

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE "OTHER" WOMAN: EARLY
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REPRESENTATIONS OF NATIVE
AMERICAN WOMEN, 1579-1690

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This dissertation examines how early modern writers deployed figures of similarity and arguments of similitude in textual and visual representations of Native American women in trans-Atlantic texts about the Americas. I explore the relationship between representations of English and Native women by investigating the ways English authors link the two figures through comparisons that reveal similarities. English writers asserted shared traits between Native and English women to cast indigenous peoples as potential subjects of the English crown. However, these writers did not describe processes of assimilation or acculturation: the English represent the Natives as already like them. English writers used similarity between Native and English to differentiate themselves from other European colonizers in the Americas, to provide rationales for

possessing American land, and to reassure English investors and would-be colonists of the safety and stability of the relationship between Native and English. My introduction situates early modern arguments of similarity and similitude alongside contemporary notions of fluid racial and cultural identities. Chapter 1 examines the descriptions of the Native woman captive in George Best's travel narrative about the Frobisher voyages and the rhetoric of similarity between Native and English women employed in this description; this rhetoric enables Best increasingly to include England's own Elizabeth I as a central character in support of the voyages. Chapter 2 considers Sir Walter Raleigh's use of the figure of the Native woman to make an analogical rhetorical argument comparing Elizabeth I to Native women rulers and, thus, to argue for English claims to American land. Chapter 3 examines how Aphra Behn and Mary Rowlandson reflect changing attitudes about Native Americans through their use of similarity to convey colonial anxieties about safety and cultural degradation as opposed to earlier depictions of similarity to convey a reassuring statement of colonial peace.

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REPRESENTATIONS OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN, 1579-1690

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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DISCLAIMER

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Introduction
Pocahontas in England, or the English Invention of the Indian “Princess”

The permanent exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. titled “American Origins,” the cornerstone of the Gallery's collections, boasts an impressive array of period portraits of some of the most famous figures in American history. Just under the arched entryway, the first painting in sight is an anonymous eighteenth-century rendition of Pocahontas, the famed American Indian “princess,” based on the iconic Simon Van de Passe engraving (figures 1 and 2). The portrait shows a young brunette woman in garish Jacobean attire whose large brown eyes look out at the viewer. A few yards to the right, or two paintings away, stands a 1558 portrait of Elizabeth I as a young queen dressed in ermine, clutching a devotional text, and wearing jewels that remind the viewer of her royal authority. Thus, within the same gallery room the viewer sees two competing claims and representations of early modern “royalty.” To complicate matters further, the English queen and the Indian “princess” are positioned in such a way that each seems to look at the other, creating a silent dialogue between these two historical figures. Pocahontas and the Good Queen Bess co-exist in the nation’s capital, and together they represent the beginnings of American history. Pocahontas’s presence should hardly be surprising, but that of Elizabeth I, an English monarch, raises some questions. What is the relationship between “American Origins” and England’s Virgin Queen? How does an English monarch relate to a room filled with Indians, settlers, and explorers? And, most importantly for this project, how does gender shape our understanding of the relationship

between Pocahontas's and Queen Elizabeth's places in this "American Origins" exhibit? The Pocahontas portrait represents Powhatan's famed daughter as she may have appeared on her fatal trip to England, where she died of illness in 1617 before she could return to Virginia. This painting is our most "reliable" glimpse at the now-mythic American matriarch, and, as reflected in her clothing, it situates her in London and within English culture. The English culture that the painting evokes may serve as a reminder that the Old World in some manner stifled this Indian woman. Her untimely death in one sense meant that literature and history never got to see this woman's lifetime negotiation between English and indigenous cultures, leaving early modern writers to construct imaginatively the future of intercultural relationships foreclosed by Pocahontas's death at the ominously named Gravesend, England. The two paintings in the "American Origins" exhibit in Washington D.C. are positioned in a manner that parallels the key rhetorical strategy that English authors of the early modern trans-Atlantic world employed to represent Native American women. This rhetorical strategy emphasized similarity over difference. Native American women are represented in comparison to English women, such as Elizabeth I, and more often than not in ways that highlight their similarities to rather than their cultural differences from the English. Just as the anonymous painting of Pocahontas in the National Portrait Gallery shows a woman dressed in high Jacobean fashion with only a written inscription and a hint of darker complexion to suggest her Native ancestry, so, too, did textual English descriptions and representations of Native women focus on their similarities to the English.

“The ‘Other’ Woman” explores how gender, culture, race, and forms of sovereignty inform early modern textual and visual representations of Native American women. I start with these examples from the National Portrait Gallery in part because visual representations will support my investigation of the period’s literature, supplementing and expanding the examples of the narrative and rhetorical strategies employed in the literature discussed in this study. I examine representations of Native women in a variety of genres, ranging from travel narratives to drama, in order to chronologically trace the development of key roles assigned to with these figures, including the functions of Native women as mediators, lovers, rulers, and rebels. These roles all had important precedents in Renaissance literature and, thus, highlight continuity with English culture.

It is the main contention of this dissertation that similarity to English women more often than difference from them best characterizes the representations of Native American women in early modern and early American texts until the late seventeenth century. This is not to suggest that English writers do not include descriptions of difference between the Natives and the English—they do catalog how Natives differ from Europeans, noting visual characteristics, such as skin color, or cultural differences, such as religious devotion, or intersecting aspects of appearance and culture, such as body tattooing. Rather, examining more critically the moments which highlight similarity of Native to English and Native life to English life reveals hitherto unconsidered early modern arguments for sustaining colonization efforts. Asserting shared traits between

Native and English women in particular enables writers of the period to cast indigenous peoples as potential subjects of the English crown.

My interest in the instances and uses of comparison in representations of Native women is two-fold: first, in reaction to the recent and on-going discussion of “race” at this historical moment, and second, in order to understand what purpose similarity between Native and English served for early English and colonial audiences’ representations of gender, particularly in the persistent representations of Native women as “princesses” and “queens.” The debate about “race” in the early modern trans-Atlantic world is heated, to say the least. My project considers how early modern English writers “Europeanize” Native women. In choosing this topic, I do not mean to grant authority to the English viewpoint, but rather to investigate the genealogical formation of the Native woman as a literary character. The concept of Indian “princesses” and “squaws” has a troubled history of representation, particularly in relation to the Native American community who often find the familiarization and mass consumption of Native culture offensive and derogatory.¹ Images from advertisements in use even today, such as the Land of Lakes Indian maiden, are descended from racist stereotypes. The image of the Native woman as a princess or squaw promotes a misunderstanding of indigenous culture and perpetuates stereotypes of sexual availability. This study examines the earliest representations of Native women in the English context to understand how images based on similarity between Native and English were constructed and alternatively how to distinguish these images

¹ See, for example, Nancy Marie Mithlo, *“Our Indian Princess” Subverting the Stereotype* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2009).

from those that emphasize difference between Native and English. English texts' characterization of Native women as princesses and queens highlights a similarity between European and indigenous forms of hierarchy. This in turn, enables a number of other commonalities between the two groups to emerge, including the roles associated with the ideal early modern housewife, such as in George Best's narrative, and the ideal courtly lover, such as in John Dryden's plays about Mexico.

The term "similitude" will be defined as early modern humanist rhetoricians, such as Erasmus, defined it. For early modern humanists and rhetors, similarity was the dominant mode of expression and argumentation. In humanist education, scholars honed their ability to generate a myriad of terms and expressions that expressed a similar idea or sentiment. Thus, drawing parallels between similar ideas or expressions was an intensive part of rhetorical argumentative training. An entire array of rhetorical devices predicated on similarity are featured prominently in Renaissance rhetorical treatises based on classical learning, including themes based on comparison or imitation, and figures such as simile and metaphor. My investigation into representations of Native women based on similarity to English women considers at length this discursive practice of the early modern period. Similitude was also defined as an argument through analogy. Rhetoricians conceived of analogy as comparison [*comparatio*] used to support an argument. Composition exercises meant to build rhetorical skill included work on comparison [*comparatio*] and imitation [*ethopoeia/imitation*].² Early modern rhetorical treatises listed analogy as an important means of

² See, Aphthonius, *Aphthonius Progymnasmata* (London: H. Lownes, 1616), 122,127.

developing and supporting an argument, a use that stands apart from our present day understanding of the term as a figure used to clarify as opposed to argue. For example, as I aver in chapter 2, Sir Walter Raleigh not only draws a rhetorical analogy between the land of Guiana as virginal and England's Virgin Queen Elizabeth, but he also argues that the shared quality of virginity unites the English queen with the New World land and, thus, allows the English to argue for a continued colonial relationship to Guiana.

The use of similitude in argumentation was thought by many in the early modern period to be the most effective strategy for persuasion. In the classical text *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, a basic text of Renaissance scholars, analogy is described as a figure that “possesses liveliness and distinction in the highest degree; indeed it permits the hearer himself to guess what the speaker has not mentioned.”³ Similarly, in Thomas Wilson's sixteenth-century handbook *The Art of Rhetoric*, similitudes are praised for their ability to delight hearers. Wilson defines similitude as “a likeness when two things, or more than two, are so compared and resembled together that they both in some one property seem like” and then goes on to say that “similitudes are used not onely to amplifie a matter, but also to beautifie the same, to delite the hearers, to make the matter plaine, and to shewe a certaine maiestie with the report of such resembled things.”⁴

Michel Foucault's analysis of the Renaissance episteme clarifies the early modern usage of similarity as a method of organizing and processing knowledge. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault describes the Renaissance episteme as ordering

³ Anon., *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, trans., Harry Caplan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 403.

⁴ Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetorique* (London 1585), 193-93.

knowledge through resemblance and cites four essential “similitudes”:
convenientia, *aemulatio*, analogy, and sympathies.⁵ In the first, *convenientia*, Foucault considers how knowledge arises through resemblances which lead to emulation [*aemulatio*] and duplication, or the endless iterations of a pattern or concept. In addition, analogy asserts a relationship between like things which was understood to be sympathies among ideas or things. Indeed, Foucault concludes that, in the first episteme at least, all representation is a form of repetition.⁶

To reiterate, then, in this dissertation I will use “similitude” according to the meaning it held in early modern rhetorical theory, a figure that expresses a relationship of resemblances that also functions as an argument. The first two chapters explore the rhetorical arguments implicit in travel literature of the descriptions of Native women that compare them to English women and thus represent Natives as similar to Europeans. The last chapter considers how uses of similarity shift from arguments comparing Native and English women to generic conventions that unite Native characters to a dramatic tradition of English characters. Thus, in the travel writings discussed in the first half of this project, I consider how travel writers use rhetorical similitudes about Native women and English women to argue for English colonial control and involvement in the New World, and in the latter half, which focuses on Restoration drama and captivity narratives, I consider how writers employ the conventions of each genre to assert similarity between Native women and English women, thus positioning the characters in relation to the canon of female character types in English literature.

⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1994), 17.

⁶ Ibid.

Literary scholarship contends that mimesis imparts a definition of imitation distinct from the early modern definition of similitude. Although the early modern world discussed mimesis as part of the debates on the artistic and literary efforts to portray Nature realistically, mimesis and mimicry have often been redeployed by today's scholars to characterize the relationship between colonizer and subaltern in post-colonial studies.⁷ According to Homi Bhabha "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other," or the colonizer's desire to see his culture consumed and performed by the subaltern.⁸ Thus, New World narratives of conversion or assimilation exhibit mimicry. Since this study examines the textual and visual representations produced by English writers, not indigenous authors, similitude will be considered rather than mimesis and mimicry. While critics such as Barbara Fuchs examine how American indigenous literary practices adopt generic models and forms from the European metropolis in order to challenge the Spanish and English colonizers' constructions of difference, my study instead explores how writers from England's imperial center impose literary conventions onto indigenous populations to make them comprehensible and provide imperial rationales.⁹ Thus, instead of looking at a

⁷ For discussions on the Renaissance debates about the imitation of Nature and the arts see, "The Defence of Poesy," in Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, ed. Gavin Alexander (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 1-55. See also, Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art: A study of form in Elizabethan drama* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972). For more on the use of mimesis to affect literary realism, see also, Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968).

⁸ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 122. For an overview of Bhabha's approach to mimicry, see the chapter "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse," in *The Location of Culture*.

⁹ See Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3-4. Also see Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999). Aravamudan considers the "tropicalization" of colonial subjects through a revision of the

progressive, teleological narrative of colonial contact in which conversion to or imitation of the European colonizer's culture creates similarity between European and Native, my study identifies an alternative narrative in which English writers construct narratives of similarity between the two groups without describing processes of assimilation or acculturation: the English represent the Natives as *already* like them.

Similarity has only rarely been treated in recent discussions of race in the early modern period. Indeed, the very notion of "race" in this period has been contested. Some scholars emphasize that the word "race" was used during the period but point to the differences from our own modern usage.¹⁰ These scholars argue that to deny the use of the word "race" is, in some sense, to deny or minimize the prejudice inherent in English or European interactions with foreign peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Americas.¹¹ Others maintain that "race" is too loaded a word, infused with our own politics and societal values and, thus, it anachronistically imposes a worldview that did not then exist. Instead, they argue that our use and construction of race today has a more recent genealogical inheritance from nineteenth-century proto-scientific explanations of human difference.¹² Many scholars in the early modern field maintain that difference was most likely viewed in much more "fluid" terms than the "black and white"

tropes and metaphors used by metropole cultures to understand the colonized; see esp. 1-29. Also see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Serge Gruzinski, *The mestizo mind: the intellectual dynamics of colonization and globalization*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁰ See, for example, Sujata Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: mythologies of skin color in early modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

¹¹ See, for example, Ayanna Thompson, *Performing "Race" and Torture on the Early Modern Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2008). See also, Iyengar.

¹² See, for example, Anthony Appiah, *Color conscious: the political morality of race* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

vocabulary we bring to it today.¹³ Still, difference remains the focus of scholarly investigations into how early modern Europeans conceived and represented non-Europeans.

The critical conversation about race in early modern literature has undergone several shifts especially in its conversation with New Historicism.¹⁴ Some studies examined how writers represented non-Europeans in ways that encouraged social prejudice against historically marginalized groups, linking these representations to a parallel narrative of the academy's initial political marginalization of questions of gender and race.¹⁵ The two main threads of the critical discussion that have emerged over the last thirty years as a result of investigations into race in early modern literature are first, a wariness of anachronism, and second, an assertion that the early modern notion of race was divorced from skin color and linked, instead, to multiple categories of identification, including religion, sexuality, and nationality. Some critics maintain that studies of race are historically appropriate, describing race using the period's wide-ranging and all-encompassing definition of the term as it relates to class, family, and culture, while others draw on the history of science to construct a narrative about racial thinking that links the pre- and post-Enlightenment

¹³ See, for instance, Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton, eds., *Race in early modern England: a documentary companion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

¹⁴ Critical race theory emerged in 1970s following the work of civil rights scholarship and focused in particular on legal conditions and sociological findings to explain the conditions of racial inequality. African American Studies led the way in early uses of Critical Race theory in literary studies; see for example the essay collection, *"Race," Writing, and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). New Historicists later adopted the theoretical apparatus to literary studies of race.

¹⁵ See, for example, Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989). See also, Arthur Little, *Shakespeare Jungle Fever* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

periods.¹⁶ Other scholars contend that “geo-humoral” understandings of the body and its relationship to the environment and other exterior factors best characterized early modern racialist thinking. Humoralist understandings of the body make the inclusion of other non-visual categories of identity, such as religion and sexuality, easier for scholars to connect to race since the balance of a person’s four humors were affected by factors such as climate and food consumption; thus, a person’s activities and experiences could affect what was perceived at the time as his or her biological identity.¹⁷ Furthermore, our understanding of early modern conceptions of difference can be traced through the changing terminology used by critics to indicate “race.” Earlier studies focused on how the early modern period constructed and perpetrated racism, and thus emphasized how physical distinctions between groups of people were understood. As concerns of anachronism and historical continuity came to the fore, terms such as “proto-racism” and “proto-racialist” emerged as ways to distinguish the early modern period from later periods.¹⁸

To this discussion of race, I wish to add an examination of the ways writers and artists from this period understood and represented similarity between colonists and Natives. Instead of isolating the mechanisms of racial differentiation, I analyze how continuities were constructed and what purposes

¹⁶ For an example of a study that connects early modern racism to the present, see, Lara Bovilsky, *Barbarous Play: Race on the English Renaissance Stage* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

¹⁷ See Mary Floyd-Wilson *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); I am also indebted to her talk "Blood or Manners: Shakespeare and the Inheritance of Acquired Traits" given at the “Bloodwork: politics of the body conference” at the University of Maryland, 6 May 2011.

¹⁸ See Celia R. Daileader, *Racism, Misogyny, and the Othello Myth: Inter-racial Couples from Shakespeare to Spike Lee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10.

they served. I use the term “race” when referring to scholarship about this period, but I avoid using this term vaguely in my analysis of this study's texts and instead specify what criteria the early modern writers adapt to construct descriptions of difference and similarity; for example, when discussing George Best’s account of the Frobisher voyages, I refer to the author’s interest in skin color and complexion differences instead of describing this as Best’s interest in racial difference. The scholarly shift to embracing early modern humoral theory as an explanation of human variety highlights the “fluidity” of identity and imparts an understanding of people in terms of monogenesis.¹⁹ Since humoral theories assumed that the human body was a porous entity open to a number of fluctuating factors that influenced its composition and appearance, they allowed for the possibility that all people were essentially the same but had, due to these factors, developed distinct complexions and constitutions as a result of the balance of the humors. Instead of extending the discussion of racial identity as it relates to humoral theory, this dissertation investigates how English texts assert similarities between Native and English cultures by focusing on how the notion of fluid identities produce representations of Native American women that express both similarity to and difference from Europeans. Previous scholars have noted that the social construction of human differences was at best unstable, and that competing constructions have had, to say the least, an uneasy co-existence, as revealed by the simultaneous avowal that groups such as Africans or Native Americans

¹⁹ See Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10-12.

participated in different cultural practices and yet were related to Europeans through a shared Biblical ancestor.

For early modern readers and writers the most perplexing problem in representing Native Americans was not asserting differences in appearance in comparison to Europeans, but instead accounting for the Native Americans' place in the Bible as part of God's creation. As a consequence, writers had to connect Natives to peoples from the three previously-known continents.²⁰ Thus, theories that speculated on the origins of Native American peoples were intended to familiarize the "New World" within "Old World" epistemologies. Since the pervasive European Christian world-view of the time held that all people were descendants of Adam and Eve and then Noah and his family—what we would now term a monogenist view of human populations—difference in appearance had to be explained as an event secondary to the Biblical Flood.²¹ Thus, early modern writers relied on similarities to place the origin of Native Americans within Christian theology, looking for traits or features of Native Americans shared with previously known groups of people.²² Some early modern writers such as George Best theorized that Native Americans shared lineage with Tartars or other Asian groups, even after most of Europe agreed that the New World was

²⁰ Cf. Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Kidd examines how people have historically interpreted the Bible to foster racial distinctions among people despite the Bible's status as an essentially "color-blind" text.

²¹ Polygenism, or a theory that humans result from multiple lineages such as co-existent "Adams" across the world, took firmer hold in the nineteenth century, although as early as the sixteenth century Paracelsus suggested the possibility of a second Adam in trying to account for the origins of Native Americans. Polygenism was viewed during the early modern period as incongruent with Biblical precedent. See Lee Eldridge Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492-1729* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 9-10.

²² *Ibid.*, 13.

a geographic space distinct from Asia. Others, such as Roger Williams and Thomas Thorowgood, speculated that indigenous people were related to one of the lost tribes of Israel.²³ Oftentimes, early modern writers listed multiple explanatory theories for their readers, providing examples for all of them. Such strategies reveal a tactic of comparing new information to known information, seeking to familiarize Native Americans through European frameworks of knowledge.

If race was indeed perceived as fluid in the early modern context, then life events such as religious conversion or intermarriage could change one's perceived "racial" status. Additionally, geo-humoral fears that people's constitutions could be modified by outside factors, such as food consumption and travel, suggest that even among homogenous European groups the threat of difference always lurked; thus similarity co-existed alongside difference.²⁴ As a result, just as fears of Europeans "turning Turk" or going "Native" (either in America, or Ireland) indicate that colonizers and travelers risk exposing themselves to difference, so too can the pattern be reversed: Europeans can impart their culture to the non-Europeans they encounter.²⁵

²³ See Thomas Thorowgood, *Jewes in America, or, Probabilities that the Americans are of that race. With the removal of some contrary reasonings, and earnest desires for effectuall endeavours to make them Christian* (London: 1660). See also, Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (London, 1643), esp. "To the Reader" (unpaginated) where Williams sees an affinity between Hebrew and the language of the Native Americans as well as similarities of Native Americans to Jews in relation to Williams's understanding of their customs regarding anointing their heads, giving dowries, and keeping women separate from men during menstruation. Williams also goes on to say that they may also be related to the Greeks because their language has close affinities with the Greek tongue.

²⁴ See Floyd-Wilson.

²⁵ See Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570–1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and Jean Feerick, "Spenser, Race, and Ire-land" *English Literary Renaissance* 32.1 (Winter 2002): 85-117. See also Feerick, *Strangers in Blood: Relocating Race in the Renaissance* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2010). For

A number of texts from this period focus on tales of conversion or assimilation that represent non-Europeans as similar to Europeans. For example, in a play set in the Spice Islands [the Moluccas], the title character Quisara of Fletcher's drama *The Island Princess* (ca. 1619) converts from a pagan-infused brand of Islam to Christianity before marrying the play's Christian merchant hero. Likewise, the African daughters of Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* (1605) receive a "recipe" for English virtue and chastity to transform their black skin into white. In these two examples the processes of conversion or assimilation result in similarity between the non-European and the European. But in the texts I examine in this dissertation, similarity is a pre-existing condition.

Contemporary texts representing Native American women more often depart from the narrative of assimilation or conversion used for Asian, Levant, and African women. Instead early modern writers often demonstrate the similarities between Native and English that exist before sustained interaction between the two groups. This is especially true of the fictional genres. For example, John Dryden's play *The Indian Emperour* (1665) characterizes the fictional Aztec princess Cydaria as similar to Europeans prior to her interaction with the European Cortez by focusing on a romantic story line. Raleigh's Amazonian queens in his travel account *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana* (1596) have political positions and policies similar to those of Queen Elizabeth I. Fletcher's island princess Quisara and Jonson's African daughters of Niger emulate European cultural practices, such as the

an early modern account of English racial anxiety over the Irish see, Edmund Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland*, ed. Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997).

Christian religion or English standards of female behavior, which, in turn, make those female characters more familiar to the English audience consuming their narratives. Dryden's *Cydaria* and Raleigh's Amazonian queen do not have to imitate or assimilate to be familiar to English audiences, unlike Fletcher's *Quisara* and Jonson's African daughter who eventually become more familiar over the course of the dramatic production. Regardless of when in these texts the similarity of non-European women to Europeans appears, gender enables the comparison. Early modern conceptions of the changeability of women make them ideal characters for such changes, yet in Jonson's and Fletcher's works the mutability of women's dispositions and bodies is presented as a positive attribute as opposed to a negative one.²⁶

In the last thirty years there have been an increasing number of new historical studies on cultural and historical circumstances affecting the representation of women and other traditionally marginalized voices. The recovery of women writers such as Aphra Behn and Lady Mary Wroth in feminist studies led to feminist new historical work on gender from the 1980s and 1990s. In the mid-1990s work expanded to include considerations of non-European women as well. Indeed, the work of scholars such as Kim F. Hall and Ania

²⁶ According to Galenic medicine and anatomy, women's bodies were thought to be physically unstable or less "perfect"; even their genital structure was conceived as an inversion of men's. In the Renaissance some writers thought that women could turn into men. See Phyllis Rackin, "Historical Difference/Sexual Difference," in *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England*, ed. Jean R. Brink (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Press, 1993), 51. See also Thomas Laquer, *Making Sex* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 66, 73-86. For a discussion of women's bodies as unstable and therefore inferior and unreliable, see Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: drama and the disciplines of shame in early modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Loomba combine gender studies and critical race theory along with a new historicist interest in the cultural context of the period to investigate the place of non-European women in early modern literature.²⁷ Exploring the structures and representations of race and gender has been a long-standing mode of academic inquiry, but in the context of the early modern period scholars see more overlap between theories about women and theories about non-Europeans than those found in subsequent periods. Scholars interested in early modern gender studies often note the widespread notion of women as “leaky vessels” who possess an unstable and changeable nature. These cultural assumptions were reinforced by adherence to the one-sex model in which women are seen as incomplete men, and thus inferior.²⁸ Similarly, recent critical work about race in this period usually contends that a strong bond between physical appearance and cultural custom existed, but, more importantly, that the body was more fluidly defined and understood. For example, humoral theory as understood in Galenic medicine resulted in early racist thinking that saw *all* bodies as susceptible to change.²⁹

Both the unstable nature of women’s bodies in early modern thinking and the fluidity of racial identity are important to my assessment of representations of Native American women. If race or physical and cultural differences were

²⁷ See Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). See also, Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, race, and colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and her earlier work, *Gender, Race, Renaissance drama*. The essays in Margo Hendrick’s and Patricia Parker’s edited collection are early examples of the combined gender studies and critical race theory methodologies; see *Women, “race,” and writing in the early modern period* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

²⁸ See Laqueur, *Making Sex*.

²⁹ See Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). See also Ania Loomba, “Delicious Traffick’: Racial and Religious Difference on Early Modern Stages,” in *Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Catherine M. S. Alexander and Stanley Wells (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 203-24; and Felicity Nussbaum, *Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race, and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century*.

characteristics that were often in flux, then what can we learn from moments of similarity between Native and English characters in literature? So far scholars who have investigated racial fluidity have often approached the topic by considering what the period considered a threat, or agent of change, to English bodies. For example, Jean Feerick has discussed how humoral theory explains racial anxieties that the English experienced concerning the Irish, especially fears of going “native” as did the Old English who stayed in Ireland hundreds of years before Elizabethan attempts at colonization. Similarly, historian Joyce Chaplin has discussed how the English feared that their bodies would degenerate in the New World, but later replaced those anxieties with empirically gathered evidence that the English constitution was impervious to change.

Historians and literary critics have considered the importance of similarity between English and Native in discussions of stadial theory, or four stages theory.³⁰ Thomas Harriot’s *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590 printing) includes images that implicitly compare Natives to English; for example, the Native figures stand in similar bodily poses to the ancient Britons and Picts, a similarity further emphasized by the writer’s captions that link the Algonquians to the ancient Britons. Unlike the contemporary English, the comparison of the Native to England’s past suggests that the Natives are a few steps behind in the Elizabethans’ progressive view of history. I contend that moments of similarity between Native women and English women in literature not only helped an English audience comprehend information about the

³⁰ Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

New World, but were also central to subsequent arguments made by English writers about the colonial experience and imperial policies.

This rhetoric of similitude enabled English writers to differentiate themselves from other European colonizers in the Americas, provided rationales for possessing American land, and reassured English investors and would-be colonists of the safety and stability of the relationship between Native and English. The rise of hemispheric American studies has led to comparisons between Spanish methods of colonization and English efforts in North America.³¹ Scholars have suggested that English writers distinguished themselves as respectful of Native monarchs in contrast to the Spaniards, whom the English described as unusually cruel in their dismantling of indigenous governments.³² Pointing out similarities between Native and English enabled writers to assert that they had not dealt fiercely and despicably with the Natives, as had the Spaniards, comparisons English writers often included to denigrate Spanish efforts as cruel and thus cast English efforts as comparatively benevolent and noble.³³ Likewise, similitude allowed English writers to allay fears of investors and future colonists back home. For example, the travel narratives of George Best and Thomas Harriot both describe how the English succeed in their negotiations and encounters with

³¹ See Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

³² See Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Tears of the Indians*, trans. by John Philips (London: 1656). See also, William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: The development of anti-Spanish sentiment, 1558-1660* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1971).

³³ See Sir Walter Raleigh, *The discoverie of the large, rich, and bewitful Empyre of Guiana / by Sir Walter Raleigh; transcribed, annotated and introduced*, ed. Neil Whitehead (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).

Natives to underscore how future efforts to harvest “merchantable commodities” will unfold with few obstacles.³⁴

Gender enables similarity between Native women and English women. Drawing on the contention that women’s bodies are more susceptible to change enables early English writers to construct Native women as figures who can easily navigate both the world of their tribes and the world of the colonists. The role of the Native woman as mediator has been explored by critics such as Heidi Hutner and Juliana Barr.³⁵ In her work *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman*, Barr argues for the place of Native women as “go-betweens” between Natives and Spaniards in the Texas borderlands. Moreover, historians such as Alida Metcalf have shown that even though more Native men and men of mixed-ancestry actually served as “go-betweens” and translators in early colonial American encounters, the image of the Native woman as mediator nevertheless emerged as a literary trope in the literature of the period.³⁶ Although the Native man would become the focal point of indigenous representations in nineteenth-century American literature and the Native woman would be increasingly marginalized, earlier representations show more balanced attention to Native men and women, and women emerge as key

³⁴ George Best, *A True Discourse of the late voyages of discoverie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya, by the Northwest, under the conduct of Martin Frobisher Generall: Devided into three Bookes* (London: 1578); and Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia 1590* (New York: Dover, 1972), 7.

³⁵ See Heidi Hutner, *Colonial Women: Race and Culture in Stuart Drama* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). See also, Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

³⁶ Alida C. Metcalf, “Women as Go-Betweens? Patterns in Sixteenth-Century Brazil,” in *Gender, Race and Religion in the Colonization of the Americas*, ed. Nora E. Jaffary (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 15-28.

mediators.³⁷ The Native women in the accounts I examine stand in as substitutes for queens or women “back home”—making them part of the complex circum-Atlantic performance and substitution between cultures noted by Joseph Roach. Roach argues in *Cities of the Dead* that cultural difference created fears of miscegenation that were elided and forgotten, or rather reshaped, through performances. However, I argue that miscegenation is either presented as a solution or does not exist in the same sense in this earlier period because Indians are not always understood as racially distinct from the English.³⁸ Thus, my study has found that substitutions are grounded on similarities, not differences as in the historical archive discussed by Roach.

Many of the common stereotypes about Native Americans and Native women still with us today date to literary and cultural expressions from nineteenth-century U.S. American texts. The ideas of the “Vanishing Race” or the “Noble Savage” permeate the filmic landscape of Westerns both old and new. The oversaturation of our culture with such images and stereotyping has blocked examination of how Native peoples were represented prior to the days of the early American republic. Focusing on the literary figure of the Native American woman can extend our knowledge of early modern culture’s representation of gender and cultural difference. Native women emerge as figures of mediation and sovereignty due to a combination of factors, including feminine personifications of the land, literary depictions of conquest as romantic union, dramatic traditions of

³⁷ For example, nineteenth-century representations, such as those in the novels of James Fenimore Cooper, focus attention on Native male characters, with few or marginal Native women.

³⁸ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

representation of non-European women characters, and the rise of female rulers in early modern Europe: all factors that rely on the use of similarity between Native and English while reflecting contemporary political shifts with more women in positions of power.

The “discovery” of the Americas by Europeans in the late fifteenth century spawned numerous tales of conquest for burgeoning European empires, some of which were purported to have religious goals while others were spurred by mercantile interest. Scholarship since the quincentennial of Columbus’s first landing in the Western hemisphere has revised previous approaches to empire and imperialism, often describing the villainous treatment indigenous peoples received at the hands of their colonizers. The recovery work done by scholars investigating the earliest moments of European destruction of indigenous people has provided a politically charged edge to literary studies, such as Laura Brown’s *Ends of Empire*.³⁹ The Native American woman has been discussed by contemporary scholars as a symbol of the land, particularly in Annette Kolodny’s provocative, and now classic, study, *The Lay of the Land*. Early modern scholars, especially those interested in the early Americas, have increasingly noticed the conventions deployed to represent European possession of Native American women.⁴⁰ The Pocahontas myth, indeed, has been with us for centuries and, despite some exceptional historical and literary scholarship on texts about early

³⁹ Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

⁴⁰ See Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 10-25. See also Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). Heidi Hutner, Bridget Orr, Stephen Greenblatt, and Kristina Bross have discussed representations of Native Americans.

European and Native American relations, the Native American woman has not been satisfactorily separated from the American founding mother motif associated with Pocahontas. What did these Native women signify in the early days of English colonial activity, and how did English writers rely on early modern discursive practices to understand and include them in their works?

Most scholarship on the Pocahontas myth assumes that difference was feared in early modern exploration and so, needed to be converted or contained.⁴¹ But other scholarship argues that differences between Native and English were not firmly in place in the early modern period.⁴² Can we reassess the roles and representations of Native American women without the romantic myth of interracial unions, or the fatalistic theme of “vanishing” Native peoples? How would an early modern audience read these representations? What literary tradition would these small anecdotes fit into? At its core the Pocahontas myth is a tale of romance, the union of two people from different countries and cultures that cements political stability and trade relations between the Powhatans and the English colonists. The varied representations of this story from its earliest incarnation in John Smith’s *The General History of Virginia* to the twentieth-century Disney animated feature film reveal that the negotiation of the place of the Native American female is crucial in the forging of inter-cultural alliances and, eventually, in the success of English colonies at the cost of suppressing Native tribal groups. Whatever the historical reality of Pocahontas and her

⁴¹ See, for example, Hutner; see also Philip L. Barbour, *Pocahontas and Her World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969); and William M.S. Rasmussen and Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas Her Life and Legend* (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1994).

⁴² See Chaplin, *Subject Matter*.

eventual marriage to the Englishman John Rolfe, the myth of Pocahontas as a cultural intermediary who saved white settlers has persisted and evolved. The story of Pocahontas influenced nineteenth-century American representations of Native American women, and, also, academic scholarship on representations of Native women regardless of the era. For example, in *Colonial Women* Heidi Hutner extensively considers how the Pocahontas myth manifests itself in seventeenth-century texts about Native women other than Pocahontas. Although at times helpful, the Pocahontas framework should be reassessed as a method to be applied wholesale to subsequent representations of Native women in literature. Instead of looking at later Native American women in literature as iterations of Pocahontas, we should instead examine what characteristics and patterns are most often associated with the romantic view of Pocahontas: a marriage union suggests consensual “conquest” or, rather, transforms the conquest from invasion or rape to legitimate conjugal union. Such a distinction is important to scholars who examine the symbolic function of Native women. When representations of Native women symbolize the land, claiming possession of the women through marriage metaphorically holds more meaning and legitimacy, a move many English writers make to differentiate themselves from the cruel Spaniards whom the English describe as raping the land and women of the Americas.

Short references and anecdotes characterize many of the early texts that include accounts of Native women. The prevalence of these marginal narrative moments speaks to the need for scholarly study in order to demystify the stereotypes associated with Native woman. The first step in combating cultural

stereotypes about Native women is to examine at length why English writers described Native women as Indian Queens and Indian Princesses. At one level assessing the use of “queen” and “princess” will dismantle a still widespread stereotype, but also show how this misunderstanding of indigenous culture by the English, which in turn asserted a similarity between Native and English forms of government, served a particular rhetorical function in the early colonial period. The English use of Indian princesses and queens enabled early modern writers to construct a colonial relationship that perpetuated rationales for imperial possession, but also suppressed the violence of first encounters. Critically recovering the rhetorical purpose behind early modern writers’ assertions of similarity between Native and English women will begin to disassemble years of a misunderstood stereotype.

One of the key characteristics of Native women characters in early modern English travel narratives and drama is royal position or titles of sovereignty. The perpetuation of the “Indian princess” stereotype can best be explored by returning to a common modern representation of Pocahontas, the 1995 Disney feature film. Disney's marketing casts Pocahontas as one among the many revered “Disney Princesses.” Alongside the more traditional princesses such as Cinderella or Snow White, Pocahontas enjoys the privileged status of princess extraordinaire available for consumption in the form of fashion dolls, t-shirts, and dress-up costumes. Her princess status contradicts the film’s characterization of difference and cultural clash by connecting her to past traditions of predominantly white princess characters. The role of princess then imparts a set of linguistic equivalencies

between Native and English cultures.⁴³ Perceiving Pocahontas as a princess forces us to apply the framework of the Old World to understand the New, which then results in minimizing the differences between the two continents and instead focuses on similarity. The use of royal titles from European monarchies and courts to describe indigenous governments persists in the English texts of the early modern trans-Atlantic world, perhaps in part because of the example of Pocahontas and her journey to King James's court.

This dissertation begins by considering how travel narratives represent Native women and ends by considering how imaginative generic forms such as drama incorporate information and conventions gleaned from these travel narratives. I begin by considering literary moments from before and after the establishment of Jamestown in 1607, England's first successful American colony, to contrast how similarity between Native and English functioned in texts by writers promoting nascent colonial ventures and how these writers' uses of similitude as argument by analogy are later modified after sustained colonization leads to increased conflict between Natives and English. In a sense then, my investigation of similarity in relation to the representation of Native women considers the promotion and positive affinities writers draw in their assertion of resemblance between Native and English, and how those commonalities must be modified as violence permeates the colonial experience. Thus similarity initially provides a rationale by early modern writers to potential investors and colonists in England, and supports colonization in the early stages of English exploration in

⁴³ On linguistic equivalencies for terms for indigenous forms of government and those of Europe, see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper, 1984), 29-30.

which resemblances between Native and English foster an ideal colonial and mercantile environment. Later colonial writers, by contrast, deploy similarity to construct a negative argument about Natives. This study begins by examining how writers who identified as English, such as Raleigh, relied on similitude to construct a positive representation of Native women to in turn craft a nuanced statement about English imperial aspirations, and ends by exploring how writers who identified as colonists, such as Rowlandson, used similarity to express a negative perspective on Natives. The different attitudes expressed and strategies employed by English as opposed to colonial writers speak to the increasing divide between England and its colonies.

Chapter 1 argues that George Best's *A True Discourse of the late voyages of discoverie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya, by the Northwest, under the conduct of Martin Frobisher Generall: Devided into three Bookes* (1578) moves away from characterizing Native American women in the medieval context of Mandevillian monstrosities and toward empirical discourses that express nuanced ideas of similarity to English women. This text about the Frobisher voyages to North America dramatically describes "sauage" Natives by focusing in the first half of the text on their differences from the English. The inclusion of a Native woman captive introduces an emergent interest in similarity to the English, which also parallels the increased inclusion of England's own Elizabeth I as a central character in support of the voyages. I discuss a similar discursive development in early modern visual culture by comparing the visual representations by John White of the Inuit woman taken captive by Martin Frobisher to the Native women

of Virginia depicted by the same artist a decade later. In the later paintings the artist renders Algonquin bodies familiar through characteristically European visual aesthetics, such as linear perspective.

Chapter 2 focuses on Walter Raleigh's *The Discovery of Guiana* (1596) and argues that Native women are deployed to make an analogical rhetorical argument comparing Elizabeth I to Native women rulers to argue for English claims to American land. As a writer trained in the Renaissance humanist rhetorical tradition, Raleigh forges a connection between Elizabeth and Native women through recourse to the "*similitudo*," a technique thought to be especially rhetorically effective because analogy and similarity were often considered the most persuasive rhetorical tactics. Raleigh famously asserts that Guiana is a territory that still has its "maidenhead." I contend that Raleigh's consistent use of the language of virginity in tandem with his representation of Native American women evokes the Elizabethan "cult of the virgin" and its anxious celebration of the English queen's chastity. Consideration of period portraits of Elizabeth alongside textual descriptions of Native women in Raleigh's text reveals the common virginal and political attributes of the queen used by both Raleigh and portraitists. Raleigh's Native women all display facets of Elizabeth's political persona: Amazonian military leaders and chaste virgins abound. These Native women function rhetorically to make an analogical argument about the legitimacy of England's imperial desires in Guiana: a virgin land inhabited by virgin women should be ruled by a virgin queen.

My study concludes with an analysis of Aphra Behn's *The Widow Ranter* (1690) and Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682). I treat Behn's play in conjunction with the engravings of an English actress costumed to play Behn's Native American lead role. Behn's play retells the events of Bacon's Rebellion (1676) in the Virginia colony, but suppresses Nathaniel Bacon's race war against Native Americans and offers instead a tragic romance between Bacon and the Indian queen Semernia. I propose that Behn's play reflects changing attitudes about Native Americans because it relies on discourses of difference that convey colonial anxieties about safety and cultural degradation. As the strangeness of the Indians escalates, so do questions about their abilities as sovereigns. Comparing Semernia to Indian rulers in Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, I show how representations of gendered sovereignty become increasingly troubled in both Rowlandson and Behn. While Behn's Semernia initially reflects English court culture in her status as an Indian queen, the crisis of the rebellion makes the inclusion of Native rulers within colonial society increasingly problematic. Similarly, Rowlandson's characterization of Weetamoo, a "squaw sachem" or tribal leader, casts the Native woman as dangerously similar to those corrupted by vain aspects of English aristocratic luxury culture, isolating similarities that cause anxieties. Finally, various engravings of actress Anne Bracegirdle costumed to play Semernia emphasize the conventions of patrician portrait composition while showcasing the merchant commodities of the New World, reflecting how consumer culture made American treasures familiar.

Examining similarities between Native and English women reveals new rhetorical purposes for the texts examined. This study of the uses of similitude in texts and images depicting Native women expands the spectrum of types of representations and opens up new critical modes of inquiry that can reframe the genealogical history of Native American representations. The Indian princess, as the subsequent chapters will show, developed out of a rhetorical necessity to connect Native culture to England and left in its wake a troubled cultural inheritance that remains with us to this day.

Special note on terminology

Changing times lead to changing terms. The terms used to refer to Native Americans within the texts of this study run the gamut from the innocuous to the offensive. Likewise, the use of the most culturally sensitive terms or accepted epithets from the past forty or more years of academic scholarship have changed with each writer's generation. "Native American" itself is a problematic classification. The media and academia have adopted the term, yet it has met with widespread resistance and anger by many people who identify as American Indian, who see the term "Native American" as part of a revisionist history that seeks to erase the ignorance and mistakes made by the first European colonizers. Still, those from non-Native groups have contested the prefix "Native" as an accurate representation of the geographic origin of these cultural groups, insisting that the people we refer to as the first Americans are not indigenous to the Americas. This dissertation will use the more general term "Native" to indicate indigenous people from both North *and* South America, and to avoid when possible the problematic category of "Native American," except only when necessary. Furthermore, the term "Indian" will be used if it better reflects the type of language deployed by a writer of one of the primary texts of this study. In addition to using "Native," when possible I strive to use the tribal name of the group being discussed, such as "Inuit," to highlight the national and cultural specificity of the women characters being discussed, but also to avoid the dangers of a pan-Indianism in which the distinctions between different indigenous groups become blurred in contrast to the European culture of the colonizer.

Chapter 1

“A Good Huswife” Gender as Vehicle for Similitude in George Best’s account of The Frobisher Voyages

The Frobisher voyages to the area of North America we now call Baffin Island and Countess of Warwick Island in Canada, just west of Greenland, occurred over three consecutive summers from 1576 to 1578. Although the English crown had sponsored earlier voyages for New World discovery, the Frobisher voyages were among the first serious English attempts to seek out trade routes and find merchantable commodities abroad by traveling to the west across the Atlantic. The most complete period account of these journeys is George Best’s 1578 *A True Discourse of the late voyages of discoverie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya, by the Northwest, under the conduct of Martin Frobisher Generall: Devided into three Bookes*. Best served as a lieutenant during the second and third Frobisher voyages, so his narrative contains both eye-witness experiences from those voyages and reported information from others involved in the first voyage. Although largely thought of today as failed commercial and exploration ventures, the Frobisher voyages captured the fancy of Elizabethan England in the late 1570s because of the public promotion of the journeys and because of the much-celebrated arrival and exhibition of Inuit captives in England. The Inuit woman captive in particular, historically referred to as Arnaq, plays a prominent role in Best’s text about the voyages; his observations of her lead him to reassess his earlier assumptions about the humanity of the Inuit. Whereas in earlier portions of his text Best describes the Inuit as savages and

cannibals, his descriptions of Arnaq provide a remarkable contrast to that initial hostility. Thus, the Native woman leads the English voyager to consider discourses of similarity between Native and English, as opposed to the difference between them he first deployed.

For most of his narrative Best follows in the textual traditions of classical and medieval travel narratives, and, as David B. Quinn has discussed, Best's account reflects an earlier Renaissance conception of travel and of non-Europeans. These traditions are frequently marked by an emphasis on differences between disparate groups of people (for example, in ancient Greek accounts that describe people living at the far reaches of the earth as monstrous). However, Best's narrative also shows evidence of the rise of early scientific observation and natural philosophy, and it is in these moments that we see Best employing a discourse of similarity to discuss the Inuit. The later sections of Best's account present a marked shift in tone and representational practices from a focus on difference towards an interest in similitude as a rhetorical tactic. In these later sections the Native woman emerges as a vehicle for familiarizing discourses in a text that has to account for a range of cultural differences, including appearance, customs of dress, and manner of eating. The Native woman's domestic role offers a familiar image to the English crew who, thus, describe this Inuit woman as similar to English women. The similarities between the Native and English women, in turn, allow Best to construct a niche for the Native peoples within England's projected empire since Natives who are already similar to English

subjects can be more easily incorporated into the burgeoning empire than those who are exotic and monstrous.

This chapter explores such moments of similarity in the representation of Native peoples, and especially of Native American women, in Best's travel narrative. *A True Discourse* shows England at a transitional moment as it attempts to define itself as a naval power that can claim and colonize new lands. This transitional moment introduced discourses of similitude as key rhetorical strategies to accompany the emerging questions surrounding England's role as a nation and an empire. I argue that in Best the introduction of Native women initiates a shift away from characterizing the Inuit as cannibals and savages and instead towards describing them in terms of future English subjects. This shift is due in part to Best's observations of the Native woman's role as an ideal housewife, rendering her familiar to the men of the journey. The familiarization of Native women serves the key rhetorical and political function of making this part of the Americas comprehensible and appealing to an English audience who had to be convinced of the value of the American colonial project in order sustain interest and investment.

Although moments of similitude will be considered at length throughout this chapter and dissertation, I am not arguing that each of the authors described Native peoples only in terms of familiarity to English culture and values, for they also recount differences in appearance, culture, religion, or government. However, it is my contention in this chapter that instances of similarity between Native and English are a crucial rhetorical strategy in Best's *A True Discourse* and that this

rhetorical strategy emerges markedly in descriptions of Native American women. Best's narrative contains contradictory and multiple assessments of the Natives, and thus the text affords scholars the opportunity to reconsider the variety and range of early representations of Native women. This study considers the rhetorical implications of asserting similarity between Native women and English women, whereby authors utilizing a discourse of similarity were able to make an argument about peaceful colonization—a meeting of mutually agreeable and similar cultural groups—as opposed to the violent conquest marked by warfare and destruction that the English so often attributed to the Spanish in the early years of English American colonial activity. Furthermore, Best's account of the Frobisher voyages features moments of similarity between Native and English that reverberate in more explicit forms in English travel texts from the 1580s onward.

Travel Traditions, Natives in Europe: Past Considerations of Inuit and English Encounters

Prior to England's own emergence as a proto-imperialist nation, English representations of Native peoples were most influenced by translations of Spanish experiences in the Americas, such as Richard Eden's translation of Peter Martyr's *Decades of the New World* (1555),¹ and by the most popular "travel" text in

¹ When Eden's translation of Peter Martyr's account of Spain first appeared, it was under the reign of Mary Tudor, a time when Anglo/Iberian relations were more peaceable. Eden describes the Indian's bondage under the Spanish as desirable because the Spanish had brought Catholic learning to the Natives. However, this praise of Spanish treatment of Natives would soon fade with the ascension of Queen Elizabeth I. See William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: The development of anti-Spanish sentiment 1558-1660* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1971), 23-24. Michael Householder argues for an ambivalent use of Spanish accounts in England,

Renaissance England, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, a fanciful text that focuses on the strangeness in appearance and custom of peoples inhabiting the far reaches of the world. The early part of Best's narrative provides a textbook example of representing non-Europeans, and specifically the inhabitants of the islands off the coast of North America, as "monstrous" and "sauage." In this chapter I argue that Best sets up dramatic moments of cultural difference between the English and the Inuit to glorify the valor of the English participants by underscoring their hardships, but gradually moves towards a discourse of similarity between Native and English in order to cast the Inuit as future subjects of Queen Elizabeth.

Despite Best's importance to the history of European travel literature, scholars have largely ignored his account of the Frobisher voyages to Baffin Island and Countess of Warwick Island.² Even with the rise of New Historicism and the increased study of early encounters that followed in the wake of the Columbian quincentennial, accounts of the Frobisher voyages have been relatively overlooked in favor of writings about the area that came to be the United States, such as those by John Smith and William Bradford. However, it should be noted that academic and scientific interest in the Frobisher voyages has taken a variety of forms outside of literary studies. For instance, the Meta Incognita Project has undertaken extensive archaeological research at the sites

noting how representations of Native women evoked a dichotomy of Eve-like innocence and Amazonian savagery so that English readers at times sympathized with Native victims, and at other times, sympathized with conquistadors. See, Michael Householder, "Eden's Translations: Women and Temptation in Early America," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70.1 (March 2007): 11-36.

² There has been work done on New France to regions very close to where Frobisher landed, but usually by historians and scholars of French literature.

associated with the Frobisher voyages.³ Although Best is often quoted by scholars in recent studies of race in the early modern period, surprisingly these critics isolate his discussion of the complexion of Africans in the Frobisher texts from the larger context of his work. Best's musing on the nature of different complexions is part of his speculation on the origins and nature of the Inuit encountered on his travels. Best situates his discussion of Africans in the context of his larger discussion about the Inuit, and, thus, his thoughts on Africans should be reassessed in light of his narrative's larger purpose as a travel narrative about North America.⁴

Among the most well known considerations of Best's narrative are the works of Stephen Greenblatt and Mary C. Fuller, who focus their attention on the male Inuit captives of Best's account and consider at length the vast differences between the English and Inuit (as described in the account). Greenblatt discusses Best's text in *Marvelous Possessions*, emphasizing the idea of "marvel" or speechlessness as phenomena generated by the "shock" experienced by Europeans and Natives alike upon first encounter, a shock that complicated their ability to put those new experiences into words.⁵ Thus, Greenblatt focuses

³ In 1990 The Canadian Museum of Civilization helped form The Meta Incognita Project to study and preserve the sites associated with Martin Frobisher's journeys to the Canadian Arctic. The project included historians and archeologists. See, *Meta Incognita: A Discourse of Discovery, Martin Frobisher's Arctic Expeditions, 1576-1578*, ed. Thomas H.B. Symons (Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1999).

⁴ For example, Kim. F. Hall quotes from Best's account of the Frobisher voyages in *Things of Darkness*, 11-12. Hall notes that the quotation comes from Best's description of Frobisher's search for a Northwest passage, but does not explain the full context and reasons why Best would describe Africans. This anecdote, which considers not only the blackness of Africans' skin but also intermarriage between an African man and an English woman, is also included in Sujata Iyengar, *Shades of Difference: mythologies of skin color in early modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 8-11, 222; and also in Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton's anthology, *Race in early modern England*, 108-9.

⁵ See Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 109-18.

significant attention to Best's passage about the Native man who bites off his own tongue as a sign of broken communication between the English and the Natives. Mary Fuller, on the other hand, extends her interests in English narratives of failure that she began in *English Voyages in Print* and further considers how England's competition with Spain affected recording and representational practices.⁶ Her study focuses on how voyages such as the one recorded by Best ultimately became part of the collective memory of both the early modern period and of our current perspectives.

While these approaches clarify the nature of communication between English and Inuit and highlight the transmission of these narratives of encounter, consideration of the rhetorical role Native women play in Best's third voyage challenges the notions of difference that pervade much of this scholarship. Best's representation of the Inuit as cannibalistic and unable to speak, is indeed a significant feature of the Frobisher narrative, as Greenblatt and Fuller point out. However, I contend that the focus on difference is valid only when considering the first two voyages and that these critics ignore Best's discussion of the third voyage where he ceases to describe the Inuit as cannibals or to characterize the relations between English and Inuit as violent. Once Frobisher and his men become familiar with the Native woman they have taken captive, they are forced to reconsider the values of Inuit society as a result of their observation of and interaction with her. Best reflects on the caring nature of the Inuit woman and describes her duties as similar to those of any good English housewife. The

⁶ See Mary C. Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English travel to America, 1576-1624*; and Mary C. Fuller, *Remembering the Early Modern Voyage*.

Native woman then serves as the catalyst for the shift from considering the Inuit as barbarous to seeing and describing them as similar to the English.

Thus, the lack of scholarly attention to the important figure of the Native woman points to a larger neglect: the hitherto overlooked place of gender in Best's narrative. The following section considers Best's narrative first by recounting the historical circumstances of the Frobisher voyages, noting how the changing purpose of the journeys from searching for a travel route to searching for gold results in a shift from the use of difference to the increased use of similarity. Next, the role of gender throughout the text is explored by considering the descriptions of the Native women in the narrative alongside the increased textual presence of Queen Elizabeth. Finally, the chapter concludes with a consideration of visual representations of the Inuit and Algonquian by John White, Elizabethan artist and traveler, to explore how the artist's representations of the Native woman captured during the Frobisher voyages establish specifically European visual aesthetics that carry over into the artist's more popular images from the English voyage to Virginia nearly a decade later. This visual progression parallels the development of similar empirical strategies that lead to textual arguments for similarity between Native and English.

The Frobisher Voyages in Context

The Frobisher voyages were among the first voyages of exploration to the New World undertaken by Englishmen. Although the travels of John Cabot were conducted for the English crown and Cabot's son Sebastian claimed he was born

in England, the Cabot voyages have a different place in the history of English exploration largely because the Italian Cabot family worked for hire for other European crowns.⁷ The sea voyages from England across the Atlantic to the Northeastern regions of present-day Canada were undertaken to fulfill multiple goals, the most promising and enticing of which was to find a Northwest passage to Cathay, a now archaic term for the land of China and which could sometimes refer to India. These early English voyages led to the formation of “The Merchants Adventures of England for the discovery of Lands, Territories, Isles, Dominions and Seignories unknown,” later known as the Muscovy Company. Despite a 1527 letter to King Henry VIII’s ambassador asserting that a Northwest passage would be possible, the first search for a sea route from England to Cathay that would deliver the promises of Asian commodities entailed a Northeast attempt.⁸ The earliest Northeast journey, headed by Sir Hugh Willoughby,

⁷ John Cabot is widely considered to be the first European to land on present-day Newfoundland since early Norse voyages. He received letters patent from the English King Henry VII for his American voyages. His son, Sebastian Cabot, also worked at points for the English crown. See Peter Edward Pope, *The Many Landfalls of John Cabot* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). See also, Jonathan Locke Hart, *Representing the New World: The English and French Uses of the Example of Spain* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), esp. ch. 2 “Establishing and Questioning Empire, 1492-1547,” 15-48.

⁸ Robert Thorne writes “Now then if from the said newfound lands the sea be navigable, there is no doubt, but sailing northward and passing the Pole, descending to the equinoctial line, we shall hit these islands [the Moluccas], and it should be a much shorter way, than either the Spaniards or the Portuguese have.” Thorne even thwarts any protest of the impossibility of the proposal by explaining, “But it is a general opinion of all cosmographers, that passing the seventh clime, the sea is all ice, and the cold so great that none can suffer it. And hitherto they had all the same opinion, that under the equinoctial line for much heat the land was uninhabitable. Yet since (by experience is proved) no land so much habitable nor more temperate. And to conclude, I think the same should be found under the north, if it were experimented. So I judge, there is no land uninhabitable, nor sea innavigable.” See Robert Thorne “*Mr. Robert Thorne in the year 1527 in Seville, to Doctor Ley, Lord Ambassador for King Henry the Eighth, to Charles the Emperor, being an information on the parts of the world, discovered by him and the King of Portugal: and also of the way to the Moluccas by the North*” in *Richard Hakluyt Voyages and Discoveries*, ed. Jack Beeching (London: Penguin, 1985), 49-51.

brought a 1553 English expedition to Russia but at the cost of Willoughby's life.⁹

Richard Eden was another early voice in favor of a Northwest passage.¹⁰

Although Sir Humphrey Gilbert wrote the treatise *Discourse of a Discoverie for a new Passage to Cataia* which argued for the profit and advantage England would gain in seeking a northwest passage to Asia, he did not receive a license for such an expedition; instead in 1575 Sir Martin Frobisher received one.¹¹

The Frobisher voyages established England's interest in points of the Americas north of Spanish claims, but the account of the voyages also reveals an evolving sense of purpose for English voyages and their relationship to England's goals as an imperial nation. On the first voyage of 1576, Sir Martin Frobisher¹² embarked on his Northwest journey to seek a passage to Cathay, but instead brought back ore and an Inuit man whom he displayed in London. It was also during this first voyage that five of Frobisher's men went out to trade with the Inuit and disappeared, leading to vast speculations by the English that they had been devoured by the cannibalistic Natives.¹³ On the second voyage even more quantities of the ore were mined and brought back to England along with an Inuit man, a woman, and a child, who, like their predecessor, were the subject of public display. The third voyage was the most disastrous one due to storms but still

⁹ See Richard Chancellor's account in Hakluyt, ed. Beeching, 60-66. Willoughby and his crew froze to death.

¹⁰ See Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Eloise McCaskill, Introduction to *The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher* Vols I and II, ed. Stefansson and McCaskill (London: The Argonaut Press, 1938), lxxxii.

¹¹ Humphrey Gilbert, *A discourse of a discoverie for a new passage to Cataia* (London: By Henry Middleton for Richarde Ihones, 1576).

¹² Prior to this undertaking Frobisher seemed to have been a sea rover or pirate, and he had been charged four times with piracy, although the fact that he never went to trial makes it hard for historians to judge the legality of his sea activities.

¹³ The English mistakenly interpreted the Inuit tendency to eat raw meat as a sign that they ate human flesh as well.

brought back more ore; however, it was later determined that the ore taken during the three expeditions was of no value, leaving all associated with the journeys embarrassed.¹⁴

The developing purpose of the journeys from discovery of a route to China to harvesting raw materials in turn transformed the representation in Best's text of the Native peoples he encountered. In the first journey, Best describes at length numerous contemporary theories that explained physical differences between people, as will be discussed at greater length below, in an effort to connect the Inuit to Tartars and, thus, make the Inuit's physical description a sign that Frobisher and his men were nearing Cathay. Once the focus shifts from finding the Northwest passage to finding ore, Best denies that the Inuit mine ore or use metal artifacts in order to establish that the locals are not competitors for this resource.

The moment when ore becomes the central aim of the journey is when Best begins to consider the Inuit as similar to the English. Increased contact with the lands of the Baffin Island region made the land more appealing to the English merchants. Thus, communicating a message of peaceful relations with the Inuit became increasingly important to ensure successful harvesting of local resources. Once the lands surrounding Frobisher's Strait were viewed not merely as

¹⁴ Archaeological studies have determined that the material Frobisher brought back was "hornblende-rich highly metamorphosed basic and ultrabasic igneous rocks." The properties of this material should not be confused with pyrite, more commonly known as "fool's gold," although the metaphorical richness of the term has often been embraced by historians and literary scholars. See the essay by Réginald Auger, William W. Fitzhugh, Lynda Gullaso, Anne Henshaw, Donald Hogarth, and Doslá Laeyendecker, "Decentering Icons of History: Exploring the Archaeology of the Frobisher Voyages and Early European-Inuit Contact," in *Decentering the Renaissance Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective 1500-1700*, ed. Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (Toronto: Univ of Toronto Press, 2001), 262-86.

territories that one may pass en route to Asia, but as lands that have material worth in and of themselves, the representations of the Inuit change as well. The need for the English to establish long-term working relationships with the people of these new lands forces a rhetorical shift away from the earlier descriptions of savagery to a mode that emphasizes English ability to peacefully negotiate and interact with the Inuit.

Although the Frobisher voyages are most known for their taking of Inuit captives, Europeans experienced short-lived interest in an earlier Inuit captive woman taken by a secret French commercial venture and displayed publicly. The earlier Inuit woman captive was described in accounts using competing premises of similarity to and difference from European culture. Frobisher would eventually bring an Inuit captive back to England, but nine years before him, a Native woman and child were kidnapped by French sailors and were displayed in 1567 in Zeeland (Netherland) for money. One witness, Adriaen Coenen, recorded that the woman's captors had evidently taught her "some appropriate European behavior" since she had learned to shake her head and join her hands as in prayer when shown Catholic devotional images.¹⁵ At least three broadsides circulated with the news of the strange captives and included a similar engraving of the woman with facial tattoos and her small child, both dressed in their large seal skin coats and pants. All the reports state the woman, estimated to be around twenty years old, had learned enough French to confirm questions that her people were cannibals.

¹⁵ William C. Sturtevant and David Beers Quinn, "This New Prey: Eskimos in Europe in 1567, 1576, and 1577," in *Indian and Europe*, ed. Christian F. Feest (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 61.

Most accounts also compared her complexion to that of “half Moors.”¹⁶ The circumstances surrounding the woman’s capture in 1567 were never made clear, suggesting she was picked up on a secret, hence unlicensed, French commercial venture.

By contrast to the murky details of the woman's capture by the French, the information about the Inuit on Frobisher’s voyages was quite public since the Inuit were central to promoting future interest in the ventures. As Sturtevant and Quinn note, during the Frobisher voyages “Informations about the captives become part of the publicity and propaganda of colonial expansion, and therefore also part of the new geographical, scientific, historical, and artistic knowledge of the world beyond Europe.”¹⁷ The Inuit taken by Frobisher were featured prominently in the major accounts of the voyages by Best and Settle. Frobisher’s Natives were also central to numerous publicity efforts and studies by artists and physicians. An entry on the Stationer’s Register suggests that an inexpensive pamphlet published by John Aldee and titled “A description of the purtrayture and Shape of those strange kinde of people whiche the worthie master Martin Fourbosier [Frobisher] brought into England in Anno 1576. and 1577,” was in circulation in the late 1570s. Thus, the captive Inuit were sensational, albeit short lived, news in Elizabethan London.

Despite the emphasis placed on the female Inuit captive, the first captive taken by Frobisher in 1576 was an Inuit man. Several paintings and visual records were made of him even though he died of a disease after being in London a mere

¹⁶ Ibid., 62.

¹⁷ Ibid., 68.

fifteen days. Although many of the visual records have been lost over time, historians have located documentation of a large life-sized panel portrait of the Inuit man commissioned by the Flemish painter Cornelis Ketel along with eight other depictions that no longer survive.¹⁸ In fact, Frobisher and his crew brought images of the first captive with them on their second voyage and showed them to the next man whom they took captive as proof of their prior knowledge of the Inuit.

A great deal of visual and textual evidence concerning the captives taken during the 1577 voyage has been discovered by scholars. Best describes how Frobisher took the second Inuit man captive and then captured a woman with her child separately. The man's name has been recorded as "Kalicho," which appears to be a proper name. The woman and child were referred to in their native tongue as Arnaq and Nutaaq. Unlike the name of the man, a unique proper noun, Arnaq is the Inuit word for "woman," and Nutaaq the word for "child."¹⁹ The English audience seem to have read the three captives as a family unit. The Inuit captives of 1577, like their predecessor a year earlier, did not live long once in England. Kalicho sustained severely broken ribs when one of Frobisher's crew wrestled him down during his capture, an injury that led to his death because the broken ribs punctured a lung, which collapsed. Arnaq died shortly afterwards of a disease; a physician's report notes that she suffered from large boils on her skin

¹⁸ Ketel's painting of Sir Martin Frobisher from the same time, however, does still exist and is part of the Bodleian Library's collection at Oxford.

¹⁹ James McDermott, *Martin Frobisher, Elizabethan Privateer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 191-92.

before she died. Her child Nutaaq survived only eight days following his mother's death, despite Frobisher's hiring a wet nurse to look after the child.

Recognizing a history of intermittent contact between Europeans and Inuit groups allows us to understand the emphasis on similarity because the "first" encounters between Frobisher and the Inuit were already influenced by previous European contact. Frobisher's Northwest voyage has often been described as one of the first moments of inter-cultural contact between Europeans and Inuit.²⁰ Similar scenarios between Europeans and Native groups have been described by some scholars as the "shock" of discovery in which both groups find the presence of the other surprising, thus, challenging to their world view.²¹ As a result, the ways Europeans process knowledge about Native groups and the Americas has been seen as a particular epistemological challenge. However, since evidence suggests Frobisher and his crew were not the first Europeans to have contact with the Natives, the eventual ease with which the English communicate with the Inuit should be less surprising. Historians now generally agree that Erik the Red and those traveling with him had contact, by an accident of navigation, with mainland North America.²² Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Eloise McCaskill, the editors of the only modern critical edition of the writings on the Frobisher voyages, have argued

²⁰ "Inuit" is the preferred term by indigenous peoples of Northeastern Canada and Greenland. "Eskimo," although used in the early half of the twentieth century, is considered by most Native peoples of these regions to be derogatory and is used to refer to Native groups of Alaska only. This chapter will use the preferred term "Inuit," except when citing the works of others, who, depending on the date of the publication, may use "Eskimo."

²¹ For discussions of the "shock of discovery," or the mutual surprise between European and Native in early encounter narratives, see Anthony Grafton. *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992), 1-10. See, also, Wayne Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers: The Diligent Writers of Early America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

²² Of particular note is the collection of essays about early modern Canada called *Decentering the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective 1500-1700*, ed. Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (Toronto: Univ of Toronto Press, 2001).

that Frobisher's journey can be cited as the European "re-discovery" of Greenland, and have extensively documented European awareness of Norse colonies on Greenland and their earlier interaction with the Inuit.²³ Acknowledging the history of Norse communities circa 800-1200 does raise key issues regarding Frobisher's later interactions with the Inuit. If the now dated work of Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Eloise McCaskill is correct in its assertions that there would have been limited²⁴ but occasional exchanges between European groups and the Inuit, then the interactions with the Inuit encountered by Frobisher may have been less shocking for Natives, especially if we consider that there might have been intermittent contact from French fishermen and traders operating covertly.²⁵

The Frobisher Voyages: Searching for sea routes, gold, and an English narrative

As the work's subtitle, "*Devided into three Bookes,*" suggests, Best focuses attention on each of the three voyages individually, and he includes information about the journey, the weather, the people whom the voyagers encounter, the land that the English discover, and the ore that they bring back. At

²³ Geographically, Greenland is considered to be part of North America, but has traditionally been aligned politically with Europe. Greenland was under control of Denmark until 1979.

²⁴ These editors also argue that the Europeans who disappeared from the Greenland colony may have intermarried with Inuit groups. See *Frobisher*, "Introduction" xxix-xxxi. Although an excellent edition, a new critical edition of the Frobisher text is needed because of the growth of early modern trans-Atlantic scholarship.

²⁵ Stefansson and McCaskill argue that some of the behavior exhibited by the Natives Frobisher encountered showed that they had prior experience trading with other non-Inuit groups, hence the possession of a small box of metal nails noted by Frobisher; see cviii.

the same time he also offers lengthy speculations regarding the progress of English seafaring and how it compares to Spain's, as well as reflections on the different complexions of people in different regions of the world. The text is at times digressive, particularly when Best considers the different explanations for human physical difference. Best also promotes his text as an exhaustive documentation of the voyages. Best includes the letter composed by Frobisher to negotiate the release of his five captive men, the list of rules for the voyages, and countless other details relating to stopping points along the way. In fact the account was so detailed in its description of the specific routes and landing points used that the printer's note mentions the suppression of latitude and longitude measurements so that England's competitors cannot misappropriate the information for their own financial gain.

The ship's library included André Thevet's *Cosmography and Singularités de l'Amérique*, the 1568 English translation by Thomas Hackett of Thevet's *The New Found World or Antarctike*, and a recent 1568 edition of Mandeville.²⁶ The ship's library's combined empirical titles of relatively recent authorship (Thevet) alongside textual traditions that are part of a medieval literary inheritance (Mandeville). Best's theoretical musings reflect both types of travel accounts: he attempts to combine prior knowledge gained from reading with hands-on

²⁶ Stefansson and McCaskill, cii. See also John Parker, *Books To Build An Empire* (Amsterdam, 1965), 16-17, 62. Parker asserts that, although English audiences would have recognized Mandeville to be imaginative, the book was still considered to contain useful information about eastern regions; Parker further supposes that the range of volumes in the Frobisher ship library "indicates that England's foremost navigators, like other Englishmen, were as yet unable to discern with certainty the comparative value of the modern writers and medieval legends" (62).

experience as a mariner under the employ of Frobisher. Best states that he applied himself:

wholly to the sciēce of Cosmographie, & secrets of Nauigation, to the ende, I mighte enable my selfe the better for the seruice of my Countrie, not onely to vnderstande what I read and hearde others speake, but also to execute in effect, and practice with my owne hands, the dutie and office appertaining to a Marriner: and so thereby be better able to make a true reporte of all Occurrents in the same voyage.²⁷

He underscores his commitment to knowledge about navigation and voyages so that he can better “execute” the practice of seafaring and represent the information he gathers accurately and within genre conventions of navigational and travel accounts. Best emphasizes the truth and accuracy of his account further by stating that “I haue taken vpon me (though altogether vnable) to write” to explain the special causes of the journey in order to dispel rumors that “by sundrie mens fantasies, sundry vntruths are spred abroad, to the gret slaunder of this so honest and honorable an action.”²⁸ Thus the method by which Best gathers his information becomes an important part of his rationale for defending the actions and events of the voyages and their value to England; he combines book learning with observation to assert both modest erudition and eye-witness authority.

²⁷ George Best, *A True Discourse of the late voyages of discoverie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya, by the Northwest, under the conduct of Martin Frobisher Gernerall: Devided into three Bookes*, in *The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher*, Vol., ed. Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Eloise McCaskill (London: The Argonaut Press, 1938), 5.

²⁸ Ibid.

Best attempts to distract readers from “vntruths” about the journey’s failure to bring back real gold by offering the narrative of his journey as a substitute.²⁹ Doubtless, as news spread that the much anticipated New World gold was not contained in Frobisher’s ore, the prestige of the journeys fell, making them a financial loss for all involved. To modern readers it seems puzzling that it took three voyages over the course of three years to determine that the ore being brought from the New World to England by Frobisher was worthless. Different theories have been postulated to account for why the English failed to realize the ore they assayed had no value. Some have speculated that the presence of gold and silver in the lead additive needed for assaying skewed the results of the tests; others have speculated that the initial assaying was forged to maintain interest in the expedition, or even that the assayers who traveled with Frobisher were untrained or lacked the proper experience to perform reliable tests.³⁰

Best’s account recuperates the initial excitement surrounding the ore by instead offering a narrative of friendly relations between Inuit and English. In this narrative the tension created by the differences between the Inuit and the English is alleviated through a rhetoric of similarity, a rhetorical move that attempts to take attention away from the financial losses the voyages incurred. Best begins his text by listing the value that can be gained from reading his narrative, a move

²⁹ Raleigh will make a similar argument later in regards to his journey to Guiana and his subsequent narrative about it, as will be discussed in ch. 2 of this dissertation. Other “myths” Best’s narrative seeks to discount include financial intrigues among the voyage’s financiers.

³⁰ See Auger, 279. The warning signs that the ore was of no value predate the second and third voyages. After the first voyage London assayers determined that Frobisher’s ore was what they referred to as “marcasite,” save John Baptista Agnello, an Italian assayer in London, who reportedly derived a small amount of gold from the stone sample given him. Michael Lok, an investor and supporter of the Frobisher voyages, supposedly asked how Agnello succeeded where others failed and the Italian assayer told Lok, “Bisogna sapere adulare la natura (It is necessary to know how to flatter nature)” (Stefansson and McCaskill, cxi).

that immediately establishes the text as a substitute for other merchantable goods.³¹ Mary Fuller has noted that the inclusion in Hakluyt of Best's narratives about the Frobisher voyages gave the texts "a new life and a different set of meanings, as a contribution to knowledge and an example of fortitude and daring to be imitated by subsequent explorers and colonists."³²

Best's text begins with a description of "What commodities and instructions may be reaped by diligent reading this Discourse," a description that provides insight into a range of issues concerning sea travel and exploration:

3 Howe to procéde and deale with straunge people, be they neuer so barbarous, cruell and fierce, eyther by lenitie or otherwise.

4 Howe trade of Marchandize maye be made withoute money.

....

7 How dangerous it is to attempt new Discoueries, either for the length of the voyage or the ignorance of the language, the want of Interpretors, newe and vnaccustomed Elementes and ayres, straunge and vnsauery meats, daunger of théeues and robbers, fiercenesse of wilde beasts and fishes, hugenesse of wooddes, daungerousnesse of Seas, darkenesse of sodaine falling fogges, continuall paines taking withoute anye reste, and infinite others.

8 How pleasaunt and profitable it is, to attempt newe Discoueries, either for the sundry sights & shapes of strãge beastes and fishes,

³¹ For an extensive discussion of the rhetorical value of narratives of failure regarding early modern English voyages see, Mary C. Fuller, *Voyages in Print*.

³² Fuller, *Remembering the Early Modern Voyage*, 6.

the wonderful workes of nature, the different manners and fashion of diuerse nations, the sundry sortes of gouernemente, the sight of straunge trees, fruite, foules, and beastes, the infinite treasure of Pearle, Gold and Siluer, the newes of landes, the sundrie positions of the Sphere, any many others.³³

The list that begins Best's text relies on ideas of cultural differences between the English and the Inuit. Additionally, this list encompasses the key themes Best weaves throughout his narrative: strangers, wealth, danger, and difference. In the third item Best casts the Inuit as different or "straunge" to emphasize the daring of the men on the Frobisher voyage, and in the fourth item he anticipates that the strangeness of the Inuit may necessitate different approaches to trade transactions. Items 7 and 8 emphasize the danger of the journey by highlighting the courage and skill needed by those who undertake long voyages to strange lands. The items on Best's list convey to the audience that reading the rest of his treatise will make these "straunge," "barbarous," and "wilde" peoples and experiences understandable to an English audience. The list of what a reader can gain from the text conveys practical knowledge that can help in trade and exploration. Difference in the form of strangeness and danger defines and also provides validity to the voyagers' experiences; in turn, the voyagers' ability to overcome these obstacles marks them as able to impart their experience to others—an experience that to an extent makes unfamiliar places, people, and tasks comprehensible since the writer explains how to overcome such hardships.

³³ Best, 4.

Best begins to familiarize the Natives to the reader by chronologically situating his narrative to show how his impressions change over time as he builds more knowledge. He describes the similarity he eventually notes as existing prior to European contact. However, by the time he describes his third voyage, Best includes the Inuit, and in particular the woman, in more familiar terms, signaling an important argument about future voyages—the arduous work of first contact and gathering information about the land has begun, making subsequent journeys easier, which in turn makes it easier for Best to observe hitherto overlooked similarities between Native and English. Although Best may be bolstering the importance of his narrative by describing how it can serve as a blueprint for future travelers and explorers, his move to represent the Inuit as less strange and less threatening towards the narrative’s end allows him to declare that the primary labor of interacting with and understanding the natives of *Meta Incognita*, the Elizabethan term for the areas of the Northeast American islands visited by Frobisher and his crew, is complete. The gradual shift to representing the Inuit on more familiar terms enables Best to construct a narrative of linear progression of English success.

In Best’s *True Discourse* difference dominates most of the early parts of the narrative but even then Best notes that theories of complexion and difference contradict each other, a rhetorical move that reveals his suspicion about absolute difference as a valid theory. Although the first section of Best’s text should describe the first Frobisher voyage of 1576, it focuses instead on Best’s thoughts about climate, complexion, and people’s habits as learned from his own

observations and from others' texts. The extended focus on why people look different in different parts of the world allows Best to sidestep a detailed discussion of the first voyage, since he was not present. The theoretical bent of the first part of the narrative sets up important concepts regarding the Inuit that will be discussed in more detail at a later point in the narrative, in particular how the characteristics of the Inuit do not corroborate previous theories of difference, thus enabling Best to re-evaluate the foreignness of the Inuit.

The sections on the blackness of Africans have been frequently cited in recent studies of race in the early modern period, but what has been ignored is *how* Frobisher applies his ideas about Africans to the Inuit. However, even though this early and oft-quoted section of Best's narrative has led scholars to focus on difference, it has also led scholars to mistakenly apply this passage to Native Americans to represent them as different to early modern Europeans. Introducing the Inuit in the context of his discussion of complexion by placing them among groups featured in past textual traditions, Best describes contemporary theories of physical difference concerning Africans and then applies his experience and knowledge about them to the inhabitants of *Meta Incognita*. Africans have darker skin, Best explains, either as the result of climate, Biblical curse, or a natural "infection." He then evaluates each possibility as a model of explanation.³⁴ He

³⁴ He begins by considering climate theory. The proximity of Africans to the sun is closer than that of people in Europe; thus the sun's rays are more powerful and "burn" the skin a blackened color. In addition the topography and its reflective properties provide greater heat and light onto the skin. Skin color, Best asserts, has historically been understood as the presence or absence of extreme heat on the skin; he describes inhabitants of the torrid zone as "burned as black as a cole, as the Indians or Black Moors there are... the Sunne beating on them continuallye" (Best, 26). Best uses the example of an inter-racial couple, an African man and an English woman living in England, whose baby, despite being born in England to an English mother, is still born black. This leads him to conclude that the skin color is a "naturall infection" (Best, 34).

uses his observation of the Inuit as a new example, one that disproves popular theories about differences:

And for a more fresh example, our people of Meta Incognita (of whome and for whome thys discourse is taken in hande) that were broughte this last yeare into Englande, were all generallie of the same coloure, that many Nation be, lying in the midst of the middle Zone. And this their couloure was not only in the face whiche was subject to Sunne and Ayre, but also in their bodies, which were still couered with garments, as oures are, yea, the very sucking childe, of twelue Moneths age, hadde his skinne of the very same couloure that most haue vnder the Equinoctiall, which thing can not procéde by reason of the clime, for that they are at least tenne degrees more towards the North, than we in Englande are, no, the Sunne neuer commeth néere their Zenith by .40. Degrées...whereby it foloweth, that there is some other cause than the Clymate, or the Sunnes perpendicular reflection, that shoulde cause the Ethiopians great blacknesse. And the most probable cause to my iudgemente is, that this blacknesse procédedeth of some naturall infection of the first inhabitâts of that Countrey, and so all the whole progenie of them descended, are still polluted with the same blot of infection.³⁵

Many of the argumentative moves Best makes in his final thoughts on complexion are implicit and follow his earlier in-depth explanations. The Inuit, he states, were

³⁵ Ibid., 34.

brought to England, yet the change in climate does not affect their color. Thus, Best argues, climate and geography are not reliable indicators because the Inuit live further north than the English, and yet they all regardless of age, have the same “coloure.” His emphasis on the child’s skin color being the same as the parents counters his earlier exploration of theories which posit skin color as the result of exposure to the outdoor elements. The example of the child establishes a new narrative thread that links behavioral characteristics with reproduction and with questions of difference. Best uses the example of the Inuit to derive his final conclusion that the nature of African complexion is the result of an infection. However, his conclusions about African complexion do not necessarily explain his theories about Inuit complexion. Thus, we should be wary of assuming that the same theories early modern Europeans developed about how they perceived Africans as different were in turn applied to Native peoples of America.

Although competition with Spain and the desire for English national glory may initially frame Best’s discussion of the voyages, the description of the Native woman captive provides the catalyst for making England’s colonial purpose a reality. The familiarizing discourse she ushers into the text helps mark the lands of the Frobisher voyages as already part of the nascent English empire.³⁶ The

³⁶ Best frames the competition between England and Spain in terms of the hardship each nation has faced. The climate and geographical hardships the English have been able to overcome make their voyages more honorable than those of the Spanish, in addition to providing Best with fodder for theorizing about climate and complexion. The extended discussion of environment and climate stems from Best’s efforts to show all parts of the world as habitable, a case that he has to make with some effort regarding the frozen and harsh climates experienced by the Frobisher crew. The Spanish, according to Best, have had the great fortune of traveling to temperate and comfortable regions, whereas the English have had the courage to travel to areas that are less comfortable. In describing the previous effort for an east-bound passage to Asia, Best states: “yet hath it bin very beneficiall to England, in finding out ȳ trade to S. Nicholas, both for ȳ maintenance of ȳ Nauie, & the yerely profit is reaped therby, the which voyage is knowē to be more dangerous & painful, thã

female captive is described as a mother who nurtures her child and her fellow male captive. Motherhood provides a familiar cultural framework for the English to re-evaluate their assumptions regarding the Inuit. Moreover, the female captive introduces Inuit chastity and other idealized gender roles valued by the English.

Best needs to consider the Inuit in less threatening terms as Elizabeth I becomes a prominent supporter of the Frobisher ventures, a support that leads Best increasingly to extol the voyages' national importance and imperial value in the later sections of the narrative. Claiming the land for England and making an argument for sustained activity on Baffin Island and Countess of Warwick Island requires peaceful relations with the native Inuit in order for the English to be successful. In the second half of the text, the English female monarch contributes to the familiarizing of the Inuit by asserting that the Inuit are subjects of the queen. Thus, in the following sections I examine specific moments in Best's narrative that include the Native women to reveal Best's strategies for establishing a rhetorical similitude between Native and English. Finally, I conclude with an alternative view of Best's Inuit woman—that of the post-mortem report by an Elizabethan physician who recasts the Native woman in a discourse of difference. Once the gold was found to be useless and further English contact with the Inuit was minimal, the familiarizing rhetoric established in the

any ŷ Spaniards or Portugals haue euer dealt in, for they being borne in a somewhat hote coūtre, hapned to deale with easie voyages, although they were lōg out, not much differing frō their own tēperature.” The English have faced many more difficulties than the Spanish, and Frobisher and his company will “courageously persist and continue on their purposed enterprise, and will not surceasse, vntill they haue (God willing) found oute that long wished passage to Cataya, to the euerlasting renoume, glorie, and fame of the English nation” (Best, 24.)

second part of Best's narrative no longer had currency in England and, thus, gradually disappeared from discussions of the Frobisher voyages at this time.

Witch, Mother, "Huswife": The Progression of Native Women In Best

The Inuit women enter Best's narrative after the incident known as the Battle at Bloody Point where many of the Inuit jumped to their death in the face of defeat against the English. Best interprets the Inuit men's suicides as an indication of the Natives' fears that the English will deal with them cruelly. Best asserts that these fears must reflect what Inuit values would be if the situation were reversed: they would treat English captives cruelly. Mary Fuller has argued that Best's "reflexive logic" fuels how he sees the Inuit as racially different, but also provides him with the rationale needed to treat the Inuit roughly: "because they 'are' deceivers, they can be deceived."³⁷ Fuller further applies her interpretation of Best's logic to the suicide scene of the Bloody Point episode, stating that for Best and Settle (a contemporary who wrote an account of the event in nearly identical language), the Inuit "had to be treated with cruelty, as a people outside the pale of humane behavior. For Best and Settle, the moment when the Inuit fighters died to avoid capture made them terminally other."³⁸

However, the female Inuit captured shortly after this episode complicates Best's earlier insistence on difference in the preceding sections of his narrative since the women were not participants in the suicide and his descriptions of them progressively move towards seeing the Inuit mother as similar to English mothers.

³⁷ Fuller, *Remembering*, 28.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

Best introduces the two Inuit women as distinct from the rest of the tribal men who commit suicide. The Frobisher crew mistakes both women for men at first, and in the case of one them, even identify her as a monster, making their later discovery that they are women surprising and unsettling. They misidentify the first woman because she possesses physically grotesque features characteristic of Mandevillean monstrosity, and the second woman because she later displays characteristics that are inconsistent with the representation of Inuit Best has provided thus far in his narrative. Best explains:

The rest by flight escaped among the Rockes, sauing two women, whereof the one being old and ougly, oure men thought she had bin a Diuell or some Witch, & therefore let hir go: the other being yong, & combred with a sucking childe at hir backe, hiding hirselve behinde the rocks, was espied by one of oure men, who supposing she had bin a man, shot through the heare of hir head, & pierced through the childs arme, wherevpon she cried out, & was takẽ, & our Surgeõ meaning to heale hir childs arme, applied salues thervnto. But she not acquainted with such kinde of surgerie, plucked those salues away, & by cõtinuall licking with hir owne tongue, not much vnlike oure dogges, healed vppe the childes arme.³⁹

The first woman's description is consistent with how Best first describes the Inuit when he mistakes them for seals or dolphins, only later to see that they are

³⁹ Best, 68.

people.⁴⁰ The old woman's ugliness makes her less than human. Best does not describe the woman's monstrosity as metaphorical, but rather asserts that the men thought she actually *was* a devil or witch and therefore did not want to take her captive. The young mother, whom they do take captive, is likewise mistaken for something she is not, as in all first encounters between Inuit and English in this narrative; she is mistaken for a human man and is shortly thereafter described as licking her child like a dog. Although difference may initially characterize the Englishmen's meeting with these two women, subsequent descriptions of the captive mother reflect a move towards similitude.

Best identifies motherhood as a similarity between Native and English. At first, the young mother is chosen as a captive over the older and devil-like woman. Frobisher's men prefer the young captive because of her less threatening nature, but also because this younger woman looks more familiar to them than the old "witch." Best describes the young woman as "combred" with a child at her back, suggesting that she was an easy target for them to capture. Since the earlier descriptions of the Inuit focus on what the English perceive to be their brutal and barbaric ways, the protectiveness of the mother towards her child sets her apart from the rest of the Natives represented in this text and highlights her similarities to rather than differences from the English.

Once the woman is taken captive, and recognized to be female, Best immediately incorporates her into the narrative as if it had been the men's intention to capture a woman from the start. Best provides a clear and explicit rationale for her capture: "Hauing now got a woman captiue for the comfote of

⁴⁰ Ibid., 48-49.

our man, we broughte them both together, and euery man with silence desired to beholde the manner of their méeting and entertaynement, the which was more worth the beholding, than can be well expressed by writing.”⁴¹ The woman fulfills many of the duties expected of the average English housewife. Furthermore, having a man and a woman captive together allowed for an anthropological exercise. The description of the men observing the couple introduces a prurient undertone, for Best repeatedly remarks that, as far as they could tell, the Inuit “couple” were chaste. The “couple” do not show the traits of lasciviousness anticipated by Best in an earlier section about the relationship between climate, complexion, and behavior.

The introduction of the female captive acts as a catalyst for representing the Inuit in familiar terms to the English. By observing her, Best and the rest of the crew discover the chaste ways, companionship, and caring the Inuit captive couple express to each other. This interpretation of the Natives’ actions marks a shift in tone away from Best’s previous incessant insistence on the savagery and cannibalism of the people.⁴² Best describes the first encounter between the two captives in detail, suggesting a prolonged period of observation that is worth quoting at length:

At theyr first encountering, they behelde each the other very wistly
a good space, withoute spéeche or worde vttered, with greate
change of coloure and countenance, as though it seemed, the

⁴¹ Ibid., 69.

⁴² Fuller explains that Best’s and Settle’s mistaken notion that the Inuit were man-eaters came from their assessment of their food preparations and manner of eating. The consumption of raw meat meant that they, by English standards, ate “improperly and with indiscriminate appetite.” See Fuller, *Remembering*, 39-40.

gréefe and disdeyne of their captiuitie had taken away the vse of their tongs and vtterance the woman at first verie suddaynely, as though she disdeyned or regarded not the man, turned away, and beganne to sing, as though she minded another matter: but being agayne broughte togyther, the man brake vp the silence first, and with sterne and stayed countenance, beganne to tell a long solemne tale to the woman, wherevnto she gaue good hearing, and interrupted him nothing, till he had finished, & afterwards, being growen into more familiar acqyntance by speech, were turned together, so that (I thinke) the one would hardly haue liued, without the comfort of the other.

This description exemplifies the narrative formula Best continues to use when describing the couple: the account of what happened followed by his interpretation and conclusions about what it tells us about the Inuit. Greenblatt's consideration of this textual moment centers on the statement that the captivity seemed to have "taken away the vse of their tongs" which he reads as revealing a mutual sense of the marvelous that marks the radical newness of difference, an experience common in English attempts to describe the New World.⁴³ Greenblatt asserts that

the spectacle [of watching the two captives] was incomprehensible: at first the captives were silent, then the woman turned away and began to sing, and then, when they were brought together again, the man "with sterne and stayed countenance beganne to tell a long

⁴³ Greenblatt, 117.

solemne tale.” The English, of course, could not understand any of it, and since the man and woman were strictly modest in each other’s presence, there was little else to see. The reciprocal kidnapping has led then to an almost complete blankness.⁴⁴

While I agree that the story of the captive man and woman gives no indication what the two Inuit adults communicated to each other, and that the account does not offer an historical “truth” about the Inuit, nevertheless, Best’s account does paint a very clear picture of English interpretations of Native ways.

The English observers represent the interactions of these two Native people as comforting, supportive, and compassionate, which in turn make the Natives more familiar to the English because they are no longer represented as threatening and dangerous. Greenblatt asserts earlier in his discussion of the Best narrative, “We cannot know, of course, if the Eskimo thought any such thing: what we are given are not his words—the English, you may recall, did not learn his language—but rather an English interpretation of the meaning of his ‘noyse and cries.’”⁴⁵ I would emphasize Best’s phrase “as though it seemed” since it characterizes his attempt at similitude. The behavior of the woman *seems* like those of English housewives; her restraint around the captive man *seems* modest.

Best’s interpretation of exchanges between the male and female captives leads to a narrative of companionship which may be seen as a key move in English attempts at familiarizing representations of the Inuit. Best describes the

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 116.

Inuit woman captive as a caretaker, ascribing traditional English women's roles to her:

And, for so muche as we coulde perceiue, albeit they liued continually together, yet did they neuer vse as man and wife, though the woman spared not to do all necessarie things that apperteyned to a good huswife indifferently for them both, as in making cleane their Cabin, and euery other thing that apperteyned to his ease: for when hée was Seasicke, shée would make him cleane, she would kill and flea y^e Dogges for their eating, and dresse his meate.⁴⁶

Best terms her “a good huswife,” but interestingly makes her the more active captive despite her limited vocal presence in the text and in later English documents about the display of the Inuit back in England. The captive man tells stories, as Best surmises, and communicates through signs and sounds to the English that he and his people are not cannibals while the woman sings rather than talks, but the set of tasks Best ascribes to her during her time in captivity portray her as the stronger and more assertive of the captives. The man is the one who is sick, and she is his caretaker. She attends to the preparation of their food and the cleanliness of the living quarters. Despite Best's representations of the man as the more vocal of the two, the woman's daily activities are more fully recorded than his.

The emphasis on the woman's chastity gives Best a starting point for familiarization that leads him to address more explicitly questions of the

⁴⁶ Best, 69-70.

comparability of Inuit and English ways. Moreover, Best details the self-sacrificing acts of the woman—the man receives the best morsels of what she prepares, thus providing a more sympathetic portrayal of how the woman cares for a man who is a stranger to her. Best concludes his first discussion of the man and woman together by underscoring their chaste manners, a quality that Best reiterates in this narrative’s conclusion as a positive quality of the Inuit. The woman may be described as a “huswife” but is clearly not described as the captive’s “wife,” despite the English attempt to construct their own Inuit family group. According to Best, the last detail the reader needs to know about these Inuit captives is “the continencie of them both, for the man would neuer shift himselfe, except he had first caused the woman to depart out of his Cabin, and they both were most shamefast, least anye of their priuie parts should bee discouered, eyther of themselues, or any other body.”⁴⁷ These details make explicit the modesty of the captives’ conduct as they change clothes and relieve themselves in a private manner. At a later point in the narrative’s concluding section, Best reiterates to his readers that the captives kept their bodies covered from one another at all times, and reiterates this episode:

for whẽ the mã which we brought frõ thence into England (ȳ last voyage) should put on his coat, or discouer his whole body for chãge, he would not suffer the woman to be present, but put hir forth of hys Cabyn. And in all the space of two or three monethes, while the man liued in companie of the woman, there ws neuer any thing séene or perceiued betwéene them, more than might haue

⁴⁷ Ibid., 70.

passed betwéene brother and sister: but the woman was in all things very seruiceable for the man, attending him carefully, when he was sicke, and he likewise in al the meates whiche they did eate together, would carue vnto hir of the sweetest, fattest, and best morsels they had.⁴⁸

The second telling provides more details—and presents the Inuit as taking an active role in their observation of chaste and modest manners. The reader is told that the change of a coat is not done in front of the woman, whereas the previous account simply states that he won't "shift himselfe," which may refer to any number of garments. The second account also has a more assertive description of the woman leaving the cabin so that the man may change; he "put hir forth" as opposed to "caused the woman to depart." Of course, the matter of the woman's changing and how she facilitates it so as not to expose her body is never explained, and any indication of these details would imply that Best or some members of the Frobisher voyages had inappropriately observed the woman. However, the shift to the more assertive tone in the second telling underscores the importance that Best attaches to the Inuits' chaste behavior, and casts them as initiators of and adherents to modesty. The chastity of the Inuit signifies that they uphold a value also important in English culture, which allows Best to describe their adaptability to other characteristically English concepts: "They wondred muche at all our things, and were afraide of our horses, and other beastes, out of measure. They beganne to growe more ciuill, familiar, pleasaunt, and docible

⁴⁸ Ibid., 125.

amongst vs in a very shorte time.”⁴⁹ Again, the presence of the Native woman allows for Best to eventually reach the conclusion that the Inuit quickly become “pleasaunt,” which then gives way to a more generalized discussion of the Inuit as inquisitive and appreciative of English ways. Here, unlike the earlier sections of the narrative, Best continues to portray them in terms of similarities as opposed to difference.

Best makes his strongest assertion of similarity between Native and English when he describes the Inuit use of English copper buttons for decorative purposes, making the Natives similar to the ladies of the English court. This episode underscores the important role that similarity between Native and English plays in Best’s promotion of trade in *Meta Incognita*. In order for English to secure and import raw materials of value so that colonization in *Meta Incognita* can occur, the English must be on familiar terms with the Inuit. Best describes the Inuit’s interest in English customs and material goods to further familiarize them and promote English trade. Cheap English goods must appeal to the Inuit because they are new or different for them. He describes Inuit appreciation of English goods as a new luxury, and draws comparisons to English customs:

They vse to trafficke and exchange their commodities with some other people, of whome they haue such things, as their miserable Countrey, and ignorance of arte to make, denyeth them to haue, as barres of iron, heads of iron for their dartes, needles made foursquare, certayne buttons of copper, whiche they vse to weare

⁴⁹ Ibid.

vppon theyre forheads for ornament, as our Ladyes in the Court of
England do vse great pearle.⁵⁰

Although he does not specify if men, women, or both use the copper buttons in this manner, the comparison to English women reinforces the shift in Best's attention from the male Inuit to the female Inuit captive by the end of the second voyage. The comparison to the ladies of the English court provides a concrete comparison to a specifically English fashion. They may not use expensive pearls, but the Inuit use an English commodity in a similar fashion.

As Elizabeth's name and representation become more prominent in the text, Best also begins to interpret additional aspects of the Inuit in terms of similarity. At this point in the narrative, colonial enterprise and gender intersect. Best softens his representation of Arnaq. Meanwhile, the increased use of similarity strengthens Best's claims for empire since it is easier to introduce new subjects of the queen who are already similar to the English. One of Best's contemporaries, Christopher Hall, wrote an account of the first Frobisher voyage and describes Elizabeth as waving to the ships from a window, a detail that Frobisher leaves out.⁵¹ Moreover, because Frobisher was not a participant on the first voyage, his description of it is not as detailed as those of subsequent ventures. However, the comparison of Elizabeth "shaking her hand at vs out of the window" to the men of the voyage meeting her in her court at the start of the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 126.

⁵¹ Hall's account was also collected and printed by Hakluyt. See Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London: George Bishop, Ralph Newberie and Robert Barker, 1600).

third voyage as described by Best is striking.⁵² Best gives the queen a smaller textual presence in the earlier voyages, by comparison, yet when he does refer to her in his account of the third voyage, her role takes on additional prominence in relation to the extended focus on the Native woman from the prior sections.

The rhetoric of similarity in English New World writings is still in the process of negotiation at the time of Best, but his account does introduce the monarch's relationship to the commercial venture in a manner that makes the land and the Natives seem more familiar. Even though the relationship between the queen, the Natives, and the land is not as explicitly developed as it will be in later travel narratives, Best's account still provides a nascent representation of similarity between Native and English. The third voyage, which occurs after the Inuit man, woman, and child have been brought back and displayed in England, begins with Best describing the queen's contribution: "besides other good giftes, and greater promises, bestowed on the Generall [Frobisher] a faire Cheyne of Gold, and the rest of the Captaynes kissed hir hande, tooke their leaue, and departed euery man towards their charge."⁵³ Not only does the Queen give treasures and her blessing to this last voyage, but she is also responsible for the naming of the lands Frobisher has encountered, "And because that place & country, hath neuer heretofore bin discovered, and therefore had no speciall name, by which it might be called & known, hir Majestie named it very properly

⁵² Christopher Hall, *The First Voyage of M. Martin Frobisher in The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher*, ed. Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Eloise McCaskill (London: The Argonaut Press, 1938), Vol 1, 149.

⁵³ Best, 82.

Meta Incognita, as a marke and boũds vtterly hitherto vnknown.”⁵⁴ In subsequent English voyages to the Americas, explorers and the financiers often bestowed a name in honor of the ruler (i.e. Jamestown, or Virginia)⁵⁵ but here the queen has the honor of doing the naming herself. The name does not reflect the queen’s own, nor does it reflect a term associated with England. Instead this name emphasizes the land’s alien novelty, and in a sense its unknowable nature, and, intriguingly, the name reflects Best’s own contradictory representations of the Inuit. The Natives are unknowable, since the English do not learn their language and one captive’s refusal to speak takes an extreme turn as he bites his own tongue in two. Furthermore, fears of cannibalism breed suspicion and apprehension. Observing the Native woman Arnaq leads Best to adjust his earlier notions of Native savagery but only in order to promote English interest in the voyages.

As much as Best sought to familiarize Arnaq and Kalicho towards the end of his narrative of the second voyage, the context of London leads other writers to depart from Best’s characterization of similarity, and return again to difference, for example in physician Dr. Edward Dodding’s postmortem report on the two Inuit adults. The captives of Frobisher’s second voyage generated much excitement and speculation in England. They were exhibited for Londoners to see and were marveled over for their strange habits and appearance. In the post-mortem reports on the Inuit, the physician also includes his observations and impressions of the adults while they were alive and part of London spectacle.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 81.

⁵⁵ The adjectives used to describe the land can also reflect the colonizer’s monarch as will be argued in the next chapter on Raleigh’s account of Guiana.

Whereas Best took the chastity of Arnaq for a virtue, Dr. Dodding saw it as mean-spirited contempt. Dodding's postmortem report on the two captive Inuit adults shows a different set of discursive practices. While Best combined his knowledge of travel treatises and cosmography with what he witnessed to represent the Natives, Dodding is more skeptical of Best's "as though it seemed" style of empirical observation, finding instead that the surface does not necessarily reflect the interior. For example, Dodding characterizes Kalicho's lung illness as "Anglophobia,' [fear of the English] which he had from when he first arrived, even though his fairly cheerful features and appearance concealed it and gave a false impression with considerable skill."⁵⁶ Dodding's use of the term "Anglophobia" to describe the captive's inability to overcome English diseases immediately casts the Inuit as different: to have Anglophobia one first needs to not be Anglo, or at least to be opposed to Anglo ways. Dodding goes on to say that he "was looking into individual things more closely and mistrusting everything."⁵⁷ Thus, the physician's lack of sympathy for the deceased Inuit man comes as no surprise as he coldly states, "I was bitterly grieved and saddened [upon the death of Kalicho], not so much by the death of the man himself as because the great hope of seeing him which our most gracious Queen had entertained had now slipped through her fingers."⁵⁸ While Best asserted similarity between Native and English as a tactic to promote interest in the Frobisher

⁵⁶ Edward Dodding, "November 8, 1577. Postmortem report by Dr. Edward Dodding, at Bristol, on the Thule Eskimo man brought by Frobisher" in *Newfoundland from Fishery to Colony. Northwest Passage Searches*, ed. David B. Quinn, New American World Series, vol 4 (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 217.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

voyages, the doctor Dodding had no such interest in ensuring the success of New World voyages and, thus falls back on stereotypes of difference.

Dodding's treatment of Arnaq relies on difference and is even less sympathetic than his report on Kalicho. The actions he records regarding his treatment of Arnaq could even be perceived as traumatizing for the Native woman. Upon Kalicho's death, Dodding insists that the Native woman be forced to observe the burial of the Inuit's body. But before the English burial, the doctor ensures that the gravediggers first dig up some old human bones so as to assure Arnaq that the English are not eaters of human flesh, a practice he states that "had become deeply rooted among" the Inuit.⁵⁹ The doctor's final assessment of Arnaq wavers between two extremes: the woman's restrained behavior and lack of mourning indicates that she "either excelled all our people [the English] in decorum and stoicism or else was far outstripped in human sensitivity by the wild animals themselves. For she was not in any way disturbed by his death, and, as far as we gathered from her expression, it did not distress her."⁶⁰ Although Dodding's treatment of Arnaq may also be construed as insensitive, he is not content to leave the ambiguous possibility of either extreme virtue or extreme apathy undecided and concludes his report with the assertion that Arnaq regarded Kalicho "with an astonishing degree of contempt, and... although they used to sleep in one and the same bed, yet nothing had occurred between them apart from conversation,--his embrace having been abhorrent to her."⁶¹ Thus Dodding interprets Arnaq's actions not as motivated by chastity, a familiar English value, but by abhorrence

⁵⁹ Ibid., 218.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

for Kalicho. Indeed, Dodding's use of "conversation" casts doubt on the modesty of the couple. As a euphemism for intercourse, to say that nothing happened between them outside of conversation could either mean that they talked, which would contradict many of the examples Best gives about how the two captives communicated, or that nothing occurred except when they had sex.

Early Images of Natives: Frobisher's Natives and Harriot's Natives in the art of John White and Theodore de Bry

In addition to the textual evidence of a rhetoric of similarity, we also have visual evidence in the illustrations of the Elizabethan painter John White, who was thought to have been present on both the Frobisher voyage of the 1577 and the Virginia voyage of 1585. White's watercolor paintings of the Inuit captured by Frobisher during 1576 and the Algonquian encountered during White's 1585 journey to Virginia provide detailed visual documentation of these two groups of Native peoples. Examining the depiction of the Inuit woman Arnaq in comparison to the "cheiff Ladye of Pomeiooc" from Virginia just a decade later shows how the artist's use of European visual aesthetics make his renderings of the Natives seem accessible and familiar to English audiences. The images discussed here will be White's watercolor of Arnaq and Theodore de Bry's engravings adapted from White's original watercolors, since these engravings were circulated widely as part of the 1590 reprint of Thomas Harriot's narrative *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, and thus had a wider viewership than the initial watercolors. The watercolor from 1577 reveals subtle representational similarities

to English artistic conventions, while the engravings from 1590 make the Natives seem familiar to the English due to the addition of artistic conventions from European art theories and practices. Thus, the more widely viewed and distributed engravings adapted from White's watercolors communicated to European audiences a view of Natives as similar to Europeans through visual conventions.

However, the images from the two different voyages also show how he constructed similarities between disparate Native groups. In the painting of Arnaq (figure 3) White has placed the woman in a *contrapposto* position, with one leg slightly bent to give a more natural stance. She has her left arm behind her back, presumably to help support her child Nutaaq. Her right hand holds the top of her leather muluks, or boots, in a pose that draws attention to her garments, and her face has blue dots tattooed across it. The lack of background provides no context in which to place the woman. Outside of her bodily pose, which follows the European conventions for costume books in its placement of her legs and the subject's holding of her clothes, there is little else to familiarize her appearance to the European viewer. A comparison to White's original water color of the "cheiff Ladye of Pomeiooc" (figure 4) reveals that the women have been given nearly identical faces, even down to the facial tattooing. More curious, in the original watercolors of each woman, their feet are identically shaped despite the fact that the Algonquian woman is barefoot and the Inuit woman wears boots. Thus, the many similarities between the images of these two Native women should makes

us wary of approaching them as scientific or ethnographic as has often been asserted.⁶²

The mass-produced engraved adaptation of White's watercolor portrait of the Algonquian mother and daughter shows a significant addition of visual material that increases the sense of similarity to English culture. De Bry's adaptation of the Algonquian mother and daughter (figure 5) is perhaps one of the images with the most compositional changes from White's watercolors, and thus expresses more similarity between Native and English as the result of using distinctively European aesthetic conventions. White's original painting entitled "A chiefe Herowans wife of Pomeoc and her daughter of the age of 8 or 10 yeares" has no background detailing, not even a few tufts of grass to imply a ground line. The two figures are grouped closely together, and the closeness of the mother and daughter is echoed in the daughter's copying of her mother's arm gesture and posture.⁶³ The painting contains evidence of the English presence among the Algonquian because the girl holds an English doll. The composition is simple and direct. De Bry's adaptation of this image makes significant changes. The mother is placed in more pronounced *contrapposto*, but most notably the two figures are distanced from one another. The daughter holds an additional English toy, a rattle, and seems to be actively engaged in play with the foreign toys. The

⁶² See, Julie Solomon, "To Know, To Fly, To Conjure: Situating Baconian Science at the Juncture of Early Modern Modes of Reading," *Renaissance Quarterly* 44.3(Autumn 1991): 513-58.

⁶³ Kim Sloan postulates that the child is actually wearing a bead necklace that may have been a gift from the English. The child in her assessment therefore is not mimicking her mother but is attempting to show her newly acquired necklace to her mother and thereby serves as visual evidence of the possibility of English trade with the natives. Since the captions of the original painting and those later provided by Harriot do not specify, it remains a matter of interpretation. See Kim Sloan, *A New World: England's first view of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 122.

imposed background space allows these two figures to be spatially separated—such an arrangement in White would have resulted in two separate portraits or images instead of a unified composition. Thus, the composition of the image encourages greater recognition of similarity by placing the figures in conventional poses and including objects the English would own. In a sense, the English toys held by the young girl provide visual confirmation of Best's claim in his preface that "trade of Marchandize may be made without money" because the girl's possession of the doll indicates an exchange of goods between Native and English.⁶⁴

The absence of linear perspective in White's painting results in a static image since there is no way for the viewer to assess the figure's spatial relation to its environment (since the background is simply blank), while the recession of space introduced in the engraving increases the narrative flow by offering a specific setting and context for the figures. In the painting the English doll assumes the central position of the composition. Although today the doll looks like a darkened shadowy mass, White originally colored it with silver and gold paint so that it would have been the focal point of the composition not only due to its position but also due to the brilliancy of the paint. The doll is an expensive toy, not the cheap "Bartholomew babe" or tin dolls most London children would have owned, so it reinforces the girl's status as the daughter of a chief.⁶⁵ The engraved version shifts the emphasis and central focal point of the original painting, creating a narrative story that the last line of Harriot's caption seems to

⁶⁴ Best, 4.

⁶⁵ Sloan, *A New World*, 22.

underscore: “They [the native children] are greatly Diligted with puppets, and babes which wear brought oute of England.”⁶⁶ Joyce Chaplin has noted that the pairing of the mother holding a gourd and the child holding English merchant goods demonstrates “what the English expected her [the child] to grow up to be—an English woman, quite unlike her mother.”⁶⁷ Furthermore, the figures fishing in the background are placed behind the mother, reinforcing her relationship to native culture. Chaplin’s assessment is based on White’s original painting; however, the same analysis could more accurately be applied to de Bry’s engraving: the spatial distancing between the two figures reinforces the English expectation for the girl to be “quite unlike her mother.” The image presents four possible views of women: the mother, the daughter, the woman the daughter will become as suggested by the English doll, and the female reproductive capacity as represented by the uterine shaped gourd whose shading is evocative of genitalia. The distance in the composition invites the viewer to compare the different possibilities of womanhood. The doll is conspicuously placed with its back to the viewer. Thus the doll is faceless and also ethnically ambiguous, allowing for the viewer to project the Amerindian child into an English woman’s dress.⁶⁸ De Bry’s engraving distances the mother from the daughter so that she seems to be engaged in the same act of viewing as the audience of the print. The mother appears to observe her daughter, who is familiarized to an English audience by her embrace

⁶⁶ Although the emphasis on English toys is more apparent in de Bry’s engraving, White’s child is the one who actually looks delighted with the toy she holds. See, Thomas Harriot, *A Breife and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, ed. Paul Hulton (New York: Dover Publications, 1972), 51.

⁶⁷ Joyce Chaplin, “Roanoke ‘Counterfeited According to the Truth,’” in *A New World: England’s first view of America*, ed. Kim Sloan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 63.

⁶⁸ Ironically, the costume of the doll evokes the later engraving by Simon Van De Passe from 1616 of Pocahontas, or Rebecca Rolfe, as recorded on her only trip to England.

of English toys, yet de-familiarized for the Native audience who is one of the picture's subjects.

The engraver makes spatial recession the central point of the image's composition, an arrangement that enables a dynamic sense of action and differentiates the engraving from the original watercolor. The center of the composition appears to be a void; it is technically a place of negative space. The outdoor setting actually masks the vanishing point that comprises the center of the image. In White's original paintings, because of the lack of surrounding environment for his native figures, space does not recede. Even in paintings with a fully represented background, such as the village paintings, White does not use precise linear perspective because he renders the spatial distance by building consecutive layers of figures, tilting them up without a proper vanishing point. The result is a more medieval sense of spatial recession. By comparison, the use of linear perspective therefore leaves a curious "empty" space in the center of the de Bry composition. Many of de Bry's images contain this negative space, particularly the images that present front and back views of individual subjects. The engravings that employ a vanishing point as the central focus demonstrate a concern for precision and balance, a hallmark of high Renaissance artistic practice. The natural background of forest and lake in the engraving reuses backdrop engraving plates that printers used when depicting European terrains, thus reinforcing the aesthetic of similarity: the Native women are literally placed in a European space.

The Frobisher voyages may in hindsight have been a commercial failure, but they were successful in establishing the figure of the Native woman using the rhetoric of similarity in early English travel and voyage literature. Best characterizes Armaq first as a mother and then moves to consider her role as a good “huswife”--both women’s roles he eventually familiarizes for his reader by comparison to English women. The Native woman then becomes an argument supporting colonization based on a comparison between Native and English. Asserting a commonality between the English and the Inuit allows Best to promote financial interests by assuring his readers that the groundwork for peaceable working relations between the two groups had been laid.

Chapter 2

Virgin Territory: The Cult of Elizabeth in Raleigh's *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*

In *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana* (1596), Sir Walter Raleigh¹ connects symbols and tropes associated with Elizabeth I to his representation of Native American women, particularly when he states at the end of his text that “where the south border of *Guiana* reacheth to the Dominion and Empire of the *Amazones*, those women shall heerby heare the name of a virgin.”² Curiously, Raleigh imagines his final statement about Elizabeth's domain in the New World in terms of the queen's power over other women rather than over the inhabitants more generally, or even the land more broadly. This closing remark characterizes many of the text's references to Elizabeth I and its descriptions of Native American women; Raleigh consistently yokes the two together throughout his narrative.

Published a year after his journey, *The Discoverie* described for a wide readership the difficulties Raleigh faced in the New World and his desire for England's eventual imperial success. Raleigh's travel account was extremely popular, going through three editions by the end of its first year in print, and was included in Richard Hakluyt's compilation of travel and promotional documents,

¹ This essay uses the preferred spelling of “Raleigh” as employed in the most recent edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. “Raleigh” will be used only within direct quotations to retain those authors' preferences.

² Walter Raleigh, *The discoverie of the large, rich, and bewitful Empyre of Guiana / by Sir Walter Raleigh; transcribed, annotated and introduced*, ed. Neil Whitehead (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 199.

the *Principal Navigations*.³ *The Discoverie* describes Raleigh's encounters with Spanish colonists and Native Americans while searching for the mythical El Dorado, the city of gold. Raleigh carefully mitigates his failure to bring back material wealth by redirecting attention to England's glorious queen, and oftentimes connects her to his discussions of Native American women. The account of his journey to Guiana abounds with references to the queen: Raleigh tells the Natives about Elizabeth in his negotiations; he describes the New World riches that will glorify Elizabeth;⁴ finally, and most intriguingly, he describes Native women using the political and rhetorical symbols long associated with Elizabeth. The connection Raleigh makes between Elizabeth and the Natives is expressed through his use of argumentative similitudes which allow him to close the distance between his representation of Native American culture and English culture. The descriptions that represent Elizabeth and the Native women are interwoven by means of Raleigh's comparisons and analogies. In this chapter I challenge earlier scholarly accounts of how early modern texts construct cultural differences, for Raleigh's text, instead, establishes and employs similarity as a lens for understanding the New World.

Neither the insistent presence of Elizabeth's representation throughout Raleigh's text nor the anecdotes including Native women have been adequately addressed by scholars. Past discussions of *The Discoverie* have emphasized

³ According to Andrew Fitzmaurice, Raleigh's text was first published at a moment in English history when there was a decrease in the number of new travel accounts in circulation. Fitzmaurice attributes this to England's naval power being compromised by the ongoing conflict with Spain throughout the 1590s; see *Humanism in America: an intellectual history of English colonisation, 1500-1625* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 52. See, also, Richard Hakluyt, *Principle Navigations* abridged as *Voyages and Discoveries*, ed. Jack Beeching (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 386-410.

⁴ For examples of Raleigh's promise of New World riches, see Raleigh, 122, and 128.

biographical readings of Raleigh's personal relationship to the queen instead of his representation of her, or have emphasized his humanistic erudition and rhetorical flair. For example, Mary Fuller has argued convincingly that Raleigh uses the rhetoric of failure to convey a moral lesson about his journey, and she considers the strained relationship between Elizabeth and Raleigh as the motive for the voyage. Fuller's interest in moral lessons leads her to examine how the rhetoric of printed English voyage narratives predicted failure through recourse to particular textual tropes. Although I also consider techniques Raleigh uses to sidestep his journey's failure, I expand on Fuller's analysis by considering other uses and representations of Elizabeth within the text outside of her role in Raleigh's biography.⁵ Moreover, Andrew Fitzmaurice has considered the promotional purpose of Raleigh's text in light of humanist learning.⁶ Other scholars have focused on Raleigh's representation of the El Dorado myth,⁷ the search for the elusive City of Gold and the ways the promise of gold shapes the promotional nature of the text.⁸ Most scholarship on this text revolves around Raleigh's

⁵ See Mary C. Fuller, *Voyages in print: English travel to America, 1576-1624*, 12, and 74.

⁶ See, Fitzmaurice, 55.

⁷ The Spanish first searched for El Dorado, a fabled city of gold and riches also known as Manoa. The idea of El Dorado as a city came from a corrupted European understanding of the indigenous ceremony of the golden man, or "el dorado," which Raleigh outlines in his narrative; see, Raleigh, 141. Raleigh never reached Manoa and was at pains to convince readers it was not just a myth so as to encourage future English interest in Guiana. Joyce Lorimer outlines three attempts Raleigh makes to convince readers of Manoa's existence; first, he asserts its location near the Incan empire of Peru, already well-known for its riches; second, he holds up the long Spanish search as evidence of its existence; and third, he claims that the Native leaders he spoke with confirmed its existence. See, Joyce Lorimer, "Introduction" to *Sir Walter Raleigh's Discoverie of Guiana*, ed. Joyce Lorimer (London: Ashgate for The Hakluyt Society, 2006), xl-lxi.

⁸ Raleigh's text was intended to promote financial interest in the Guiana project. The dedications to Charles Howard and Sir Robert Cecil address their financial investment in Raleigh's voyage, and Raleigh's hedging and apologetic tone about the failure of his journey points to his anxiety over incurring debt to these men. Raleigh's text should be seen as a way of showing how future investments in Guiana will pay off.

purpose of promoting English colonial and financial interest in Guiana.⁹ Past discussions of Native Americans in Raleigh's text have often emphasized Native American men and the historical context of inter-cultural contact, but less attention has been paid specifically to Native American women.¹⁰ Neil Whitehead, for example, has provided historical and anthropological readings of Raleigh's text, noting possible fabrications in Raleigh's descriptions of Native tribal groups. However, literary constructs and rhetorical tactics in connection to Native Americans, especially women, have been less frequently explored.¹¹

This chapter re-examines the representations of Natives alongside questions of commerce and promotion by considering the relationship Raleigh constructs between representations of Elizabeth I and representations of Native American women. References to the queen, including subtle allusions drawn from the cult of the virgin, exemplify Raleigh's use of Renaissance understandings of the rhetoric of analogical argument by similarity to establish English imperial

⁹ See Neil Whitehead's introduction to *The Discoverie*, 1-116. See, also, Fuller, *English Voyages*, 74; and Fitzmaurice, 55.

¹⁰ For an overview of European encounters with the Native groups of Guiana, see, Lorimer, lxi-lxxii. For a discussion on why early modern readers would have found Raleigh's descriptions of Amazons plausible, cf. Lorimore, lxxii-lxxiv. Regarding Native American men and, in particular, scholarly interest in the ceremony of El Dorado, or the Golden Man, see, Charles Nicholl, *The Creature in the Map: A journey to El Dorado* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 288-325.

¹¹ The one notable exception is Walter S.H. Lim, *The Arts of Empire: The Poetics of Colonialism from Raleigh to Milton* (Cranbury, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1998), which contemplates genre and form in Raleigh's *The Discoverie*. In particular, Lim focuses on Raleigh's tendency to use the conventions of courtly love in his literary addresses to Elizabeth beginning with his sonnets. However, like most other scholars, he discusses Elizabeth as the target reader of *The Discoverie*, citing the historical circumstances of the strained relationship between queen and courtier (32-35). Lim's discussion of Native Americans focuses on Raleigh's negotiations with the male leader Topiawari (38-40). For a discussion of Amazons in Raleigh's text, see Louis Montrose, "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery," in *Representations* 3 (Winter 1991): 1-41. Montrose argues that Raleigh's Amazons are a "radical Other" and should not be considered Elizabeth's counterparts (25-29).

claims to Guiana.¹² Through asserting a commonality between Elizabeth and Native women, Raleigh argues by analogy¹³ that subjects that are alike belong together.¹⁴ In this case, Raleigh argues that Elizabeth and the English, instead of other European imperial competitors, belong in Guiana. In this chapter, I suggest that the study of Raleigh's use of analogy provides a new critical lens on issues of gender and sovereignty, as well as a more complete perspective by which to view the text's representation of English colonial activity. Past scholarship on colonial encounters has studied how English writers' evocation of difference was used to justify possession of land and peoples.¹⁵ However, I contend that the rhetoric of similitude was more important than that of difference to Elizabethan audiences trained in humanist thinking and had a more powerful connection to their justification of possession. The rhetoric of similitude reflects the discursive practices of the early modern period and points to an alternative set of imperial rationales. Renaissance humanism replaced the sophisticated formal logic system of late medieval theologians with a rhetoric of dialectic characterized by

¹² See, Sister Miriam Joseph, *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language* (New York: Hafner Publishing, 1966), 142, for other examples of Renaissance uses of arguments from similitude, and 176 ff. for Shakespearean examples of syllogistic reasoning and argumentation. See, also, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, IV.xlv.59, and IV.liii.67. Thought to be by Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* was often the introductory Latin rhetoric text for Renaissance students.

¹³ For a discussion of arguments of analogy between American Indians and Europeans, see David Armitage, "The New World and British Historical Thought," in *America in European Consciousness 1493-1750*, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1995), 63.

¹⁴ See, Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 25, where Foucault describes the early modern world view in which all aspects of life and representation were interrelated by a web of similarity constructed on the premise of sympathy between things. For more on the Elizabethan world view, and in particular the chain of being, see, E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto and Windus Ltd, 1960), 23-33. See, also, Jason S. Best, Sara Maene, and Peter Usher, "New Light on the Elizabethan World View," in *SRASP* 25 (2002): 51-75.

¹⁵ See Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 1-25. Greenblatt argues that the New World was so different that European discursive forms did not fully encompass the sense of awe or "marvel" experienced during early encounters in the Americas. See, also, Armitage, 60-1; and Rolena Adorno, *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 1-20.

probability. Figures such as similes and metaphors could be methods of argumentation.¹⁶ Raleigh applies the language of Queen Elizabeth's "cult of the virgin" to Native women rulers to render them familiar, which enables him to argue analogically for an English claim to Guiana.

Early modern interests in the rhetoric of similitude have largely been overlooked in critical discussion of texts about the English experience in the New World, due in part to our own understanding of racial difference and stereotype. Descriptions of differences and similarities co-exist in many travel narratives from the period, but there has been disproportionate critical attention to those moments of difference,¹⁷ thus leading to an unbalanced view of differences as central to Europeans' justifications for imperial claims, at least in studies of English texts.¹⁸ Although there have been studies of the discursive uses of similarity in some of the early modern French and Spanish narratives of encounter, the English texts have largely been considered in terms of difference.¹⁹

¹⁶ For example, Sister Miriam Joseph notes that Shakespeare's *Othello* first uses a dissimilitude and then a similitude to emphasize "the irrevocability of the deed he contemplates," in *Othello* 5.2.8, and the comparisons he first uses to describe Desdemona become conflated with the character. Instead of using simile or metaphor to draw a comparison between two normally unlike things, the comparison grafts onto the object it modifies and represents those qualities as intertwined; see Joseph, 143.

¹⁷ On literary depictions of blackness, see, Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness*; and Sujata Iyengar, *Shades of Difference*.

¹⁸ There has been a shift in scholarship attempting to recover how the early modern period constructed difference by looking largely at humoral theory and concepts of the body. See *A Centre of Wonders: The Body in Early America*, ed. Janet Moore Lindman, and Michele Lise Tarter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). See esp. Lindman and Tarter's introduction for a discussion of theories of the body and implications for the colonial project in the Americas. For a discussion of distinguishing Native women's bodies as different, see Kari Boyd McBride, "Native Mothers, Native Others: La Malinche, Pocahontas, and Sacajawea," in *Maternal Measures: Figuring caregiving in the early modern period*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 307.

¹⁹ See Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, 29. Todorov argues for linguistic equivalences in which Columbus assumes the indigenous hierarchies of power are analogous to those of Europe's monarchs. See also Frank Lestringant, "The Myth of the Indian Monarchy: An Aspect of the Controversy Between Thevet and Lery (1575-1585)," in *Indians and Europe: An*

Such scholarship on difference asserts that difference from European custom was often construed as inferiority, which, in turn, enabled Europeans to justify the conquest of land in the Americas.²⁰ Difference, of course, included an awareness of religious beliefs. The 1492 Papal bull issued by Pope Nicholas V held that land could not be taken from fellow Christians. Thus, the bull provided Europeans with a strategic rationale whereby, if they categorized Natives as pagan and non-Christians, they could justify the taking of Native land and their submission to European authority, even if in historical practice lawyers appear not to have upheld this distinction.²¹

Scholarship about rhetorical modes of difference as opposed to modes of similarity extends to questions about language and discursive practices in the early modern period.²² William Spengemann and Stephen Greenblatt explore the

Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays, ed. Christian F. Feest (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 37-60. Lestringant argues in a vein similar to Todorov, considering the familiarizing effect of Indian monarchies; he asserts “The homology of social structures on both sides, the neighboring concepts of seigneurial dignity and of the ‘eminence’ accorded to the ‘principal’ of the savages are conducive to facilitate the taking of peaceful possession. The Indian monarchy represents the myth indispensable for the establishment of alliances with the new people and further for the installation of jurisdiction over their territories,” 47.

²⁰ Some works that consider questions of difference between Natives and Europeans include Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: literacy, territoriality, and colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); and Lee Eldridge Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492-1729* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 14-21. For a discussion of difference in Raleigh’s account of Guiana, see Stephen Speed, “Cartographic Arrest: Harvey, Raleigh, Drayton and the Mapping of Sense,” in *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies, and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert, and Susan Wiseman (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1999), 119-22. For more on the relationship between legal issues and Catholic doctrine in this period, see James Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels: the Church and the Non-Christian World, 1250-1550* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979).

²¹ Such ideas fueled the fervor of the Spanish during the *Reconquista*. The Valladolid debates between Las Casas and Sepulveda considered the religion of the Indians when determining if they were natural slaves or not; see Adorno, 82-83.

²² English rationales could also rely on difference to justify land possession. The English voiced arguments that the Natives did not know how to cultivate the land of the Americas properly, and thus, either had surplus territory for the English to take, or failed to use the land to its full potential, which the English could accomplish. Richard Ebourne and Samuel Purchas, among others, forwarded the concept of the *vacuum domicilium*, or the right to settle on the “empty”

“shock of discovery,” maintaining that New World knowledge could not be adequately processed using the knowledge frameworks of the Old World.²³ Other scholars, such as Anthony Pagden and Anthony Grafton, argue, instead, that classification precedes knowledge formation and processing, and thus texts about the New World always use the language and systems of Europe to describe the Americas.²⁴ My examination of how Europeans used their language and discursive practices to express similarity extends the theoretical work of scholars who see continuity between the production of knowledge across the Renaissance and early modern periods.²⁵ A consideration of the analogical techniques used in Raleigh’s text shows another way in which European language systems could describe information about the New World: similarities were important in crafting imperial rationales.

The quincentennial of Columbus’s “discovery” promoted an increase in studies about the Americas that assessed the role that difference and race played in early modern cultural encounters. Increasingly, scholars are beginning to approach early modern questions of race and culture in terms of fluid categories of identity. To this critical turn I add a consideration of the role of Renaissance

geographical expanse of Virginia and New England. In this rationalization, God intended the English to assume ownership and use of the land because there was a surplus of land in relation to the number of native inhabitants. See J. Martin Evans, *Milton’s Imperial Epic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 17 ff. for an overview of *vacuum domicilium*. For primary documents that include these rationales, see Richard Ebourne, *A Plaine Pathway to Plantations* (London, 1624); and Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London, 1625). See, also, Lauren Benton and Benjamin Straumann, “Acquiring Empire by Law: From Roman Doctrine to Early Modern European Practice” *Law and History Review* 28 (2010): 1-38.

²³ William C. Spengemann, *A New World of Words: redefining early American literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 45. See also Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possession*, 1-25.

²⁴ Anthony Pagden, *The fall of natural man: the American Indian and the origins of comparative ethnology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 4-5; and Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts*, 6. See, also, Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: from Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

²⁵ See Foucault, 17-25.

rhetorical techniques and literary form in the process of creating and sustaining such fluidities.²⁶ Indeed, only recently have scholars begun to address similarities in discussions of fluid identities and social boundaries. Barbara Fuchs has analyzed mimesis and imitation of European literary forms by figures such as Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Guaman Poma, and assorted Morisco writers to show how appropriation of European ideas subversively reveals similarities between Europeans and Native, or Christians and Infidels.²⁷ Ann Little has approached the question of similarity in terms of gender hierarchies that describe English colonist and Native societies.²⁸ Continuing this examination of similarities, I argue that Raleigh uses the similarity of Elizabeth to Native women to make imperial claims, thus linking gender and sovereignty in a characteristically English fashion. Raleigh's text approaches similarity not in terms of fluctuating degrees of differences, but in comparative terms that privilege the commonalities between Native and English women. Moreover, *The Discoverie* characterizes Native women by comparing them to England's most powerful woman, a method which focuses on social groups other than those explored by scholars such as Fuchs and Little, since these two critics examine colonist and creole populations, many of whom belong to lower social ranks than the European aristocracy who guided colonial projects from afar. By including Elizabeth, Raleigh allows for questions of sovereignty to be explored, thus reaffirming his goal of arguing for English

²⁶ See Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, 243-79. Chaplin argues that Indians' bodily difference was the result of artifice, and thus provides a more nuanced voice in the formation of racialist discourse during the early modern period. Chaplin considers how European and Indian bodies are similar, and then how Indians modify their bodies through custom which results in physical differences.

²⁷ Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire*, 2-5.

²⁸ Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 1-11.

imperial claims. Whereas Fuch's exploration of a work such as Guaman Poma's text shows how indigenous traditions become synthesized and re-inscribed within European frameworks, my examination of New World queens alongside England's queen leads to comparisons in forms of power and rule. Similitude, as opposed to synthesis, reflects early modern argumentative sensibilities, and, in this case, keeps Raleigh's text firmly focused on questions central to the English imperial project and, more specifically, the rule over Guiana.

Elizabethan readers were immersed in the rhetoric of similitude in a variety of forms, including humanistic study and the debate about art and the imitation of nature²⁹ as a form of verisimilitude.³⁰ Most famously, Sir Philip Sidney explores how poets improve upon nature in "The Defense of Poesy," a sentiment that demonstrates not only the importance of similitude, but also the idealization that characterized early modern understandings of similitude in life and the arts.³¹ The notion of Erasmian copiousness, in which having a myriad of words and phrases to describe a single idea or concept in multiple ways was a sign of erudition and sometimes *sprezzatura*, relied on rhetorical theories of similarity and topical invention to generate multiple incarnations of a single

²⁹ The debate over the place of art and how it mimics nature began as part of a discussion about the place of the arts in Renaissance Italy. Figures such as Leonardo and Michelangelo sought to elevate the place of the artist from his usual rank as a skilled laborer of the artisan class, and instead saw artists as part of a learned and elite group. Antonio del Pollaiuolo included "Perspective" as one of the Liberal Arts on the tomb of Pope Sixtus IV in 1483, making a bold statement in the debate over the place of the arts. See, Leonardo, *On Painting*, trans. and ed. Martin Kemp and Margaret Walker (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 2001), 13-16.

³⁰ See, Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art*, 54-84.

³¹ See "The Defence of Poesy," in Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, ed. Gavin Alexander (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 1-55. Sidney even mentions the importance of poetic similitude among non-lettered peoples, stating in the "Defence" that "Even among the most barbarous and simple Indians, where no writing is, yet have they their poets, who make and sing songs which they call *areytos*, both of their ancestors' deeds and praises of their gods" (6).

sentiment.³² Erasmus's work *De Copia* states that arguments derive from similarities, and also considers the argumentative development possible with a *similitudo*.³³ Thus, argument by analogy and the rhetorical figure of similitude populated early modern writings and provided a common, and even idealized, mode of thought.

Casique of the North: Elizabeth and English Imperial Rationales

The rhetorical argument Raleigh makes in *The Discoverie* about Elizabeth I and Native American women historically had two purposes: to re-secure his position at the English court and to promote financial interest in the Guiana project. When Raleigh embarked on his first journey to the Americas, he faced a critical problem in his relationship to Elizabeth I. Having recently incited the ire of the queen for his clandestine marriage to Elizabeth Throckmorton, Raleigh had to find a way to ameliorate Elizabeth's disapproval.³⁴ The quest for mineral wealth in Guiana certainly was one way to mend his relationship to the queen, but due to the overwhelming failure to secure any tangible profit from his New World journey, the account of his travels served as the vehicle to resolve his precarious position at the English court. Raleigh's references to Elizabeth are laudatory and flattering, but, more importantly, these eloquent references become the vehicle for staking English imperial claims to New World lands that were simultaneously pursued by

³² See Doran, 47-49. See, also, Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 27-28.

³³ See Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas (De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia)*, trans. and ed. Donald B. King and H. David Rix (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1963), 30, and 67.

³⁴ See Fuller, 74; and Montrose, 9.

the Spanish and the Dutch. Raleigh's text then excuses his failure, and, in place of immediate mineral wealth, offers the glories of England and of her queen for permanent record.

Raleigh expresses Elizabeth's suitability for imperial rule directly: "it seemeth to me that this Empire is reserved for her Majestie and the *English* nation, by reason of the hard successe which all these and other *Spaniards* found in attempting the same."³⁵ Raleigh explains that he does not bring back gold or other profitable materials due to bad weather, but, more importantly, because he wishes to discover the queen's desires about Guiana before taking any action she might not sanction. The figure of Elizabeth establishes Raleigh's alibi for his failures and also provides a way for him to rhetorically recover his voyage in a tract that bolsters an image of a strong English colonial presence that can rival the power of Spain.

Elizabethan iconography celebrated Spanish defeat, and English travel narratives constructed the Spanish as a force hindering English success in the New World. Thus, Raleigh's inclusion of Elizabeth threatens Spanish efforts in Guiana; by recalling her 1588 Armada victory, Raleigh suggests a similar success in Guiana.³⁶ Native women are encoded in this complex web of anti-Spanish sentiment especially when Raleigh perpetuates the tropes associated with the

³⁵ Raleigh, 141.

³⁶ Raleigh states, "It is his [the Spanish king, Charles V] Indian Golde that indaungereth and disturbeth all the nations of Europe, it purchaseth intelligence, creepeth into Councils, and setteth bound loyalty at libertie, in the greatest Monarchies of Europe. If the Spanish king can keepe us from forraine enterprises, and from the impeachment of his trades, eyther by offer of invasion, or by besieging us in Britayne, Ireland, or else where, he hath then brought the worke of our peril in greate forwardness"; see 127-28. The "invasion" Raleigh refers to is the 1588 Spanish attempt to invade England, which the English navy famously defeated. Thus, Raleigh alludes to England's naval power over Spain and its source of strength as a burgeoning empire.

Black Legend, a modern term for the period practice of telling tales about the unusual barbarity and cruelty of Spanish colonization efforts in the Americas, detailing the abuses Native women received from the Spanish.³⁷ The Spanish abuses against Native women enable Raleigh to cast England's queen as a savior to these women and to justify English intervention in colonizing Guiana.

The invocation of Elizabeth and of qualities specifically associated with her in *The Discoverie* becomes a literary tactic to combat Spanish colonial dominance, since by the 1590s Elizabeth was also a symbol of Protestant resistance to Spanish Catholicism.³⁸ Raleigh's representation of Elizabeth complicates the relationship scholars often assume between monarchy and English ventures. Scholars have often characterized English colonization as distinct from Spanish efforts because of each country's differing relationships between religion and monarchy. Richard Helgerson characterizes English ventures as inherently commercial and reliant upon private investors, as opposed to full funding from the English court.³⁹ More recently, English ventures have been distinguished as influenced by how humanist thought could harness the *studia humanitatis* as tools of colonization in addition to advocacy for the *vita*

³⁷ Published in 1552 and among the first prominent early modern texts to outline Spanish abuses of indigenous peoples was Bartolomé Las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias/The devastation of the Indies: a brief account*, trans. Herma Briffault (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992). Ironically, this text, written by a Spaniard to reform his nation's practices in the Americas, was re-purposed by other nations, especially England, as anti-Spanish propaganda.

³⁸ The failed journey to Guiana established the fate of England's colonial activities in South America, because it was one of the last sustained attempts by the English to stake a claim in these decidedly Spanish-dominated territories. England did rule the colony of Surinam in the mid-seventeenth century, but infamously lost possession of it to the Dutch in 1667.

³⁹ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 178.

activa.⁴⁰ By comparison, scholars argue, Spanish colonization was fueled by the religious fervor of the *Reconquista* and funded by the royal court.⁴¹

However, English and Spanish efforts had a number of similarities.⁴² Texts from the period perpetuate a false binary that has in the past been carried over into contemporary scholarship.⁴³ Edmund Morgan has noted that Elizabeth had to be cautious about openly endorsing New World projects to avoid a direct affront to Spain.⁴⁴ Yet, she still supported efforts by Drake, Raleigh, and others, and, thus, should not be seen as uninterested in early colonial ventures. Raleigh openly admits to awaiting the queen's command about how to proceed in Guiana, thus making the monarch central to colonial success.

Many of the references to Elizabeth in *The Discoverie* relate to Raleigh's discussion of Native American women; thus, the text proffers a connection between the English female monarch and her political counterparts in the Americas, the Native women rulers. Early in the narrative Raleigh recounts that he made the Natives understand that he was the servant "of a Queene, who was the great *Casique* of the north, and a virgin, and had more *Casiqui* under her then

⁴⁰ See Fitzmaurice, 22-25.

⁴¹ Abbas Hamdani argues that Columbus saw the *Reconquista* in the Americas as a way to travel across Asia and reclaim Jerusalem. See Abbas Hamdani, "Columbus and the Recovery of Jerusalem" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99.1 (1979): 39-48. For a contrary view, see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic*.

⁴² It should be clarified that, even though England imagined Spain as unnaturally cruel, and represented their own efforts as civil, these are rhetorical constructs and not indicative of the negative influence both nations had on indigenous American cultures. For English perspectives on Spanish cruelty, see, William Davenant, *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (London: Printed for Henry Herringman, 1658).

⁴³ See Cañizares-Esguerra, who argues that both English and Spanish colonization had a religious purpose and that scholars should not fall prey to the doctrinal binaries of Catholicism and Protestantism expounded by early modern writers.

⁴⁴ Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: Norton, 1975), 14, and 25-32.

there were trees in their Iland.”⁴⁵ This declaration characterizes his representation of English imperialism, but also shows how he utilizes the figure of Elizabeth to establish communication with the Native population. Raleigh represents Elizabeth as superior to both English explorers and Natives when he defines himself as servant to the queen, but he also transports her into Native society by translating “queen” as “casique.” Raleigh’s recourse to indigenous terminology familiarizes Elizabeth for the Natives, but he qualifies his description by asserting that Elizabeth is more powerful than any casique already known to the Natives. Here, Raleigh uses Elizabeth to demonstrate England’s authority while complimenting his queen.

However, most of the similarities between Native and English in the text make Native women comprehensible to English audiences--rather than make the queen comprehensible to the Natives--and these similitudes function rhetorically to make an argument in favor of English claims to Guiana. Raleigh describes Indian maids and Amazon queens living in a “virgin” land untouched by civilization—features he emphasizes by using language emblematic of England’s own “Virgin Queen,” Elizabeth I. Raleigh uses the language of Queen Elizabeth’s “cult of the virgin” when describing Native American women. As a result, the text does not highlight ethnographic differences between indigenous and European cultures, but instead notes similarities in order to make an analogical claim about England’s right to American land: a virgin land should be ruled by a virgin queen.

⁴⁵ Raleigh, 134.

Raleigh and the Queen

Raleigh makes two over-arching arguments within his text that set up a comparative consideration of Elizabeth I and indigenous women: Elizabeth is a virginal, yet warrior-like queen who defends those who cannot defend themselves, and Elizabeth is a virgin queen ideally suited to rule over a land that is described as virginal and inhabited by native “queens” strikingly similar to her. At first, *The Discoverie* casts the English queen as a protectress of Native women from violent Spaniards, England’s chief rival for this contested New World land; thus Elizabeth’s power and benevolence emerge first. Raleigh’s travel narrative culminates in a description of Native women who appear as female warrior-leaders, in other words as American versions of Elizabeth. The text consistently repeats virginal symbolism and references to Indian “queens” even though these claims refer to marginal figures in the narrative. Raleigh’s narrative style seemingly leaves little room for explication. He describes his surroundings with little detail, often repeats information he hears from others, and provides sparse outlines of his encounters with all people, be they English, Spanish, or Native American. The narrative style of *The Discoverie* may raise questions about the plausibility of a focused reading on the text’s inclusion of Native American women since Raleigh’s narrative gives them no more than a passing glance. However, such representation is consistent with how he records other figures and events in *The Discoverie*. Although many of the people and places described by Raleigh may appear underdeveloped, the references to Native American women create a coherent and consistent narrative about English colonial activity. The

depiction of Native American women represented in the text progresses from weak and passive victims of male abuse to strong female leaders.

Raleigh legitimates his information and arguments about Guiana through rhetorical recourse to Elizabeth I through three forms. First, he directly describes the queen's image on material items (such as coins or medals) that he circulates among the natives. Second, Raleigh refers to the queen's wishes and power. And third, he makes use of symbolic references long associated with the queen's public and political persona, usually when describing the land of Guiana or Native women rulers. Raleigh circulates Elizabeth's image among the Natives at two points in his narrative when he emphasizes the authority the queen's image commanded over the indigenous population. The first anecdote extends from Raleigh's description of Elizabeth as a *Casique* and he follows through on his description of Elizabeth's power by showing the Natives the queen's image: "I shewed them her majesties picture which they so admired and honored, as it had beene easie to have brought them Idolatrous thereof."⁴⁶ The charge of idolatry conveys the queen's authority, but also underscores Elizabeth's place as a substitute for religious icons of the Virgin Mary. While the public persona of Elizabeth replaced Marian devotion, it instead celebrated the queen's rule and discouraged Papist honoring of saints. Likewise, Raleigh's words carefully indicate that "it had beene easie" to make the Natives worship the queen's image, suggesting that he encouraged their praise. The sway Elizabeth's image holds over the Natives thus attests to English power, but also implicitly reinforces the values of English Protestantism. Second, Raleigh circulates Elizabeth's image as a

⁴⁶ Ibid.

gesture of good-will towards the Natives that is meant to foster a positive relationship to the English nation and its activities in Guiana. Indicating that he does not want to make his “desire of golde” made known to the Natives, he records “I gave among them manye more peeces of Golde then I receaved of the new money of 20. shillings with her Majesties picture to weare, with promise that they would become her servants thenceforth.”⁴⁷ Instead of finding gold and bringing it back to England, Raleigh gives away English gold. This counter-intuitive gesture, however, Raleigh makes productive, and hence profitable, through his representation of Elizabeth and the way he uses her image to negotiate with the Natives. The gold Raleigh circulates has no monetary value in the New World context; the Natives wear the coin as a sign of their promise to be Elizabeth’s servants. Instead, Raleigh circulates political currency.⁴⁸

Raleigh atones for his failure to secure material wealth by deferring decisive action until he knows Elizabeth’s desires for English involvement in Guiana, but he hedges this atonement with another persuasive tactic by emphasizing the queen’s protection of Native women. Raleigh rejects an invitation from Topiarwari, Lord of the Aromaia to sack some Native towns of his enemies the Epuremei. Topiawari tells Raleigh that if they work together as allies against the enemies of the native leader, the Epuremei, his faction will win their enemy’s women, and Raleigh and his men can have their gold.⁴⁹ Raleigh describes his refusal to enter this profitable contract until he knew what Elizabeth would prefer

⁴⁷ Ibid., 185-86.

⁴⁸ My thanks to Elizabeth Maddock Dillon for pointing out the political function of this textual moment.

⁴⁹ Raleigh, 184.

him to do: “til I had known her majesties pleasure, I woulde rather have lost the sacke of one or two townes (although they might have been very profitable) then to have endaugered the future hope of so many millions, and the great good, and rich trade which England maie be possessed of thereby.”⁵⁰ However, given previous moments in the text where Raleigh describes himself as protecting Native women from Spanish rape by Elizabeth’s command, this refusal to sack the towns also presents the English involvement as refraining to victimize women from any Native faction.

The text frequently describes the land as virginal, evoking the most prominent terms of Elizabeth’s “cult of the virgin.” The most well-known lines of the text clearly assert Guiana’s purity:

Guiana is a Countrey that hath yet her Maydenhead, never sackt, turned, nor wrought, the face of the earth hath not beene torne, nor the virtue and salt of the soyle spent by manurance, the graves have not beene opened for gold, the mines not broken with sledges, nor their Images puld down out of their temples. It hath never been entred by any armie of strength, and never conquered or possessed by any Christian Prince.⁵¹

The land is clearly described as virginal; it still possesses its “Maydenhead” because it has not been subjected to the assault of sacking or turning, a term that can mean both plowing in an agriculture sense and also a euphemism for intercourse, thus again emphasizing the virgin quality of the land. The virginity of

⁵⁰ Ibid., 184-85.

⁵¹ Ibid., 196.

the land is emphasized through describing what has *not* happened, using a clear metaphor of sexual penetration to describe imperial possession: it has not been “entred.” These qualities of the land, Raleigh suggests, make Elizabeth a suitable ruler for it. He states earlier in his text that Guiana seems “reserved” for Elizabeth, but this later explicit moment that captures the purity of land makes a more subtle and powerful analogical argument. He concludes his description of Guiana’s purity with a simple statement that it has never been possessed by a Christian prince. “Prince” was often Elizabeth’s preferred title;⁵² thus, the reference to virginity and Elizabeth’s preferred title link the two statements about possession of the land together to refer unmistakably to the English queen as rightful ruler. If we consider the analogical argument between Native women, the virgin land of Guiana, and Elizabeth, specifically in relation to the vitality, attraction, and virtue of the land and Native women, then Raleigh’s desire to associate England with the virginal and young land also speaks to anxieties about Elizabeth’s increasing age at the time of the Guiana ventures. Guiana offers the possibility of a venture that provides a symbolic act of renewal by offering to the audience a younger version of Elizabeth and England.⁵³

Descriptions of Native American women in the text increasingly resemble and recall Elizabeth I. Sexuality is an important factor in the various references to

⁵² See Leah S. Marcus, “Shakespeare’s Comic Heriones, Elizabeth I, and the Political Uses of Androgyny,” in *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 139.

⁵³ The eternal youth of the queen was also established through Elizabethan portrait traditions, in particular the “mask of youth” tradition that characterizes many images from the 1590s. In Elizabeth’s later years artists used earlier miniatures by Nicholas Hilliard as their face patterns for all portraits of the queen to maintain a look of youth and vitality in the royal image. See Sir Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Hampshire: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 48.

Elizabeth and Native women in Raleigh's text. The text does not depict women of "loose" morals;⁵⁴ instead, it describes the women as alluring but virtuous. The text thus echoes the main tenets of Elizabeth's cult of the virgin: Elizabeth's unmarried state led to her title of the "virgin queen," which she then manipulated to encourage her courtiers to perpetually "court" her. *The Discoverie*, then, includes an awareness of sexual desire that cannot be acted upon—the women referenced have an erotic allure, but they are not to be possessed. The only figure entitled to possess the women is Elizabeth I, and Raleigh casts her as a ruler over other women and land while, oddly, erasing men from the rewards of colonization, an erasure that contradicts scholarly characterizations of the imperial hero's masculine enterprise.⁵⁵

This progression complements the inclusion of Elizabeth I within the text: it both flatters the queen by connecting her specifically to effective women warriors, and also suggests that empowered Native women are the result of England's queen protecting the indigenous populations from Spanish abuses. The text represents and asserts Elizabeth's power as a monarch and proto-imperialist through her protection of and connection to Native Americans.

Raleigh's focus on Elizabeth and the reflection of her attributes in descriptions of Native American women showcase English interest in questions of sovereignty in the New World. *The Discoverie* expresses interest in Native rulers and raises questions for early modern English writers regarding possession and

⁵⁴ Cf. Amerigo Vespucci's representation of lascivious Native women in his *Letters* as discussed by Montrose, 5.

⁵⁵ Cf. Richard Frohock, *Heroes of Empire: The British Imperial Protagonist in America, 1596-1764* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004).

governance: first, how the English can negotiate with existing indigenous power structures, and second, how Native sovereignty can allegorize English sovereignty.⁵⁶ Writers such as John Smith and Thomas Harriot certainly offer practical information about indigenous governments to potential investors or colonists. However, Raleigh's work provides an early example of how writings about Native kings and queens also reinforce the structure of domestic politics. Raleigh's Indian queens not only function to provide readers with a familiar sense of power dynamics, but also to reinforce English values and politics.⁵⁷

Beyond the Map: Elizabeth as Personification of England and Empire in Text and Image

Raleigh's text borrows from the iconography of Elizabeth I a complex combination of poetics, imagery, and politics that fosters the image of a woman uniquely situated in a position of power in European politics. As Roy Strong, Carole Levin, and Frances Yates have discussed, the cult of Elizabeth, sometimes styled the cult of Gloriana and even the cult of the Virgin, emerged as Protestant England's answer to the social need and order provided by the Catholic devotion to the Virgin Mary. Thus, the cult of Elizabeth translates the purity and virginity of the Holy Mother to the English queen by focusing on the monarch's unmarried state.⁵⁸ Such a translation was possible because Mary was often represented as the

⁵⁶ See Thomas Scanlan's work on allegory in *Colonial Writing in the New World, 1583-1671: Allegories of Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁵⁷ Texts of the Stuart period would also serve a similar function, as Laura Brown argues for Behn's works set in the Americas. See Laura Brown, *The Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 25-63.

⁵⁸ See Roy Strong, *Gloriana: the portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987); and Carole Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave, 2003); and Frances

“Queen of Heaven” in medieval and early modern devotional texts and paintings. The praise of Elizabeth’s virginity separates her from other women in English society; it is a singular quality that enables her to be a perpetual object of courtship, in addition to making her continental alliances more negotiable because she use the possibility of a foreign match to maneuver her continental allies, while also not having to answer to the interests of a foreign husband in her political policy. Leah Marcus observes that

As a virgin queen, Elizabeth I was anomalous, unprecedented in England. Her virginity exempted her from most of the recognized categories of female experience, allowing her to preserve her independence while simultaneously tapping into the emotional power behind the images of wife and mother through fictionalized versions of herself. But the identity which lay behind all the others and lent them much of their authority was her identity as ruler.⁵⁹

Raleigh’s constructions of Elizabeth and Native women in *The Discoverie* tap into these “fictionalized versions” of Elizabeth; he represents both Elizabeth and the Native women in archetypal gender roles.

Constructions of Elizabeth took the form of both visual and verbal rhetoric, forms not mutually exclusive. In fact, a strong visual component informs Raleigh’s inclusion of Elizabeth I and Native American women. In his study on

Yates, *Astraea: the imperial theme in the sixteenth century* (Boston: Routledge, 1975). See, also, Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995).

⁵⁹ Marcus, 138.

“The Cult of Elizabeth,” Roy Strong notes the intricacies of early modern rhetorical and visual constructs:

Inscriptions, emblems, symbolic objects and whole inset scenes are meant to be read separately as well as together.... All this suggests that a more intensive study of the visual evidence of the Elizabethan age could throw new light on the conventions of literary pictorialism as consistently practiced by its writers.⁶⁰

The Elizabethan rhetorical technique of literary pictorialism included textual descriptions of visual material using language to catalog information normally processed by the eyes.

Raleigh’s *Discoverie* exemplifies the complex union of the visual and the verbal inherent in literary pictorialism. Raleigh describes the queen’s images on material items, but, more importantly, includes her as a point of comparison in his textual descriptions and anecdotes involving Native American women. Even among the few descriptions of Native women that do not evoke comparisons to Elizabeth directly, Raleigh still compares them to aristocratic English women. In particular, Raleigh’s descriptions of chaste Native women follow the format of literary pictorialism: like a portrait in the early modern period, we are given not only a sense of the subject’s physical likeness, but also specific values, what the period would consider virtues. The most notable example of this practice occurs when Raleigh describes the wife of a *Cassique* encamped near a river during a trading journey:

⁶⁰ Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, 111.

That *Cassique* that was a stranger had his wife staying at the port where we ankored, and in all my life I have seldome seene a better favored woman: She was of good stature, with black eies, fat of body, of an excellent countenance, hir haire almost as long as hir selfe, tied up againe in pretie knots, and it seemed she stood not in that aw of hir husband, as the rest, for she spake and discourst, and dranke among the gentlemen and captaines, and was very pleasant, knowing hir owne comeliness, and taking great pride therein. I have seene a Lady in England so like hir, as but for the difference of colour I would have sworne might have beene the same.⁶¹

The passage exemplifies literary pictorialism. The reader is given a detailed description of the subject's appearance, but Raleigh links the description to an interpretation of the subject's character: she is "pleasant" and values "pride" in "hir owne comeliness." In the case of the Cassique's wife, Raleigh compares the woman's appearance, especially her "colour" and her manners, to a woman he remembers from England. Raleigh familiarizes the Native woman, but the familiarization is the conclusion and not the initial information given to the reader. Thus, Raleigh begins with the characteristics that distance the woman from English culture, particularly in his use of the term "Cassique's" wife; the foreign quality of the word inscribes her physical difference. The second part of the description collapses and yet oddly specifies difference: Raleigh highlights difference in his description of the Native woman's skin color while at the same time he praises her through reassuringly English standards. Raleigh's description

⁶¹ Raleigh, 168.

of Native women and English women mutually inform each other, further complicating the role of “difference” in the text.

After the 1588 victory over the Spanish Armada, the image of Elizabeth was reformulated to reflect England’s most recent and impressive naval victory. In the *Armada Portrait* (fig. 6), for example, Elizabeth is seated before a table, presiding over a globe of the world, her hand casually draped over the territories of the New World. Julia Walker notes that the imagery of the *Armada Portrait* connects Elizabeth to England’s naval power and makes her emblematic of the English defeat over the Spanish; therefore, the Elizabethan icon becomes “ineluctably tied to an historically anti-Spanish, an arguably anti-European, and a clearly anti-Papist mind-set” during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.⁶² Elizabeth’s association with Spanish defeat allows Raleigh to use her figure to invoke anti-Spanish sentiment. The format of the English printed travel narrative itself has been considered inherently anti-Spanish, because it was “unavoidably drawn into stirring up resentment against the chief obstacle to those designs [English colonization], and that obstacle was not public apathy, but Spain.”⁶³ The conventions of English travel narratives, which construct the Spanish as obstacles to English success in the New World, and Elizabethan iconography that celebrates Spanish defeat provide the necessary context for reading Raleigh’s representation of Native American women. Native women are defined as victims or sovereigns, two narrative possibilities that defer to Elizabeth’s role in the New World.

⁶² Julia M. Walker, *The Elizabethan Icon: 1603-2003* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2004), 85-86. Walker argues that during the Jacobean period the icon of Elizabeth was used to combat anti-Catholic sentiment over the “Spanish Match,” whereas during Elizabeth’s reign, associating the queen with anti-Spanish sentiment was a mainstay of late Tudor propaganda.

⁶³ William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England*, 63.

Raleigh draws attention to virginity in several anecdotes describing Native women, thus using the queen's most famous attribute to ingratiate himself with Native groups. Elizabeth's virginity was one of her most distinctive qualities and was often represented in her portraits. Portraits such as the *The Sieve Portrait* (fig. 7), attributed to Quentin Massys the Younger, depict virginity as a hallmark of Elizabeth's cult. The queen holds a sieve, an attribute that symbolizes her virginity and recalls the classical story of the vestal virgins who proved their purity by carrying water in a sieve without losing a single drop. In the background is a globe of the world illuminated with intricate details, including English ships crossing the Atlantic to the Americas. Thus, the portrait connects Elizabeth's virginity to New World travel. Raleigh's text similarly connects Elizabeth's virginity to New World exploits. Raleigh implies that chastity and purity are qualities antithetical to the Spanish presence in the New World, but sexual restraint, or temperance, characterize Englishmen.⁶⁴ His account follows the usual moves made in Black Legend texts, depicting savage treatment, including rape and torture, of Native peoples at the hands of the Spaniards. The text invokes Elizabeth as a symbol against this savagery; Raleigh cites her virginal status as part of the rationale behind the queen's desire to protect Native women from sexual abuse. Raleigh says "hir Majestie" commands him and his men not to "touch any of their wives or daughters."⁶⁵ Elizabeth's virginal purity extends to the lands Raleigh wants to ascribe to her power. Guiana has its "Maydenhead," but

⁶⁴ See Andrew Hiscock, "Barking Dogs and Christian Men: Raleigh and Barbarism," in *Writing the Other: Humanism versus Barbarism in Tudor England*, ed. Zsolt Almási and Mike Pincombe (New Castle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 209.

⁶⁵ Raleigh, 165.

Raleigh also represents himself as protecting the purity of the virgin land's inhabitants as well.⁶⁶ Therefore, Raleigh's use of Elizabeth to protect Native American women offers a particularly English-coded approach to New World conquest because all the information of the account is filtered through symbols unique to English politics.⁶⁷

Elizabeth's virginal purity was sometimes characterized as a strong antidote to the "wildness" in others. The New World was considered a wild space,⁶⁸ one that could benefit from the order Elizabeth could offer. Indeed, the juxtaposition of Elizabeth's virginal and pure state to the acts of New World travel and control, as suggested by her hand draped over the American hemisphere of the globe to the queen's right in the *Armada Portrait* which effects a statement of possession, connects purity and wildness much the way that Elizabethan entertainments did. Elizabethan entertainments used the motif of the queen's ability to control wildness and to restore social order. Oftentimes, this motif used the image of the Wild Man, the European folk tradition later adapted in texts about the Americas, of a savage human who had been raised in the forest outside of civil society.⁶⁹ In Elizabethan court traditions, wildness could be

⁶⁶ Ibid., 196.

⁶⁷ Although the Virgin Mary would also be connected to virginal symbolism, that Raleigh deploys a secular context ensures that these strategies do not become conflated with the center point of Spanish Catholicism.

⁶⁸ See Hayden White, "The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of an Idea," in *The Wild Man Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, ed. Edward Dudley and Maximilian E. Novak (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972), 3-38.

⁶⁹ See, White, 3-38. Spenser also includes a wild man character in *The Faerie Queen* in Book VI, Canto 3 known as the "salvage man"; Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queen* (London: Penguin Books, 1978).

contained by the queen's "virtues and beauty but by her learning too."⁷⁰ Raleigh's narrative presents Guiana as a wilderness—especially in the moments where he asserts that the land is untouched by European colonization. Thus, Elizabeth's virginal status can be seen as having a double significance in Raleigh's text: it not only allows for an analogical argument that a virgin queen should preside over a virgin land, but also suggests that the virgin queen possesses traits that can control the "wild" nature of the land.

Artists and writers commonly equated the monarch to the land she ruled, making the repeated emphasis on Guiana's "Maydenhead" and England's virgin queen of particular note. The Ditchley portrait (fig. 8) presents Elizabeth standing on a carpet that doubles as a map of England and its territories, thus rendering in a visual medium the metaphor that equated the land with the ruler. In the context of New World exploration, the land's connection to Elizabeth had been established in Raleigh's first charters in North America for Virginia. The name not only implies England's dominion in that particular North American territory but also explicitly connects the land to Elizabeth's state as the virgin queen, thereby emphasizing a particular aspect of the monarch that became a key part of the political and public image she and her court crafted. The feminine name "Virginia" inscribes the English colony as a gendered space and sets an important precedent for exploring a connection between monarchy, the New World, and gender in English ventures.

⁷⁰ Erzsébet Stróbel, "The Figure of the Wild Man in the Entertainments of Elizabeth I," in *Writing the Other: Humanism versus Barbarism in Tudor England*, ed. Zsolt Almási and Mike Pincombe (New Castle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 71.

Sex and the Early Modern Courtier

The Discoverie represents Elizabeth as a guardian of chastity. One of Raleigh's discussions with the Arwacans, worth quoting at length, demonstrates his invocation of Elizabeth in describing the sexuality of Native women:

they [the Arwacans] began to conceive the deceit and purpose of the *Spaniards*, who indeed (as they confessed) tooke from them both their wives, and daughters daily, and used them for the satisfying of their owne lusts, especially such as they tooke in this manner by strength. But I protest before the majestie of the living God, that I neither know nor believe, that any of our companie one or other, by violence or otherwise, ever knew any of their women, and yet we saw many hundreds, and had many in our power, and of those very young, and excellently favored which came among us without deceit, starke naked. Nothing got us more love among them then this usage, for I suffred not anie man to take from anie of the nations...nor any man so much as to offer to touch any of their wives or daughters: which course, so contrarie to the *Spaniards* (who tyrannize over them in all things) drew them to admire hir Majestie, whose commandment I told them it was, and also wonderfully to honour our nation.⁷¹

⁷¹ Raleigh, 165.

In an interesting inversion, the chastity of Elizabeth is embodied in her male courtiers, and the restraint of the men is then used to characterize the women.⁷² Raleigh explicitly explains that he tells the Natives that the Englishmen's sexual abstinence is at the command of the English queen, thus constructing her as a protector of these Native women—a rationale that Raleigh will use for English justification of land possession. Raleigh's language choices figure Native women as victims of Spanish rape, not as sexually promiscuous or deviant females from an unknown culture:⁷³ the women are “without deceit,” and the Spanish “tooke” the women to satisfy their “lusts”—all words suggestive of the Spaniards's abuse of the women, and by extension, of the entire Native nation.

The cult of Elizabeth fostered a particular type of male relationship to the monarch that Raleigh applies to this New World encounter. Historians and literary scholars alike have noted that Elizabeth positioned herself as an object of courtship, but, because of her superior social position as monarch, interactions with the queen had to be represented as a chaste courtship. Male courtiers would use the language of the romantic suitor, much in the vein of Petrarchanism, and,

⁷² Raleigh does concede immediately after this passage that “it was very impatient worke to keepe the meaner sorte from spoile and stealing,” suggesting that relations between the English and Natives are not as ideal as he initially represents (165).

⁷³ The sexual proclivities of foreign cultures were often cataloged in medieval and early modern accounts. For example, in the “Stukeley” plays of Elizabethan England and Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*, Moorish women and men are depicted as lascivious and effeminate. In many of these cases their excessive sexual energy is represented as perversion. See Thomas Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the West Parts I and II* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967); and Anonymous, *The Famous History of the Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukeley*, ed. Charles Edelman (New York: Palgrave, 2005). Literary and historical scholars often explain such associations through humoral theories that connect the “complexion” of a person with the interior biles and personal dispositions. See, also, Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, *Black face, maligned race: the representation of blacks in English drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1987). For more on humoral thought, see, Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and selves in early modern England: physiology and inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

like the Petrarchan lover, admire from afar and never consummate the desire for sexual union. Thus, Elizabeth's court set a model for chaste male and female relations that Raleigh had violated in England but upholds while in the New World. If Raleigh's sexual indiscretion and secret marriage to Elizabeth Throckmorton betrayed Elizabeth I and her chaste system of courtier-suitors, then his representation of his own and his men's behavior in the New World in some sense atones for his past mistakes.

Ironically, Raleigh is only able to uphold the sexual values and mores of the queen's court in the Americas, not in England. This distinction suggests something particular about the topography of the new land and furthers the metaphoric personification of the American territories as female bodies.⁷⁴ Raleigh's strict adherence to "courtly chastity" in the Americas further idealizes the space of the New World. He emphasizes not only that Guiana is a land that still has her "Maydenhead," to imply the vast material wealth that has not been exported for the European trans-Atlantic trade, but also that the land he metaphorically describes using the language of virginity connotes a sense of innocence and purity typically associated with people, not with land or inanimate objects.

Women's Bodies and the Question of Difference

The rhetoric surrounding Elizabeth I included language that had to account, and even apologize for, the monarch's female body. Due in part to

⁷⁴ For a discussion of feminine metaphors applied to geographic spaces, see Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters*, 10-25. See, also, Montrose, 2.

adherence to the one-sex model of gender differentiation, various theories and prejudices existed throughout much of the medieval and early modern period about the inferiority of the female body. Many early modern English considered women “incomplete” men, with their genital structure merely an internal variation on the male’s external form.⁷⁵ This rationale led to many misogynist discourses about the inferiority of women’s minds and bodies, including ideas from humoral theory about the changeability of women’s physical constitutions. Indeed, one of Elizabeth’s most famous speeches confronts anxieties about the frailty of women’s physical bodies. When addressing her troops at Tilbury before the defeat of the Spanish Armada of 1588, Elizabeth proclaims, “I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too.”⁷⁶ Thus, past scholarship on early modern gender studies has often considered Elizabeth I anomalous because she was frequently described in androgynous terms since as a monarch she occupied a male position of power. Many scholars have discussed the ways the early modern period constructed women’s bodies as different, and thus, the attention on difference has led to considerations of further early modern methods of racial and religious othering. As a consequence, non-European women would have been seen as doubly different due to their gender and cultural or complexional differences from Europeans.

⁷⁵ See Phyllis Rackin, “Historical Difference/Sexual Difference,” in *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England*, ed. Jean R. Brink (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1993), 37-63. For a discussion of the one-sex model, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex*. Cf. Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, “Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermaphrodite in Renaissance Europe,” in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 80-111.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth I, “Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury,” in *Elizabeth I Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 326.

Although previous considerations of race often highlight difference between Europeans and non-Europeans, Raleigh focuses less on physical difference and more on similarities. Previous early modern studies about the construction of race and gender have considered comparisons of European feminine beauty to women of darker complexions, most of which position the two groups of women as opposites. Kim Hall, in particular, has focused on how “blackness” emerges as a literary trope in poetic forms to highlight and further privilege white European beauty by creating “a poetics of color in which whiteness is established as a valued goal. Whiteness in this case is as much about a desire for a stable linguistic order as it is about physical beauty.”⁷⁷ However, Raleigh’s text complicates differences in complexion in comparison to other texts from the early modern period that have been considered by scholars such as Hall. Native women and Elizabeth are subject to similar characterizations, a similarity that demonstrates a need for further critical inquiry about the representation of non-African women. According to Hall’s investigation of English sonnet traditions,

descriptions of dark and light, rather than being mere indications of Elizabethan beauty standards or markers of moral categories, became in the early modern period the conduit through which the English began to formulate the notions of “self” and “other” so well known in Anglo-American racial discourses.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Hall, 66.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

However, instead of cataloging numerous physical observations, Raleigh is more interested in the ways Native women participate in their societies, for example in their roles as leaders or fighters. Most early modern studies on race find extremes of representation in racialist and proto-racialist discourse: beauty as opposed to ugliness, chastity as opposed to licentiousness, Christianity as opposed to paganism, and other antithetical groupings. However, in Raleigh's travel account the comparison of Native women to Elizabeth I does not create a simple contrast—Native women are not shown to be antithetical to Elizabeth, nor are they shown to be equivalent to the English queen. Rather, in *The Discoverie* a more complicated inter-cultural web of English and Native is constructed that simultaneously uses familiarizing and alienating discourses. Raleigh privileges the similarities between England and America by noting female queens in both, and uses the Native women's difference from Elizabeth, chiefly their sexual victimization, as reasons for the English queen to rule over Guiana and protect the women. That *The Discoverie* resists the types of extremes exhibited in travel and discovery narratives about Africans suggests that Raleigh's constructions of Native Americans present a different kind of cultural representation that has not been fully accounted for in early modern scholarship.

Nonetheless, Raleigh does remark on physical appearances and notes the skin color and hair color of Native peoples at several points. But in the examples of Native women he mentions skin color only once, and for the remainder of his discussion characterizes their appearances in more general terms. Oftentimes he records physical differences about Native American bodies when generally

discussing entire regional populations that include both men and women, rather than in his specific discussions of individual women.

When Raleigh does specify differences about women, he still draws on aspects that characterize the reign of Elizabeth, especially the image of the classical Amazon. The characterization of male versus female physical traits and behaviors is often the criterion by which to assess and describe the appearance and customs of other cultures—yet the anomalous position of Elizabeth and her cult complicates this situation in Raleigh’s text. The description of Elizabeth as possessing both male and female attributes enables a previously unconsidered conversation in the language of racial and cultural othering in the early modern period. For example, in his discussion of the Amazons of Guiana Raelgh compares them to the classical tradition and focuses on details such as masculine behavior and social organization, and how “feminine” they appear physiologically. Raleigh relays his second-hand discovery “that the cut of the right dug of the brest I do not finde to be true” and that the women are “desirous to increase their owne sex and kinde.”⁷⁹ That the women do not cut off their breasts suggests that they remain feminine in appearance despite masculine behavior, which he characterizes as “very cruell and bloodthirsty [in war], especially to such as offer to invade their territories.”⁸⁰

Therefore, the details Raleigh selects to convey about the Amazons provide information that can be seen as analogous to discourses surrounding Elizabeth that were cultivated after the Armada year. The Amazons of Guiana are sensitive

⁷⁹ Ibid., 146.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

to outside invaders and are presented as warlike but possessed of female bodies— characteristics similar to those that serve as the rhetorical basis of Elizabeth’s Tilbury speech. Raleigh concludes his description of the Amazons with the disclaimer “though I digresse from my purpose, yet I will set downe what hath been delivered me for the truth of those women,” which raises the question for what reason he includes this tangent that feels oddly voyeuristic in its relation of sexual and social behaviors of Native women?⁸¹ Raleigh draws attention to the tangential nature of his information about the Amazons; however, his point does connect to his continuous argument about England’s suitability to rule Guiana. This digression speaks to how *The Discovery* represents Native women in relation to Elizabeth or the familiar context of previous European textual traditions, such as classical narratives.

Raleigh’s lack of interest in cataloging physical differences and manners of dressing differentiates his narrative from those of many of his predecessors. George Best’s lengthy musings on the nature of African skin color and his confusion over the complexion of Native Americans exemplifies the sort of analysis and detail missing from Raleigh. Thomas Harriot and John White in Theodore de Bry’s 1590 illustrated edition of *The True Report of the Newfoundland of Virginia* catalogue dress and tattoo customs as a way to describe Native social hierarchies. Although other travel narratives describing indigenous cultures underscore difference and catalogue the foreign and unknown, Raleigh’s descriptions of Native women highlight cultural similarities. One way Raleigh constructs similarities is through the terms already in play in England to describe

⁸¹ Ibid.

Elizabeth's exceptional status. Elizabeth's androgyny provided an element of strangeness and difference within English culture that Raleigh uses to familiarize Native women, who under any other circumstances, might be considered exotic and unknowable; thus he underscores how both English and Native women serve as queens.

Ezrabetta Cassipuna Aquerewana* or Raleigh's Queens: The last note in *The Discoverie on Elizabeth and American Female Monarchs

The concluding section of Raleigh's text strongly asserts the role of Elizabeth in the New World by synthesizing many of the text's earlier references to Native women and the English queen. Of particular note is his return to the myth of the Amazon women at the end of his narrative, instead of continuing the discussion of the sexual victimization of Indian women by the Spaniards. Raleigh concludes his text with an anecdote about female monarchy. At the outermost region chronicled in the text, Raleigh recalls an encounter with a Native woman of the Canuri who asks for information about Elizabeth I because she, too, is a female ruler:

Upon the river of *Caroli*, are the *Canuri*, which are governed by a woman (who is inheritrix of that province) who came farre off to see our nation, and asked mee divers questions of her Majesty, being much delighted with the discourse of her Majesties greatnes, and wondering at such reports as we truly made of her highness many vertues.⁸²

⁸² Raleigh, 192.

As in much of Raleigh's text, the encounter with this woman is not elaborated. Indeed, Neil Whitehead speculates that this passage constitutes one of Raleigh's fanciful additions that forward his argument about English colonization rather than the reality of his journey.⁸³

Despite the brevity of the reference, Raleigh's characterization of the woman ruler who expresses interest in the English queen reinforces key arguments about rightful claims to monarchy, and, by extension, dominion over the land. Raleigh specifies that the woman rules over the land as an "inheritrix," establishing her right to rule through lineage. Such a definition may appear elementary, yet it introduces a number of complications when considering the role of competing European powers in the Americas and England's own troubled history of royal succession. The Canuri woman's right to rule over the territory specified diminishes Spanish claims, yet at the same time, the Canuri woman's leadership does not diminish English claims in the same manner as it does the Spanish. As empress of a budding empire, Elizabeth may have tributary queens beneath her. Thus, it is important that the land ruled by this unnamed indigenous woman is placed at the periphery of the territory that concerns Raleigh's narrative, and, consequently, she is positioned in a liminal space.

However, the focus on Elizabeth in the conversation between Raleigh and the Canuri woman makes an argument in favor of English claims to the land. The explicit reference to the queen as the topic of conversation between the Native woman and Raleigh legitimates Elizabeth's own claim to monarchy by underscoring the English queen's own role as an inheritrix of her throne and

⁸³ Whitehead, 192n112.

country. The discussion of inheritance also looks forward to increasing English anxiety over future succession, for it was clear by 1595 that Elizabeth would not marry and produce an heir to the throne. That Raleigh does not provide a proper name for the Native “queen” ultimately serves to diminish the place of the indigenous ruler in favor of Elizabeth, who emerges as the main subject of the anecdote. This is typical of Raleigh's representation of Native women throughout the text; he never records their names even though he notes the names of Native men. One way of assessing this consistent oversight may be simply to speculate that the information was not important enough for Raleigh to remember, or that such inconsistencies raise concerns about fabrication for rhetorical effect. However, regardless of why this information is withheld or unknown, it enables him to more clearly connect these women to Elizabeth—they are more “familiar” because they do not have exotic and foreign names, but rather are another extension of the symbolic representation of the English queen.

The lack of additional information about the Canuri “queen” combined with the vagueness of the “divers questions” imbues Elizabeth with a quality of the exotic. The Native ruler is “wondering” over reports of the English queen’s “greatnes” and “many vertues” so that the unknowable-ness of the indigenous woman and her domain becomes shared with the known Elizabeth. Momentarily casting Elizabeth as exotic allows Raleigh to impart a sense of the unknown extent of the English queen’s power, a rhetorical move that renders her a more imposing figure.

Finally, the penultimate sentence in Raleigh's narrative makes explicit the argument that England's claim to Guiana stems from Elizabeth's power.

Returning to the Renaissance use of analogy, Raleigh states Elizabeth's suitability to rule over the Native women he has chronicled earlier in his text—specifically the Amazons—to argue that a female is best suited to rule over other females:

Her Majesty hereby shall confirme and strengthen the opinions of all nations, as touching her great and princely actions. And where the south border of *Guiana* reacheth to the Dominion and Empire of the *Amazones*, those women shall heereby heare the name of a virgin, which is not onely able to defend her owne territories and her neighbors, but also to invade and conquere so great Empyres and so farre removed.⁸⁴

The text concludes with an assertion of Elizabeth's claim and suggests that what will best serve English interests is the strength of Elizabeth's reputation. The fame of her name is not only associated with the defense of territories but also the ability to conquer. The final reference to Native American women clarifies the previous example of the Canuri woman, since that episode was evidence of the far-reaching fame of Elizabeth's name. The penultimate sentence makes explicit that knowing Elizabeth's name is to be aware of her ability to defend and conquer, thus serving as a warning to others.

The final reference to the Amazons expands the scope of Elizabeth's, and by extension England's, imperial boundaries while maintaining the sense of the wondrous nature of England's desired empire. This reappearance of the Amazon women underscores their location in a far-flung "empire" that implies that

⁸⁴ Raleigh, 199.

Elizabeth's empire is built by consuming existing nations, at least in Raleigh's optimistic assessment. However, the allusion to Amazons from antiquity and the manner in which Raleigh deploys such allusions establishes a mythic quality that engages ideas of the medieval Mandevillean monstrosity, but also subordinates overtly "exotic" inhabitants of the Americas under the rule of Elizabeth. Thus the liminal location of the Amazons and the unconventional female roles create a complicated relationship to Elizabeth's anomalous position in English society in which the experiences of the colonial periphery can be identified with the central English queen's court.

The text's final two references to Native women provide few specific details. Instead, Raleigh relies on the evocation of Elizabeth to convey key information about these women, thus revealing his interest in using the Native women as a rhetorical device. Raleigh's Amazons are one-dimensional and based on pre-existing classical traditions, an aspect he reinforces by admitting at an earlier point in the text that he receives his information about them from word of mouth instead of from his own empirical evidence.⁸⁵ In the case of the Canuri woman ruler Raleigh does not extend her role beyond the one sprawling sentence discussed above. In his introduction to his edition of Raleigh's text Neil Whitehead notes, "Raleigh's 'Indians' were sophisticated actors having had plenty of prior experience of Europeans and their political and economic stratagems."⁸⁶ The Native American women Raleigh represents in *The Discoverie*, particularly

⁸⁵ Raleigh first mentions Amazons when verifying for his readers that the famed women warriors from antiquity did indeed exist in the New World. Raleigh attests that he delivers the "truth of those women" and conveys characteristics consistent with ancient tropes of Amazons. See 145-46.

⁸⁶ Whitehead, 3.

the one who inquires about Queen Elizabeth, exhibit this knowledge of prior European interaction. Thus, the one-dimensionality of the women characters can also be attributed to Raleigh's framing them by means of European experiences. Raleigh's text represents the women as "sophisticated actors" by demonstrating their awareness of English culture, therefore diminishes aspects of exotic voyeurism in favor of a familiarizing discourse. The Native women's knowledge of Elizabeth allows us to see what the women from both sides of the Atlantic have in common.

Elizabeth's reign enabled a unique moment of similitude to flourish. England's female monarch elicited comparisons to New World forms of sovereignty as seen through English eyes. Perhaps the most singular familiar feature between the English queen and the content of Raleigh's travel narrative is the rhetorical deployment of "maidenhead." Just as speculations about Elizabeth's private life led many courtiers to view the cult of her virginity "as a necessary and effective, collectively sustained political fiction," so too does Raleigh view the land of Guiana.⁸⁷ Raleigh declares Guiana a country⁸⁸ that hath yet its "maidenhead," but like Elizabeth whose virginity was a source of doubt for many detractors during her lifetime, Guiana is a territory "pure" or virgin from conquest only for political effect. Raleigh spends much of his narrative chronicling the failures of the Spaniards and Portuguese to colonize Guiana and find Manoa, attempts that have to a degree contaminated the land and the people through the cruel realities of colonization, and yet he effaces these attempts to assert that the

⁸⁷ Montrose, 9.

⁸⁸ Montrose notes a bawdy Elizabethan pun on "country," inherent in the statement "Guiana is a country that hath yet its maydenhead"; see, 12.

metaphoric purity of the land has not been sullied. Instead, Raleigh presents a politically savvy, yet ideal view of Elizabeth and Guiana so that he may best increase English interest in the Americas.

Chapter 3

Romance and Rebellion: Political and Cultural Anxieties in Behn's *The*

Widow Ranter

The Widow Ranter, or the History of Bacon in Virginia, A tragicomedy (1690) was one of the last plays written by Aphra Behn and was probably composed in 1688, the same year as her much lauded *Oroonoko*. Like *Oroonoko*, *The Widow Ranter* is set in the colonial New World. Yet *The Widow Ranter* has not received the same degree of critical attention from Behn scholars as *Oroonoko*, despite its similar interest in inter-cultural exchanges and romance.¹ The *Widow Ranter* retells the events of the colonial uprising in Virginia known as “Bacon’s Rebellion” (1676), but suppresses the turmoil of what many historians now describe as the colonist Nathaniel Bacon’s race war against Native Americans. Behn’s play offers, instead, a tragic romance between Bacon and the Indian queen Semernia. The romantic story transforms a threatening moment of colonial instability into a familiar narrative that signals English colonial success. The love story of Bacon and Semernia follows the conventions of the often-repeated early modern tale of the conquered who loves the conqueror.² This story legitimates the presence of English colonists by showing the relationship between the Native woman and the colonist as one of mutual and similar romantic desire.

¹ Indeed, reviews of the play’s first and posthumous staging were less than glowing and may have contributed to its marginalized place in Behn’s literary production. By contrast *Oroonoko* was embraced by late seventeenth and early eighteenth century literary audiences, which was helped by Southerne’s dramatic adaptation of Behn’s novella.

² For similar characters, see Marlowe’s *Zenocrates*, Shakespeare’s *Catherine*, and Dryden’s *Orazia* and *Cydaria*. See note 75.

The play also reveals a shift in representations of Native queens on the English stage, from idealized objects of romantic interest, such as those in Dryden's plays, to enemies of colonial government. Like the Native women of Dryden's plays, *The Indian Queen* and *The Indian Emperor*, Behn's Semernia is typed as the unattainable or idealized beloved. However, unlike Dryden's Native heroines, miscegenation is not presented as a viable solution to the problem of competing forms of culture and government in the Americas. Rather, Semernia's love for the colonizer Bacon leaves her Native monarchy open to attack by the colonial army and also leads to her colonist lover's death. The play's alliance between the Native queen and the colonial rebel indicate competing forms of government power; both colonial rebels who defy the royal governor and Native American monarchs are affronts to the power of the Virginian governor. Bacon and Semernia both die, and with them dies Native sovereignty and colonial insurrection.

The play features an ambivalently defined Native woman character. At moments Semernia is a tragic romantic heroine, rendered familiar by the description of her place in the Indian royal court, recalling European social customs. The heroic speeches assigned to her eerily echo Shakespeare's works, and this language makes her seem familiar rather than exotic, despite her ethnicity. At other moments, she laments the vast cultural differences that divide her from Bacon, the English renegade, and that align her with the enemy tribal group. The representation of the Indian Queen as vacillating between civil ruler and strange Indian reflects changing colonial attitudes about Native Americans:

Behn's play explores the major colonial anxieties concerning frontier safety and the potential for cultural contamination. As the antagonism between Europeans and Indians escalates in the play, so do critiques of the Natives' ability to govern and fears of their threat to colonial government. In Behn's play, the rhetoric of similitude gives way by the end to a discourse of opposition and difference.

Whereas the early texts examined in this study, such as Raleigh's, use unquestionably English literary traditions to represent Native women as similar to the English, Behn's play suggests that earlier methods of familiarization have become outmoded. The historical conditions of English colonization in North America had changed substantially from the Elizabethan period considered in the first half of this study. The establishment of Jamestown, Virginia in 1607 occurred approximately eighty-one years before Behn wrote her play about the events of 1676. Although earlier writings about Virginia were intended as promotional pamphlets to attract investors, by the time of Behn's play the colonial situation had changed. Events such as the Great Massacre of 1622, in which Indians led by Opechancanough killed and destroyed nearly a third of the colonists living in Virginia, as well as the Pequot war in New England from 1634 to 1638, made the earlier idealized representations of Natives and colonial relationships harder to sustain.³ By 1688, when Behn is thought to have written *The Widow Ranter*, the accounts sent to England about Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia and King Philip's War in Massachusetts reported deteriorating conditions for the English in North America.

³ Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 135.

In this chapter I examine the tension in Behn's play between discourses of similarity and differences: Behn could still represent Natives as similar to the English, yet she also includes an anxious characterization of increased colonial violence (absent in the earlier texts examined in this study). I argue that Behn characterizes Semernia inconsistently, at times focusing on her similarity to English court culture, and at other moments focusing on her alienation from English customs. Although it has often been noted that the edition of *The Widow Ranter* we read today may reflect an incomplete or possibly corrupted copy of the author's work, the inconsistency surrounding Semernia's characterization mirrors the increasing political tensions over the course of the play, so should be interpreted as more than an editorial oversight. The play initially presents Semernia as a civilized ruler, but later as an exotic, threatening other, only to return to portraying her as similar to English women upon the queen's tragic death. The increase in violence between colonists and Natives in the play leads to new anxieties about colonization and government which destabilize the initial similarity the Natives have to the English and increase the distance between the two groups.

Previous readings of Semernia have viewed her as a tragic figure anticipating the annihilation of the Native peoples of Virginia. However, examining the similarity of Semernia to English women also allows us to see the remarkable agency Behn assigns to this alien and female character. Even in moments of the play when Semernia is presented as more threatening and different, Behn still has her character communicate to the audience through the

familiar forms of dramatic and literary conventions. Thus, the character retains similarity to the English in the mode of her delivery while the play represents a colonial environment overrun by political differences from competing cultures. Furthermore, Semernia's similarity to English character types enables us to consider her death outside of the readings that anticipate the erasure of Native groups from the colonial eastern seaboard. Indeed, the very characteristics that make this Native character similar to English women, such as her position as queen and her courtly demeanor, are also the foundation for the character's agency in the play.

My consideration of Semernia's similarity to and difference from English women extends the discussion of gender in the play started by critics such as Heidi Hutner, because Native similarity to the English has been overlooked, due in part to scholarly focus on the character of the Widow Ranter. Hutner has considered the various roles the women of the play occupy in a colonial context. I analyze how Behn represents her Native woman character by casting her as both similar to and different from the English; thus, my investigation examines gender not in terms of women's social roles but in terms of how female characters were better vehicles for English writers to convey similarities between colonial and English culture than their male counterparts.

By contextualizing the play in relation to key historical events and contemporary colonial texts about Native and English interactions in Anglo North America, my reading of Behn's last play situates the text in a broader colonial American context as opposed to the framework of English stage traditions.

Literature produced in the wake of two prominent and bloody colonial events, Bacon's Rebellion and King Philip's War, posed a challenge to early modern writers who could no longer continue to use the narrative conventions that highlighted similarity between Native and English without also acknowledging the escalating cultural disparity between Native and English reflected in current events. *The Widow Ranter* retains vestiges of similarity of Native women to English women because of Semernia's classification as a queen.⁴ Behn's own Royalist politics may have pre-disposed her to privilege representations of monarchy. Furthermore, Restoration writers often looked to Virginia for settings about political subjects since Virginia was a royal colony (as opposed to the Puritan dissenter colony at Massachusetts Bay).⁵

I explore the increasingly complicated use of similarity between the descriptions of the Native woman and the English woman by first comparing Behn's Semernia to Mary Rowlandson's Wetamoo, the Indian female monarch in the captivity narrative *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682), which illuminates mounting tensions between colonists and Natives. Rowlandson expresses concern about powerful Native women, a marked shift from earlier textual representations that positively idealized Indian women as queens and princesses. By comparing Semernia to the female Indian ruler in Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, I show how female sovereignty has become a

⁴ Just as representing royal subjects was a hallmark of Restoration drama, stories about queens were also popular. Besides Dryden and Howard's *The Indian Queen* (1664), there were also Nathaniel Lee's *The Rival Queens* (1677) and John Weston's *The Amazon Queen* (1667). Thus Behn's Indian queen, Semernia, is part of a larger Restoration dramatic tradition that focused on stories about queens from time periods past and present and from different parts of the globe.

⁵ Heidi Hutner, *Colonial Women*, 5.

threatening idea by the time of Rowlandson and Behn. Whereas Behn describes Semernia as a queen, Rowlandson ignores Weetamoo's considerable political power in favor of the more mundane details of the Native woman's daily life; thus, Native women's roles transition from the political to the domestic. Despite the different emphasis each writer brings to her representation of Native women, both Behn and Rowlandson employ characterizations that express similarity to English aristocratic and royal culture. However, each author characterizes Native women as similar to the English for different rhetorical purposes. For the English Behn, similarity provides reassurance; she alters historical events to make the Native tribe less threatening within the context of colonial war and rebellion. By comparison, the colonist Rowlandson uses similarity between Native and English to express her anxiety about the vulnerability of her own Puritan identity.

In the conclusion to this chapter, I examine two engravings of actress Anne Bracegirdle costumed to play Semernia that reflect visual traditions of similarity to English women while also registering differences from the English. The illustrators depict a white English actress wearing a costume embellished with New World treasures, such as feathers and pearls. The images follow the familiar English forms of patrician portraiture, but include unusual costume features that make these images exotic. Portraiture conventions display new foreign commodities—in this case American rather than Eastern ones—through a conventional and familiar medium, thus blending the traditional with the new by familiarizing potential New World commodities through European aesthetics.

Politics and the Stage, and Other Past Critical Considerations of *The Widow Ranter*

The varying comparisons of English and Native cultures represented over the course of her play reveal how Behn re-defines and regulates inter-cultural contact. Behn adds a fictional and wholly imaginative interracial romance between Bacon and Semernia. I argue that Behn's earlier representations of Semernia emphasize the native woman's noble position as queen and make her character appear conversant with European court traditions. But by the play's end the political turmoil of the Rebellion arouses European fears of Native savagery that ultimately doom the union between Semernia and Bacon. The change in of Semernia's characterization can be linked to the early modern English conception of race as fluid. When Semernia and her tribe break off their alliance with the colonists, the play increasingly emphasizes her difference from Bacon and the rest of the colonists.

The Widow Ranter represents women's agency in a slightly anomalous manner in comparison to the rest of Behn's oeuvre. Women not only motivate the action of the play, but assume, and more importantly remain in, men's dress, even taking up arms in a military scuffle.⁶ The play uses the historical event of Bacon's Rebellion to tell two fictional romantic stories. The romance plot obscures the political turmoil and the process of colonization by focusing on lovers' intrigues

⁶ As noted in Behn scholarship, cross-dressing is not uncommon among Behn's works; see Peter E. Morgan, "A Subject to Redress: Ideology and the Cross-Dressed Heroine in Aphra Behn's *The Widow Ranter*," *Eighteenth-Century Women: Studies in Their Lives, Work, and Culture* 2(2002): 23-41. However, most times cross-dressing and social masquerade end by the conclusion of the work, thus reinforcing patriarchy and social hierarchy. For example, in *The Rover* the true identities of the Spanish sisters are revealed, and their social masquerade ends once they are married to men from the same social class.

instead of political ones. The first romance plot in Behn's play chronicles the wealthy and rowdy older woman known as the Widow Ranter in her pursuit of a young second husband. The second romance plot follows the colonial military figure Nathaniel Bacon and his pursuit of Semernia the Indian "Queen." The 1676 uprising in Virginia, "Bacon's Rebellion," unites the colonial male characters of these seemingly separate romance stories, and at first glance this parallel relationship appears to make the colonial English woman Ranter a comic foil to the tragic figure of Semernia. However, a closer look reveals that each woman's story provides a different way of reading the relationship between love and colonial conflict, making the two characters more than just a succession of contrasts. Ranter's character shows how to adapt best to changing political conditions, while Semernia's character shows the consequences of remaining faithful to the older form of political power.

Behn's use of dramatic conventions and romance in *The Widow Ranter* enables her to solve on page and on stage the problems of colonial government through imaginative re-writing. The play reflects the increasingly troubled political climate of England and of the colonies, for the late seventeenth century was a period marked by significant conflicts in North America, as well as anxiety in England about the Exclusion Crisis—all events that challenged social hierarchy and governance in the English-speaking world. Behn's tale of a lost Native monarchy and the heroic defender of English monarchy's New World territories reflects important English political issues.

In the world of *The Widow Ranter*, the tensions of the colonial world are resolved through recourse to the Native woman, making this figure central to colonial negotiations. As Heidi Hutner has argued:

The native woman operates discursively in travel accounts and histories of the period as a means to bring order to England's unstable world, and the seventeenth-century stage dramatizes this image repeatedly in an anxiety-laden reestablishment of patriarchal identity by the dramatic spectacle of the native woman falling for her European seducer/exploiter.⁷

Although the scenario Hutner describes operated in many texts about the Americas (in plays such as *The Indian Emperor* and *The Indian Queen* by John Dryden, for example), in *The Widow Ranter* order is not brought about by the Native woman falling in love with the colonizer. Instead, more complications ensue due to the inter-cultural romance, especially because the Native woman falls for the one who has rebelled against legitimate colonial authority in Virginia.

The most significant critical discussions of the play have focused on a comparison of Semernia and the character of the Widow Ranter.⁸ Hutner and Brenda Josephine Liddy explore the place of women in the play and the new

⁷ Hutner, 3.

⁸ Other readings have argued that the play serves as a political allegory for English politics—that it either mimics a past Civil War era or that it raises a new anxiety about possible civil war following the removal of the heirs of James II from the throne. For example, Josephine Liddy suggests that Behn's works demonstrate “that the trauma and divisions created by the Civil War did not suddenly disappear, but reemerged to haunt the restored Monarchy” (x). Hutner argues that the Natives “lose their heads” because “the loyalist governor and the crown he represents are absent” (104). See Brenda Josephine Liddy, *Women's War Drama in Seventeenth-Century England*. See also Jenny Hale Pulsipher, “*The Widdow Ranter*, and Royalist Culture in Colonial Virginia,” *Early American Literature* 39.1 (2004): 41-66; and Margaret W. Ferguson, *Dido's Daughters: Literary, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 333-74.

social roles they occupy as a consequence of living in a colonial environment, including their participation in merchant enterprises and frontier conflict. The readings that consider Semernia often see her as the polar opposite of Ranter.⁹ Widow Ranter is bawdy and forceful, joining the local rabble of men in military skirmishes in a bold and lustful pursuit of her ideal man. Semernia, in Hutner's and Liddy's readings, is by contrast demure and passive: a tragically and fatefully doomed Native woman who cannot survive or outwit colonial conflicts and politicians and who is conflicted by her feelings of love as opposed to finding conviction in them as Ranter does. Liddy's discussion of the play focuses on the role of warrior women and notes that despite the association of Native American women with "Amazon" military culture in the texts of Columbus and Raleigh, Semernia asserts that she is *not* an Amazon.¹⁰ Liddy reads Semernia's anti-Amazon identity as symptomatic of the Indian queen's submission to white male desire and power. For Hutner and Liddy, Semernia exists to make a statement about the possession of colonial land and male power. Hutner's use of the "Pocahontas myth" in her reading of the play emphasizes Semernia's role in abandoning the culture of her tribe in favor of the ideals of the male European colonist.¹¹

Given the play's subject of conflict between English colonists and Native Americans, scholarly consideration of race relations has been a mainstay of

⁹ Chiefly the work of Liddy and Hutner. Melissa Mowry has also started research on *The Widow Ranter*, some of which she shared in a public lecture titled "Bacon's Rebellion and Behn's Widow Ranter, or How the Collective Lost Its Honor" at the University of Maryland, 6 October, 2010.

¹⁰ Liddy, 169.

¹¹ Hutner uses the phrase "the myth of Pocahontas" to refer to a set of characterizations associated with the famous Native American woman and how she enabled colonial success for the English. Hutner applies this phrase to a variety of texts that cast Native women as symbols of "success of the colonial project." See Hutner, 23-25.

Widow Ranter criticism. However, the discussion of race needs to be further extended and reassessed to better reflect how it was understood in the seventeenth century. Many of Hutner's very intriguing readings work only when binary racial configurations are assumed; for example, Hutner's analysis relies on theories of surrogacy and substitution—when a white English female character can be read as African or Native. However, the mutable and fluid early modern conceptions of race challenge the notion of substitution.¹² Scholars such as Roxann Wheeler have shown that race is a fluid concept at this point in time; therefore scholars should strive to avoid grafting our own contemporary ideas about race onto the play. Thus, I suggest that if we reduce Semernia to a tragic foil, the racial other to the *Widow Ranter*, we do not understand Semernia's complexity and function within the play. Although the play concludes tragically for the Native woman, we cannot ignore her earlier surprising position of power and her potential as a romantic and political partner for the Englishman Nathaniel Bacon. Indeed, focusing on Semernia's "fated" death perpetuates later myths of the "noble savage" or the

¹² Hutner's analysis of colonial women, which she defines to include not only European, but also, Native and African slave women, convincingly argues for the power of the "stand-ins" in a myriad of colonial-centered texts; thus, the white *Widow Ranter* in her moments of rebellion acts in a manner similar to the stereotypes of Native and Black slave women. Hutner's analysis examines moments of unstable identity, and looks for ways in which European characters signify Nativeness or Blackness, a methodology that assumes stark categories of difference exist in the social thinking of the time and in the texts produced in this climate. While it is true that, as the seventeenth century progressed, measures to police inter-cultural, and what we would term today, interracial contact increased, I maintain that such differences cannot be assumed absolute. Instead of seeing women such as Miranda from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* or *Widow Ranter* from Behn's play as "standing in" for a non-European group, we should instead consider how these women can help us see what representations of Europeans and non-Europeans hold in common. Theories of substitution or stand-ins can only work if differences among groups are clearly defined. I would add to Hutner's interesting analysis that the apparent use of stand-ins demonstrates the *process* of racialization. Considering the overlap in representing Native from African from English is particularly important to avoid associating Native groups with either naïve innocence or brash forwardness, both characterizations that can be construed as negative and stereotypical. In Behn's *Widow Ranter* the phenomenon of "stand ins" should be considered representative of the fluidity that still exists among social and cultural groups at this time.

Indian as a member of the “vanishing race.”¹³ Behn’s play, instead, gives us two views of Native Americans: one that represents them as similar to English culture, applied particularly to Native monarchs, and another that depicts them as different, and thus a threat to colonists. Only George Best’s descriptions of the “sauage” Inuit exceed in strength the depiction of Native violence at the end of Behn’s play. However, even in the moments which highlight Semernia’s difference, we still find echoes of similarity to the English—for example, as will be discussed later in this chapter, Semernia’s difference is represented at times as religious and at others as transvestism, yet she speaks in the familiar words of Shakespearean paraphrase. Noting the complexity and even contradictions in the representation of Native Americans in the play will avoid overly tidy and anachronistic readings that more closely reflect our own modern stereotypes of cultural and racial difference. Behn’s representations of Natives, and particularly Native women are complex. Even though the plot of the play may include the tragic demise of the Native woman, Semernia’s importance is firmly maintained through similarity to English women character types.

Semernia’s initial characterization emphasizes her social rank and royal blood that place her above the social-climbing Widow Ranter. It is only with the destruction of the colonial political structure and the dissolution of social hierarchy in the aftermath of Bacon’s Rebellion that Semernia is transformed from a regal and respected queen to a tragic and doomed Indian. Thus, despite previous critical assertions about Semernia’s tragic fate by Hutner, Liddy, and

¹³ Scholarship on the early American republic has often remarked on this phenomenon as chronicled in the works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and James Fenimore Cooper.

Ferguson, Behn's play makes transparent the ways social hierarchy changes, thus leading to sad fates for some and successful ones for others. As the pandemonium of colonial upheaval increases, so, too, does the "racialization" of Semernia.

Bacon's Rebellion In History and Literature

Bacon's Rebellion was a moment of social upheaval in which social boundaries were blurred. Without the authority of the colonial government, English land holders, white indentured servants, African slaves, and even some women, took violent action against Indian raids onto land that had been claimed by the English. The Rebellion's participants perceived all Indians to be a common threat to colonial safety and stability. The social upheaval in Virginia united classes and racial groups together in a common mission to kill Native Americans, a mission that blurred a typically class-conscious society's emergent forms of racial and social segregation into a more polymorphous collective that would have been unimaginable under other circumstances. Historians now characterize the Rebellion as a race war intended to destroy all Native American groups—with wide and indiscriminant killing of Native peoples regardless of their tribe's political history with the English colonial government and colonists.

However, Behn's play focuses less on the demonizing of Native peoples and more on exploring the inefficiencies of colonial governance. Behn translates this setting into the symbolic inter-cultural union of an English colonist with an Indian queen. Whereas the historical rebellion in Virginia included individuals across classes, Behn's play suppresses the social inter-mixing and motivates the

Rebellion through Bacon's erotic desire for Semernia. At the height of the Rebellion, Bacon and Semernia voice their mutual desire for a sexual relationship that under other circumstances would be considered inappropriate; thus instead of the play showing African and English joining together in a common cause, the play shows the union of an English man and a Native woman.

Nathaniel Bacon began his "Rebellion" in March of 1676 with the promise to stop the killing of colonists by local Indians along the Virginia frontier.¹⁴ According to Bacon's manifesto, unethical colonists sold rifles to the Indians illegally. He described the English colonists' greedy trading as "vile" and dangerous since Indians were purportedly using the rifles to kill colonists on the Virginia frontier. Bacon represented his unauthorized military action against the Indians as an act to protect the King of England's best interests since he claimed that the Indians "ruined and made desolate a great part of his Majesty's Country."¹⁵ For Bacon the Indian raids are the fruit of "vile" English colonists who have too quickly improved "their Estates" through unethical means, thus attributing the failure of order in the colony to colonists crossing social boundaries with disastrous effects.¹⁶ Yet, despite the historical Bacon's objections to vile social-climbers, he was ultimately accused of advocating social "mixing."

¹⁴ The rebellion was also a power play by Bacon against the royal Governor Berkeley. Berkeley had a monopoly on fur trading in the region and, as a result, advocated pro-Indian policies. Berkeley's hesitancy to respond aggressively to frontier violence was partly because of the peaceful relations between the English and the tribes he traded with. Bacon and his supporters used the governor's hesitancy as an opportunity to undermine the colony's current political authority.

¹⁵ Nathaniel Bacon, "The Declaration of the People against Sr. Wm. Berkley 1676," in *The Widow Ranter: or The History of Bacon in Virginia*, ed. Aaron R. Walden (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 148.

¹⁶ Nathaniel Bacon, "Manifesto," in *The Widow Ranter: or The History of Bacon in Virginia*, ed. Walden, 141.

For example, in the 1677 tract, “Strange News from Virginia,” the anonymous writer details the assorted groups involved in the Rebellion as “Runnagado,” or renegade Englishmen, assisted by their “Slaves and Servants.”¹⁷

Hutner considers Cockacoeske, the Indian queen of the Pamunkey tribe, the real-life inspiration for Behn’s fictional Semernia. Cockacoeske was the key Native leader in the tidewater region and served as a liaison between the English and the neighboring tribes during the time of Bacon’s Rebellion. Although historians now know more about Cockacoeske than Behn could gather from the publicly available news tracts about the colonies, the details of this Native woman’s life reveal the importance of Native women leaders to colonial negotiations. Berkeley and the colonial government had a peace agreement with Cockacoeske, so that when Bacon attacked her tribe during the Rebellion, she encouraged her people to flee instead of fighting and so violating the terms of their agreement. Behn’s play departs from this historical account of the female Native leader in part due to scant information on this leader in the materials Behn had available to her. Cockacoeske did not die in the rebellion and, unlike the chaste Semernia, Cockacoeske had a bi-racial child with an English general following the death of her Native husband.¹⁸ Behn’s fictional Native queen does not have the same strong political presence, and she certainly does not consummate her illicit desire for Bacon.

The information that the most popular contemporary news reports offer about the Native queen has some clear parallels to Behn’s re-telling; however, the

¹⁷ Anon., *Strange News from Virginia*, in *The Widow Ranter: or The History of Bacon in Virginia*, ed. Walden, 167.

¹⁸ Hutner, 97.

play is markedly romanticized in its presentation. According to Heidi Hutner and Janet Todd, Behn most likely drew her information about Bacon's Rebellion from three contemporaneous news reports: the anonymously authored *Strange News from Virginia* (1677), and its follow-up *More New from Virginia, Being a True and A Full Relation of All Occurrences in that Countrey, since the Death of Nath. Bacon with an Account of Thirteen Persons that Have Been Tryed and Executed for Their Rebellion There* (1677), and the official royal commissioner's report, *A True Narrative of the Rise, Progress, and Cessation of the Late Rebellion in Virginia* (1676). The source documents simply refer to Cockacoeske as "Queen of Pomonkas" or the "Queen of Pamunky."¹⁹ All of the contemporaneous documents chronicling the events on which Behn bases her play describe the Pamunkey Queen as an ally of the English and more powerful than neighboring tribes; indeed, the "Articles of Peace" between Charles II and the Indian Kings and Queens of Virginia grant the "Queen of the Pomunky" more power than any other native sovereign in the region.²⁰ The source materials describe the Indian queen's power and position in colonial society with reverence, and characterize Bacon's attacks on Cockacoeske and her tribe, including her horrific exile in the forest, as particularly heinous.

¹⁹ *More News from Virginia*, 176; and *A True Narrative of the Rise, Progress, and Cessation of the Late Rebellion in Virginia*, 203, all in *The Widow Ranter: or The History of Bacon in Virginia*, ed. Walden.

²⁰ The text of the treaty states: "each Indian King and Queen have equall power to govern their owne people and none to have greater power then other, except the Queen of Pomunky: to whom severall scattered Indians doe not [sic] againe owne their antient Subjection, and are agreed to come in and plant themselves under power and government, whoe with here are alsoe hereby included into this present League and treatie of peace and are to keep, and observe the same toward the said Queen in all things as her Subjects, as well as towards the English." See "Peace Treaty Between Charles II and the Virginia Tribes," in *The Widow Ranter*, ed. Walden, 222.

These records describe the allegiance and devotion of the historical Indian Queen to the English, oftentimes in contrast to the disobedient English rebels of Bacon's rabble. For example, the official Commissioner's Report of the Rebellion elaborates the anecdote of the queen's hardships in the forest in the wake of Bacon's warring and violence in a fair amount of detail:

The good Queen of Pamunky during this attaque to save her Life betooke herself to flight with onely one little Indian Boy of about ten yeares old along with her, and when she was once coming back with designe to throw herself upon the mercy of the English, Shee happened to meet with a deade Indian woman lying in the way being one of her owne nation; which struck such terror in the Queene that fearing their cruelty by that gastly example shee went on her first intended way into wild woodes where shee was lost and missing from her owne People ffourteen dayes, all that tyme being Sustained alive onely by gnawing sometimes upon the legg of a terrapin, which the little Boy found in the woods and brought her when she was ready to dye for want of ffoode, and of a great while had not Provisions for her support but noe necessity could include her to adhere to Bacon's overtures.²¹

This episode in particular appears to serve as inspiration for how Behn re-imagines her Indian Queen's death. Semernia flees into the woods "dress'd like an Indian Man, with a Bow in her Hand and Quiver at her Back," perhaps a conflation on Behn's part of the Pamunky Queen and the Indian boy who

²¹ *A True Narrative of the Rise, Progress, and Cessation of the Late Rebellion in Virginia*, 203-4.

accompanied her in the forest.²² However, unlike her historical counterpart who confronts the terrors of the colonial war by finding the dead body of one of her people and by being cut off from the society of her tribe, Semernia confronts the war through the loss of her lover and ruling power. The historical Indian Queen survives her ordeal in the forest and is restored to her position as a leader of her tribe and as an ally and servant to the English crown. The reports about the events in Virginia make no mention of the Native queen's husband or love interest; however, the insistence on her allegiance to the English crown provides a point of departure for Behn's development of the character of the Indian Queen in *The Widow Ranter*.

Indeed, Behn characterizes Semernia as displaying qualities that make her similar to women from English literary culture. Behn defines Semernia by following the conventions of the ideal early modern woman: chaste and submissive. Despite her political title of "queen," Semernia remains loyal to her husband and thus to her identity within the private family unit. She voices regret that she cannot act on her love for Bacon because she recognizes and honors her marriage to Cavarnio above her own sexual attraction to the colonist.²³

Furthermore, Semernia allows men, Cavarnio and Bacon, to claim a leadership

²² Aphra Behn, *The Widow Ranter*, ed. Walden, 110 stage direction to 5.3.1.

²³ In this chapter I use courtly romance in the sense of unconsummated, Platonic attractions predominant in the courtly drama traditions of Queen Henrietta Maria. Erica Veevers has argued that the forwarding of Platonic love was a way for the queen to make her Catholic religion more acceptable at the English court. As many critics have argued for Behn's own Catholic leanings, her adoption of a courtly love tradition connected to a queen not only associated with Catholicism but also symbolic of the royalist cause makes sense. See Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge, 1989). Karen Britland has also noted that Caroline conventions of courtly love fashioned storylines around the idea of "a single, true love" as a way to explain relationships among people engaged or married to other spouses. See Karen Britland, *Drama At The Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 48.

role in political negotiations while she intervenes only subtly, quite the opposite of how period sources document the actions of her historical counterpart. Behn's comparatively demure re-imagining of the principle Native ruler enables a dramatic contrast to Widow Ranter but allows Behn to include a sympathetic monarch.²⁴

Powerful Native Women: Indian Queens and Mistresses in Behn and Rowlandson

Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative of 1682 chronicles the female colonist's time as a political prisoner of Metacom's War from February to May of 1676.²⁵ Metacom's War broke out the same year as Bacon's Rebellion, and the anxieties and fears colonists historically held about Indians in both cases are quite similar, despite the different causes of each war and the very different colonial life of Puritan New England and the more mercantile Virginia commonwealth.²⁶

Metacom's War, also known as King Philip's War, was the violent reaction of

²⁴ Scholars have discussed Semernia's story as a political allegory concerning English politics. As Laura Brown argues about *Oroonoko* in *The Ends of Empire*, so Hutner and Liddy have argued that by means of Bacon's Rebellion Behn allegorically represents the English Civil War and even the exclusion of the Stuarts to the throne of England in *The Widow Ranter*.

²⁵ The scholarship on Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative is vast and draws on disparate critical approaches to consider discursive form, religion, colonialism, gender, race, and economics. Past criticism has tended to focus on how Rowlandson maintains her strong Puritan identity in the midst of an alien culture; see Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier: 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 102. See also, Ralph Bauer, "Creole Identities in Colonial Space: The Narratives of Mary White Rowlandson and Francisco Núñez de Pineda y Buscuñán," *American Literature* 69.4 (December 1997): 665-95; Duckhee Shin, "Gender and Creativity in Mary Rowlandson's Creation of Indian Captivity Narrative," *Feminist Studies in English Literature* 13.2 (Winter 2005): 111-28; and Rebecca Blevins Faery, *Cartographie of Desire: Captivity, Race, and Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 19-79.

²⁶ For a discussion of the relationship between Bacon's Rebellion and King Philip's War, see Stephen Saunders Webb, *1676 The End of American Independence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984). For more on King Philip's War, see Daniel R. Mandell, *King Philip's War: Colonial Expansion, Native Resistance, and the End of Indian Sovereignty* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

allied tribal groups against further European encroachment onto Native lands and the colonists' increasingly coercive attempts to convert Natives to Christianity.²⁷ Rowlandson's account describing the numerous hardships faced by the Puritan woman—the burning of her home, the death of relatives and fellow colonists, the loss of her own young child during captivity—was very popular in England and America. Most intriguing are Rowlandson's descriptions of her role within the Native community where she found herself a hostage, oftentimes plying her needle to craft or embellish garments at the request of the Narragansetts and Pocasset Wampanoags in exchange for extra food. Rowlandson describes her ordeal as a series of “removes,” her term for each separate location the Indians set up camp; thus she organizes her text in terms of geography. But as the narrative progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that the wife of Quannopin, her Narragansett Indian master, has the last word on Rowlandson's living arrangements and care. Her presence and Rowlandson's interaction with her thus become a prominent feature of the story of her captivity since the captive's interactions with the Indian woman highlight the English woman's resistance against vice and temptation, an important theme of the work. Rowlandson's Indian mistress,²⁸ referred to in the captivity narrative as “Wettimore” and historically known as “Weetamoo,” challenges Rowlandson's Puritan values by

²⁷ Converted Indians' position in colonial Puritan society became precarious as a result of King Philip's War. Although the death of John Sassamon, a Pequot convert, has often been cited as the precipitating event of King Philip's War, so-called “Praying Indians” had earlier been a figure of suspicion and even racial hatred in Puritan society. Kristina Bross, for example, has argued that Rowlandson's text represents Praying Indians as religious and cultural hypocrites; see *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 147-48, 181.

²⁸ This is Rowlandson's term for Weetamoo, and should be seen as the feminine version of “master.” As sister-in-law of Metacom, or King Philip, Weetamoo would ostensibly be part of the Native noble family.

obstructing the captive's religious devotional practices, such as reading the scriptures.

Historians such as Stephen Saunders Webb have yoked the events of Bacon's Rebellion with those of Metacom's War, examining the similarities of their effects on the future shape of colonial American life and government. Although historians have discussed Mary Rowlandson's text, they have done so without considering imaginative works such as Behn's. A comparison of literary texts that represent these two historical colonial events reveal intriguing similarities that echo the findings of historians, but offer a look at how discursive practices employed by both English and American writers were connected.

The representations of Semernia and Weetamoo rely on generic conventions that make the Native women seem familiar to early modern English audiences while drawing attention to gender issues such as women's political power (for Semernia) or women's stereotypical weaknesses (for Weetamoo). Similarity to the English characterizes both Native women. Although the two texts approach Native female power from different perspectives, they are alike in the ways each represents the centrality of Native women to both indigenous and colonial societies and in the ways the representation of their power communicates similarity to the English. The influence of these powerful Native women raises concerns and questions about Native rule and sovereignty and the threat it poses to English colonists. For example, Behn's play examines questions such as who has the right to govern American land and raises parallel questions regarding England's own debate over monarchy. On the other hand, Rowlandson's text

centers on the vices associated with power, reflecting her interest in religious, Puritan values; her text thus resists and condemns the power of the Native woman. However, even though Rowlandson's text takes a more critical view, the basis of her criticism of the Native woman still relies on similarity because she compares Weetamoo's vices to those of the English gentry who define power through material accumulation. Behn's Semernia emerges as the symbol of her disappearing tribe but also of the old form of Native government. Rowlandson's Weetamoo represents the challenges to Puritan values the captive English woman must meet before being allowed to return to her own society. In each case, gendered literary conventions determine the final outcome of each text: in Behn the question of what it means to be a female leader as well as the topic of women's predisposition towards excessive passion, and in Rowlandson the stereotypical qualities attributed to women, such as vanity and frivolity. Thus, both writers use negative conventions (excessive passion and vanity) to characterize their Native women characters as similar to English women, even though Behn's characterization is meant to be sympathetic and tragic.

The way each writer situates the Native woman in relation to familiar English reference points makes her at once comprehensible to the English, but also presents her as challenging to colonial efforts. Rowlandson paints an image of Weetamoo as vain, proud, and antagonistic towards the captive and her religion. The Indian mistress serves as a foil to Rowlandson's definition of ideal womanhood, but also functions as motivation in the narrative for Rowlandson to overcome her "affliction," the author's term for her suffering. The hardship

Rowlandson suffers under Weetamoo provides a sign of her elect status. Although Semernia's role as queen makes her a familiar character-type on the English stage, this familiarity challenges the legitimacy of English claims to Native land since it is already ruled by a monarch. In Rowlandson, familiarity is also a source of concern as she critiques Weetamoo's position as her mistress using characteristically English aristocratic vices.

Even though both Rowlandson's narrative and Behn's play ascribe alien characteristics to these powerful Native women, both women are represented as expressing their cultural difference through familiar English literary conventions. Despite the difference in genre and purpose between Rowlandson's and Behn's texts, each represents Native women as having significant roles in these moments of colonial upheaval. In Rowlandson's account, a Native woman presides over her captivity and determines the captive's subsistence and shelter. In Behn's play, a Native woman co-presides over a tribal court, underscoring her leadership abilities. Whereas the strangeness of Weetamoo makes her power over Rowlandson more threatening because it conflicts with the captive's Puritan beliefs, the strangeness of Semernia makes her less powerful in the face of the Rebellion by characterizing her power as antiquated.

The texts by Behn and Rowlandson focus on escalating conflicts between colonists and Natives over land possession, which makes the idealized representations of Native women, such as queens and princesses, less viable characterizations. However, in the imaginative traditional literary form of Behn's play, the idealized Native woman still persists, albeit in a slightly altered form

since she does die by the play's end. The difference between Behn's and Rowlandson's representations of Native Americans reflects the increasing divide between colonial and English societies. Linda Colley characterizes English attitudes about conflicts in the North American colonies as not wholly uninterested, but instead more preoccupied with matters facing the European continent. English support for the colonies in military matters usually took the form of extra arms and supplies, not troops, because English forces were already stretched thin, which led to a general marginalization of news related to the details of colonial culture with the exception of a handful of sensational headlines.²⁹ As a result, England's knowledge of increasing cultural and political conflicts with Native groups was often delayed, leading to their retaining some of the idealizations seen in earlier works (such as those by Dryden.) Linda Colley also cites an increasing awareness of cultural difference between English people born in the colonies and those born in England as a source of apathy for domestic concern over Native and colonist struggles: "As far as Britons at home were concerned, Native American attacks before 1750 almost exclusively affected colonists, people who increasingly were born in American, and who were unlikely

²⁹ Rowlandson's text even demonstrates the limited power of the English army, which she in turn interprets as part of God's plan. She describes the English army's failed attempt to save her from her captors during the fifth remove: "on that very day came the *English* Army after them to this River, and saw the smoke of their Wigwams; and yet this River put a stop to them. God did not give them the courage or activity to go over after us: we were not ready for so great a mercy as victory and deliverance: if we had been, God would have found out a way for the *English* to have passed this River, as well as for the *Indians* with their *Squaws* and *Children*"; see Mary Rowlandson, "A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson," in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, ed. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 22.

ever to spend time in Britain itself.”³⁰ Many stories of Indian captivities that circulated widely in North America among colonists never even reached English shores, with the exception of Rowlandson.³¹

How issues of power and sovereignty were represented increasingly divided English-based representations of Native Americans from those created from within the colonies. England continued to express interest in visual symbols of indigenous royalty, while colonists of the late seventeenth century became increasingly preoccupied with records in both print and material objects that signaled Native losses. For example, during King Philip’s War, the King of England was sent the belt and other personal ornaments from the body of King Philip, and colonial minister Cotton Mather snatched King Philip’s jaw bone from its permanent display at the Plymouth colony. Thus, the English king received material symbols of Metacom’s noble status and leadership while Mather relished keeping a piece of the Native man’s carcass.³²

The distinction between English and colonial interests in Native “souvenirs” carries over into representational strategies. Hence, English

³⁰ See Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 160.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 137-67. Indeed, the popularity of Rowlandson in England provided the basis of Nancy Armstrong’s and Leonard Tennenhouse’s argument that compares the archetypal English novel heroine of Richardson’s *Pamela* to Mary Rowlandson. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse argue for a connection between Mary Rowlandson and the genre of women’s American captivity narratives and Richardson’s *Pamela* and the rise of the English novel. They assert that the novel has its origins in captivity narratives, and that unlike Defoe’s famed eponymous character Crusoe, Pamela and Mary Rowlandson are able to re-enter the societies they were separated from during their captivities due to social expectations for gender roles. See *The Imaginary Puritan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 196-216.

³² Colley, 161. It should also be noted that after Metacom was shot to death in 1676, the New England colonists quartered and displayed his dead body throughout the Plymouth colony; thus display of the defeated Native body was a prominent part of early colonial warfare between the two groups. One of Metacom’s hands was preserved in a bucket of rum where it was displayed across the colonies for admission. See Mandell, 127.

audiences, writers, and artists still easily conceived of Native American cultures in terms of primitive versions of the sovereignty already familiar to them, while later colonial writers began to modify their use of similarity between Native and English. For example, the four Indian “kings” who visited the English court in 1710 were portrayed using the conventions of patrician portraiture, and were depicted in settings or holding attributes that corresponded to their roles as leaders of state, or men of privilege and leisure, entitled to hunt.³³ By contrast, colonists besieged and beleaguered by frontier strife began to demonize Natives in their representations, a feature that emerges in Rowlandson’s text; she calls the Natives who burn the colonists’ houses and take captives “diabolical,” “hell-hounds,” and “black as the Devil.”³⁴ Rowlandson deploys these epithets when describing the Natives’ burning of her home, and these terms stand in contrast to her emphasis on the “Christian” blood that has been shed in the raid.³⁵ Rowlandson tends to reserve her most heated language for decrying the wholesale acts of the Natives as a group. The demonic descriptors just listed are all used in conjunction with bands of Indians, as opposed to individuals. Hence, Rowlandson still uses conventions of similarity to the English when describing individual Native characters, such as Weetamoo. The tradition of describing Native queens and kings always distinguished them as unique from their larger social and cultural group—as discussed in the earlier chapter on Raleigh. Although representational practices between England and the colonies were diverging, the focus on individualized character portraits enabled continuity of rhetorical traditions on both sides of the

³³ Colley, 164-67.

³⁴ Rowlandson, 10, 14, 40.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

Atlantic even though English texts portrayed Natives as more idealized than their colonial counterparts.

In Behn and Rowlandson the female characters tend to be more individualized than their male counterparts. Rowlandson relates several anecdotes about different Natives she shared meals with or made clothes for, but, as is typical of her representations of the Indians she encountered, she mainly describes how they treated her—if they allowed her to see her children or gave her sufficient food. Weetamoo is the exception to Rowlandson’s discursive practices. Rowlandson describes the Native woman’s personality, appearance, demeanor, as well as how she treated Rowlandson during her captivity. Likewise, Behn develops Semernia’s character and role in *The Widow Ranter* more than any other Native character. The audience learns about Semernia’s wishes and desires, as well as the “back-story” of her character’s life before the time of the action of the play. The more individualized treatment of these two Indian women compared to other Natives in these texts about colonial strife underlines the women’s pivotal role in colonist and indigenous relations. Furthermore, the representation of these Native women enables the authors to offer more personalized perspectives on these conflicts: the experience of the individual captive and the romantic complexities that arise in the midst of frontier violence. The focus on personal details allows the writers to convey similarity between Native and English by including information about the women’s places in their homes or in their personal relationship—both sites that the authors use to express similarity.

Rowlandson depicts Weetamoo as antithetical to Puritan values and surrounds her with a discourse of worldly vanity as defined by upper-class English luxury culture. Thus Rowlandson connects the regal Native woman to English aristocratic culture even though it is a cultural similarity of which Rowlandson disapproves. For example, Rowlandson describes Weetamoo's pride in her physical appearance and dress:

A severe and proud Dame she was; bestowing every day in dressing her self near as much time as any of the Gentry of the land: powdering her hair and painting her face, going with her Neck-laces, with Jewels in her ears, and bracelets upon her hands. When she had dressed her self, her Work was to make Girdles of Wampom and Beads.³⁶

The descriptions of Weetamoo's pride and vanity familiarize her to a European audience by situating her within the context of luxury culture; this similarity to European culture, however, remains alien to strict Puritan theology. The description details Weetamoo's elaborate dressing ritual and includes the accoutrements of her dress in terms from English and European traditions of women's consumer culture—powdering, painting, jewels, necklaces, and bracelets. These are not terms that register as specifically foreign or exotic. Indeed, the list of primping activities satirizes the rituals of English ladies and makes the comparison to English culture an unflattering one. The similarity between the Native woman and the implied English woman is a source of criticism; Weetamoo embodies the upper-class vices familiar from Rowlandson's own English background. Contextualizing vices familiar to English luxury culture

³⁶ Ibid., 37.

within Native culture—vices such as vanity and pride which were anathema in Puritan culture—enables the captive to make the incomprehensible violence of Metacom’s War understandable. Not only does Rowlandson portray herself as astute enough to assess the situation, but also as wary enough to avoid falling prey to such “vanity.” Weetamoo’s connection to English gentry women is further underscored by her primary labor. Like a gentry woman who would sew or embroider, Weetamoo works on wampum and beads. The privileged status of Weetamoo’s labor for decorative purposes contrasts to Rowlandson’s own labor among the Natives. Whereas Rowlandson sews and makes garments in exchange for sustenance, Weetamoo’s labor is described in recreational, rather than economic, terms.

Rowlandson’s detailed description of Weetamoo in the scene describing her dressing ritual sets up an implicit comparison between the Native woman and the English captive. Rowlandson’s representation of Weetamoo as similar to the English signals anxiety and confusion as opposed to familiarity and comfort as in the other texts discussed in previous chapters. Rowlandson does not represent Weetamoo as copying English fashions or customs and instead represents her as already having characteristics in common with them. However, Rowlandson represents the other Natives as becoming similar to the English through assimilation and conversion. In both cases, Rowlandson expresses anxiety and skepticism about Natives who appear similar to the English. Rowlandson’s criticism of Natives who adapt English fashions can be seen as part of a larger

cultural argument made by detractors of Praying Indians.³⁷ Kristina Bross has noted that in accounts written before King Philip's War, "missionaries had noted bobbed hair, psalm singing, and broken English as evidence of the Praying Indians' redemption from Satan and transformation into Christians. But war chroniclers cite these same signs as evidence of intrinsic deception, blasphemy, and stupidity made all the more despicable by evangelists' earlier promises of acculturation."³⁸ The visible signs, then, of Native conversion were not reliable. Although Rowlandson's characterization of similarity between Native and English was a textual strategy with an early modern antecedent, the type of similarity used and its purpose differs. Whereas the earlier texts used similarity to express a positive connection between colonizer and colonized, in Rowlandson similarity expresses how colonists see both the Natives and non-Puritan English as different from them. Weetamoo thus reminds Rowlandson of the wrong type of English women, women whom she condemns, according to her Puritan values.

Rowlandson distances herself from Weetamoo to express her Puritan agenda: her suffering at the hands of Weetamoo is God's test, and the end of that suffering will provide evidence of her election. For example, in one episode with Weetamoo, Rowlandson explains that she has not cared for her appearance in a long time. She had been separated from her primary master and mistress and was delivered back to them by King Philip himself, who tells her she "*shall be Mistriss again,*" a message that comes at the precise moment she needs to lift her

³⁷ The term "praying Indians" came from John Eliot, a seventeenth-century Puritan minister and the author of *Indian Dialogues*, who coined the term to refer to Indian converts to Christianity in New England. Praying Indians also lived apart from the unconverted of their tribes and lived in "praying towns." See Bross, 22-23.

³⁸ Bross, 147.

“little Spirit.”³⁹ That she receives this information from King Philip lends her captivity a more impressive note; she is not captive to an average Indian, but is captive to King Philip’s relatives (Weetamoo and her husband). Rowlandson may be a captive, but she is a captive of royalty.⁴⁰ Thus the emphasis on Native royal epithets and status throughout Rowlandson’s narrative reflects her own special place as a captive who in her own society was a prominent personage. Once Philip returns the captive to his sister-in-law and her husband, Rowlandson’s master asks, “when I washt me? I told him not this moneth; then he fetch me some water himself, and bid me wash, and gave me the Glass to see how I lookt.”⁴¹ The Indian captors telling her to wash indicate an interest in appearance. This short exchange at the reunion with her captors simultaneously shows the Indian man’s kindness towards her, which will soon be contrasted by his wife’s haughty behavior, but also the captors’ emphasis on appearance. Rowlandson does not ask them to allow her to improve her appearance; when she does ask them for assistance, it is always for food or to see her children. Rowlandson being directed by her captors to tend to her personal grooming directly precedes her description of Weetamoo’s dressing rituals, thereby making a comparison of the two women’s care of themselves inevitable. Her master’s first wife, whom Rowlandson simply refers to as the “old squaw,” gives her food following her washing up. Weetamoo does not freely give Rowlandson food, and in fact

³⁹ Ibid., 37, and 36.

⁴⁰ Her captivity among members of Native royalty could be allegorically read as Puritan values being lost in English society more broadly with the restoration of Charles II. Her criticism of her captors also allows for the possibility of a more general Puritan criticism and rejection of monarchical values that oppress Puritan religion.

⁴¹ Rowlandson, 37.

requests that Rowlandson return to her home to continue serving her. The old wife's care characterizes this Native woman as obedient to her husband's orders, and Rowlandson even calls the old wife "kind" when she offers to provide her with food and lodging. The age of the "old squaw" stands in contrast the youth and vanity of Weetamoo.

Weetamoo's status is further shown through the domestic hierarchy of the Indian home. Rowlandson asserts that "*Wettimore's Maid*" came to fetch her home, lending more authority to her mistress as a woman who not only commands captives, but also servants.⁴² Although Rowlandson lives with different wives and in different households of her master, Weetamoo is the person she primarily "had lived with and served all this while."⁴³ The return of the captive to her usual mistress enables Rowlandson to distinguish Weetamoo from the friendly old squaw and, thus, to paint a picture of "bad" Indians or "good" Indians. However, it also highlights issues of Indian hierarchy and the captive's deliverance. Rowlandson interprets the unpleasant task of returning to serve Weetamoo as a sign that confirms King Philip's earlier statement that she will soon be her own mistress again, for she says,

I understood that *Wettimore* thought, that if she should let me go and serve with the old Squaw, she would be in danger to lose not only my service but the redemption-pay also. And I was not a little

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

glad to hear this; being by it raised my hopes, that in Gods due time there would be an end of this sorrowful hour.⁴⁴

Weetamoo's negative traits as depicted by Rowlandson, in this instance chiefly her avarice, become the mechanism to again reveal Rowlandson's belief that her release will come soon, an event that will come "in Gods due time" and will reveal her Elect status.

The narrative's final description of Weetamoo comes just before Rowlandson's release and depicts Weetamoo as a member of a larger tribal network as opposed to an individual, a change from the earlier representation of this figure. As Rowlandson prepares for her return to her family, she begins to distance herself and English culture from the Natives. She describes Weetamoo less as the ostentatious and oppressing regal woman with whom Rowlandson had to spend many days and more as a member of a larger tribal group from which the captive is physically and culturally distanced. This time Weetamoo's appearance and dress is again catalogued, but her haughty behavior is not. The negotiations for her release obviously underway, Rowlandson describes a Native dance and celebration—an event she implies is another sign her time among them will end soon. Rowlandson describes the Indians as being preoccupied with preparations for their dance and describes her captors' apparel, with additional emphasis on Weetamoo and her husband:

He was dressed in his Holland Shirt, with great Laces sewed at the tail of it; he had his silver Buttons, his white Stockings, his Garters were hung round with Shillings, and he had Girdles of Wampon

⁴⁴ Ibid.

upon his Head and Shoulders. She had a Kersey Coat, and covered with Girdles of Wampom from the Loins and upward. Her arms from her Elbows to her Hands were covered in Bracelets; there were handfals of Neck-laces about her Neck, and several sorts of Jewels in her Ears. She had find red Stockins, and white Shoos, her Hair powdered, and her Face painted Red, that was always before Black. And all the Dancers were after the same manner.⁴⁵

The list of items in these costumes is a conspicuous mix of English and Native styles. Whereas the earlier catalog of Weetamoo's finery used generic garment classifications that could easily be applied to an Englishwoman's dress, this time there is more emphasis on Wampum decorations and the excessive quantity of jewelry that Rowlandson sees as distinctive in Native attire. To further distinguish the Native identity of her captors' clothes, Rowlandson describes their attire as "after the same manner" of the rest of the dancers. This description underscores their tribal identity as opposed to their individual ones. The dance and its costumes attest one last time to the foreignness of the company she is leaving.

While earlier writers use similarity between English and Native cultures as a way to bring the two groups closer together, and thus under the shared governance of England, Rowlandson uses similarity as a rhetorical strategy for maintaining her Puritan English colonist identity. Interestingly, Rowlandson describes the Natives initially as devils during the raid on her home, but during

⁴⁵ Ibid., 42

her captivity her representations soften⁴⁶ to describe the kindness she receives from certain Indians, such as the old squaw. She then moves to a characterization of Natives in terms of English vice, thus making them similar to the English even if in unflattering terms, and finally returns to a characterization of them as demonic and alien right before she departs to return home. The distancing rhetorical strategy Rowlandson employs makes the Indians stranger when she is in closer proximity to English colonial culture. Similarity through comparisons appear most frequently when Rowlandson finds herself embedded within Wampanoag culture. A frequent phenomenon of captivity in seventeenth-century America was the capture of English, usually children, by Natives in order to repopulate their tribes following heavy losses from frontier conflict, which at times led to the permanent immersion of English people in Native societies.⁴⁷ Describing similarities between Natives and English affords Rowlandson the opportunity to assert that she has not gone “native.” Although she may be living among the Wampanoag her focus on the great number of similarities between her and her Native captors assure her readers that she is not partaking in strange Native customs, nor does she find herself surrounded by strange ways. Upon her return to her husband, Rowlandson defines the two cultures in terms of Heathens and Christians, and finally reduces the Natives to a scourge as part of God’s

⁴⁶ The notable exception to this is the coldness she maintains about the death of Weetamoo’s baby where she describes the Indian women’s mourning as howls. Rowlandson describes the loss of the Indian baby as beneficial: “there was more room,” and she admits that she “could not much condole with them” (32-33).

⁴⁷ Colley notes an insistence on “enduring Englishness” among a variety of early modern captivity narratives to reassure readers that the captive’s return to English society would be seamless and to quell any criticism of learning indigenous ways. See 151.

“strange providence.”⁴⁸ Thus, in her final analysis, Rowlandson ascribes the strangeness and aristocratic vices of the Indians as having a special role in fostering adherence to her own Puritan culture, depicting the roles of Natives and colonists as mutually reliant upon the other.

Rowlandson’s positioning of Weetamoo as a variation of the English gentry-woman makes the Native woman’s negative characteristics comprehensible to Rowlandson, but suggests that how the Natives act as a mirror that reflects the colonists’ own excesses and sins. By making Weetamoo a vain “aristocrat,” Rowlandson makes her captivity narrative not a retelling of cultural clashes, or even a civilian’s perspective on King Philip’s War, but rather a story of religious conviction that reaffirms Puritan doctrine and theology.

Rowlandson’s representation of Weetamoo enables comparisons between aristocratic and Puritan English culture and, thus, reflects the author’s interest in defining piety and Christian devotion. The Indian mistress also has the most significant position of power over Rowlandson during her captivity. Weetamoo proves the strongest test of Rowlandson’s faith. The characteristics that Weetamoo shares with ladies from English luxury culture are unique to women. Weetamoo’s position as a woman enables Rowlandson to share daily life with her captor in a way that does not compromise her virtue and reputation. The narrator forges a rhetorical bond through a series of comparisons to the Native woman to reclaim her own place as a Puritan woman.

Similarly, Behn’s play sets up an implicit comparison between colonial and Native cultures through Semernia and the Widow Ranter. Behn’s Indian

⁴⁸ Rowlandson, 45.

queen and the Widow Ranter both look for love in the midst of frontier conflict; but, unlike Rowlandson's narrative, where Weetamoo served as a foil and test to Rowlandson's own identity and faith, Semernia's story when compared to the Widow's shows a shift in female power and authority in the colonies from a monarchical model to a mercantile one. Behn portrays her two women characters as sharing a similar approach to the relationship between love and power; however, the failure of one and the success of the other reflect historical changes in patterns of government within Virginia. Semernia's power comes from her position and title as queen, and her similarity to English women comes not only from the familiar character type of "queen" but also from the way Behn portrays her love for Bacon in terms of courtly romance traditions.⁴⁹ By contrast, the Widow is wealthy from the colonial merchant experience since she inherits her late husband's business. Ranter's power comes from her financial capital, and her romantic relatively operates much like a business negotiation. Thus Ranter emerges as the woman in the colony who does not fit traditional women's roles in English literature because of her occupation; thus, Behn portrays the white English colonist as more different from the ideal English woman than the Native woman. Just as the violence of Metacom's War forced Rowlandson to cling more strongly to her Puritan convictions and place Native culture in relation to her worldview, the violence of Bacon's Rebellion leads Behn to familiarize the power of the Native threat in terms of English monarchy but then discredit it as antiquated in an expanding colonial economy. Thus, the changing roles for

⁴⁹ See note 23. Behn's use of romance traditions follows closely the types of Neo-Platonic courtly romances emphasizing chastity associated with Henrietta Maria's court. Although Semernia and Bacon desire each other, Behn's Native queen remains sexually faithful to her husband.

women in a colonial environment explain to a degree the differences between Semernia and Weetamoo. Rowlandson depicts Weetamoo within the particularized experience of New World captivity, while Behn applies the European framework of royal courts to Virginia without explaining how a colonial queen differs from a European one.

Behn's Rebellion: Cross-dressing Women and other Social Transgressions

The Widow Ranter expresses political troubles and anxiety through romantic entanglements, a rhetorical move that connects the private sphere embodied by romance to the public sphere of politics and empire. The doomed relationship between Bacon and Semernia symbolizes the unsuitableness of the rebels' class transgressions. The play introduces the character of Bacon through a conversation between two English colonists who describe the Rebellion leader's dual desires: glory in war and love from the Indian Queen Semernia. Indeed, the Virginia colonists explain Bacon's love for Semernia solely in terms of political ambition without conceding the possibility of emotional or even sexual attraction to her. The colonist Friendly states, "The thirst of glory cherished by sullen melancholy, I believe was the first motive that made him in love with the young Indian queen, fancying no hero ought to be without his princess."⁵⁰ Semernia, whom the colonist only refers to by her title "queen," exists in this first reference as one piece of Bacon's political plan—she would complete his image of himself as a conqueror in the vein of Alexander the Great or the Roman Romulus. Curiously, the passage makes little of his desire for an Indian woman. According

⁵⁰ Behn, 1.1.134-6.

to the speaker, Bacon's love for the queen and his desire to win her made him beg for a commission to fight the Indians. What is left out by the colonist characters is how Semernia feels about Bacon. The conversation between Friendly and Hazard suggests that Bacon will attempt to take her by force, particularly because the conversation revolves around his military action against the Indian raiders. But the conversation also demonstrates how in the play questions of desire are intertwined with questions of political power. This early assertion of force without consent establishes Bacon as a rebel leader and makes the Indians he plans to besiege appear as victims, especially since the next scene shows the Indian King and Queen to be peaceful and civil.

The civility of the negotiations of the Indian monarchs with Bacon introduces the Native characters as similar to English royal characters. Behn initially represents Semernia as a commanding and civil monarch, but as the play's political tensions increase, her refinement becomes compromised by Native "grotesque antics." Semernia makes her first stage appearance in the play in the context of the "Indian royal court" which emphasizes her position as a monarch. Bacon describes Semernia as a virtuous woman in the most flattering terms. As Margo Hendricks observes, "the Indianness of the monarchs is subsumed by their identification with Bacon."⁵¹ Hendricks reads Bacon's presence as the reason the Indians appear to be civil; according to Hendricks, Bacon's sense of control in the scene creates order and sets a model for behavior. However, this reading leaves the Native monarchs merely to ventriloquize courtly platitudes, which may oversimplify the dynamics of the scene. Rather, the scene begins with the Indian

⁵¹ Hendricks, 232.

King initiating the dialogue between the tribe and Bacon by stating, “I am sorry, sir, we meet upon these terms, we who so often have embraced as friends.”⁵² Cavarnio laments the current disagreement between the two groups, and, as the initiator of the dialogue, he, not Bacon, sets the tone for the courtly deportment and not Bacon. Semernia, however, emerges as the dominant voice in this diplomatic negotiation over and above those of the men’s. Once the colonist Duncie enters to deliver a message to Bacon, the Indian King becomes sidelined and Semernia becomes the central figure with whom Bacon speaks. In the Indian King’s absence, Bacon shifts the focus from colonial politics to his love for the queen, which he claims leaves the Indian Queen in “command” over him.⁵³

In the first half of the play while the political tensions rise in the colony and the precise conflict remains unclear, Behn creates sympathetic Indian characters who by comparison to the corrupt colonists are diplomatic and refined and, most importantly, civil, as befits their title. In fact the politeness of the negotiations of the Indian monarchs with Bacon at first raises the question of who is the real threat in the play: the Indians or the rabble of colonial upstarts determined to ensnare Bacon and to stop him from thwarting their desires of social mobility and prestige. The polite court culture of the Indian monarchs is immediately contrasted with a farcical colonial court episode full of drunken debauchery and misunderstandings about legal terms that reveal the colonists to be not only uncouth, but also uneducated.

⁵² Behn, 2.1.1-2.

⁵³ Ibid., 2.1.133.

Semernia's cultural allegiance is never made clear throughout the work, which enables her character to have an ambiguous and even ambivalent cultural or even racial position for much of the play. This ambiguity mirrors the development of the colonial conflict, at times presenting the Rebellion as necessary to the English crown's colonial interests and at others as detrimental to it. Semernia's social position as a queen separates her from the other Indian characters in the play since she possesses an epithet ("Queen") that makes her similar to English royalty. The "Indian court" scene focuses on Bacon's diplomatic negotiations but then develops into a story of love between him and the Indian Queen. As in Petrarchan sonnets, each lover in Behn's play expresses desire instead of consummating it.⁵⁴ Bacon exclaims that Semernia is "charming" and laments in asides how she is unavailable to him because of her marriage. Semernia similarly sighs about Bacon's "charms," and indeed, her attraction to the Englishman inspires her to forge a peaceful resolution between the two factions, pleading: "Is it impossible there might be wrought an understanding betwixt my lord and you? 'Twas to that end I first desired this truce, myself proposing to be mediator."⁵⁵ Interestingly, Semernia and not her husband, the young Indian King Cavarnio, makes political decisions and initiates governance. Cavarnio may receive the first word in the negotiations, but Semernia guides the direction of the conversation towards a productive resolution.

The first hint of Semernia's cultural differences from Bacon aptly occurs after a lavish display of tribal exoticism that interrupts the first scene at the Indian

⁵⁴ The only exception being the character of the Widow Ranter.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.1.26-28.

court—a spectacle of Indians “that dance antics.” This spectacle emphasizes that, although the Indian King and Queen thus far have conversed civilly with Bacon, they are by no means culturally the same. The dance interlude provides a transitional space from polite negotiations to the reality of the colony's troubles. During the dancing episode, Duncie arrives with a message for Bacon. Semernia is the first to speak after the dancing and describes her dissatisfaction at finding herself caught in a cross-cultural romance, lamenting, “The more I gaze upon this English stranger, the more confusion struggles in my soul; oft I have heard of love, and oft this gallant man (when peace had made him pay his idle visits) has told a thousand tales of dying maids.”⁵⁶ Her recognition of Bacon as a stranger anticipates that their romance is doomed before it even begins since she associates the Englishman with tales about dying maids, and by the plays’ end she becomes another such story. The conflation of “peace” with “dying” creates paradoxical sentiments in which Bacon’s and Semernia’s previous “idle” time together is marked by unpleasant reflection on the past. Of course, “dying maids” alludes also to sexual orgasm, thus, further underscores the queen’s illicit desire. The dance scene detracts attention from the actual substance of the political issues between the colonists and the Indians, and even the divisions among the colonial subset factions. Thus the first dance interlude shifts the tone of the scene from politics to romance. Although Semernia’s discovery of love for Bacon leads her to detail the differences between Native and English, the development of the romance story makes the queen seem familiar to the English audience since Behn has her character resort to conventional lover’s laments.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 2.1.43-46.

When the Indian village and court are shown in Act IV for the second and final time of the play, Bacon is absent, and instead of depicting refined court culture the scene brims over with exotic ritual, dance, and superstition. Idols and prophecies abound, and the Indian monarchs emerge fully as “others.” This scene occurs right after the termination of the temporary truce agreed upon in the earlier Indian court scene. A soldier reports to Bacon: “The truce being ended, sir, the Indians grow so insolent as to attack us even in our camp, and have killed several of our men,” to which Bacon replies, “‘Tis time to check their boldness.”⁵⁷ The change in the political climate in turn changes the representation of the Native monarchs and the rest of the tribe. The strange and threatening overtones of what Behn describes as pagan rituals complete with foreign chants reflects the destabilized political climate; furthermore, the play presents the Indians’ summoning of strange rituals to thwart the colonist’s success. The Indian King says “Invoke the god of our Quiocto to declare what the event shall be of this our last war against the English General.”⁵⁸

The first scene of the Indian village Behn depicts as a familiar and civil space but this changes over the play, leading to its characterization as a site that is culturally other. The dancing spectacle reinforces the increasing divide between Native and colonist. This final return to the Indian village clearly alienates it from the familiar European context by the strange, pagan religious ritual that the Indian King invokes to combat the “English general.”⁵⁹ Behn depicts the exoticism of the Native culture as a threat to colonial society and English people. Although it is the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 3.2.257-9.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.1.3-5.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Indian King who primarily articulates the ritual invocation to their god Quiocto, Semernia is shown as a complicit participant. The stage directions have her bowing and making offerings in front of an altar with a statue of the Indian god. However, the ritual scene shows Semernia as a character in conflict between two different ways of life: Indian and English. She worries that her husband interprets the Priest and Priestesses' prophecy too optimistically, revealing the character's skepticism about Native culture's practices and beliefs. Behn attributes to Semernia an admission of guilt over her secret relish that if her husband dies in battle, she can freely desire Bacon. Thus, her skepticism concerning Native beliefs along with her preference for Bacon distance Semernia from her Native culture and align her more closely to the English. Her attraction to the English way of life in this scene underscores her similarities to the English.

Semernia's conflicted romantic interest in Bacon increases as relations deteriorate between the colonists and Natives. This conflict complicates the relationship between difference and similarity since the political situations marks her as increasingly different, yet her love for Bacon marks her as similar to other romantic characters. She even compares her love for the Englishman to religious conversion, an event which signals the shift from one belief, or cultural tradition, to another. The context of pagan ritual and offering of this scene furthers the tone of conversion. She states:

What pity 'tis I saw the general, before my fate had given me to
the king—but now—like those that change their gods, my faithless
mind 'twixt two opinions wavers; while to the gods my monarch I

commend, my wandering thoughts in pity of the general makes
that zeal cold, declined—ineffectual;--if for the general I implore
the deities, methinks my prayers should not ascend the skies since
honour tells me 'tis an impious zeal.⁶⁰

Semernia understands that her prayers to protect Bacon in the ensuing battle are sacrilegious to her Native gods and traitorous to her Native culture, especially as the political tensions escalate between the colonists and the Indians.

Semernia in her last scene assumes the clothing of an Indian man to escape the colonists' raid on the Indian village, a move which visually disavows her earlier similarity to English courtly culture. When she dresses like a man, she looks like one of the threatening Indians so feared by the colonists in the recent Indian raids against the English. The men's clothing as well as the weapons transform her from a familiar monarch to a dangerous Indian. As an Indian Queen she may have been a foreign monarch, but her civilities as a queen and her use of lover's laments made her familiar to Bacon and the play's audience. As an armed Indian man, however, she represents the brute force behind the attacks on colonists that spurred on the Rebellion.

Furthermore, the play suggests that in imaginative literature *women* from foreign cultures can be more easily incorporated into the play's dominant English colonial culture. The diplomacy involved in monarchical duties to a degree means that political negotiations give way to cultural ones. Behn's casting of Semernia as a romantic, albeit tragic, heroine suggests that the Indian Queen finds the Anglo-culture appealing in her attraction to Bacon and her growing skepticism

⁶⁰ Ibid., 4.1.52-59.

concerning her Native faith. However, the possibility of cultural renegotiation is foreclosed by Semernia's death—an event that is precipitated by her cross-dressing—the question of Semernia's allegiance forever remains open, leaving her position as Native queen and colonial ally ambiguous. Thus, the similarities between Native and English depend on Semernia portraying a stable gender identity—dressed as a man she no longer registers as similar.

Nostalgia and Similitude: Creating Memories of Familiarization

The love between Behn's characters is doomed from the start not only because Semernia is married, but also because each lover belongs to an opposing faction of the colonial rebellion. Thus, Semernia relies on idealized memories to sustain her similarity to English colonial culture. Behn represents Semernia's personal memory of Bacon as a tool to elide the omnipresent violence of the Rebellion and colonial encroachments on Native land. Behn's dramatic portrayal reveals how memory functions to reshape unpleasant political histories by shifting the focus to interpersonal romantic entanglements and blurring the distinction between personal and cultural memories. This love story represents a nostalgic longing for an earlier moment in colonial history that counters the present moment of defeat and violence. At the height of the play's action, Semernia recollects her personal and idealized memory of Bacon in a more peaceful time and attempts to recast the fraught tensions of the current colonial uprising and the subsequent destruction of her tribe in terms of an unsuccessful love affair. The shift from a collective and shared colonial experience to a personal and emotional

one privileges the individual over the nation or body politic, and thus suppresses the very issues that incited the Rebellion. This emphasis on the personal also provides more opportunities for Behn to portray her Native character as similar to the English since in developing the love story the playwright increasingly assigns speeches to Semernia that follow the conventions of either Shakespearean adulation and praise or of laments for unrequited love—both textual features that read as specifically English.

Towards the end of the play, and shortly before her death at the hand of her English lover, Semernia reminisces about the first moment she saw Bacon. Her account of the colonial conqueror who stole her heart, an idealization of his physical form, reveals the importance of memory in reshaping colonial encounters. Semernia tells her confidante Anaria:

. . . I adore this
General,—take from my soul a truth—till now conceal'd—
at twelve years Old—at the Pauwomungian Court I saw this
Conqueror. I saw him young and Gay as new-born Spring,
Glorious and Charming as the Mid-days Sun, I watch't his
looks, and listened when he spoke, and thought him more than
Mortal.⁶¹

In this passage Semernia shares her memory of Bacon and provides new information for the audience that makes her more sympathetic. The doomed romance between Bacon and Semernia becomes more tragic because the emphasis on the queen's memory of Bacon conveys the long passage of time during which

⁶¹ Ibid., 5.3.18-24.

she has loved the colonist.⁶² Furthermore, the passage describes Semernia's love differently⁶³ from that of other adulterous, non-European queens of English drama, such as Shakespeare's Cleopatra, Thomas Heywood's Tota, or Marlowe's Dido, whose sexual desires and satisfaction motivate them.⁶⁴

There is, however, an uncanny resemblance between the words Semernia uses to describe her memory of Bacon and Vernon's speech about Hal's glorious entry onto the battlefield in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*. The particular comparisons to Hal "As full of spirit as the month of May, / And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer" and "like feathered Mercury" are echoed in Behn's paraphrase. Behn's figurative comparisons of the young Bacon to spring, the sun, and immortal beings follows the same sequence of comparisons that Shakespeare's Vernon uses to describe the young, but regal, Hal. The allusion to *1 Henry IV* reminds the audience that Behn's play is a history play, and as such, re-envision the past. In *The Widow Ranter* Bacon's transformation is the inverse of Hal's heroic one. The similarity of phrase and structure between Shakespeare's Vernon and Behn's Semernia connects the Native character more firmly to traditionally English stage characters.

In this reminiscing, Semernia redefines colonial conflict not as competition for land or power, but as rivalry for the same woman's body, which

⁶² The "Pauwomungian court," is a possible corruption of the name Pamunkey; see Hutner, 97.

⁶³ See Shakespeare, *The History of Henry the Fourth (1 Henry IV)* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: Norton, 1997), 1147-224. Vernon's speech to Hotspur occurs at 4.1.97-111.

⁶⁴ See Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt, 2619-708. See, also, Thomas Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the West Parts I and II*; and Marlowe, *Dido, Queen of Carthage* in *Christopher Marlowe, The Complete Plays*, ed. Frank Romany and Robert Lindsey (London: Penguins Books, 2003), 1-68.

has a similarly defined value in both Native and English culture.⁶⁵ By privileging possession of the Indian queen, memory has reshaped colonial and indigenous relations. The turn from competition over the same land to competition over the same woman changes the historical motives behind the military events of the Rebellion. In Behn's imagining, love trumps war, or rather, the author "re-members" the colonial event by reconstituting the various members, or parts, of the events of 1676 through a personal memory.⁶⁶ In particular, the transformation of colonial violence into romantic disappointment is a perspective in the play unique to Semernia's character,⁶⁷ but is a feature that can also be read in terms of the significance of her royal title. As queen, the character of Semernia symbolizes her tribal nation in much the same way that the earlier Queen Elizabeth was a symbol of England; thus the personal affairs of Semernia allegorically represent the history of colonial dispossession of Native peoples. In the play the memory of one woman stands in for the collective memory of her tribe. The play's recourse to memory encodes romantic sentiment as a feminine reaction, but cannot erase the masculine militaristic language of conquest; in her reminiscence, Bacon conquers her heart.⁶⁸ For instance, when describing her inability to combat the love she still has for Bacon, she laments that "all my Artillery is sighs and Tears,"

⁶⁵ Behn's description of war as a romantic disagreement of course had earlier precedents, including the mythic tale of Helen's role in the Trojan War in Homer's *The Iliad*.

⁶⁶ Early in *The Widow Ranter* the other colonists of the play declare that Bacon's true motive behind his struggle with the local Native Americans is to win Semernia. The character Friendly states, "The Thirst of Glory cherisht by Sullen Melancholly, I believe was the first Motive that made him in Love with the young Indian Queen, fancying no Hero ought to be without his Princess" 1.1.34-37.

⁶⁷ By contrast, the other main character of the play, Widow Ranter, translates military victory into romantic victory since her match with Daring is concluded during one of the Rebellion's fracas.

using the bellicose metaphor to characterize her emotions.⁶⁹ The play asks the audience to recognize the incompatibility of romantic emotions with her choice of metaphor; this only serves to highlight the futility of her fight to cast away the memory of her lover. If she can put aside her love for Bacon, then she can flee the scene of colonial violence in which she finds herself. Her love for Bacon has not only left her emotionally vanquished but also eventually leads to her death.

Although Semernia may be disguised, and further de-familiarized for the audience by her masculine dress, her words make the cross-cultural romance accessible for the audience by using recognizable literary tropes from European representations of New World encounters. Memory has relegated Bacon to the stuff of myth, which distracts Semernia from the impending threat he poses to her within this scene. However, memory has also placed this episode of the play in dialogue with a larger body of New World tropes well established in early modern literature. In particular, her emphasis on the colonist's immortality recalls the attribution of supernatural strength to European conquerors by Natives during early encounters in the contact zone.⁷⁰ Interestingly, Behn does not portray Semernia as trying to define Bacon's immortality within her indigenous pantheon,

⁶⁹ Behn, 5.3.37.

⁷⁰ For example, dramatist John Dryden, Behn's contemporary, portrayed the Indians of Mexico at first mistaking Cortez and his men as "born of Heavenly Race"; see John Dryden, *The Indian Emperor, or The Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards* in *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr., Vol 9 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 1-112; quotation at 1.2.235. The Quetzalcoatl story usually maintains that the Aztec deity Quetzalcoatl, or the Plumed Serpent, was a leader forced to flee to the east but would one day return to claim his kingdom. Scholars today are unclear if it was a European invention, Native afterthought and tool of resistance, or some combination of the two. See Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, trans. and ed. A.J.O. Anderson and C.E. Dibble (Santa Fe and Salt Lake City: School of American Research and University of Utah Press, 1982); and Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992). For scholarly discussions of the European manipulation of indigenous traditions, see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1984), 116-20. See, also, David Carrasco, *Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2000).

but instead using elevated and romanticized imagery to characterize the power of Bacon. Even at the height of her visual difference from English society she encodes herself within the familiarity of English literary tropes. Her words signal her place as a woman and the unfortunate effect is that her immersion in the myth of Bacon and courtly love has left her vulnerable to colonial attack.

When Semernia describes her pre-adolescent encounter with the prominent colonist at the height of the Rebellion's violence, her words stand in stark contrast to the tension and anxiety embodied by the escalating violence in the play. She has had to leave behind the Indian court and has assumed the dress of an Indian man complete with bow and quiver. Her costume signals violent masculinity, but her sentimental words signal defeat. Semernia's choice of words—such as “Conqueror,” “pain,” “destroy,” and “fatal” –bespeaks her loss of power, but her re-telling of the events when she first saw Bacon suggests she gains agency over the situation.⁷¹ By re-telling the event, she becomes a central actor; her re-telling makes clear her lack of interest in her deceased husband, and she admits to a “certain trembling joy” at the thought of Bacon.⁷² The Rebellion has offered her the possibility of attaining the man her heart desires, but her reflection on past events keeps her from moving forward and finding safety. Semernia's reminiscence redefines in terms of romantic loss a moment of colonial upheaval which has resulted in the forced relocation of her tribal nation. In turn, the character's reflection on her romantic past, an individual experience, distances her from the Native group she rules over as queen.

⁷¹ Behn, 5.3.31-34.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 5.5.40.

Semernia's remembrance highlights the potential military dangers posed by Bacon as an indestructible general, and illustrates both the relationship memory forges between the past and present, and the uncanny use of memory to elide cultural differences in favor of similarities. Events or feelings from the past can overshadow the perception of the present moment. This reminiscence reveals the fraught relationship between colonizer and subaltern by expressing the human experience of Semernia's lament and emotional pain, while making Bacon an even more threatening figure. He caused her "silent languishment," but he is also a "Murderer."⁷³ The immediacy of colonial violence unites past and present. Retrospection allows Semernia to connect the turmoil and violence of recent events of the Rebellion to her first meeting with Bacon many years ago. Semernia acknowledges that she needs to reconcile her past love for Bacon with his more recent violent and murderous acts, however difficult this may be: "now there's a necessity I must be brave and overcome my Heart: What if I do? ah wither shall I fly, I have no Amazonian fire about me."⁷⁴ As Bacon and his men near the woods where Semernia and her tribe seek refuge, the necessity to fight or flee increases. Focusing on the past memory of Bacon instead of his violent present compromises her ability to survive. Behn redefines Semernia's memory of Bacon from love interest to violent threat so the Indian queen can overcome her heart in a shift that requires Semernia to negate the importance of the memory and focus on the present and on the necessity of survival on the colonial frontier. Semernia admits that she has "no Amazonian fire," an admission which contradicts the

⁷³ Ibid., 5.3.30, 33.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 5.3.35-37.

warrior costume worn by the actress portraying the character. Moreover, the dialogue shows the character's preference for an idealized romantic past over the troubled colonial present.

Semernia reflects on her struggle to balance her place in her tribe against her relationship with the colonizer.⁷⁵ She speaks of Bacon as the "Conqueror" of her heart when she describes him in exalted and idealized language, but she also speaks of him as the "Conqueror" who has unsettled the Native government of which she is a part when she remembers him as the "Murderer" of her lord, the Indian King.⁷⁶ The mutual romantic attraction between Semernia and Bacon does not prevent the colonial general from carrying out his military campaign.

The tragic story of Semernia's death and her doomed romance provides scholars with an alternative narrative to the story of Pocahontas, a figure who represents another very specific memory of colonial encounter and different uses of similarity.⁷⁷ John Smith's and John Rolfe's accounts of Pocahontas describe her role as an intermediary between colonists and Natives, but they do not offer a

⁷⁵ The conqueror conquered is a story told frequently in early modern drama. See the scenes between Henry V and Catherine in Shakespeare's *The Life of Henry the Fifth*, and Tamburlaine's speech on Zenocrates. As an invader of France, the English Henry forces the French monarch to allow him to marry his daughter, Catherine. In Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* the Scythian conqueror claims the Egyptian Zenocrates for himself despite her previous betrothal to an Arabian king and his threat against her native country. See Shakespeare, *The Life of Henry the Fifth* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt, 1445-524; see 5.2 especially. See Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part I* in *Christopher Marlowe, The Complete Plays*, ed. Frank Romany and Robert Lindsey (London: Penguins Books, 2003), 69-154; Tamburlaine's speech to Zenocrates occurs at 1.2.82-105. Also, John Dryden's *The Indian Queen* has the Aztec hero Montezuma marry the Incan Princess Orazia, whose country he has claimed for Mexico's empire. Of note is each woman's expression of love for the conqueror, despite his actions.

⁷⁶ Behn, 5.3.33, 34.

⁷⁷ See, John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles*, in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, Volume 2, ed. Philip L. Barbour (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 151, 152, 182-83, 258-62. See also, "John Rolfe's Letter to Master Thomas Dale," in J. Franklin Jameson, *Narratives of Early Virginia* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 237-44.

story of cross-cultural romance, despite her marriage to the Englishman Rolfe. Pocahontas is held captive by the English before her “conversion” to Christianity, baptismal re-naming, and marriage to an Englishman. Pocahontas thus is the classic myth of Native conversion and assimilation, while Behn’s Semernia, like Dryden’s Indian princesses and queens, is already conversant with English cultural values. Thus, Behn’s fictional imagining of the colonial frontier foregrounds romantic passion as leading to the death of Semernia, and diminishes the Indian queen’s role as a political negotiator by presenting colonial conflicts in terms of failed romantic desires. Although the audience may be sympathetic to Semernia’s story due to the description of love as her downfall, the play implicitly faults the excess passion of the Native woman for the plight of her tribe, as opposed to blaming colonial brutality. This move then overwrites the memory of English violence and aligns the Native women with the English colonizer in her love for him, thus minimizing the differences between the two groups by showing their attraction for each other.

White Indians: Anne Bracegirdle’s Indian Queen

The engraving published in the first edition of *The Widow Ranter* of the actress Anne Bracegirdle costumed to play the part of Semernia reveals a decidedly “white” Indian woman whose dress combines English finery with Indian “exotic” touches such as feathers. Aaron Walden has remarked that this engraving shows “A porcelain-skinned English girl” whose skin color is further emphasized by her attendant “cherubic, swarthy-skinned babes who, with a

dangling parasol, shelter her from the skin-darkening sun.”⁷⁸ The image therefore reveals that the actress is read as “English” with her notable porcelain complexion and her dress, while her accoutrements read as “Indian.” Thus it is impossible to place the female subject of the image as either entirely English or entirely Indian. The dual “racial” position of the image mirrors the place of Semernia in Behn’s play. She reads as “English” in the early scenes of the Indian court, and Bacon’s courtship of her also works to make her conversant with English culture. Yet, the play trades social distinction for racial ones, and the Queen becomes a common, faceless (male) Indian character by the end, not unlike the nameless “savage” dancers from earlier. Thus, we can see Semernia’s trajectory from commanding queen to threatening Indian “man” as a development of the play’s racial paradigm.

The prologues of Dryden’s plays, as well as some period commentary on their performance, highlight the expensive costumes used to perform Native characters. Famously, Aphra Behn’s narrator in *Oroonoko* describes the feathers she sends from Surinam to be used on the English stage for the costume of Dryden’s *Indian Queen*.⁷⁹ However, unlike for the Dryden plays, period engravings of Anne Bracegirdle, who first played Semernia, survive. There are two engravings held at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, one that shows the actress’s entire body, and another of a bust portrait. The most commonly reprinted image (figure 9) shows Bracegirdle in a long English dress, perhaps provocatively low-cut, wearing bands of pearls around her arms and

⁷⁸ Walden, xxii.

⁷⁹ Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, ed. Joanna Lipking (New York: Norton, 1997), 9.

feathers in her hair. Her accessories read as exotic; indeed, the placement of the pearls around her biceps would have been an early modern visual cue to Indian style. De Bry's engravings of White's paintings discussed in chapter one feature arm band tattoos, and Italian paintings such as those by Jacopo Zucchi associate the wearing of pearls and corals around the upper arm as a sign of Indian-ness as well. Bracegirdle's complexion looks strikingly pale as she is being fanned on either side by two cherubic and black-skinned children, which serves to highlight her whiteness. The attendants are coded as African, and are reminiscent of the Black attendants of the play that dance with the Widow Ranter's punch bowl. The image includes exotic flora and the relaxed and diagonal position of Bracegirdle suggests repose and leisure, while her fanning attendants further attest to her regal status and suggest a hint of exotic eroticism. By contrast, the image in the Folger holdings (image 10) is just a bust portrait in a roundel. The three quarters view of Bracegirdle makes the pearl and feather ornamentation of her costume prominent, but the bodily position suggests formal portraiture traditions. The neckline comes up considerably higher in this portrait and, due to the cropping style, notably exotic touches to Bracegirdle's costume such as sandals and feathered fans are not visible. Bracegirdle instead is depicted draping a handkerchief over her shoulder.

The two images are rendered through aesthetic conventions in both the form (patrician portraiture) and the poses (three-quartered view of the sitter) that familiarize the exotic character to English audiences. Each artist visually communicates the cultural difference of the character of the Indian Queen through the use of feathers and pearls as ornamentation. In both images the sitter looks

away from the gaze of the viewer. The regal and commanding presence of Bracegirdle's character in each engraving lends seriousness to the character, but also places the images in conversation with other images of royal figures and noble persons.

The Widow Ranter exhibits the hallmarks of early modern racial construction discussed by critics such as Roxann Wheeler and Kim F. Hall. The play begins by asserting the elevated social status of the Native woman, but ends with a view of Semernia that also accounts for emergent notions of physical differences and cultural strangeness. However, in connection to Behn's rewriting of the historical Bacon's Rebellion, the emergent racial anxiety of Bacon and Semernia's romance overwrites the anxiety created by class and racial intermixing in the formation of a colonial military rabble that deeply upset pre-existing class distinctions. The play chronicles the tragic romance of Bacon and Semernia as a momentary and unsuccessful episode of inappropriate social-mixing—a story that can be solved and ended through each characters' death which then removes the source of anxiety. The anxiety about class intermixing in the historical Rebellion could not be so easily allayed as that associated with a doomed romance, and historically the rebellion flared intermittently in Virginia for ten years following Bacon's death. The romance story makes disturbing and real events palatable to a removed English audience by representing them as a fleeting entertainment, one that ends just as quickly as it began.

Conclusion

The figure of the Native American woman in early trans-Atlantic texts and images reveals to scholars today that the alien stereotypes we so often associate with moments of first encounter co-existed alongside a tradition that idealized and celebrated Native American women as similar to English women. To return to the portraits that opened this dissertation, the image of Pocahontas alongside Queen Elizabeth I demonstrate the comparisons early modern and early American authors often engaged in when representing Native women. Images of elite Native women were frequently represented positively and were employed by writers to encourage interest from investors in the colonial project since elite Native women were central to colonial negotiations. This study ended with a consideration of increased frontier violence in the English colonies of seventeenth-century America, a historical as well as literary turning point after which Natives were more frequently represented as different and threatening. Thus, the conventions of difference that co-existed uneasily alongside the earlier uses of similarity to the English emerged more forcefully by the late seventeenth century.

The title of this dissertation “The ‘Other’ Woman” encapsulates the alternative tradition of representing Native American women as unlike the common figure of the other—that is to say the opposite of difference that usually accompanies othering and racialization. By the eighteenth century, the conventions of representing the Native woman no longer easily enabled comparisons to English women. Novels such as *The Female American* tell the

story of a woman of half Native and half English descent who finds the two sides of her family tree incompatible. Whereas in the earlier texts examined in this study the description of commonalities between Native and English was embraced by writers as a rhetorical strategy, by the eighteenth century stories about women of mixed-race descent no longer easily represented the embodiment of two alike traditions and would gradually shift into the discourses of difference that twenty-first century readers are more familiar with.

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