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Captaine Smith, Colonial Novelist

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The novel has become the leading hero in the drama of literary development in our time precisely because it best of all reflects the tendencies of a new world still in the making; it is, after all, the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it.—Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*

Most critics today maintain that the first American novel is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), an assertion accompanied by a number of axioms about early American fiction. There is the much-noted irony, for starters, that the "Early American Novel" is far from early: in fact, the novel is a relative late-comer in the settlement and letters of North America.¹ This delayed arrival is attributed to a constellation of mutually reinforcing factors: the slow development of printing, the absence of a critical mass of readers, the late emergence of a book market, limited leisure time for writing and reading, relative neglect of belletristic culture, and cultural prohibitions against fiction writing.² In short, the infrastructure necessary for novels did not arise in this country until the early national period, suggesting a natural association of the novel with the nation. Recently, however, there have been some challenges to this conventional account. I'm not speaking here of attempts to label any number of novelistic works from the 1750s to the 1770s as the real first novel. These arguments largely accept the standard view of the novel's late development while seeking slightly earlier titles from a broader popular repertoire.³ Nor am I speaking of attempts, like

William Spengemann's, to extend our definition of *American* to such works as Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*—a useful and legitimate gesture, surely, but one that takes for granted generic categories.⁴ What I have in mind, rather, are more fundamental challenges to the conceptualization of the novel, such as Robert Micklus's contention that Dr. Alexander Hamilton's *The History of the Ancient and Honorable Tuesday Club* is a "comic novel that borrows heavily from the 'anatomy,'" or Grantland Rice's view that *Letters from an American Farmer* is a "*bildungsroman* of sorts," a narrative of "gradual demystification."⁵

What these and similar challenges have in common is, first, their skepticism toward the commonsensical definition of the novel as a mass-printed, mass-marketed literary commodity of what readers identify as fiction, typically produced in national contexts.⁶ Instead, Micklus's and Rice's references to the anatomy of the *bildungsroman* suddenly call our attention to a surprising silence about genre in early American studies, as if such an approach doesn't quite suit the colonial context. While it may be axiomatic to genre theory that fiction is not defined as that which is untrue but, rather, as "any work of literary art in a radically continuous form, which almost always means a work of art in prose,"⁷ Americanists are still more apt to adhere to the eighteenth-century definition of fiction formulated by a John Adams or a Jonathan Edwards.

But just as recent challenges undermine commonsensical literary categories, they likewise call attention to a nuts-and-bolts attitude toward the history of the novel. Most of the explanations for the "late" development of the American novel—limited developments in printing, markets, and club and salon culture plus the relative absence of leisure time—stress deficient material conditions in a fairly crude way, as if a literary version of Turner's frontier thesis were at work here. Meanwhile, the more cultural dimensions of this argument—for example, the cultural prohibitions against fiction—unwittingly reinforce the view of colonial culture as a theologically monolithic, top-down affair. By contrast, when we pause to consider *Letters from an American Farmer* or *The History of the Tuesday Club* as novels, we can immediately see the dangers of correlating material conditions with culture in an empiricist fashion (Hamilton's work was, of course, unpublished, while Crèvecoeur's first appeared overseas). And more important, we can also begin to think about a broader range of conditions making novels possible—Hamilton's Scottish background

and his contact with itinerant professionals in the mid-Atlantic, say, or Crèvecoeur's international movement through different colonial contexts.

Reasons abound for the neglect of genre criticism in early American studies, including a tradition that focuses on theme, image, and national consciousness at the expense of form; a related defensiveness about the aesthetic quality of early American letters; the relative dormancy of the field during the early (more formalist) theory boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s; a contemporary association of formal criticism with an apolitical conservatism; and last but not least, the tacit adoption of parochial literary classifications—perhaps the generic version of American exceptionalism—whereby scholars speak more comfortably of sermons, true relations, captivity narratives, and jeremiads than of anatomies, picaresques, and masques. This relative inattention to genre has diminished early American literary history, rendering it profoundly empiricist and removing it from the important debates about the cultural origins and significance of the novel. This paucity may explain the enthusiasm that greeted Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse's seemingly counter-intuitive claim that Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative provided an important source for the eighteenth-century British novel: suddenly one of "our own" genres seemed influential to the development of the novel.⁸

I will argue here that John Smith, colonizer of Virginia, was a colonial novelist, and that his *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* (1624) and *The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations of Captaine John Smith* (1630) are best understood as innovative works at the dawn of novelistic prose. Building on Spengemann's assessment of the American *and* the literary qualities of Smith's writing, I will examine the surprisingly novelistic dimensions of Smith's prose. But my emphasis will be equally on its colonial origins. Enrique Dussel has challenged the Eurocentric tale of the continental and metropolitan origins of modernity, arguing instead that the New World encounter between Europeans and Native Americans was decisive for modern consciousness. "The experience not only of discovery, but especially of the conquest, is *essential*," he writes, "to the constitution of the modern ego, not only as a subjectivity, but as subjectivity that takes itself to be the center or end of history."⁹ If Dussel's reconstruction of modernity is accurate, the notion of a colo-

nial novel may not be as far-fetched as it seems. We might in fact need to go a step further than identifying the colonial context of works like *Robinson Crusoe* to consider more seriously the formal influences—and achievements—of colonial writing.

My argument is not that John Smith was a genius or that all colonial writing is novelistic. And I am not writing an account of the progressive novelization of colonial American writing or rescuing, as novels, previously scorned texts. My concern is with the importance of a specific colonial moment for a particular formal innovation, which I will gradually outline. I start with a discussion of Smith's autobiography and the ways in which it resolves a tension between two competing narrative genres, combined so as to reorder our understanding of good and evil; I then move to the Pocahontas legend to discuss the important role of Indians in fictionally triangulating European relationships; and I conclude with an overview of colonization's significance to what I'll call Smith's *Ameripædia*. The big issue at stake here is the understanding of modern consciousness afforded by the novel, which for the "Grand Theorists" like Lukács and Bakhtin, serves as a major index—as mirror but also as cause—of changing experiences of time, space, language, self, and community. The notion of a colonial novel, far from being oxymoronic, I argue, will expand our view of this "only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it."¹⁰

Life or Legend

To what generic forms might a colonial writer turn in writing ethnography or tales of contact, in describing slaughters or treaties, corporate squabbles or trade? I approach this question through Smith's autobiography, *The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations of Captain John Smith*, written in the twilight of his colonizing activities. Its novelistic introduction is written in third person: "He was borne in Willoughby in Lincolneshire. . . ."¹¹ The opening chapter quickly provides information about Smith's childhood—"his minde being even then set upon brave adventures" (*TT*, 3:153–54)—and his entry into competing worlds of adventure and society. In one paragraph, Smith studies "Machiavills Art of warre" and lives as "an Hermite" whose "food was thought to be more of venison than any thing else" (*TT*, 3:156). By the second chapter, a traveling Smith has encountered a range of villains and been thrown overboard and rescued. A further

episode describes a young man who, “wandring from Port to Port to finde some man of war, spent that he had, and in a Forest, neere dead with grieve and cold, a rich Farmer found him by a faire Fountaine under a tree: This kind Pesant releevd him againe to his content, to follow his intent.” Shortly afterward, the hero encounters a thief and engages in a swordfight witnessed by inhabitants of “an old ruinated Tower” (*TT*, 3:158).

The fictional influences upon Smith’s narrative are doubtless obvious, but listing fictional tropes doesn’t explain why and how they are brought together in seemingly conflicted juxtapositions: a hermit studying Machiavelli, a rich farmer becoming a peasant. Useful here is Fredric Jameson’s account of the rise of the novel, in which every text aspires to a “symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation.”¹² This attempted resolution is what drives the dialectical relationship between social and literary materials: the literary work inherits generic conventions and ideologemes as raw materials that can be brought to bear, with modifications, upon the context, while the context is similarly reworked to fit generic categories. The critical point for formal criticism is that a historical approach to genre must target the “conflict between the older deep-structural form and the contemporary materials and generic systems in which it seeks to inscribe and to reassert itself” (*PU*, 141). Rather than a formal criticism grounded in “the idea of historical *identity*” à la Northrop Frye, Jameson thus proposes a “negative hermeneutic” of “substitutions, adaptations, and appropriations” (*PU*, 130–31); in other words, instead of a descriptive checklist assuming a timeless definition, he proposes the careful assessment of the historical specificity and modification of the literary text. It is in these generic modifications, more than in self-evident content, that we can find historical change and political conflict.

Within this framework, Jameson insists that the exceptional formal feature of the novel is “the layered or marbled structure of . . . *generic discontinuities*” (*PU*, 144), which of course speaks to the historical context from which the novel emerges. The novel, as Bakhtin similarly argues, is the genre that systematically brings older genres into contact with one another, using the consequent tensions and contradictions to achieve new symbolic resolutions. The novel thus signals a historical moment in which writers faced the challenge of mediating competing traditional narrative patterns. One of Jameson’s central illustrations of this mediation is Manzoni’s *I Promessi Sposi* (*The*

Betrothed), in which “the separation of the lovers allows Manzoni to write two very distinct narrative lines which can be read as two different generic modes,” one a Gothic novel, the other a *roman d’aventures* (*PU*, 143). The “systematic interweaving of these two distinct generic modes” thus amounts to “not so much an organic unity as a symbolic act that must reunite or harmonize heterogeneous narrative paradigms which have their own specific and contradictory ideological meaning” (*PU*, 144).

The odd union in *The True Travels* of episodic encounters with rogues and such fantastic motifs as the “faire Fontaine” and the “ruinated Tower” suggests just this kind of systematic interweaving of distinct generic modes, here the picaresque novel with the chivalric romance. The character’s oscillation between the “rich Farmer” and the “kind Pesant” throws him into two narrative modes—one emphasizing a dynamic, nascent class position and its entailed obligations, the other a more fixed lifestyle with a corresponding demeanor—but also suggests an uncertainty about representing Smith himself: Will he be the mobile, fellow representative of the “middling” sorts, or the heroic adventurer seeking assistance from an archetype of modesty? Will he be an agent within a determinate political tradition (that of “Machiavill”) or will he be “an Hermite” about whom one can only speculate? The third chapter simply exacerbates this question with a new inflection, even in the two registers of its title: “A desperate Sea-fight in the Straights; His passage to Rome, Naples, and the view of Italy.” Here we have the suspenseful story of an encounter with privateers: “twice in one houre and a halfe the Britaine boarded [the Venetian argosy], yet they cleared themselves, but clapping her aboard againe, the Argosie fired him, which with much danger to them both was presently quenched” (*TT*, 3:160). When the “Britaines” finally take the merchant ship, however, the narrative moves to a catalog of commodities: “The Silkes, Velvets, Cloth of gold, and Tissue, Pyasters, Chicqueenes and Sultanies, which is gold and silver, they unloaded in foure and twentie houres, was wonderful” (*TT*, 3:161). Is Smith to be a swashbuckler or a tallying merchant?

Each of these opening chapters, in other words, poses the problem of how Smith will retroactively characterize his career. And this is a literary problem, for Smith is composing a fictional work within which he is trying to present his experiences in reference to generic conventions. Biographers of Smith often speak of the “life and legend” of their

subject, noting that Smith was a notorious liar, exaggerator, and self-promoter. We might take that rubric also as an index of the literary challenges he faced in piecing together the more social or “realistic” generic patterns (life) with the more fantastic (legend). Such conflicts are even evident in the protagonist’s name: Will this most prosaic of English names be defined by the swashbuckling or the bureaucratic-imperial “Captain”? Or more generally, what is the proper narrative form for a colonizer: the episodic tale of adventure or the surveilling travel narrative? Are Smith’s antagonists to be villains or social types? Is his world a mythic landscape of immanent qualities or the variegated terrain of imperial projects? How will the colonial enterprise be characterized? Will it be a history of romantic adventures against villainous forces or an episodic account of so many rogues engaged in squalid imperial con jobs?

We might say that the retrospective *True Travels* undertakes, in literary terms, a resolution of some fundamental problems and tensions in English colonization through striking generic juxtapositions in this novel about Smith’s career, as in his account of his military service in Hungary. Around the year 1600, we find Smith in central Europe fighting the Turks—in other words, in a context ripe for the older romantic opposition between good Christian forces and their evil Muslim counterparts. Among the expected tales of heroism, the most elaborate is the one behind Smith’s coat of arms, in which he beheads three Turks. The central passage is worth citing at length:

The death of this Captaine [Turbashaw, the first beheaded Turk] so swelled in the heart of one Gualgo, his vowed friend, as rather inraged with madnesse than choller, he directed a particular challenge to the Conquerour [Smith], to regaine his friends head, or lose his owne, with his horse and Armour for advantage, which according to his desire, was the next day undertaken: as before upon the sound of the Trumpets, their Lances flew in peeces upon a cleare passage, but the Turke was neere unhorsed. Their Pistolls was the next, which marked Smith upon the placard; but the next shot the Turke was so wounded in the left arme, that being not able to rule his horse, and defend himselfe, he was throwne to the ground, and so bruised with the fall, that he lost his head, as his friend before him; with his horse and Armour; but his body and his rich apparell was sent backe to the Towne.

Every day the Turkes made some sallies, but few skirmishes would they endure to any purpose. Our workes and approaches being not yet advanced to that height and effect which was of necessity to be performed; to delude time, Smith with so many intractable perswading reasons, obtained leave that the Ladies might know he was not so much enamoured of their servants heads, but if any Turke of their ranke would come to the place of combate to redeeme them, should have his also upon the like conditions, if he could winne it.

The challenge presently was accepted by Bonny Mulgro. The next day both the Champions entring the field as before, each discharging their Pistoll, having no Lances, but such martiall weapons as the defendant appointed, no hurt was done; their Battle-axes was the next, whose piercing bills made sometime the one, sometime the other to have scarce sense to keepe their saddles, specially the Christian received such a blow that he lost his Battle-axe, and failed not much to have fallen after it, wherat the supposing conquering Turk, had a great shout from the Rampiers. The Turk prosecuted his advantage to the uttermost of his power; yet the other, what by the readiness of his horse, and his judgement and dexterity in such a businessse, beyond all mens expectation, by Gods assistance, not onely avoided the Turkes violence, but having drawne his Faulchion, pierced the Turke so under the Culets thorow backe and body, that although he alighted from his horse, he stood not long ere hee lost his head, as the rest had done. (*TT*, 3:173-74)

Remarkable here are the numerous and obvious romantic motifs taken straight from the *chanson de geste*: the boasts and taunts, the accompanying Ladies and Trumpets, the God-assisted Christians set against infidels, the affectively motivated warriors (like the ferocious and avenging Grialgo), the talismanic weapons and armor, the rending of the enemy's body, and the threefold repetition of the heroic deed. One might think that Smith is writing in full romantic mode, were it not for a few jarring departures from expected conventions. Not only do the more modern "Pistolls" intrude upon this account—perhaps significantly with no real effect—but the entire heroic confrontation turns out to be a ruse "to delude time"—nothing but a delaying tactic. The most out-of-place sentence in the above passage is easily the one in which Smith shifts for a moment from third-person

narration to the business-like first person plural: "Our workes and approaches being not yet advanced. . . ." That one strange clause renders the whole chivalric account subordinate to a more technical and managerial account of the conflict, written in a vastly different register.

The narrative passages preceding the three beheadings confirm this shift as well. For Smith's first great military feat occurs not in a traditional battle of arms but in devising a code for long-distance communication. Smith's second military achievement, along similar lines, involves the fashioning of "two or three thousand pieces of match fastened to divers small lines of an hundred fathome in length being armed with powder" to simulate "so many Musketteers" (*TT*, 3:164). Finally, in a third piece of technical ingenuity, Smith "prepared fortie or fiftie round-bellied earthen pots" as firebombs, the text giving readers a detailed recipe (*TT*, 3:166). The narrative following the battle scene marks a similar departure from the romance. The wounded Smith is taken from the field by Turks who nursed him "till his wounds were cured, and at Axopolis they were all sold for slaves, like beasts in a market-place, where everie Merchant, viewing their limbs and wounds, caused other slaves to struggle with them, to trie their strength." Smith is finally sold to "the young Charatza Tragabigzanda" (*TT*, 3:186) whose brother Tymor eventually "caused his *Drub-man* to strip him naked, and shave his head and beard so bare as his hand, a great ring of iron, with a long stalke bowed like a sickle, rivetted about his necke, and a coat made of Ulgries haire, guarded about with a peece of undrest skinne" (*TT*, 3:189). This rematerialization of the hero's body as slave commodity sharply undercuts a potentially romantic sequel to this plot, so while Smith writes that "All the hope he had ever to be delivered from this thraldome, was only the love of Tragabigzanda," it is no surprise that he eventually effects his escape not with the aid of the Lady's heart but by beating Tymor to death (*TT*, 3:200). Throughout this segment of the narrative, too, Smith reverts to an episodic tale of travel combined with the ethnography of conquest. Chapter 13 describes "[t]he Turkes diet; the Slaves diet; the attire of the Tartars; and manner of Warres and Religions, etc.," while chapter 15 takes up "[t]heir feasts; common diet; Princes estate; buildings; tributes; lawes; slaves; entertainment of Ambassadors" (*TT*, 3:189, 193). The forces of evil become anthropological objects of study.

To read these episodes as biographical or historical data, however thematically laden, misses the fictional achievement of *The True Travels*, which is better read as a work mediating “generic discontinuities”—as a novel. And what we find in the “marbled structure” of these combined registers is an attempted symbolic resolution to the problem of colonialism. The battle scene, as noted above, self-consciously embraces a host of romantic conventions, while each of the flanking episodes offers in turn a commentary on the romance of a Crusading Europe. The romantic segments establish a binary pitting good (Christians, English) against evil (Turks, invaders), but as noted before, Smith explicitly marks this episode as a delaying strategy for the better construction of “our workes and approaches.” In this context, the innovations of the preceding segment are transferrals of “good” into the scientific world of civilized communication (the long-distance code), administrative expertise (the simulated muskets), and technological know-how (the fire-bombs). These innovations also mediate the confrontation between good and evil, which is no longer direct, face-to-face combat: coded messages pass over the heads of evil, good is misperceived because of simulations, and the fire bombs of the good forces rain upon evil from a great distance. The reworking of good, from hero to technique, thus offers a new narrative hybrid in the fusion of the scientific treatise (at this time, a narrative of experiments) with the military adventure. The figure of Smith meanwhile becomes that of the applied scientist, bringing the narrative forms of scientific Europe into the battlefield. The juxtaposition of these two generic segments enacts, on a larger scale, what we find in the familiar contact-narrative trope of the technological fetish—the moment when the colonizer shows, to the uncomprehending Indian, some object (a watch, a compass, a magnifying glass) that establishes his superiority, thus revising, for an imperial situation, the romance’s account of the totemic object.

As significant as these transformations of good is the differential characterization of evil, which remains left behind in the older romance, where it now seems an anachronistic mode of conquering, one of forced conversion, slaughter, and de-civilization. In this light, the strong emotions of Gualgo or Bonny Mulgro are outmoded character flaws, primitive emotional responses to be contrasted with the irony of Smith’s commentary to the observing women. Certainly a target here is “Spanolized” colonization, a recurrent object of Smith’s

polemics for its old-fashioned bluster and brutality. But Indians are implied targets as well, as the passages following the beheadings demonstrate. A romantic feint of sorts is offered in the reference to the Lady Charatza Tragabigzanda, as if to announce the logical sequel to the chivalric battle—some kind of courtship tale in which a unity is reestablished. But this generic line is immediately short-circuited through the displacement of the Lady's heart with her brother's "braines." This episode stands in stark contrast to the earlier beheadings not only in its different form of violence but also by drawing attention to the ethnographic detail of farm implements: Smith "beat out the *Tymors* braines with his threshing bat, for they have no flailles" (*TT*, 3:200).

With Smith's captivity and immersion in the savagery of southeastern Europe, we are clearly making the transition from the civilizations of northwestern Europe to the experiences in America (yet to come for Smith as character but in the past of Smith the author) effected through the novelistic entwining of two competing forms described by Bakhtin, the high Baroque adventure tale and the picaresque novel. The former genre, along romantic lines, focuses on an encyclopedic series of tests of a hero figure but without any process of transformation or becoming: "Testing begins with an already formed person and subjects him to a trial in the light of an ideal also already formed" (*DI*, 392). The latter, by contrast, undertakes important "negating work," in which established and conventional unities and affects are systematically undermined. "All the high positions and symbols, spiritual as well as profane, with which men adorn themselves with such importance and hypocritical falsity," writes Bakhtin, "are transformed into masks in the presence of the rogue, into costumes for a masquerade, into buffoonery" (*DI*, 408). In *The True Travels*, these two conventions come together, one determining the nature of the protagonist, the other the setting, in a New World combination. Smith is the constant and surveilling hero of the Baroque tale, observing rather than changing as he moves across the Turkish realms; he analyzes and sees through but is not himself developing or coming to a new, skeptical type of subjectivity. At the same time, however, the Turkish domains are reworked as a picaresque setting, where their civilized masks and fronts are systematically separated from the underlying buffoonery of a culture ripe for conquest. Thus, at the very conclusion of Smith's wanderings, he writes: "Notwithstanding to see how their Lords, Gov-

ernours, and Capitaines are civilized, well attired and acoutred with Jewells, Sables, and Horses, and after their manner with curious furniture, it is wonderfull; but they are all Lords or slaves, which makes them so subject to every invasion" (*TT*, 3:202–3). If the passages preceding the battle scene revise our sense of good in colonialist fashion (as a quality of administrative and mechanical prowess), these succeeding passages similarly reconfigure evil not as some infidel mirror-image of Christian Europe but—again, in colonialist fashion—as a backward context of primitive slaves ruled by lordly imposters. In retrospect, then, the chivalric beheadings are heavily ironized, as if Smith were just playing along, as if the decapitations were a preliminary unmasking of Islamic (or indigenous) backwardness. And once again, the juxtaposition of these two generic segments enacts, on a larger scale, a trope common to contact narratives, in which the colonizer condescendingly humors a petty potentate, a New World con man whose aristocratic titles cannot be taken too seriously. Such, for example, are Smith's encounters with Powhatan, or any number of European commentaries about Native American political systems and oratory.

Pocahontas among the English

In *A New World of Words*, Spengemann takes issue with the easy characterization of Smith's canonical *A True Relation of Virginia* (1608) as one of the founding works of American literature. Most critical assessments of Smith, he argues, employ the terms *American* and *literature* in nearly meaningless ways, referring simplistically to location or the written word: America + writing = American literature. But if the label American literature is to have any serious meaning, Spengemann contends, three conditions have to be met: the work must be shown to be literary in some meaningful sense; the American context must be linked with the work in more than an incidental fashion; and the Americanness must be connected with the work's literariness, and vice versa.¹³ This skepticism notwithstanding, Spengemann proceeds to argue that Smith's *A True Relation* is indeed a work of American literature. America had "figured somewhere in all the circumstances surrounding the production of the *True Relation*," for instance, in the enactment of its "new kind of historiography," "a story of a new world and a new man emerging together through individual action" (*NWW*,

64, 60). Furthermore, the writing can itself be called literary, for “his narrative depicts the Virginian interior as coming into being with his discovery of it, as extending only to the limits of his awareness of it at any moment, and as existing seriatim, in the form of successive perceptions—of words on a page—rather than all at once, in the timeless form of a map” (*NWW*, 89). Finally, that literariness can be linked with the text’s Americanness:

What makes the *True Relation* American—its stylistic acknowledgment that the discovery of the New World both permitted and required a new idea of the world as a whole and of the function of language in the world—also makes it literature—a recognizable linguistic episode in the development of modern reality. Conversely, the literariness of the *True Relation*—its perceived allusions to the world inhabited by the modern reader—is inextricable from its Americanness—its efforts to adapt an Old World style to the altogether new, modern world that was born with the discovery of America. (*NWW*, 93)

The pressure Spengemann places on our understanding of early American literature seems salutary, not least because he eschews a simplistic thematic analysis (for example, of Nature, of the rugged individual) for a stylistic and formal analysis of, among other things, Smith’s “unfamiliar diction, unbuttoned syntax, and untethered pronouns” (*NWW*, 89). Such an analysis demands that we move beyond the simplistic view of the “true relation” as a “plain-spoken and businesslike” piece written for “a purely utilitarian purpose, the transmission of objective information from America to Europe” (*NWW*, 52). But we must take Spengemann’s argument a step further. First, in developing his assessment of the text’s literariness, we must think more carefully about genre. Spengemann understands the early *True Relation* as a hybrid of two distinctly American genres, the “true relation” and the promotional pamphlet (*NWW*, 55–56). But as I have argued, this acceptance of parochial or context-bound categories simply defers the question of generic origins, wrenching American writing from its literary context, as if all-new genres spring forth, naturalistically, from all-new situations. While Spengemann is astute in criticizing such simplistic views of an American style, insisting that Smith is reworking European semantic conventions, his skepticism does not extend to questions of genre. Granted, his case is limited by his choice of a very

early Smith text, whereas a generic reading of Smith's later oeuvre—works that are revisions and extensions of *A True Relation*—has the advantage of foregrounding a genealogy of generic forms that logically develops his discerning stylistic analysis. What such an extension suggests is that Smith's writing is not a genre unique to the New World (like the "true relation") but a dialectical genre—the novel—that combines Old World genres.

Similarly, we might apply pressure to Spengemann's understanding of Americanness. His analysis stresses a stark opposition between New World and Old World cultural systems, suggesting that the ambitious Smith rejects the latter while carving out and initiating the former: "Smith's ambitions inclined him quite naturally toward this emerging but unauthorized and still largely unwelcome idea of America as a vast New World, an unbounded land of human possibility where a man of true virtue might throw off the artificial constraints of a society in decline and prove his natural nobility through heroic action." By contrast, "[t]he status and power of Smith's immediate superiors . . . arose from, and depended upon the maintenance of, the Old World order" (*NWW*, 63). But this again begs the question of how those New World attitudes emerged. What I have suggested in my treatment of *The True Travels* is that the culture of colonization emerged from the reworking and mediations of various Old World forms, for which we find examples in the novels of the colonies. Does this suggest, then, that there never was a New World contact? Did the circumstances of Native America never intrude upon the closed systems of European understanding? Was colonization simply a reconstruction or remixing of European forms, genres, and modes of thought? Yes and no: I want to suggest that New World situations accelerated the breakdown of European conventions and forced the reconstitution of Old World patterns. Native Americans necessitated a reworking of European modes of perception in a way that brought about, secondarily, the colonial novel. I will offer some initial speculations about this dynamic at the end of this essay, but first I want to turn to an illustration from one of Smith's more explicitly colonial works, his recounting of the Pocahontas tale in *The Generall Historie*.

Much insightful criticism has been written about this legend but rather than talk about the isolated myth, I want to situate it within the prose framework Smith provides.¹⁴ As chapter 2 opens, sickness, disobedience, mismanagement, and scarcity prevail in the newly formed

English camp; defensively, the colonists construct the first rudiments of Jamestown and inaugurate trade with the “Salvages.” There is some talk of “abandon[ing] the country” but this is “suppressed by Smith,” and when game becomes more plentiful with the autumn, discontent momentarily abates.¹⁵ It is then that additional mutterings “against Captaine Smith” impel him to seek “the head of the Chickahamania river” (*GH*, 2:146). The exploration party sets off and is quickly ambushed, two or three men are killed, and Smith is captured by Powhatan’s party. The captive “Captaine Smith” continually fears for his life as he witnesses new and apparently barbarous rites and ceremonies; the culmination of this time is the execution ritual (probably an Algonquian adoption ceremony) in which “Pocahontas the Kings dearest daughter, when no intreaty could prevaile, got his head in her armes, and laid her owne upon his to save him from death.” Powhatan subsequently “told him now they were friends” (*GH*, 2:151), and he sends Smith back to Jamestown for supplies; as Smith returns, however, he finds the colonists preparing to abandon the colony. Smith halts the English mutiny with force, preventing, too, an attempt to execute him for the loss of his men, but some security is restored to the colony by “the love of Pocahontas” (*GH*, 2:152). In whatever form subsequent generations passed on the Pocahontas story, in this 1624 account, it is one episode in the initial English conflicts about the establishment of Virginia.

To appreciate the generic dimensions of this chapter, we must remember that Smith’s major challenge as a retrospective author is to explain—and resolve—his conflicts with other English colonizers. The problem is particularly aggravated by Smith’s marginal status (it is almost always Smith against everyone else); by the extremity of the conflicts (he is almost executed, and he has to draw weapons on other Englishmen); by the conflict’s strong class dimensions (Smith is the bourgeois adventurer clashing with gentlemen); and, above all, by the conflict’s stunning racial dimensions (whites fight whites in what should be a situation demanding racial unity against Indians). Smith could, of course, tell this political story and the Pocahontas story on their own, distilling the two narratives; indeed, at many other points such narrative strands are separated. But he chooses instead to meld the two, sometimes in very jumbled paragraphs, which should lead us to consider that the Pocahontas legend is solving some of the contradictions of the colonization struggle. Smith would perhaps like to tell

the story of colonization as something of a romance, a battle between good (English) and evil (natural environment, Indians), after the fashion of any number of Spanish tales compiled in Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages* (1582). But this romantic framework will not work. The evil element here is English and, more specifically, what Smith elsewhere calls the "Spanolized English" acting out the dated and failed patterns of Spanish conquest. So the romance of colonization must be shifted to the Pocahontas story in which, yes, the Indians are a danger (threatening and "barbaric" in their practices and rituals), but they are converted, as a group, and with their English counterparts, by the goodness of a young princess. The result is the entwining of two generic forms—a romance of Indian contact and a picaresque unmasking of English rogues—in a novel of inaugural colonization.

Such a reading is apparent in certain formal features of the text. For instance, the formal depictions of a more complex internal subjectivity that we find in the all-English segments (dialogue, internal monologue, use of the first person, narration stressing a division between external behavior and internal thought, simultaneity of narration) are not evident in the Pocahontas legend. Where Smith does, on occasion, present his internal feelings (such as his fear of being eaten), he cites classical verse to illustrate: "As if neare led to hell, / Amongst the Devils to dwell" (*GH*, 2:149). This use of poetry makes his feelings less a matter of personal subjectivity on a par with English plotting than an archetypal, lyrical response to danger and fear. Similarly, his descriptions of the Indians tend toward appearance and behavior to an extreme, as if he is refusing to grant Indians internal complexity. Particularly telling is his agnosticism toward Pocahontas's motives. And in keeping with this simplification or flattening of the Indians is the comic "Isickles" passage, in which the Indians respond to a gunshot leveled at an icy tree not with internal emotions or curiosity but by farcically running away. By contrast, moments of complex internal subjectivity appear in reference to the other English, as when Smith attributes secret thoughts to them, or describes actions undertaken while they assume he is dead. Several explicit generic references also stress the complexity of the English: the initial conflicts are described as "Tragedie," as if to stress the conflicted dimensions of colonization (*GH*, 2:146), while a closing reference to "the Histories of the Spanyards Discoveries" also implicitly distinguishes genres of "mutinies, disorders and dissentions"—histories, revenge dramas—

from genres of unification, like romance (*GH*, 2:153). Simple romantic Indians on the one hand and tragically scheming English colonizers on the other—and between them, shaped by them, moves Captaine Smith. In a narrative solely about English conflicts, Smith is destined to be one more opinion, just another faction, vulnerable to the same criticism and second-guessing as his English (or, for that matter, Spanish) peers. But through his “legendary” encounter with the Indians, he is set apart from the English—his life saved for no apparent reason but the innate heroic qualities recognized by an Indian princess—and comes forth to operate in a completely different generic mode.

If we extract the Pocahontas legend from its prose context, the climax will surely seem to be the moment when the Indian princess saves John Smith. Placed back within the second chapter’s English conflicts, though, the real climax is that moment at which the two narratives (Smith vs. the English, Smith vs. the Indians) collide:

Now in James Towne they were all in combustion, the strongest preparing once more to run away with the Pinnacle; which with the hazard of his life, with Sakre falcon and musket shot, Smith forced now the third time to stay or sinke. Some no better than they should be, had plotted with the President, the next day to have put him to death by the Leviticall law, for the lives of Robinson and Emry, pretending the fault was his that had led them to their ends: but he quickly tooke such order with such Lawyers, that he layd them by the heeles till he sent some of them prisoners for England. Now ever once in foure or five dayes, Pocahontas with her attendants, brought him so much provision, that saved many of their lives, that els for all this had starved with hunger. (*GH*, 2:152)

The generic oppositions outlined above are concentrated throughout this short passage, in which the turbulent English, who plot like “Lawyers” and flee like cowards, can be contrasted with the regal Pocahontas, complete with “attendants,” beneficently saving the lives of the needy. Furthermore, generic patterns established in earlier scenes are implicitly echoed in ways that somehow ironize one or more of the scenes. Pocahontas, having saved an Englishman, does so again—but while the first Englishman was somehow innately worthy, the second act seems a beneficent extension to the unworthy. Smith, threatened first by ritualistic barbarians, is threatened again, by Levitical schemers—but the impenetrability of the cultural other is now in-

flected by a lawyer joke. Farcical clowns terrified by weapons are terrified again—as if to intimate the savagery of the English and the manipulations of Smith. Above all we see the romantic hero emerging from the woods to put down the dissenting English, who are no longer simply other whites with differing strategies and opinions but characters now of a completely different order. Smith's time with the Indians has made him more than simply another conspirer, just as it has made the English something slightly less than evil villains.

To speak of the Pocahontas legend in isolation, then, is misleading insofar as it implies that the legend is the true core of Smith's narrative, and best read via a structuralist mapping of its cultural algebra. But the legend is firmly situated in a broader prose narrative, a conjunction more aptly approached as a formal trigonometry—the sides and angles of contact between different genres. Such a critical shift gives greater complexity to our understanding of the racial and gendered dimensions of the Pocahontas tale. It is certainly true that the legend plays on a relationship between a masculine, European project of discovery and a feminized, American landscape of nurture, providing a kind of marriage of those two modes; and likewise, the myth inaugurates a racial pairing of white and nonwhite, privileging a feminized and assimilable sidekick as the proper supplement to whiteness. This is only part of the story, however, for the legend's racial and gendered codings are likewise mediating a tale of class conflict among masculine white colonizers, in which competing generic modes are identified, only one of which (Smith's) is suitably white and masculine.

At one point in chapter 2, Smith sends some Indians to Jamestown with written instructions, ostensibly to send back goods to Powhatan but, actually, to warn the English: "In part of a Table booke he writ his minde to them at the Fort, what was intended, how they should follow that direction to affright the messengers, and without fayle send him such things as he writ for" (*GH*, 2:148). It is tempting to read this familiar trope of the talking book as a metageneric commentary of sorts, whereby the transmission of a written work from one context transforms and mediates another. The talking book does, as numerous critics point out, stage the conflict between a dominating logocentrism and an oral culture, but it involves more than a juxtaposition of these two modes; for the talking book is transformed by its indigenous delivery, while the European recipient or reader, in many cases, reads the book as a call for a stylized performance for the

Indian audience. Here it is as if Smith's note anticipates and signals the transmission, through Native Americans, of the romantic legend into the Hakluytian history of Jamestown. Genres are being used, moved around the landscape of America, and transformed by the triangulated conditions of their delivery. What this suggests, I think, is a new way of reading Smith's entire oeuvre, in which the *Generall Historie*, far from being just a history or a glorified "true relation," must be read as a novel, a colonial *Ameripædia* bringing together an unprecedented range of literary forms, not to mention previously written texts. What distinguishes Smith's *Generall Historie* from "Mourt's Relation" or Edward Winslow's *Good Newes from New-England* or Thomas Harriott's "A Briefe and True Report," or even Smith's own earlier works like *A True Relation* or *A Map of Virginia* (1612), is that like other early novels drawing together disparate resources, it incorporates all of those works. I cannot offer here a comprehensive reading of Smith's work, which should be undertaken more carefully, section by section. But I will outline some possible frameworks for thinking about Smith's writing, his career, and early English colonization's relations with Indians, before concluding with some generalizations about the colonial novel.

The Ameripædia

Gordon Sayre, in a valuable—and rare—discussion of genre in colonial writing, has argued for a pervasive dialectic between ethnography and the travel narrative. The ethnography, he maintains, rehearsed the "encyclopedic totality" of a timeless scientific empiricism, while the travel narrative complemented this epistemological mode with the "temporal, spatial, and perspectival tools" that became so crucial to "the early English novel."¹⁶ Taking into account what Sayre skillfully chronicles as John Smith's exceptional career as a writer-colonizer,¹⁷ I want to suggest that Smith's writing, while not unique, departs from this standard colonial hybrid of travel narrative plus ethnography. Because Smith's writing chronicles not only a spatiotemporal movement across the landscape but also a fairly detailed sociopolitical movement through Virginia's colonization conflicts, he had recourse not only to the conventions of the travel narrative but also turned to a particularly novelistic combination of adventure narrative and the conventions of the picaresque narrative line described by Bakhtin.

Sayre rightly insists that Smith “fashioned himself after Powhatan and Opechancanough and imagined that he should become a leader in their style” (*LSA*, 64), which suggests, in turn, that Powhatan, more than Pocahontas, may have inspired the novelistic complexity of Smith’s writing.

While Sayre links the ethnographic form with classical antecedents like “classical portraits of the cultural Other by Tacitus and Herodotus” (*LSA*, 80), I suggest another formal connection—with the anatomy. Consider Frye’s description of the anatomy: it focuses less on individual characters and more on mental and social attitudes; tends to stress an “occupational approach to life” rather than specific instances of “social behavior”; “presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent”; ultimately tends to produce “caricature”; targets “diseases of the intellect, as a kind of maddened pedantry,” at its most extreme giving “a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern”; is organized around a satirical “structural principle or attitude” that contrasts this caricature with a less unified picture of the world; “pil[es] up an enormous mass of erudition about [a] theme” in order to overwhelm “pedantic targets with an avalanche of their own jargon”; and combines the “comprehensive survey of human life” with a sustained “dissection or analysis” (*AC*, 309–12). Frye’s overview is clearly influenced by his European, and often classical, exemplars—for instance, in its focus on the “occupational approach to life.” But with some slight changes in inflection, Frye gives us a good description of European ethnographies of Native Americans, which focus on indigenous mental and social attitudes rather than differentiated Native Americans; stress an approach to life tending to caricature; target a disease (primitivism, savagery, paganism) of the culture in question, typically characterized as a unified intellectual pattern; contrast this view, implicitly, with a more mature and pragmatic European approach to colonization; satirize Indian culture through the accumulation of Indian concepts and, often, language; and present a comprehensive portrait of indigenous life in order to effect a practical military, political, and cultural dissection. Ethnographies constitute an initial “anatomy of America,” spelling out a disease and implicitly suggesting a cure.

Frye notes that the dialogue or colloquy is the common “short form” of the anatomy, “in which the dramatic interest is in a conflict of ideas rather than of character,” adding that the common setting for such works is “a *cena* or symposium” (*AC*, 310). We might also add wigwam

or fire, and with this generic link in mind, make better sense of those dialogues between Smith and Powhatan or Opechancanough in chapters 8 and 9 of *The Generall Historie*'s third book. These exchanges, like so many other accounts of Indian oratory, play out a conflict of cultures in ways that should be studied further. Meanwhile, Frye's insistence that the utopia is a variant of the anatomy is also worth remembering. While it is now a critical commonplace that More's *Utopia* was inspired by New World exploration, this observation often tacitly casts the utopia as a creative response to brute data from the New World. But we should not lose sight of the literary system from which American utopias emerge. As James Holstun insists, utopias must be read through the "conjuncture of . . . relations to other genres and other utopias."¹⁸ In Smith's case, the utopias and dystopias offered in his accounts of Virginia and New England are clearly inspired, at the level of form, by the broader ethnographic anatomies of the Virginia Algonquians, and by the fact that his schemes of colonization simply could not be separated from the Indian societies he cataloged.

To argue that ethnography is anatomy, then, implies more than another interesting literary-critical tidbit about American genres. Understanding the generic conventions of the ethnographic anatomy compels us to approach the formal dimensions of colonial politics more carefully. In *The Generall Historie*, for example, we can now read the shift from ethnography to the history of Jamestown as more than a shift in topics or a baffling shift in style. Read in a generic framework, Smith's conflict with Captain Christopher Newport, running through the dialogue sequences mentioned above, offers a contrast between two literary approaches to the anatomy. In one, Captain Smith is the rogue whose dialogue deflates the "subtil discourse" of the Indian point of view, systematically taking apart the totality of Indian culture. In the other, Newport is the fool whose naive, partial, and perhaps epic approach to Powhatan profoundly threatens colonization by not seeing the anatomy as anatomy. In this colonial novel, in other words, the ethnographic anatomy becomes the backdrop rendering possible the irony of colonization in the New World context. And this makes it the primary critical foil for the English struggle to interpret and direct New World conquest, the formal backdrop against which to contrast two competing literary and political modes, against which to construct an anatomy of colonization.

With these observations in mind, I want to turn, finally, to more

general hypotheses about the colonial novel. Many, if not most, theorists of the novel have attempted to determine which “tendencies of a new world still in the making” created the novel, “the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it.” This “new world” has been variously formulated in terms of emerging discourses of science, the development of capitalism, social revolutions from below, and nationalist revolutions, to name only a few of the more common—and consistently Old World—rubrics. But it would be worth considering more seriously the additional impact of the New World, and specifically of the colonization project, on literary development. Three preliminary conditions seem noteworthy for considering early American prose:

1. *Early colonization was multifaceted.* The many ideological projects and demands of early colonization were contradictory, including conversion, looting, exploration, enslavement, agricultural production, administration, trade, diplomacy, extermination, and the construction of utopias.
2. *Early colonization literature was correspondingly multigeneric.* Because no clearly established generic forms or conventions facilitated talking about this variegated experience of colonization, writers looked to earlier forms, which they adapted in a range of ways, including “filiation, supersession, precession, complementarity, antagonism, [and] parallelism.”¹⁹
3. *The reconciliation of colonization with its literature necessitated a strategy of novelization.* The adaptation of established forms to describe and undertake colonization illustrate what Bakhtin calls the new, novelistic mode of grasping the present, seizing the time of “contemporary reality,” seeking that “zone of maximally familiar and crude contact” (*DI*, 22–23). Colonization, in other words, was at least one important site for a changing literary expression of temporal contact, of contemporary immediacy.

Colonial writing thus took on many of the characteristics that puzzle and challenge readers today, such as its odd diversity of forms, styles, even neologisms to express the conflicting projects of colonization and a corresponding practical air of dealing with problems right here, right now. Because genres proliferate as tools for different situations, it follows that this generic disorder, for some, posed significant challenges of mediation as they tried to imagine how the diverse practices, goals, and tools of colonization were to fit together.

Here we should distinguish between those writer-colonizers who accepted many of the assumptions, conventions, and standards of colonization, focusing only on specific subprojects, and those writer-colonizers who found the totality of colonization still open and up for grabs, each subproject implying and suggesting modifications in others. William Byrd's *The History of the Dividing Line* (1728–29), for instance, opens with the assertion that certain American patterns have been established in an epic colonial past (that of Smith and others), much as Mary Rowlandson's narrative assumes that the norms of New England's colonization are largely in place, focusing then on the racial and military dimensions of Christianization. In contrast, another body of texts—Morton's *New English Canaan*, De Vries's *Korte Historiae, ende Journaels Aenteyckeninge*, LePage du Pratz's *Histoire de la Louisiane*, or Fray Diego Durán's *Historia de las Indias de Nueva-España*, to name a few examples—continued to take up the totality of the colonial-imperial enterprise, producing what I have called *Ameripædia*, in which the different genres of colonization were mediated and unified. Why did some colonial texts pursue this broader conceptual project? What moved them toward, or made possible, this novelistic framework?

4. *Initial intimate contact with Indian societies inspired and demanded the unifying framework of the novel.* Surely one impetus for this encyclopedic project came from the anatomical perceptions I've outlined. Perceiving Indian societies as complex, differentiated totalities distinct from their European counterparts—ironic doubles, in a sense—invited a corresponding notion of the colony as a totality needing symbolic construction. In this respect, the colony as a subject of analysis is analogous to both its inspiration, the Native American society or tribe, and its later descendant, the nation. Theories of the novel stressing the national framework thus rightly identify an important totality inspiring the new form, even as they neglect important and earlier New World analogues.

Karen Kupperman's recent periodization of colonization and contact in *Indians & English: Facing Off in Early America* reinforces this view. Kupperman argues that the initial contact between the English and American peoples, from Roanoke to the beginning of the English Revolution, constituted an "early tentative period," a moment of cultural exchange, communication, and inquiry that would pass away as colonization continued. Challenging the conventional view of contact

as “the striding forward of a confident, burgeoning, literate culture into a world of no less confident but technologically disadvantaged societies” with an alternative view of “deeply ambivalent members of a culture marked by fears and misgivings as much as confidence,” Kupperman suggests how, in this initial moment of ambivalent “mirroring,” Smith’s generic innovations were particularly necessary.²⁰

Kupperman’s caveats do not, however, undermine Dussel’s larger point that European modernity and modern subjectivity took shape through the encounter with New World peoples. Under the figures of “*invention, discovery, conquest, and colonization*”—each denoting “existential experiences” of both praxis and theory—a Eurocentric sense of self and other took shape and has persisted to the present (*IA*, 27; see also 27–57). “In 1492,” Dussel argues, “the European *ego* first transformed other subjects and peoples into its objects and instruments for its own Europeanizing, civilizing, and modernizing purposes” (*IA*, 90). This account of modernity touches on many of the thematics (subjectivity, modernization, capitalism, nationalism, folk cultures) that recur in theories of the novel, but Dussel’s goal is to reveal the importance of Europe’s periphery for phenomena normally located squarely in Europe. Applied to standard histories of the novel, and joined with generic analyses of the novel as form, Dussel’s observations suggest a possible Americanization of our accounts of the novel’s origins. If, to cite Michael McKeon, the necessary preconditions for the novel include the “destabilization of generic categories,” “secularization and epistemological crisis,” emergent “histories of the individual,” “destabilization of social categories,” and the “volatility of reform” under absolutism,²¹ do we not find all these conditions, in extreme forms, in the colonial context, in which the primary “instigators” are the Native American antagonists to colonization? It should follow, then, that colonial writing, as the literature of contact, marks at least one important instance of emergent novelization.

5. *The dialectic of genres was crucial to the symbolic mastery of American peoples.* European contact with Indians was staged, symbolically, through the use of competing and conflicting generic modes. The generic formulation of a unified European colonialism necessitated the association of diverse genres with Indians, a step followed by the dialectical subsumption of those genres in the broader framework of the novel. The colonial novel developed to master those genres adapted to capture Native Americans.

In Bakhtinian terms, the *Ameripædia* developed as a centripetal genre for the heteroglossia of the colonial context, the languages of indigenous peoples being categorized generically to then be mediated by the dialectical framework of the novel. I have tried to show how the jarring generic clashes that characterize Smith's writing—including the engagement with the romance form in *The True Travels* and the Pocahontas legend and the strategic use of the anatomy as background for *The Generall Historie*—represent just such moves toward the novel in the colonial context. This relationship between colonization and form suggests a final point:

6. *The colonial novel maps the processes of colonization—and vice versa.* If the ideological demands of colonization gave shape to the novel on the periphery of Europe, then study of the colonial novel in the generic terms I have outlined may provide a kind of cognitive mapping for the history of colonization. And the reverse is true as well, for the relative absence of colonial novels—the shift away from the colonial novel to more monologic or centripetal narratives after the initial moments of colonization—suggests a consolidation of the colonization enterprise.

Reading Captaine Smith, colonial novelist, may help us better understand Captaine Smith, colonizer.

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Notes

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- 1 Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky, for instance, notes that Brown's novel appears 159 years after the 1630 commencement of Bradford's history of Plymouth; see "The Early American Novel," in *The Columbia History of the American Novel*, ed. Emory Elliott (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), 7.
- 2 See Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), especially 3–79.
- 3 See Davidson, *Revolution*, 84–85, which accepts *The Power of Sympathy* as the first novel but also cites arguments for such contenders as Charlotte Lennox's *The Life of Harriot Stuart* (1751), Brackenridge and Freneau's *Father Bombo's Pilgrimage to Mecca* (1770), Francis Hopkinson's *A Pretty*

- Story* (1774), Thomas Attwood Digges's *The Adventures of Alonso* (1775), Peter Markoe's *The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania* (1787), and the anonymous *The Golden Age* (1785).
- 4 See William Spengemann, "The Earliest American Novel: Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 38 (March 1984): 384–414.
 - 5 Robert Micklus, introduction to Alexander Hamilton, *The History of the Ancient and Honorable Tuesday Club*, ed. Robert Micklus (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1990), xxvii; Grantland S. Rice, "Crèvecoeur and the Politics of Authorship in Republican America," *Early American Literature* 28.2 (1993): 102.
 - 6 The strongest argument for such local definitions is hermeneutic: if readers did not perceive texts as novels, then they weren't novels, thus perceptions of "novelness" must ground our analyses. Leaving aside the problem of the slippery classifications of early American fiction (many of which famously denied the novel label), my argument will assume that novels—like, say, the commodity or capitalism—existed before the coherent development of the novel concept. This approach need not imply the complete disregard for hermeneutic understanding but simply acknowledges a common lag in the formulation of concepts. In the case of the colonial novel, such a lag may stem from—in addition to the factors just enumerated—a hermeneutics of content, that is, an overidentification of colonial writing with its New World subject matter, to the neglect of its formal qualities and innovations. On the hermeneutics and preexistence of the novel as genre, see Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 14–24.
 - 7 Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), 303; further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as *AC*.
 - 8 See Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1992), 196–216.
 - 9 Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity*, trans. Michael D. Barber (New York: Continuum, 1995), 25; further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as *IA*.
 - 10 M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), 7; further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as *DI*.
 - 11 *The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations of Captaine John Smith*, in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580–1631)*, ed. Philip L. Barbour, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1986), 3:123–251; further references to this source will be to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as *TT*.

- 12 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), 117; further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as *PU*.
- 13 See William C. Spengemann, *A New World of Words: Redefining Early American Literature* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1994), 54; further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as *NWW*.
- 14 On the Pocahontas legend, see Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Pilgrims and Pocahontas: Rival Myths of American Origin* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1999); Rebecca Blevins Faery, *Cartographies of Desire: Captivity, Race, and Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1999); and Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994).
- 15 John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles. . . .*, in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580–1631)*, ed. Philip L. Barbour, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1986), 2:145; further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically as *GH*.
- 16 Gordon M. Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1997), 108, 84.
- 17 See Sayre's second chapter, which provides a structural and discursive comparison of the careers of Smith and Samuel de Champlain (*Les Sauvages Américains*, 49–78); further references will be cited parenthetically as *LSA*.
- 18 James Holstun, *A Rational Millenium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 12. Challenging Frye's over-aestheticization of literary form, Holstun insists that utopias are practical political projects. But in rejecting criticism that "depoliticizes literature," he likewise warns of the dangers of "deformaliz[ing] political writing and social practice" (9). Holstun's project, in this excellent study of Puritan utopias, is to "look for the ways in which the formal traits of utopian writing (literary and nonliterary) and its exercise of power imply each other. . . . Definition becomes a matter of charting relations of generic forces, and the meaning of *utopia* becomes not the cause of its relations to other genres but the effect of those relations" (10, 12). Holstun's dialectical approach to New World utopias—pathbreaking for the study of early America—is the primary inspiration for my argument.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 12.
- 20 Karen Kupperman, *Indians & English: Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2000), x, 16.
- 21 These are the rubrics organizing the first five chapters of Michael McKeon's study of the English novel; see *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987).