

Perspectives

FIRST ENCOUNTERS: NEW WORLDS AND OLD MAPS

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Abstract

This essay explores the new forms of learning that occurred, and the difficulties entailed, when European explorers like Christopher Columbus and Jacques Cartier encountered new lands and strange customs. This essay examines how the explorers filtered their perceptions and learning through their inherited cosmography. It is also offered as a rather modest initial probe into how we might write the history of adult learning in Canada before adult education was invented.

Résumé

Cet article examine les nouvelles formes d'apprentissage, et les difficultés impliqués à l'époque où, Christophe Colomb and Jacques Cartier, exploreurs Européens, a l'encontre des pays neufs et des coutumes étrangères. Cet article examine comment les exploreurs filtrent leurs perceptions et apprentissages selon leurs cosmographies. De plus, l'article offre une enquête modeste au sujet de la façon dont on peut commencer à écrire l'histoire de l'éducation d'adultes au Canada, au paravent de l'invention de l'éducation d'adultes.

Introduction

This *Perspectives* essay originated, in a sense, when I first read J. Roby Kidd's attempt to identify adult education moments in Canada's early colonial history. He began with Samuel de Champlain's famed *Ordre de Bon Temps* (Order of Good Cheer) in early 17th-century New France (Fischer, 2008, pp. 215-217). In itself, this was interesting because historians of adult education usually begin their narratives from the early 19th century with the birth of industrial society. But our species, from time immemorial to our present information age, has always been learning. A professionalized field will gaze into the past and discover only intimations of the present. If we are interested in understanding how adults learned in different times and spaces, then we need a different approach. Taking up the challenge, this essay explores how 15th- and 16th-century explorers like Christopher Columbus and Jacques Cartier filtered their perceptions of the new worlds through their inherited mental

and spiritual maps. I work with published sources, but shape them within my narrative frame by putting the spotlight on the learning dynamics of history and human encounter with the strange and unfamiliar.

In the early 1560s, the Parisian lawyer, Étienne Pasquier, wrote that “our classical authors had no knowledge of all this America, which we call the New Lands” (in Elliot, 1970, p. 8). This mysterious “fourth continent” had not appeared in any of the sacred texts or mythical stories. Europe knew something of the Far East and Africa. But the Americas were an unknown territory, discovered by accident as various explorers set out across the great Pacific Ocean in search of Cathay and the substance called gold. Historians have rightly called this period from the late 15th century to the end of the 18th, the “Age of Discovery.”

It was a momentous time of learning for Europe and, fatefully, for those indigenous peoples who had moved into the Americas from Asia thousands of years earlier. Of course they “discovered” the Americas first and developed tribal wilderness learning systems as they adapted to the new environment. Their learning proceeded with experience. Over many years of trial and error, native peoples sustained their existence, developed appropriate social forms of organization, and elaborated meaning systems for inhabiting the different environments (from the frozen north to the steaming jungles of the Amazon). But their greatest challenge lay ahead of them in the form of the strange creatures from Europe: hairy people in strange clothing arriving in massive canoes.

Europe entered momentous learning challenges in the late 15th through 17th centuries. When Columbus set sail in the epochal year of 1492 and Jacques Cartier in 1534, neither of these navigators could have imagined the revolutions in human imagination and thought about to unfold. In 1543, a dying, unknown man called Copernicus handed his manuscript, *De revolutionibus*, to his only disciple, Rheticus. This book told a new, strange story that claimed to prove that the earth was in motion around the sun. The “book of nature” had been opened in a way never before imagined. Copernicus observed, calculated, proved, and disseminated his findings. His insights into the cosmos managed to gather only 12 believers for the next 60 years before Kepler and Galileo launched a new way of seeing and understanding our place as humans in the universe. Europe was not only in the midst of the humanist Renaissance, asserting the glory of man’s capacity to investigate—this Renaissance humanism was, perhaps, manifest most wonderfully in the search for harmony in the art of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Albrecht Dürer, as well as the magnificently rationalized urban spaces of Italian towns—but also on the doorstep of the “scientific revolution” (Levenson, 1991).

Anthony Grafton claims, “A revolution in the form of knowledge and expression took place in early modern Europe” (1992, p. 6). Europeans had to deal with multiple assaults to old ways of thinking and learning. The unity of Christendom had been shattered when Luther nailed his theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. The authority of sacred text was undermined as a new empirical attitude to the world gained strength. Europe’s complacent ethnocentrism crumbled as overconfident Europeans encountered the Amerindians for the first time. The silly myths of wild men and monstrous characters inhabiting wildernesses were challenged as explorers, colonizers, and missionaries discovered human beings who were different from them. Indeed, sometimes it seemed that

les sauvages were both different and a better form of human. Europeans had to assimilate new knowledge about the natural and animal worlds into categorical systems that were scarcely adequate for their own environments, let alone anyone else's. Sophisticated classification systems, like Linnaeus's, had to await the arrival of the 18th century.

To explore these new forms of learning and the difficulties entailed we examine the forms of knowledge and technological skill that enabled Columbus to float across the Atlantic to the West Indies and the three voyages of Jacques Cartier, who mistakenly landed in Canada on his way to Asia in 1534. We will also examine how the Amerindian fit into European mental maps. We will learn many fascinating things, among them the discovery of the first adult education lesson given to native peoples, the first immersion lessons in a second language, and, perhaps, the first early modern philosophy of adult learning.

In this essay, I am concerned with how Europeans saw the First Nations peoples, and am not explicating their world view or engaging the vast literature on Aboriginal ways of seeing the world (Watson, 2005). I also acknowledge a debt to Anthony Pagden's (1982) marvelous scholarship of the period under discussion, as well as Ramsey Cook's (1993) astute commentaries on Cartier's journals. I offer this essay as a reflective piece and make no claims to original scholarship. Simply, I bring some new questions to old data. However, I make no apologies for viewing history through a learning lens. Without this heuristic, historians cannot fully understand historical processes or transformation.

European Cosmography in the Age of Discovery

Columbus floated to the West Indies on a sea of adult learning. He had acquired enough learning from experience (reading the signs of the sea) and books to enable his path-breaking voyages. Columbus drew upon four essential texts: Ptolemy's *Geography* and *The book of Marco Polo*; d'Ailly's *Imago Mundi*; and Pius II's *Historia rerum*. The earliest maps in Christendom had ordered space in religious and symbolical fashion. These maps—commonly known as *mappae mundi*—represented the world as sacred history. They placed Jerusalem at the centre of the world. While Columbus certainly subscribed to a Christocentric world view, the *mappae mundi* didn't provide any practical guidance. The explorers did use portolan maps, crafted in the 13th century, which measured maritime distances and were good examples of the power of experiential learning. However, a new way of ordering geographic space using coordinates of latitude and longitude began in the 15th century. The idea of a geometric and homogenous space originated with Greek mathematics (Euclidean geometry). Ptolemy's great 2nd-century work was rediscovered and refashioned because it provided a coordinate system. The scholarly and artistic world of high Renaissance humanism esteemed the universality and interconnectedness of knowledge. Now the whole earth could be imagined. A rational way of thinking about space allowed navigators, colonizers, and missionaries to begin to plot their way across previously mysterious distances.

Columbus's mastery of the scientific and technical knowledge underpinning the crossing of the Atlantic did not necessarily extend to either the Amerindians or the flora and fauna he encountered. Natural history and ethnology were in the infant stage in their classification schemes and scientific understanding. Understandably, Columbus and others entered into new worlds carrying cognitive maps that enabled them to navigate the familiar

and search for the fantastic. These maps were a *mélange* of writings, ancient and modern. They didn't really have adequate descriptive vocabularies. Sixteenth- and 17th-century Europe certainly recognized the need for a classificatory system. But the fundamental problem faced by all of us when we encounter the strange and unfamiliar is the problem of recognition. We see, but not necessarily what is before us (Fernández-Armesto, 1991; Sale, 1990; Todorov, 1984).

Our first interpretive move is usually to describe what we see as identical to what we already know. In his *Diario de a bordo* (1493) and *Relación del tercer viaje* (1498), Columbus had great difficulty identifying the exact nature of the wonders before him. "There are a thousand kind of trees," Columbus exclaimed, "and all bear fruit in their fashion, and they all have a most marvelous scent, so that I am the saddest person in the world not to know them. . . ." (in Myers, 1993, p. 183). According to Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478-1557), the first official chronicler for Charles V in the Indies, overseer of the gold foundries in 1514, and legendary author of *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (1535), pumas were lions, jaguars, tigers, and so on. But it quickly became discernible that the forms and categories didn't fit. As the Jesuit historian José de Acosta later remarked, "If we are to judge the species of animals by their properties, these are so varied that to wish to reduce them to the species known in Europe would be like calling the egg a chestnut" (in Pagden, 1982, p. 12).

Oviedo's *Historia* presented itself to the reader as "an authoritative text on America's wonders." (Myers, 1993, p.189) He was a sort of New World Herodotus. But how was he to represent faithfully the plentitude and diversity of forms of life in the New World? As Pliny the Elder had observed, "It is difficult to make old things new, and to give authority to new ones" (in Myers, 1993, p. 189). Oviedo was writing in a time of great turbulence in modes of representation. Ancient and medieval notions were competing with the new Renaissance spirit of empiricism and natural observation. So Oviedo imagined he could teach the Old World about the New by drawing objects like his famous pineapple. He privileged the eye. He imagined equivalence between seeing and understanding. By drawing his objects, Oviedo thought he might overcome the inadequacies of language. Through visual communication, his outer, corporeal eye could communicate understanding to his readers' own inner, or mind's, eye. To see was to understand. Thus, the visual representation of an object could bridge the gap between object and representation. The desired mimesis could be achieved. Yet Oviedo also recognized that even these representations could miss the target. Indeed, one only has to traverse art galleries in Australia or Canada exhibiting early landscapes to see how easily the visual representation can fail the object. Visual forms of adult education, then, played a significant role in Jesuit and other later missionary pedagogies (Gagnon, 1975).

Those encountering the new struggled with their own "helplessness before the indescribable" (Pagden's (1982) charming phrase). They finally had to realize that the egg was not the chestnut. Confronted by the intractability of difference, Pagden argues, European man chose to create display spaces—museums and cabinets—to collect and assemble objects from the new worlds. A collecting mania seems to have swept over Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Perhaps by gathering objects and comparing them, new meaning would arise. Humanists amassed amazing collections of objects and texts.

These objects and inquiry into their meaning circulated among impressive social learning networks. They learned through collecting, displaying, and conversing seriously as friends in salons. Perhaps it is not surprising, as we will see, that Cartier would kidnap several Amerindians to be exhibited in Europe.

Residents of the 21st century do not believe that the worlds of self, other, and nature can ever be accessed directly. Our perceptions are filtered through our mental maps. We see what our conceptual maps permit us to. Our perceptions lay down boundary markers that both define and confine meaning. The European perception of newly discovered worlds was filtered through both popular conceptions, with origins in the distant past, and an intellectual system derived primarily from Aristotle. Now we turn to how European rulers, merchants, traders, and missionaries perceived the native peoples of the Americas. This has serious consequences for how they were treated and transformed into objects of pedagogical action (Welton, 2005).

The Place of the Amerindian in European Mental Maps

Around the end of the 15th century, papal decrees in 1493 and 1512 acknowledged that the Amerindians were “truly the children of Adam and Eve” (Moogk, 2000, p. 19). Amerindians (and Africans) were believed to be definitely within the human orbit. Once inside this orbit, they could be claimed for Christendom. Christian Europe classified all non-Christians as barbarians. The Greeks, from Homer to Aristotle, believed that humankind was a single species but that one could differentiate variants of humanity. Some human beings, Aristotle thought, were bestial-like in their thoughts and actions, mainly because they did not inhabit the city-state, the place of reasoned existence.

Aristotle, perhaps the first Western theorist to articulate a developmental approach to human capacity, believed that a man became a real man only when he actualized this inner potential. He had to learn to control his animal nature. Some men would remain as children, living lives hardly distinct from animals. This conception of human unfolding contains the basis for the pedagogical objectification of the non-European. Through instruction, *les sauvages* could become real men. They could become civilized. Thus, the Greeks imagined themselves to be at the upper end of the scale of humanity, god-like, and the barbarians somewhere near the lower end. The Greeks were civil because they were the first city-dwellers. Others were outside the *polis* (Pagden, 1982, p. 18).

One might think offhandedly that the Greeks were racists, but this appellation is undeserved. Barbarian is a cultural category and not a racial one. Christian Europe easily negotiated the transition from the Greek world to its own. The Christian *oikoumene* (privileged collectivity) transposed the secular notion into the brotherhood of all in Christ. Like the Greeks, Christendom thought of those on the inside as set apart from those on the outside. But this was a distinction on the basis of belief, not kin. Unlike the Greeks, Christendom embraced the entire world. Thus, the Christian Utopian vision from the 15th to 17th centuries was a redoubtable synthesis of secular and sacred notions. The world contained potential for its movement toward fulfillment. The Christian myth of the second coming fueled the desire to convert those outside the faith. Through conversion, humankind could achieve perfection. One of the motives impelling those who went to the new worlds

was the hastening of the return of the redeemer and the release of humankind from the weary and sin-sick world (Pagden, 1982, p. 19; cf. Elliot, 1970; Phelan, 1970).

By the high Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, the label of barbarian became equated with paganism. Essentially, paganism attracted to itself the negative features of the non-civil community. Those outside civil society inverted normal human behaviour by engaging in nefarious activities like drinking blood from a skull. Barbarians did not communicate with each other. These wild creatures of the literary imagination, the *sylvestres homines*, lived in forests and mountains removed from rational activities. The imaginations of those who came to the New World, missionaries and explorers alike, were peopled with "pygmies and pilosi, the fauns and satyrs," creatures who were "half-man/half-beast" (Pagden, 1982, pp. 21–22). Thus, the existence of these creatures dwelling in the border between man and animal introduced a profound ambivalence into the ethnological reflections of the intellectuals and others.

This wild-man was not-quite-man, and Amerindians were often fitted into this classificatory category. The Bishop of Santa Maria (Colombia) described the Indians as "'wild men of the woods, for which reason they could retain no Christian doctrine, nor virtue nor any kind of learning'" (in Pagden, 1982, p. 23). Observations such as this would resound through missionary perceptions and struggles with the other throughout the 16th and later centuries. But philosophical and religious discussion about where the Amerindian fit into European anthropological schemes quickly added another profound ethical dimension. By 1500, the Spaniards had enslaved their native workforce and made concerted efforts to transform the ecological landscape. One of the most important debates of the 16th century then ensued over the theological and legal rights of Spain to enslave the Indians. This debate is fascinating and intricate.

The famous Spanish *encomienda*, something like a slave plantation, habituated the body of the Amerindian to forms of labour previously unknown. Their minds and spirits were instructed in the new Christian teachings. But some critical questioning persisted. What was the justification for coercing the native people to do their manual work for them? Some theologians found support in Aristotle's strange idea of the "natural slave." Natural slaves, although clearly men, had intellects that had failed to gain mastery over their passions. Thus, the natural slave, as a man, could, through imitation of the person of reason, achieve full human status. That was the refined theory. In practice, though, the situation for thousands of Amerindians was ghastly. The lash of the whip was an odd way of providing emulative models.

The Aristotelian notion of natural slavery, however, did not hold up to theological scrutiny once news of the great Amerindian empires of Mexico and Peru had been discovered. The conquistadors Hernán Cortés (1519–1522) and Juan Pizarro (1531–1532), hailed in their day as Moseses of the New World, described societies that seemed to fit into the socio-political classificatory schemes used in Europe. These Indian societies had nobility, markets, a merchant class, and means of exchange; fought organized wars; collected taxes; and possessed a structured religion. Moreover, the expanding Spanish empire created vast numbers of Amerindian vassals of the Castilian crown. They didn't appear to be barbarians at all. If so, how could they be deprived of their rights and property on the grounds that they couldn't make choices for themselves?

The great Spanish theologian of the day, Francisco de Vitoria (ca. 1492–1546), leapt into this debate with his mighty intellect in full bloom. Vitoria easily dismissed those who wanted to deny Europe’s domination over Amerindians. Yes, the Indians had culture and religion, but it was inferior in quality compared to Europe. Didn’t the Indians practise cannibalism and human sacrifice? These were clear indicators of mental defects. However, Vitoria believed he had discovered a contradiction in Aristotle’s idea of the natural slave. A natural slave was not a man, and Amerindians had clearly manifested so many human-like qualities that they cannot be natural slaves. They were in the possession of reason. Since one could not be partially human, the theory of natural slavery could not explain Amerindian unnatural behaviour. Their foolish behaviour, then, had to come from their “poor and barbarous education” (in Pagden, 1982, p. 97; cf. Phelan, 1970). Vitoria’s thought can be usefully understood as one of the first articulated and coherent philosophies of adult education and learning in the early modern period. By insisting that “education” was responsible for the Indian’s actions, Vitoria freed them from a permanent state of semi-humanity.

Vitoria thought of education as habituation. It trained the intellect to perceive the basic principles (*secunda praecepta*) of the law of nature accurately. All norms and laws of the community were derived from these principles. They were dependent on the operation of the human intellect. Barbarians were without guidance; the law of nature could be obscured. The influential School of Salamanca in Spain argued that custom exercised powerful formative power. They believed that customs were like dictators. Those inside one cultural universe rarely saw any need to question them. Not yet ready to open its own cultural horizon to the Amerindian other, Europe’s pedagogical vision asserted that Indians had to live continuously with Europeans and be led like children to the truth. Thus, the missionary task in the New World would be basically one of pedagogy. Indians were just misguided—unlike Jews or Muslims, who had to be coerced violently into the Christian fold.

“A Most Astonishing Encounter”

Jacques Cartier, the experienced navigator from the lively seaport of St. Malo in France, sailed through the Strait of Belle Isle into the Gulf of St. Lawrence (named such by Mercator in 1569). He arrived in the Gaspé on July 24, 1534, and erected his famous cross. He was, one might conjecture, performing Canada’s first instructional lesson. The cross was 30 feet high. Under the cross-bar he fixed a

. . . shield with three fleurs-de-lys in relief, and above it a wooden board, engraved in large Gothic characters, where was written, LONG LIVE THE KING OF FRANCE. We erected this cross on the point in their presence and they [the native people] watched it being put together and set up. And when it had been raised in the air, we knelt down with our hands joined, worshipping it before them; and made signs to them, looking up and pointing towards heaven, that by means of this we had our redemption, at which they showed many marks of admiration, at the same time turning and looking at the cross. (in Cook, 1993, p. 26)

Evidently pleased with this instructional act of visual education, Cartier commented bemusedly that the chief responded with a "long harangue, making the sign of the cross with two of his fingers; and then he pointed to the land all around about, as if he wished to say that all this region belonged to him, and that we ought not to have set up this cross without his permission" (in Cook, 1993, p. 26). Cartier then proceeded to deceive the Amerindians into boarding his ship. He promised them that the cross was really only a "land-mark and guide-post," that they would return with "iron wares and other goods," (in Cook, 1993, p. 27) and that they wished to take the chief Donnacona's sons away to France.

Cartier was the first explorer to mark Canada for France and Christianity, but he was by no means the first to arrive in the northeastern part of the New World. Vikings arrived at L'Anse aux Meadows as early as the close of the 10th century. This venture pushed Eric the Red's Greenland westward over a 10-year period. Greenland was not, however, one of the crusading "springboard societies" (Trigger, 1985, p. 119) driven to establish permanent overseas empires. The emerging nation-states of Europe—first Portugal and Spain followed by France and England—struggled for hegemony in Europe by extending themselves outward to the New World through costly and risky mercantile expansion. The competition among these hungry kingdoms was fiercely contestatory and bloody.

The Portuguese set out on their "sacred mission" (Jennings, 1976, p. 5) sailing along the coast of West Africa and westward into the Atlantic Ocean, searching for islands suitable for agriculture, fishing, and sealing. They managed to reach Cape Breton. But their interest in Atlantic exploration had subsided after Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1488. Spain wasted little time in occupying and dominating Amerindia. Between 1492 and 1500, approximately 50,000 square kilometres of land were colonized in the Caribbean, Venezuela, and Panama. By 1515, their occupation had expanded to 300,000 square kilometers with three million indigenous inhabitants under their rule. Indians were put to work in mines and farms on *encomienda*, where they received Spanish protection, religious instruction, and a very small wage in exchange for their labour. The Spanish conquistadors treated the native peoples horrendously. This gave rise to the "Black Legend" and precipitated weighty debates about their treatment.

But Henry VII, King of England, quickly challenged Pope Alexander VI's granting of the new worlds exclusively to Spain. He commissioned John Cabot in 1496 to "conquer, occupy and possess" the lands of "heathens and infidels" (Jennings, 1976, p. 5). France also got into the action seriously several decades later. Francis I had convinced Pope Clement VII to allow voyages to discover mineral wealth and a sea route to the spices and wealth of Cathay. Thus, Jacques Cartier's voyage was not initially intended either to establish a colony or convert the pagans. But Cartier's lesson for the indigenous peoples certainly was foreboding. Donnacona, the Iroquoian chief, did not seem to think that the erecting of the cross was simply a navigational marker.

Jacques Cartier left us written records of his voyages along the northern coast and the St. Lawrence region. In fact, they are our main sources of description of the beginnings of European contact in this part of the New World. We know very little about Cartier, but, once teased out of the pages of the voyages, he appears to have been a wealthy Renaissance

man. He was interested in overseas adventures. Most significantly, he was an astute observer of his unfamiliar surroundings. Eminent Canadian historian Ramsay Cook (1993) adds he was a “man of his times in other ways, too. Though fully conscious of rising religious dissent, he remained a loyal Catholic opposed to ‘wicked heretics and false law-makers’” (37). Nor did his experience in North America—the discovery of other religions—shake his own faith. Indeed, his attitude confirms Lucien Febvre’s contention that “‘what the discoveries engendered in their messianic souls was an old-fashioned, amazing zeal for proselytizing’” (Cook, p. xiii). Cartier naturally assumed that Catholic Christendom ought to be extended to the entire world. He was relatively unaffected by the dogmatism of the counter-reformation and the new rationalism. His faith was mystical and made little distinction between natural and supernatural worlds. Although this latter belief placed him on common ground with native peoples, he had “no doubt that the line between France and Canada, between civilization and savagery, was sharply drawn and that civilization was on the march” (Cook, p. xv).

Cartier sought to render the unfamiliar familiar by giving the flora and fauna French names. Like his explorer colleagues, he was often stumped before the new. He was baffled by discovering beluga whales at the mouth of the Saguenay River. “‘This fish is as large as a porpoise but has no fin. It is very familiar to a greyhound about the body and head and is as white as snow, without a spot on it’” (in Cook, 1993, p. 48). Cartier was trying to learn about this new animal through similarities. The object was observed and described through a cultural lens absorbed in his own environment.

Cook awards Cartier high marks for his ethnological representations. Although Cartier did not have any difficulty believing Donnacona’s tales of people who possessed “‘no anus, never eat nor digest, but simply make water through the penis’” (in Cook, 1993, p. 82), he was able to make accurate descriptions of their culture. As Cartier travelled along the coast of Labrador, which he named the land of Cain, he found a “‘wild and savage folk’” who adorned themselves “‘with certain tan colours’”—Beothuks hunting seal (in Cook, p. 10). What did Cartier learn about these New World people? He learned that they were not all alike. They had different languages and even fought one another. He also feared them. In the famous meeting with the Mi’kmaq in the Bay de Chaleur, when 40 to 50 canoe-loads of people arrived indicating their desire to trade, Cartier drove them away with gunfire. The natives had met other whites before—Bretons, Basques, and English fishermen. When he first exchanged commodities with natives, Cartier somehow imagined they would be easy to convert. “‘We perceived,’” he wrote, “‘that they are people who would be easy to convert, who go from place to place maintaining themselves and catching fish in the fishing-season for food’” (in Cook, 1993, p. 22).

Cartier inhabited the mental universe of the 16th century. The ideas of the theologians and philosophers had been filtered into the universe of influential explorers like Cartier (who may even have read some of the works beginning to be published in Europe). Cartier described the native people he met as savages. “‘This people may well be called savage; for they are the sorriest folk there can be in the world, and the whole lot of them had not anything above the value of five sous, their canoes and fishing-nets excepted. They go quite naked, except for a small skin’” (in Cook, 1993, p. 24). Cartier was no 20th-century cultural relativist or sensitive post-colonial theorist. He interpreted the

cultural cues of the Indians in terms of his own cultural codes. There were no permanent settlements that he could readily identify; they were not overdressed the way the French were; they were impoverished materially; and, upon translating their commodities into his exchange rules, they had little of value. To be different was, then, to be inferior. Indeed, *les sauvages* fit nicely into European classification systems that divided the civilized city-dwellers from those who wandered in forests. As Cook reminds us, while the "native people were accepted as 'human,' they were only potential, not actual, equals of the Europeans. Only if the 'savage' characteristics that made them different were 'tamed' or 'moulded' could they become actual equals" (p. xxiii).

Cartier could not, then, conceive of "equal and different." They had no government and no culture or religion to speak of, so Cartier simply assumed he had the right to claim the land for France. But his adult education lesson for the uncomprehending and angry Iroquois, then residing in the lowlands along the St. Lawrence, was met with hostility. In fact, we have the first incidence of a "discordant configuration" (Cremin, 1980) in Canadian history. Donnacona and his sons drew upon their own knowledge of the land and skills designed for living with it. Cartier could not believe—it appears, beyond his cultural horizon—to imagine that the native people had any rights to this land of their forefathers and foremothers. The native leaders resisted this pedagogical intrusion into their cultural worlds. Their tribal wilderness learning system was now placed on a collision course with that of Catholic France (Watson 2005; Welton, 2005).

Cook (1993) argues convincingly that Cartier interpreted the Indian protest as a jurisdictional dispute. He introduced his second voyage by relating his journeys to the "protection and promotion of Catholicism against the threat of 'wicked Lutherans, apostates, and imitators of Mahomet' and to 'these lands of yours,' 'your possessions,' and 'those lands and territories of yours' (p. 38). If, then, crosses were merely traffic signals, they should at least be described as French traffic signals" (p. xxiv). The Indians believed they had proprietorial rights to the land to hunt and fish. Cartier acted decisively to squash this rebellion. He boarded their canoes and took Donnacona and others prisoners. This whole messy business was steeped in misunderstanding and deception. In fact, one can quite naturally wonder at how little each really understood the other's language. Thus, Cartier, like Columbus before him, took captured natives back to Europe—primarily, perhaps, as fascinating objects to feed the new European appetite for curiosities. More likely, Cartier presented his Indians as evidence of his own discoveries. They could also act as go-betweens. Their immersion in French was to serve the colonizers' interests.

Subsequent voyages in 1534–1536 and 1541 would not go well. Dom Agaya and Taïnoagny, sons of Donnacona, had been to France and learned some of its ways. They provided Cartier with some useful information, since Cartier was searching for a route to Asia by travelling westward from the mouth of the St. Lawrence. But after arriving near the Ile d'Orléans on September 8, 1534, the mood turned sour. Suffice to say the Indians were trying to get Cartier and his crew of Frenchmen to treat them with respect and understand something of the politics of trade relations. Cartier misinterpreted the offering of children as gifts as a way of cementing alliances. He apparently did not understand why the Indians sought to have him lay hands on them.

By the end of 1534, things went very badly. European pathogens—measles, smallpox, tuberculosis, influenza—swept through native communities. Scurvy and other diseases were widespread among the Europeans. Many of Cartier's men died; Cartier remained blind to Dom Agaya's offering of the white cedar cure for scurvy. Filled with dread and mistrust, Cartier trapped Donnacona, his sons, and several others into travelling across the Atlantic. On May 6, 1536, Cartier and his human cargo set sail. None of the native people (10 in all) ever returned to their homeland. The third voyage was a total disaster. In Cook's insightful analysis:

Cartier's failure, for that is what it was, resulted from his ethnology, his attempt to understand the people who lived along the St. Lawrence River. His description of them was careful and often perceptive. He leaves the impression of having "been there". But his judgment, and therefore his representation, of these people was mortally flawed. They existed only in European terms, never in their own, their alterity unrecognized because it was unaccepted. Though Cartier successfully mapped the St. Lawrence, he misidentified the St. Lawrence Iroquoians, who remained as mysterious as the *adhothuys* [porpoises] and "seahorses" who played near the mouth of the Saguenay River. For Cartier, a flawed ethnology brought only failure; for Donnacona's people it proved fatal. (1993, p. xl)

Looked at in the cold light of day, Cartier's France was scarcely appealing. People fought over dogma. The decadent rich lived on large estates while the peasants huddled together in shabby huts on lousy diets. Disease was rampant and superstition and fear infected the popular mind. Those who left French ports were "self-confident adventurers and sharp traders who carried arms, ignorant of local customs. These suspicious, scheming intruders brought unknown illnesses, frightened native women, told lies, and shamelessly kidnapped even those who helped them" (Cook, 1993, pp. xl–xli).

France began to take a serious interest in a permanent settlement only in the late 16th century. Imperialism now depended on discovery, conquest, and settlement. Unless one could settle land and defend it with armaments and skillful management of indigenous populations, papal or royal proclamations meant little. In 1603, Henry IV, the Huguenot turned Catholic, appointed Pierre du Guay, sieur de Monts, a prominent merchant, to procure settlers for New France. He ordered Samuel de Champlain to increase these numbers. This was to be accomplished through evangelization and assimilation of native peoples into French culture. Thus, France's fur trade interests could be protected, and the census would be able to report more French than English residents. These purposes were encased within the dream of fulfilling the dictates of the papal encyclicals to bring the knowledge of God, the Catholic Church, and religion to the native peoples.

In conclusion, this essay has explored the new forms of learning emerging on the cusp of the scientific revolution in Europe (the release of considerable energy to investigate empirically the natural world, and the fracturing of the "Christian Community," which in itself released fierce moral and spiritual powers). These new forms of humanist learning enabled early explorers like Columbus and Cartier to sail across the seas. However, these explorers (and the many who would follow after) filtered their perceptions and learning

through their inherited cosmographies when they encountered the indescribable. This was acutely evident in the encounters with indigenous peoples. Columbus and Cartier did not see who and what was before them; the discordance between what was before them and their mental categories opened the door for new ways of seeing and being in the world. But even though European Christendom was fracturing irrevocably, the Christian cosmography did not yet allow for a radical acceptance of the other. Indeed, we would have to await the fullness of the scientific revolution and the blooming of the enlightenment—as well as significant resistance from those deemed as objects of Euro-pedagogy—to accomplish the corrosion of Euro-superiority and deepen its self-critique.

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