



# Acoustemologies in Contact

Sounding Subjects and Modes of  
Listening in Early Modernity

EDITED BY EMILY WILBOURNE AND SUZANNE G. CUSICK



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# 3. Performance in the Periphery: Colonial Encounters and Entertainments<sup>1</sup>

Patricia Akhimie

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Early modern English narratives of encounter have a soundtrack in which singing, playing, speeches, and dancing accompany other forms of communication and exchange: offered gifts, and shared meals. Even on the mysterious island in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1623), music signals and shapes moments of cross-cultural contact.<sup>2</sup> Shipwrecked by the powerful and vengeful Prospero (the deposed Duke of Milan), King Alonso of Naples and his party of Italian courtiers find themselves at the

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- 1 This essay was completed with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.
  - 2 Shakespeare's play has repeatedly been read as representing cross-cultural and, specifically, colonial contact; see, for example Barbara Fuchs, 'Conquering Islands: Contextualizing *The Tempest*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48.1 (1997), 45–62, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2871400>; William M. Hamlin, 'Men of Inde: Renaissance Ethnography and *The Tempest*', *Shakespeare Studies*, 22 (1994), 15–44; Paul Cefalu, 'Rethinking the Discourse of Colonialism in Economic Terms: Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Captain John Smith's Virginia Narratives, and the English Response to Vagrancy', *Shakespeare Studies*, 28 (2000), 85–119, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403973658\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403973658_2); Jace Weaver, 'Shakespeare among the "Salvages": The Bard in Red Atlantic Performance', *Theatre Journal*, 67.3 (2015), 433–443, <https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2015.0109>; Deborah Willis, 'Shakespeare's *Tempest* and the Disclosure of Colonialism', *Studies in English Literature*, 29.2 (1989), 277–289, <https://doi.org/10.2307/450475>; Kelsey Ridge, '"This Island's Mine": Ownership of the Island in *The Tempest*', *Studies In Ethnicity & Nationalism*, 16.2 (2016), 231–245, <https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12189>; John Wylie, 'New and Old Worlds: *The Tempest* and Early Colonial Discourse', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 1.1 (2000), 45–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649369950133485>



mercy of the spirits of the island, who operate under Prospero's control and Ariel's command. When the Italians finally encounter the island spirits, they first hear a 'solemn and strange music' and then receive a seemingly transparent gesture of welcome: a banquet and a 'gentle' dance.

*Solemn and strange music, and PROSPERO on the top (invisible). Enter several strange shapes, bringing in a banquet, and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations, and inviting the King etc. to eat, they depart.*

[...]

ALONSO. What harmony is this? My good friends, hark!

GONZALO. Marvellous sweet music!

ALONSO. Give us kind keepers, heavens! What were these? [...]

GONZALO. If in Naples

I should report this now, would they believe me?

If I should say I saw such islanders

(For certes, these are people of the island),

Who, though they are of monstrous shape, yet note

Their manners are more gentle, kind, than of

Our human generation you shall find

Many — nay almost any.

[...]

ALONSO. I cannot too much muse

Such shapes, such gesture and such sound, expressing

(Although they want the use of tongue) a kind

Of excellent dumb discourse.<sup>3</sup>

The courtiers are quick to interpret the music and movements as welcoming gestures from the island's inhabitants. They find the performance fantastic, but not unfamiliar, remarking on the strange stories they have read in travelers' tales even as they comment on the 'monstrous shape' and 'dumb discourse' of the 'people of the island'. Yet as soon as King Alonso determines that it is safe to accept these gestures of welcome at face value — 'I will stand to and feed' — and to

3 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, rev. edn (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011), act 3, scene 3, lines 18–39.



partake of the banquet, the tenor of the music and performance changes drastically.<sup>4</sup>

*Thunder and lightning. Enter ARIEL, like a harpy, claps his wings upon the table, and with a quaint device the banquet vanishes.*

ARIEL. You are three men of sin, whom destiny,  
That hath to instrument this lower world  
And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea  
Hath caused to belch up you, and on this island  
Where man doth not inhabit — you 'mongst men  
Being most unfit to live — I have made you mad

[....]

*He vanishes in thunder. Then, to soft music, enter the shapes again and dance with mocks and mows, and carry out the table.*<sup>5</sup>

The sudden change and the accusations that follow — as Ariel demands that Alonso take responsibility for his role in the theft of Prospero's dukedom — drive Alonso and his companions to a kind of temporary madness, a desperate guilt. Their willingness to accept the spirits' music, dance, gestures of welcome, and offered banquet as genuine is also proven to be imprudent. Ariel decries their presumptuousness in imagining that they are welcome, wanted, and forgiven for past crimes anywhere, least of all on an island where they are strangers. This kind of reversal — a gentle welcome turned hostile assault — is not Shakespeare's invention, nor is the centrality of music and sound to the tableau.

When early modern English travelers relate their exchanges with the people they have met in far-flung places, they frequently include descriptions of music both familiar and strange, performed by both foreign visitors and Indigenous peoples. As with Alonso and his companions, however, the presence of music and its seemingly transparent meanings may enable perilous miscommunications. Incidents that we might describe as failures of musical interpretation or sudden alterations of meaning in musical exchanges proliferate in

<sup>4</sup> Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 3.3.50.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.3.53–82.

reports of English and European encounters in the Americas. In this chapter, I argue that the English carried with them an epistemology of musical meaning predicated on the ways that music functioned in European entertainments, particularly those associated with the outdoors and with English country estates.

The term 'entertainment', both a synonym for performance and the name of a specific genre of dramatic performance in early modern England, recurs frequently in episodes of colonial encounter that involve music, performance, dance, and other such gestures. Importantly, 'entertainment' has an inherent instability; as an exchange it points directionally both up and down the social scale from high to low and from low to high. The primary denotative meaning is provision: monarchs, lords, and masters make provision for those under their protection, whether material or financial, providing money, goods, food, land, or shelter for servants, soldiers, and livestock. To entertain is to retain service and repay that service with worldly care. Yet to entertain is also to provide amusement, courtesy, and welcome; and in this case entertainment is often offered by the recipients of patronage or largesse to those monarchs, lords, and masters, as a token of love and loyalty. Entertainment describes the offer of hospitality, especially banquets, or the offer of pretty speeches, music or dance. Entertainment thus became the name for a dramatic performance offered as part of a larger gesture of welcome for an elite guest at court or at a country estate.

When the term entertainment is used to describe an exchange between parties of unequal status, it serves to demonstrate a hierarchical relationship understood and accepted by all. When used to describe an exchange between parties of uncertain relative status, it becomes part of a language of conduct, deployed as an interpretive and argumentative strategy. This is true not only in the context of the country house entertainments, transcripts and descriptions of which circulated in printed prose accounts, and in which aristocratic hosts vied for political power and royal favor, but also in the colonial periphery where the term appears frequently in accounts of exchanges between the English and others, including Indigenous groups, in promotional literature about the Americas.<sup>6</sup> These two kinds of texts share in a discursive field that

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6 Promotional literature functioned to inform readers about the landscape and peoples of the 'New World' in an effort to entice new investors and settlers to travel

is at once green, pastoral, and open, and also violent, political, and contested.

Promotional literature emerges at the moment of the English colonial enterprise in Virginia and elsewhere in the Americas and the rise of aspirational and nationalist travel literature, such as Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* (1589), which attempted to demonstrate that England was the rival of other European nations in its voyaging and colonizing exploits. In the 'New World', there were no clear answers to questions such as who could lay claim to land and the power that came with it, and who was the guest and who the host; thus the familiar yet complex custom of welcome-as-performance takes on a structural function. Certainly, English aristocrats, ambassadors, and monarchs were accustomed to receptions on this level when they traveled to the continent or received important guests from abroad. As I will show, however, it is in the context of English experiences in North America that the familiar form of the country house entertainment as welcome takes on a crucial importance. There, participants struggled to establish their relative social identities and their relationships to a new and newly contested land against barriers of extreme linguistic and cultural difference. Under such circumstances, music became an unreliable narrator, presumed to communicate where words failed, and often foiled by incommensurate cultural assumptions.

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to the colonies. The boundaries of the genre are amorphous, encompassing text and image, print and manuscript, personal and corporate interests, and an incredibly varied history of textual transmission and cross-pollination. For an introduction to the genre of promotional literature, see Howard Mumford Jones, *O Strange New World. American Culture: The Formative Years* (New York: Viking Press, 1964); Paul Lindholdt, 'The Significance of the Colonial Promotional Tract', in *Early American Literature and Culture: Essays Honoring Harrison T. Meserole*, ed. by Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992), pp. 57–72 and Richard Beale Davis, 'The Literary Climate of Jamestown Under the Virginia Company, 1607–1624', in *Toward a New American Literary History: Essays in Honor of Arlin Turner*, ed. by Louis J. Budd, Edwin H. Cady, and Carl L. Anderson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1980), pp. 36–53. Paul Lindholdt has compared promotional literature to 'the prospectus printed by modern corporations to attract potential investors', noting that reading audiences would have included not only investors, adventurers, and potential settlers, but also armchair travelers seeking diversion and education in stories about foreign lands (pp. 58–62). Studies of promotional literature tend to focus on a single tract, author, or theme rather than on the genre as a whole, while promotional tracts or 'literature' are considered valuable by some only as historical documents, and unreliable ones at best.



## Entertainment on the English Estate

Within English territories, royal and aristocratic country house entertainments were nationalist in their aims. At these lavish events aristocrats welcomed royal guests to their country homes with multi-day celebrations that included dramatic and musical performance, dance, speeches, exchanges of gifts, feasting, and hunting; entertainments were staged in various locations — indoors and out, in green spaces, rooms of state, and purpose-built structures such as arbors, man-made lakes, and temporary buildings.<sup>7</sup> These performances involved multiple authors and a myriad of actors, some professional, and many local amateurs. As the king or queen traveled the countryside, ritually claiming the lands and estates that made up his or her kingdom, the aristocrats, servants, city, and country folk who participated in these gestures of welcome could perform fealty and, at the same time, present their suits for patronage or blessing to the monarch in person; the sheer cost of such a welcome entertainment was a testament to the loyalty and love of the monarch's subjects.

The following example and illustration, from *The Honorable Entertainment at Elvetham* (1591), recounts the elaborate festivities

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7 On the genre of country house entertainments see Suzanne Westfall, "'What Revels Are in Hand?': Performances in the Great Households", in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur Kinney (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 266–280, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470998922.ch20>; Malcolm R. Smuts, 'Progresses and Court Entertainments', in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur Kinney (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 281–293, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470998922.ch21>; Muriel Bradbrook, *The Rise of the Common Player: A Study of Actor and Society in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Bruce Smith, 'Landscape with Figures: The Three Realms of Queen Elizabeth's Country-house Revels', *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1977), 57–109, <https://doi.org/10.1086/rd.8.41917137>; Helen Cooper, 'Location and Meaning in Masque, Morality and Royal Entertainment', in *The Court Masque*, ed. by David Lindley (Manchester and Dover, NH: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 135–148; and Cedric Brown, 'Milton's *Arcades*: Context, Form, and Function', *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1977), 245–274, <https://doi.org/10.1086/rd.8.41917144>. More recent studies include *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. by Jayne Elisabeth Archer and Sarah Knight (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Gabriel Heaton, *Writing and Reading Royal Entertainments: From George Gascoigne to Ben Jonson* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), and Elizabeth Kolkovich, *The Elizabethan Country House Entertainment: Print, Performance and Gender* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316460818>

offered by Edward Seymour, the Earl of Hertford, for Queen Elizabeth on the occasion of her visit in September 1591 (see Fig. 3.1).<sup>8</sup>



Fig. 3.1 Hand-colored woodcut depicting the water pageant at Elvetham, *The Honourable Entertainment Given to the Queenes Majestie in Progresse at Eluetham in Hampshire, 1591*. The Royal Collection / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2020.

8 The authorship of the Entertainment at Elvetham is uncertain but, as with most entertainments, many hands contributed to and collaborated on its production. Ulrich Suerbaum offers a full account of the events of the Entertainment at Elvetham in 'Performing Royalty. The Entertainment at Elvetham and the Cult of Elisa', in *Word and Action in Drama: Studies in Honour of Hans-Jürgen Diller on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday*, ed. by Günter Ahrends, Stephan Kohl, Joachim Kornelius, and Gerd Stratmann (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher, 1994), pp. 53–64, while H. Neville Davies unpacks the complex publication history of related documents in the introduction to the Entertainment in *John Nichols's The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. by Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Clarke, and Elizabeth Goldring, 5 vols. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), III, pp. 563–569. For more on the Entertainment at Elvetham, see, Harry H. Boyle, 'Elizabeth's Entertainment at Elvetham: War Policy in Pageantry', *Studies in Philology*, 68.2 (1971), 146–166; Curtis Bright, 'Realpolitik and Elizabethan Ceremony: The Earl of Hertford's Entertainment of Elizabeth at Elvetham, 1591', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 45.1 (1992), 20–48, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2862830>; Ernest Brennecke, 'The Entertainment at Elvetham, 1591', in *Music in English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by John H. Long (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), pp. 32–56; Albert Chatterley, 'Thomas Watson and the "Elvetham Entertainment"', *Notes and Queries*, 47.1 (2000), 37–40, <https://doi.org/10.1093/nq/47.1.37-b>, and Neville H. Davies, '"To Sing and Revel in These Woods": Purcell's The Fairy-Queen and The Honourable Entertainment at Elvetham', *Renaissance Journal*, 1.6 (2002), 3–14.

This day hir maiestie dined with her Nobles about hir, in the room of Estate, new builded on the hill side, aboue the Pondes head. There sate below hir, many Lords, Ladies, and Knightes [....] The manner of seruice, and abundance of dainties, I omit vpon iust consideration, as also the ordinance discharged in the beginning of dinner, and variety of consorted musick al dinner time.

Presently after dinner, the Earle of Hertford caused a large Canapie of Estate to bee set at the pondes head, for hir maiestic to sit vnder, & to view some sportes prepared in the water [....]

At the further ende of the ponde, there was a Bower, close built to the brinke thereof; out of which there went a pompous araie of sea-persons, which waded brest-high, or swam, till they approached neere the seate of hir maiestie. *Nereus*, the prophet of the sea, attired in red silke, & hauing a cornerd-cap on his curld head, did swimme before the rest, as their pastor and guide. After him came fiue Tritons brest-high in the water, all with grisly heades, and beards of diuers colours and fashions, and all fiue cheerefully sounding their trumpets.<sup>9</sup>

The festivities not only showcase the Earl of Hertford's loyalty to the queen, but also his bid for a favored position in her court — enacted before all those who were present to see the exchange in September 1591, as well as those who read about the event and saw the accompanying illustrations in the pamphlet, which appeared in print later the same year. In this example, the Queen is feted with feasting, music, and performance in structures — a room of state, a canopy by the pond, and the pond itself, a body of water enhanced with stage design to become a performance space — all built especially to receive her. The sounds the narrator describes as accompanying the dinner (despite voicing the decision to 'omit' these details) include the unspecified 'variety of consorted music' and the blast of 'ordinance discharged'.<sup>10</sup> These sounds of more ordinary tribute to an elite guest who is both urbane courtier and military leader, then give way to a more bizarre display. The Earl has 'some sportes prepared' — a water pageant in which Queen Elizabeth's

9 John Nichols's, III, pp. 581–582.

10 For a sustained treatment of the music performed in the Entertainment at Elvetham see Brennecke, 'Entertainment at Elvetham, 1591'. For more on music in country house entertainments, see Ross Duffin, *Some Other Note: The Lost Songs of English Renaissance Comedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 123–134, and 'Framing a Ditty for Elizabeth' (forthcoming).



power is demonstrated by her dominion over not only the people on her lands, but also a ‘pompous araie of sea-persons’, strange creatures with ‘grisly heads’ and multi-colored beards, who nevertheless approach the Queen to give her tribute by ‘cheerfully sounding their trumpets’. Within the genre of the court masque or country house entertainment, this kind of submissive gesture from exotic or otherworldly beings — even Nereus himself — is a familiar move indicating the reach and potency of royal power. The narrator goes on to emphasize the congruence between sound and scene: ‘The melody was sweet, and the show stately’, and seems to find reassurance in this balance, a representation of the fair exchange of service for benevolent rule.<sup>11</sup>

It is important to note that, while in comparison with colonial holdings, the country estate stands as the epitome of domestic stability, even the green space of the English country house with its private forest or chase can be understood as a contested space. The green space of the chase serves to determine the boundaries of the country estate and by extension the nation as culturally imagined. And it follows that within this boundary region or interstitial space, borders are in fact ill-defined, constantly under negotiation. Welcome is never a done deal, though through performances such as that described above, ‘grisly’ strangers may seem to be domesticated and rendered docile subjects of the Queen.

## European Entertainments Abroad

The forms and gestures of country house entertainments traveled well and, from the perspective of European travelers, they arrived overseas intact. In the periphery, entertainments consisting of a variety of activities including conversation, feasting, music, dancing, impromptu and scripted dramatic interludes, and hunting, are crucial in conveying welcome.<sup>12</sup> The complexity of the ritual reflects the complexity of the intended (and unintended) messages that welcome delivers. Entertainments contain messages of respect as well as threats

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11 John Nichols's, III, p. 582.

12 For more on the role of music and musicians in particular in episodes of travel, exploration, and encounter, see Ian Woodfield, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995) and Bryan White, “‘Brothers of the String’: Henry Purcell and the Letter-Books of Rowland Sherman”, *Music and Letters*, 92.4 (2011), 519–581, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/gcr116>

of dominance, gestures that emphasize commonly held beliefs as well as defiant proclamations of cultural difference. 'The voiage made by Sir Richard Grenville, for Sir Walter Raleigh, to Virginia, in the yeere 1585', for example, describes an encounter between two rival powers, the English and the Spanish, on Hispaniola. Here, banqueting, polite conversation, music, exchange of gifts and an invigorating hunt on horseback are all incorporated into a ceremony of welcome and hospitality.<sup>13</sup> The subtext of the meeting, however, is that of parley between two competing military and colonizing powers in the very theater where the contest waxed hottest.

The Spanish Gouvernor receiued [Sir Richard Grenville] very courteously, and the Spanish Gentlemen saluted our English Gentlemen, and their inferiour sort did also salute our Souldiers and Sea men, liking our men, and likewise their qualities, although at the first, they seemed to stand in feare of vs, and of so many of our boats, whereof they desired that all might not land their men, yet in the end, the courtesies that passed on both sides were so great, that all feare and mistrust on the Spanyardes part was abandoned.

In the meane time while our English Generall and the Spanish Gouvernor discoursed betwixt them of diuers matters, as of the state of the Country, the multitude of the Townes and people, and the commodities of the Iland, our men prouided two banquetting houses couered with greene boughs [...] and a sumptuous banquet was brought in serued by vs all in Plate, with the sound of trumpets, and consort of musick wherwith the Spanyardes were more then delighted [...] The Spanyardes in recompense of our curtesie, caused a great heard of white buls, and kyne, to be brought together from the Mountaines, and appointed for euery Gentleman and Captaine that woulde ride, a horse ready saddled, and then singled out three of the best of them to be hunted by horsemen after their manner, so that the pastime grew very plesant, for the space of three houres [...] After this sport, many rare presents and gifts were giuen and bestowed on both partes, and the next day wee plaied the Marchants in bargaining with them by way of trucke and exchange for diuers of their commodities, as horses, mares, kyne, buls, goates, swine, sheepe, bul hydes, sugar, ginger, pearle, tabacco, and such like commodities of the Iland.

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13 The account was printed in Richard Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* (London: Bishop and Newberie, 1589). Grenville transported Ralph Lane and a group of colonists to Virginia in 1585, leaving from Plymouth in April and arriving in the largely Spanish-controlled Caribbean in May before sailing on to the English colony.

The 7. day we departed with great good will from the Spanyardes from the Iland of Hispaniola: but the wiser sort do impute this greate shew of friendship, and curtesie vsed towards vs by the Spanyards rather to the force that we were of, and the vigilancie, and watchfulnes that was amongst vs, then to any harty good will, or sure friendly intertainement.<sup>14</sup>

By describing the general and governor 'discours[ing]' about various topics including the successes of Spanish colonizing efforts on Hispaniola and sharing in that bounty, the author of this account suggests that the English may (and should) someday be capable of hosting such an event in their own territories. The English offer of a banquet and music is 'recompensed' by the Spanish hunt in a battle for the title of best 'curtesie'. The peaceful meeting between two rival powers implies an agreement or concession that the Spanish have firm control of the island. However, there is also the suggestion that the two groups are competing, though subtly, to decide who is the guest here and who the host. Following a mutual display of force in which the English are apparently at an advantage, the détente becomes frivolity, then an oddly commercial bartering for goods and staples. Finally, the narrator asserts that this display of good will has only been possible because of the English party's greater numbers. In this instance, entertainment reflected both the rivalry of two maritime powers, and the specific power dynamics of this one encounter. Under different circumstances, the groups might well have exchanged fire, rather than pleasantries. This knife's edge (conflict or camaraderie) is present in many accounts of entertainments.

In this account, however, it is clear that the forms of the entertainment and its meanings (however complex, multi-layered, or contradictory) are familiar to all. Each major figure (the general and the governor) clearly represents a European nation, acting as an extension of that nation's policies, positions, and customs. In such episodes, the social hierarchy is anything but static, and the outcome of the careful negotiation of participants' relative roles is not predetermined as it is in country house entertainments.

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14 Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations*, pp. 734–735. David Quinn identifies the Spanish general as Captain Rengifo de Angulo in *The Roanoke Voyages, 1584–1590: Documents to Illustrate the English Voyages to North America under the Patent Granted to Walter Raleigh in 1584*, 2 vols (London: Hakluyt Society, 1955), I, p. 163. Hakluyt's source for this episode was an anonymous journal written by someone traveling aboard Grenville's flagship, the *Tiger* (see Quinn, *The Roanoke Voyages*, p. 178, n. 4).



## Entertainment in the Periphery

In meetings between English and Indigenous people in the Americas, the forms of welcome also appear familiar, at least to English chroniclers, while the meanings of welcome are in fact far from clear. While inattentive to the diversity of Indigenous cultures in the vast area of North Eastern America, often indiscriminately using the term 'Indian', authors of promotional literature are exacting in their descriptions of the gestures and activities that constituted face-to-face interactions between English colonists and peoples like the Algonquian of coastal New England and the Powhatans of the Mid-Atlantic.<sup>15</sup> In the de Bry engraving that illustrates the 'Arrival of the Englishmen' (see Fig. 3.2) in the 1590 edition of Thomas Harriot's *A Brief and True Report*, an English ship approaches a Virginia shore.<sup>16</sup> Thomas Hariot traveled to

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- 15 Peter Mancall offers a concise introduction to interactions between English settlers and Indigenous people throughout the early modern period in 'Native Americans and Europeans in English America, 1500–1700', in *The Origins of Empire*, ed. by Nicholas Canny (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 328–350, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198205623.003.0015>
  - 16 Hariot's patron, Sir Walter Raleigh, supported his work as a scientist and mathematician. Hariot, in turn, used his skills to aid Sir Walter Raleigh in his colonial ventures. Critical attention to Hariot and to *A Briefe and True Report* expanded, particularly in the wake of Stephen Greenblatt's influential essay, 'Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion', *Glyph*, 8 (1981), 40–60. Ed White provides a useful overview of scholarship on Hariot in 'Invisible Tagkanyough', *PMLA*, 120.3 (2005), 751–767, <https://doi.org/10.1632/003081205x63840> but see also Robert Fox, ed., *Thomas Hariot and His World: Mathematics, Exploration and Natural Philosophy in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315236155>; Mary Campbell, 'The Illustrated Travel Book and the Birth of Ethnography: Part I of De Bry's America', in *The Work of Dissimilitude: Essays from the Sixth Citadel Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. by David Allen and Robert White (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1992), pp. 177–195; Andrew Hadfield, 'Thomas Harriot and John White: Ethnography and Ideology in the New World', in *The Arts of 17th-Century Science: Representations of the Natural World in European and North American Culture*, ed. by Claire Jowitt and Diane Watt (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 199–216; Andrew Hadfield, 'Bruited Abroad: John White and Thomas Harriot's Colonial Representations of Ancient Britain', in *British Identities and English Renaissance Literature*, ed. by David Baker and Willy Maley (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 159–177; William Hamlin, 'Imagined Apotheoses: Drake, Harriot, and Raleigh in the Americas', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 57.3 (1996), 405–428, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhi.1996.0022>, and Peter Stallybrass, 'Admiranda narratio: A European Best Seller', in *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Charlottesville: Published for the Library at the Mariners' Museum by the University of Virginia Press, 2007), pp. 9–30. De

Virginia in 1585, as part of Grenville's voyage. His short *Briefe and True Report* (1588), was first published to attract support for future voyages to Virginia. It was then reissued as part of Theodor de Bry's 'Grand Voyages', accompanied by large engravings based on the paintings of John White, for which Hariot wrote short captions. In the image, the small English vessel has successfully passed through dangerous shallows where the wrecks of other ships are visible; its passengers look toward the small island of Roanoke, while one sailor at the prow holds up a cross. On the island, Indigenous people engage in hunting, farming, and fishing, and a small raiding party faces off against a group of armed defenders. The historical record of early encounters between English and Algonquian people on and around Roanoke is both conflicted and one-sided, marginalizing the experiences of Algonquian men and women, forgetting the Algonquians' own elaborate social codes around diplomacy and intercultural exchange, and erasing much of the violence of these meetings.<sup>17</sup> Instead, the image conveys a simplistic narrative about a series of unsuccessful European attempts to reach land and make peaceful contact with the Indigenous people who have gone on with their pastoral lives, undisturbed by the voyages of exploration that are, for the English, a great national enterprise. Now that moment of successful contact is imminent, as the caption describes:

Wee came vnto a Good bigg yland, the Inhabitante therof as soone as they saw vs began to make a great an[d] horrible crye, as people which [n]euere befoer had seene men apparelled like vs, and camme a way makinge out crys like wild beasts or men out of their wyts. But beenge gentlye called backe, wee offred them of our wares, as glasses, kniues, babies, and other trifles, which wee thought they delighted in. Soe they stood still, and perceuinge our Good will and courtesie came fawninge vppon vs, and bade us welcome. Then they brought vs to their village

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Bry's edition of *A Briefe and True Report*, originally published in French, German and Latin as well as English, has been made readily available to modern scholars and students in two facsimile editions: the 1972 facsimile reproduces the English edition, and a 2007 facsimile from The Mariner's Museum with notes and critical essays reproduces the Latin edition.

- 17 For an in-depth look at the history of Algonquian and English relations at Roanoke, see Michael Leroy Oberg, *The Head in Edward Nugent's Hand: Roanoke's Forgotten Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812203417>, and Seth Mallios, *The Deadly Politics of Giving Exchange and Violence at Ajacan, Roanoke, and Jamestown* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006).

in the iland called, Roanoac, and vnto their Weroans or Prince, which entertained vs with Reasonable curtesie, althoug[h] the[y] wear amased at the first sight of vs. Suche was our arriuall into the parte of the world, which we call Virginia.<sup>18</sup>



Fig. 3.2 'The Arrival of the Englishmen in Virginia', Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Frankfurt: Typis Ioannis Wecheli, 1590), Plate II. Call #: STC 12786. Reproduced with permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library, CC BY-SA 4.0.

The English 'arrival' quickly becomes their 'welcome' and 'entertainment' by the 'inhabitants'. This move refigures what might be understood as an English invasion or conquest of an existing society as a positive reception: a welcome arrival, in a mode familiar from country house entertainments. The inhabitants' 'amazement' is then written as the awe of the subject viewing an approaching monarch or lord, allowing the author to imply that the English are now in possession of this new land.<sup>19</sup> In contrast with the entertainment shared with the

18 Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Frankfurt: Typis Ioannis Wecheli, 1590), Plate II.

19 On English discourse surrounding Indigenous people's presumed naivety in the reception of theatrical and other performances, see Miles Grier, 'Staging the Cherokee *Othello*: An Imperial Economy of Indian Watching', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 73.1 (2016), 73–106, <https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.73.1.0073>



Spanish, recounted in 'The voyage made by Sir Richard Grenville', the suggestion of a meeting of equals who are also rivals is missing. Here, the exchange of gifts is one-sided, from the English to the Algonquians, and the gifts themselves are not 'rare presents' but 'wares' and 'trifles'. In a more commercial transaction, gifts elicit welcome from an otherwise non-committal or hostile group. There is also the suggestion that this commercial exchange favors the English, whose gifts are not as valuable as the welcome they receive.

Contradictions abound in this encounter, seemingly readable as 'welcome'.<sup>20</sup> The inhabitants are somehow infantile — distracted and swayed by trifles — and also mature hosts capable of 'reasonable curtesie'. This episode introduces an account, not of similarities between Algonquian and English culture, but of cultural differences in both manner of living and forms of entertainment (feasts and banquets). Communication would seem to be impossible between these culturally disparate groups — the Algonquians greet the English with 'crys' and antics that the English describe as inarticulate, bestial, insane. Nevertheless, the passage offers complex semantic interpretations of these noises; they cry 'as people which never before had seen men appareled like us'.<sup>21</sup> Moments later, moreover, despite language barriers and other stark differences, the English respond with 'calls' of their own. Miscommunication is recast as clear agreement, with the Algonquians

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20 For scholarship on the relationship between conflict and performance (read as both spectacle and dissimulation) in colonial New England and New France, see Matt Cohen, 'Lying Inventions: Native Dissimulations in Early Colonial New England', in *Native Acts: Indian Performance 1603–1832*, ed. by Joshua David Bellin and Laura L. Mielke (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), pp. 27–52, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1df4g7c.4>; John H. Pollack, 'Native Performances of Diplomacy and Religion in Early New France', in *Native Acts: Indian Performance 1603–1832*, ed. by Joshua David Bellin and Laura L. Mielke (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), pp. 81–116, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1df4g7c.6>, and Olivia Bloechl, 'Wendat Song and Carnival Noise in the Jesuit Relations' in *Native Acts: Indian Performance 1603–1832*, ed. by Joshua David Bellin and Laura L. Mielke (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), pp. 117–143, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1df4g7c.7>. See also, Richard C. Rath, *How Early America Sounded* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

21 Bruce Smith delivers an extended reading of the sounds and sights described in the passage in 'Mouthpieces: Native American Voices in Thomas Harriot's "True and Brief Report of...Virginia"', Gaspar Pérez De Villagrà's "Historia de la Nuevo México", and John Smith's "General History of Virginia"', *New Literary History*, 32.3 (Summer 2001), 501–517, <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2001.0046>

‘perceiving’ English ‘courtesie’ and returning their own with legible gestures such as ‘fawninge’ and ‘bidding welcome’.

Presenting a subjective interpretation of events as objective and authoritative, Hariot’s account denies the possibility that this encounter between English and Indigenous people might be anything other than amicable. This kind of translation, it should be understood, is a show of power; the move is familiar from country house entertainments.

In a second episode, this one also included in Hakluyt’s massive anthology of accounts of travel and exploration, *Principall Navigations* (1589), a group of English settlers in Virginia fail to interpret a song correctly, hearing welcome where they should hear warning:<sup>22</sup>

In the euening [...] about three of the clocke we heard certaine sauages call as we thought, Manteo, who was also at that time with mee in boate, whereof we all being verie glad, hoping of some friendly conference with them, and making him to answere them, they presently began a song, as we thought in token of our welcome to them: but Manteo presently betooke him to his peece, and tolde mee that they ment to fight with vs: which word was not so soone spoken by him, and the light horseman ready to put to shoare, but there lighted a vollie of their arrowes amongst them in the boate, but did no hurt God be thanked to any man. Immediatly, the other boate lying ready with their shot to skoure the place for our hand weapons to lande vpon, which was presently done, although the lande was very high and steepe, the Sauages forthwith quitted the shoare, and betooke themselues to flight: we landed, and hauing fayre and easily followed for a smal time after them, who had wooded themselues we know not where.<sup>23</sup>

The English party hope to have ‘friendly conference’ with the group of Indigenous people, who the narrator refers to as ‘Savages’, and they interpret their song optimistically, as a ‘token of [...] welcome’. They are warned, however, by the Indigenous interpreter traveling with them,

22 This discourse (*An account of the particularities of the imployments of the Englishmen left in Virginia by Sir Richard Greeneuill vnder the charge of Master Ralfe Lane Generall of the same, from the 17. of August, 1585. vntill the 18. of Iune 1586. at which time they departed the Countrie: sent, and directed to Sir Walter Raleigh*) is authored by or for Ralph Lane and is most probably based on a report to Raleigh on Lane’s command of the fort on Roanoke Island 1585–1586 and the loss of the colony (see Quinn, *The Roanake Voyages*, p. 255, n. 3). The report was published in *Principall Navigations* in 1589, but the original manuscript is not extant. Manteo, the Indigenous man mentioned in the passage, acted as Lane’s interpreter.

23 Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations*, p. 741.

a man whom they call Manteo, that the song is not a welcome but a warning, 'that they mean to fight', and are immediately attacked with a volley of arrows.<sup>24</sup> The passage recounts a series of sounds: calling out, singing out, and the volley of arrows flying and landing (a sound we can almost hear, but that is not described). The misinterpretation of the call and the song as welcome establishes a failure of communication between the two groups from the first instance of contact. That failure is not recognized in the written account but rather compounded. The marginal note, for example, reads, 'a conflict begun by the savages', enacting yet another unfounded interpretative act through the claim that the exchange was in fact a 'conflict', that the arrows which did not 'hurt' anyone represented an act of violence thwarted only by chance, and that this supposed 'conflict' was unprovoked and instigated solely by the 'savages'. Seen through a different lens the passage recounts not a welcome but a series of warnings: the call, the song, and the volley of arrows. Yet the English fail to receive any one of these messages; the fact that the arrows do not injure anyone is read as a miracle rather than as a warning shot. Here, music occasions miscommunication on multiple levels, both in the moment of encounter and exchange as well as in the record and rehearsal of the moment in printed prose. The episode as recounted reflects the unfounded certainty that English travelers and colonists will always know what music means, that music signals the universal language of entertainment, that the very presence of song counteracts any perceived threat.<sup>25</sup>

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- 24 For studies of Indigenous interpreters including Manteo, see Scott Manning Stevens, 'Mother Tongues and Native Voices: Linguistic Fantasies in the Age of the Encounter', in *Telling the Stories: Essays on American Indian Literatures and Cultures*, ed. by Elizabeth Hoffman Nelson and Malcolm A. Nelson (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), pp. 3–18; Alden Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500–1776* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Michael Leroy Oberg, 'Between "Savage Man" and "Most Faithful Englishman"': Manteo and the Early Indian-English Exchange', *Itinerario*, 24 (2000), 146–169, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0165115300013061>; and Michael Leroy Oberg, *The Head in Edward Nugent's Hand: Roanoke's Forgotten Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
- 25 Dylan Robinson examines a similar paradigm in his critique of intercultural music, 'Intercultural Art Music and the Sensory Veracity of Reconciliation: Brent Michael Davids' Powwow Symphony on the Dakota Music Tour', *MUSICultures*, 39.1 (2012), 111–128, questioning 'public discourses that champion intercultural art music as the quintessential medium of reconciliation' (113). As he argues, while the collaboration that intercultural music entails is frequently regarded as heralding a new era of 'harmony and "understanding"', and the dissolution or crossing of

Authors of promotional literature and travel narratives about the Americas sought to evaluate the status of Indigenous peoples, but found that their customs of music, dress, diet, and even land-ownership and use were a mystery. In the colonial context, not only the power of entertainment to elevate practitioners by establishing their civility, but also the very meanings of such gestures come under direct pressure. Established correlations between behaviors and social status did not comfortably apply either for settlers (who might well be self-made men rather than gentlefolk) or for Indigenous people whose customs and hierarchies differed (sometimes greatly) from English ones. Ultimately, wherever the term 'entertainment' recurs, whether in domestic or foreign contexts, we can attend to such uncertainty around social position and relation, questioning those authors who employ 'entertainment' rhetorically in order to imply settled relations where in fact turmoil and contest persist.

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borders, the efficacy of such works must be interrogated: 'it is important to ask precisely what particular methods of collaboration enact a crossing of borders in the first place and how such border crossings effect the everyday lived encounters of those musicians who take part in performance or those audience members who witness the performance' (113–114). For more on the decentering of settler colonial sensory experience, see also, Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctvzpv6bb>