

ing psychological impact of worshipping a white savior, Jesus, explored. It is only alluded to in passing. The nebulous and undefined concepts of “creolization” or “syncretism” are of no help here. Yet these are most serious issues, and in the end, the question that Erskine sought to answer—that is, how “Africa’s children” could “turn to the religion of their oppressors and seek the favors of the gods of their oppressors in their search for survival and liberation?” (12)—remains unanswered, as baffling and poignant as ever in the face of the powerlessness and proliferation of “black churches” in the midst of great black existential difficulties.

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Paper Sovereigns: Anglo-Native Treaties and the Law of Nations, 1604–1664

JEFFREY GLOVER

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014
 312 pp.

Treaties have always been a favorite topic of scholars of Indian-colonial relations, and it is no wonder why. Whereas so many aspects of Indian-colonial exchange have gone undocumented or underdocumented, treaty making has produced an enormous paper trail, rivaled perhaps only by missionary work and trade. Yet the bulk of this scholarship has focused on the conduct of formal diplomacy and the Indian land cessions produced by it, particularly during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This includes the most recent statement on the subject by Colin Calloway, the aptly titled *Pen and Ink Witchcraft* (2013). Jeffrey Glover’s first book, *Paper Sovereigns*, makes some important contributions to this literature. First, it calls attention to the earliest English-Indian and, to a lesser extent, Dutch-Indian, treaties in the Chesapeake, New England, and lower Hudson River

Valley during the seventeenth century. Second, it challenges popular conceptions that Europeans' ethnocentrism made them dismissive of Indian protocols and instead argues that colonists showed respect for and carefully documented Indian ways of marking agreement. Third, it contends that colonial attention to Indian political customs had less to do with cultural relativism and more to do with convincing royal authorities and imperial rivals that indigenous people consented to colonial possession of native land or rights to trade. Finally, it doubles as a survey of Indian ways of diplomacy, though this purpose consistently takes a backseat to questions of colonial concerns and European audiences.

Glover organizes *Paper Sovereigns* chronologically around several case studies and presents his findings in crystal clear expository prose. It opens with two chapters on events from early Virginia: Christopher Newport's crowning of Powhatan (or Wuhunsunacawh), and the kidnapping of Pocahontas followed by her marriage to John Rolfe and visit to London. Chapters 3 through 5 shift to the Northeast, examining Plymouth's production of treaties backed by the threat of gun violence, fur traders' attempts to claim water rights through Indian commercial alliances, and finally the efforts of Rhode Islanders Roger Williams and Samuel Gorton to gain recognition from London and thwart encroachment by Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut by touting their colony's friendship with the Narragansetts. Though Glover does not argue that these treaties built on one another through time, the chronological flow carries the reader through the evolving domestic and imperial politics of England that shaped these accounts. He begins with the early seventeenth century when Spain was a threat to England's overseas colonies, proceeds to the mid-seventeenth century when the English turned their attention to rivalries with the French and Dutch, and ends with factious disputes within the English colonial ranks. Glover sometimes resorts to excessive grandstanding (such as repeatedly announcing "I argue," "this book will show," "this chapter considers," etc.), but the method is effective at keeping the reader on track.

Though some scholars (most famously, Francis Jennings) see treaties as little more than underhanded colonial attempts to swindle Indian land, Glover contends that the English of the 1600s tried to represent Indians speaking for themselves in order to solidify English claims. The English took this approach to appeal to the *consensus ad idem* deriving from Roman law, which stipulated that treaties should extend from voluntary

agreement between parties. Drawing up accounts reflecting such a meeting of the minds was supposed to legitimize English claims against the Spanish, French, and Dutch, convince London that colonies were expanding with justice to indigenous people, and secure metropolitan approval for heretofore unauthorized colonies like Plymouth and Rhode Island. Glover's definition of treaty might be too broad for some readers. It includes not only signed or marked statements of diplomatic agreement but colonial-authored accounts of a range of formal and informal political interactions published in such forms as pamphlets, promotional tracts, land deeds, and histories. Glover's position is that because colonial producers intended these writings to serve as representations of treaties to European audiences, we should take them seriously as such.

Colonial efforts to signify indigenous consent to treaties make these accounts valuable, if fraught, ethnographic sources. They contain details of feasts, smoking, speechifying, dancing, shamanism, gift giving, captive exchange, gesturing, indigenous vocabularies, and more. Some of these writings, like John Smith's histories of Virginia and Roger Williams's *Key into the Language of America* (1643), are ethnographic classics for the Powhatans and Narragansetts respectively. Yet there is a deep, tragic irony embedded in this richness. Glover submits, "When the English pointed to treaties with Native peoples as evidence of possession, Native words, gestures, and other ways of marking agreement suddenly became highly charged evidence in international legal disputes, even as Natives themselves lost their land and power" (4).

The English preference was to signal the Indians' peaceful consent to conquest, but when the natives resisted, colonists were comfortable publicizing that they resorted to deception, threats, and violence to produce the Indians' agreement. Virginia's John Smith, for instance, favored strong-arm tactics against the Powhatans, and his successors made no pretense about having kidnapped Pocahontas before her marriage to John Rolfe brought a temporary end to hostilities between the colony and her people. Likewise, Plymouth Colony was explicit that it threatened the Wampanoags with guns and launched a bloody, supposedly preemptive, strike against the Indians of Massachusetts Bay, in order to frighten neighboring Indians into accord with the English. Peaceful consent was the ideal, but ultimately consent itself, however produced, was the point.

Glover is at his best explaining how intended audiences and colo-

nial factionalism shaped written treaties. In Virginia, for instance, John Smith criticized the diplomatic approach to treaty making carried out by Christopher Newport and publicized by Gabriel Archer, favoring threats and scorched earth raids to force Indians to bring the English provisions. Aware of critics and skeptics, including the rival Spanish, authors like Archer were careful to include details of political setbacks to create a sense of verisimilitude. For instance, they tell of Powhatan's resistance to kneeling when they attempted to crown him, and of his return gift of used moccasins. The Dutch claimed navigation rights around their trade posts in and around the Hudson River valley by virtue of Native consent as part of an attempt to fend off English claims to the region. Likewise, Virginia's Henry Claiborne appealed to his trade alliance with the Susquehannocks to (futilely) assert his claims to Kent Island and Palmer's Island in territory within the royal charter of Maryland. In New England, Roger Williams and John Winthrop dueled, through accounts of Indian-English politics, over the future of the dissident colony of Rhode Island. Williams used his friendship with the sachems Canonicus and Miantonomi to argue that the Narragansetts had gifted him land for a plantation and that, therefore, Parliament should issue him a charter for it. Winthrop countered that Miantonomi had violated a covenant with the Puritan United Colonies and Mohegans, thereby justifying the English to war against his people and seize their land (including, by extension, Rhode Island). The audience, in all this, was authorities in London. None of this will come as news to specialists, but the effect of putting all of these case studies in conversation is to reveal the ubiquity of colonial accounts of treaties grounded in native consent, real or imagined.

Glover is less interested in how Indians understood these exchanges, though he sometimes gestures in this direction. For instance, he makes productive use of English interpreter Henry Spelman's writings to contend that Powhatan viewed the crown bestowed on him by Virginia as a source of spiritual power and a sign of his relationship with strange, potent foreigners and their gods. Drawing on recent work by Jenny Hale Pulsipher, Glover also acknowledges that Narragansetts took an active role in treaty making. They formed alliances with Englishmen that produced documents to subject themselves directly to London's authority, which posed little threat, in order to fend off the aggression of the United Colonies, which posed a great one. I would have liked to see more discussions of this kind

throughout the book to reflect actual Indian voices and perspectives in the treaties under scrutiny.

An additional criticism, which applies not only to Glover but also to most scholars of treaty making, has to do with the limited attention paid to questions of jurisdiction, not just land. Glover takes for granted the English opinion that when Indians sold them land (real or imagined), they also transferred jurisdiction. My reading of the same documents is that Indians made no such assumption. Why would they? Imagine a group of Indians arriving in England and buying land. Would the English have thought this purchase also involved the Indians establishing their laws and customs over the people, Indian or English, who thereafter inhabited that territory? Of course not. Yet that is precisely what colonists did when they arrived in Indian country. Indians did not make this assumption, which they demonstrated repeatedly by refusing to bow to colonial law and demanding that colonists pay them tribute and adhere to their customs in cases of theft, trespass, and murder. In other words, they assumed that colonists were buying and negotiating their way into Indian country, not absorbing Indian country into a European order. Glover's study, and future scholarship on Indian treaties, would be much richer by taking such perspectives into consideration.

Suffice it to say, there is much work left to be done on the subject of Indian-colonial treaties, both from the perspectives of literary studies and history. Glover's thoughtful, wide-ranging, and clearly written study will be a touchstone as this important agenda progresses.

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Liberty Power: Antislavery Third Parties and the Transformation of American Politics

COREY M. BROOKS

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302 pp.

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