

A Dramaturgical toolbox for...

Sinking



Neptune

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Preface

Canada's first play to be revived: CBC Arts (Dec 08, 2004)

HALIFAX - A new production of *The Theatre of Neptune in New France*, Canada's first play, will be staged in 2006. The production, which will take place on Nov. 14, marks the play's 400th anniversary. It will be staged along the shores of Annapolis Royal on the Bay of Fundy, where it was originally performed.

"It may be a little cold, but we want it to be at the exact same time, 400 years down to the minute if we can," director Ken Pinto told the Canadian Press at a press conference on Tuesday. "Hopefully there won't be snow falling."

Written by lawyer and historian Marc Lescarbot, the play was used to lift the spirits of the French settlers at Port Royale, who had survived a fierce winter the previous year.

"Good theatre, real theatre has a purpose. This play was aimed at guaranteeing the survival of this group of people for the rest of the winter," added Bill Van Gorder, a member of the board of Theatre 400, the organization behind the re-enactment.

According to Pinto, *Theatre of Neptune* was a remarkable production, using cannons, smoke bombs, trumpets and canoes. The cast includes the god Neptune, and a chorus at one point sings the praises of France's king – a choice that underlines the play's secondary purpose: to forestall a mutiny.

"It's a very simple play, but it's a good play and it started theatre in this country," Pinto said.



Colonial map of Port Royale & environs (present day Lower Granville, Nova Scotia)

400 years of theatre in Canada: Halifax Herald (Dec 08, 2004)

Ken Pinto [originator and director of the Atlantic Fringe Festival] wants to celebrate the 400th anniversary of theatre in Nova Scotia, with a year of festivities, including a re-enactment of the first North American play staged Nov. 14, 1606 in Port Royal....Among plans for the year, which Theatre 400 (the group planning the festivities) hopes will be designated by government as "the Year of Theatre" are: a commemorative stamp, a Heritage Minute TV spot, a travelling display of the original 1606 manuscript, and a musical based on the Order of Good Cheer to be produced in Halifax (where Neptune Theatre is named after the 1606 play)...."We hope Theatre 400 will put Nova Scotia theatre on the map, which is why we're making the announcement now, so we can begin fundraising," Pinto said.



Port Royale, 1606

Dramaturgical Analysis

The first play ever recorded in the so-called “New World”, *The Theatre of Neptune in New France*, will apparently be re-enacted in 2006 to mark its 400th anniversary. Penned by colonial lawyer and historian Marc Lescarbot, the play was originally performed on November 14th, 1606 at the French colony of Port Royal (present day Granville, Nova Scotia). As the “first play”, Lescarbot’s *masque* has been proclaimed as the progenitor of Canadian theatre, Port Royal is immortalized as the “birthplace of poetry and drama in the North American continent” (Pierce, 113), and Lescarbot has been credited as “the father of Canadian Theatre” (Pichette, 21). *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* has been re-enacted several times, attempts have been made to build a theatre on the spot of the original performance, a permanent plaque has been unveiled at Lower Granville praising Lescarbot’s work, and Halifax’s regional playhouse (the Neptune Theatre, named after the *masque*) all attest to the keen dedication by some of keeping this memory alive.



Neptune Theatre, Halifax – named after the play

Ken Pinto, founder and director of the Atlantic Fringe Festival, wants to celebrate the “400th anniversary of theatre in Nova Scotia” with a year of festivities, including a re-enactment of *The Theatre of Neptune in New France*.

Theatre 400, the group planning the festivities, hopes the government will declare "the Year of Theatre", issue a commemorative stamp, commission a Heritage Minute TV spot, facilitate a travelling display of the original 1606 manuscript, and fund a musical to be produced in Halifax. According to Pinto: "We hope Theatre 400 will put Nova Scotia theatre on the map, which is why we're making the announcement now, so we can begin fundraising," Bill Van Gorder, a board member of Theatre 400, is equally supportive of the re-enactment, suggesting "Good theatre, real theatre has a purpose. This play was aimed at guaranteeing the survival of this group of people for the rest of the winter."

Not everyone, however, is likely to agree with this glossy and nostalgic assessment. It takes no great stretch of the imagination to see that *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* is an extremely racist play directed against First Nations (especially the Mi'kmaq people). I first studied the celebrated *Neptune* play during an MFA program in Drama at the University of Calgary, and quite frankly was angered by its racist structure and imperialist motives. As the supposed "foundation of Canadian theatre", it smacks of Euro-centric misrepresentation, manipulation, and oppression – hardly something we should base Canadian theatrical heritage on, especially given the extraordinary theatrical traditions of the First Nations people themselves. When I proposed unmasking its oppressive, colonialist agenda and subverting the text, I met with considerable old-fashioned Albertan resistance: some professors felt the plan was an insult to "Canadian Theatre History" whereas others argued that it would be inappropriate because I am not of First Nations ancestry, and therefore should hold nothing against the play. The overall message I received was to leave *Neptune* alone and get on with the business of directing uncontroversial traditional plays for (mostly white) middle-class subscription audiences. There was something rankling about these attitudes – instead of opening discourses that could potentially challenge Western theatre and its initially corrosive relationship with the First Nations, they were meant to discourage my interest in post-colonial and Native theatre. Luckily, hailing from the multi-cultural mecca of

Montréal, I felt empowered to disregard such outdated and apolitical attitudes – I explored these fields outside of the stuffy academic institution.

Upon closer examination of *The Theatre of Neptune in New France*, it becomes disturbingly clear that this *masque* was used in an imperialistic manner to subjugate First Nations through the appropriation of their identities, collective voice, and lands (often referred to as Turtle Island). Lescarbot, the cultural appropriator, not only recast Turtle Island as “New France” in his play; he also co-opted the chief’s title (*Sagamaos*), and penned four “Indians” (note that these are called *sauvages* in the original French production, or “savages”), who all happily welcome and accept European domination without any reservations whatsoever. In fact, these “savage” characters are positively obsequious and servile to the French colonial masters and their imperialist agenda. Also, in a similar vein to racist “blackface” shows of the American south, white French sailors played *all* the roles enacted - including the “Indian” characters.

While re-enactment director Eric Pinto suggests “It’s a very simple play, but it’s a good play and it started theatre in this country,” others with more critical perspectives might tend to disagree. *The Theatre of Neptune in New France*, far from being “simple” and “good”, can be seen as a frightening cultural precedent based on racism, imperialism, oppression, and Western cultural hegemony. Despite Van Gorder’s spurious assertion that the play “was aimed at guaranteeing the survival of this group of people [the colonists] for the rest of the winter,” many [Euro-Canadian] scholars believe otherwise, the general consensus being that the play was actually designed to subjugate the First Nations. Anton Wagner, editor of *Canada’s Lost Plays*, believes that “[f]rom a political point of view, *Théâtre de Neptune* claims the new world for France and announces the submission of its indigenous people to the rule of white man” (“Nationalism” 23; see also Wagner, “Colonial Quebec”). Rick Bowers concludes that *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* is:

...[an] accompaniment for a new world perceived as untamed and hostile, but also one in which the French now consider themselves resident ... The mythic and the realistic have been merged to

produce the cultural material of the script through an image of hegemonic interaction in which the Europeans predominate... The play thus encodes sweeping and unprecedented social energy: new-world exploration and endurance, European/Native acculturation, cultural hegemony through assertion of the dominant myth...Its author has both a practical and metaphorical purpose in mind (498 - 499).

According to Bowers in "Le Theatre de Neptune en la Nouvelle-France: Marc Lescarbot and the New World Masque":

...the French play by Lescarbot *is* a significant literary and cultural artifact: it represents a social interaction expressed in artistic form. In fact, *Le Théâtre de Neptune*...is an exercise of power to be grasped immediately by French explorer and Micmac native alike... But there is never any doubt as to the dominant cultural ethic. The French both create and benefit from this dramatized celebration of power (483 – 484).

As the first piece of Western literature created in the so-called "New World", *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* can also be seen as significant entry-point of Western cultural hegemony into the First Nations' social and cultural reality. The play imposed foreign language, culture and style, behaviour, and perhaps significantly it was also *recorded*, imposing on the First Nations an entirely new way of interpreting and re-producing social and cultural reality. It can be seen as the starting point of a cultural imperialism that continues to this day.

Cultural imperialism is a form of oppression that comes about when the dominant group universalizes its experience and culture, and then employs these as the norm, or as the "official definition of reality" (Adam, 1978). Through a process of ethnocentrism the dominant group, often without realising it, projects its experience and culture as representative of all humanity. Young (1990: 59) notes, "the dominant cultural products of the society, that is, those most widely disseminated, express the experience, values, goals, and achievements of these [dominant] groups." Social institutions are based on the culture and experiences of the dominant group, such as the education system, news media, advertising, and the entertainment industry. These "cultural" agents serve as "conduits of

cultural reconstitution, by continually reproducing the language and symbolic universe of a society" (Adam, 1978: 30). This imposed "social reality" enables the maintenance of hierarchical divisions of class, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, and the like by promoting, imposing, and universalizing its own culture while repressing or suppressing other cultures. In other words, the *status quo* consistently receives favourable treatment and, consequentially, subordinate groups and their efforts to obtain social justice consistently receive negative treatment (Gitlin, 1980). Members inhabiting a society enveloped by cultural imperialism are then encouraged to accept this official definition of reality, which is continuously reinforced by cultural hegemony. Based on the work of Antonio Gramsci, theatre historian Walter Cohen suggests:

... broadly speaking, [cultural hegemony] is domination by consent - [it] nicely captures the structured complex of ruling-class power and popular opposition, specifying both the limits and the possibilities of insurgency from below. (28 - 29)

Cultural hegemony, then, is imposed not through domination by force, but rather by establishing and maintaining a "norm" that dictates how people are to behave. In *Prison Notebooks* Gramsci describes how a "norm" can be created and imposed, suggesting that hegemonic culture works its way into the "spontaneous philosophy" of a society, with thinking contained by:

1. Language itself, which is a totality of determined notions and concepts and not just words grammatically devoid of content;
2. "Common sense" and "good sense";
3. Popular religion and, therefore, also the entire system of beliefs, superstitions, opinions, ways of seeing things and of acting, which are collectively bundled together under the name of "folklore". (57 - 58)

When ruling powers manage to dominate meaning within these three spheres of influence, a cultural hegemony is created, providing a seemingly "natural" social reality.

The Theatre of Neptune in New France was, of course, written in French. This alien language (along with others) imposed on the First Nations had devastating cultural effects. Not only were certain native languages driven to extinction, but the European languages in their spread effectively disfigured the pre-European social reality. In “The Theatre of Orphans/Native Languages on the Stage” Floyd Favel, a Cree-speaker and Native theatre practitioner suggests that “Language is related to place; it is our umbilical cord to our place of origin; literally and symbolically...When a native language is not spoken, an understanding of the worldview of that nation is purely theoretical (8).” He suggests that “The unsubtle message in the European languages is human superiority over nature, man over woman, man over the birds and bees and the beast, and all brown, black, and yellow folks (11).”

Notions of “common sense” are also instilled in *The Theatre of Neptune in New France*, notably the whole notion of spectatorship to written, rehearsed, reproducible, and staged theatricals. Spectacle, as a form of monologue, is intended to create a uni-directional discourse. According to Foucault, those who control the discourse control the power; spectacle, as such, is an ideal mechanism for alienation and depoliticisation of adversaries. As Theatre of the Oppressed creator, Augusto Boal notes, when healthy dialogue transforms into uni-directional monologue, oppressions ensue. The very fact that this Aristotelian theatre arrangement came into being attests the new way Europeans intended to “do business” – on a meta-level they would do the casting and write the scripts, while the First Nations were relegated to the role of spectator (to their own roles being appropriated and played).

In *The Imaginary Indian* Daniel Francis notes: “By appropriating elements of Native culture, non-Natives have tried to establish a relationship with the country that pre-dates their arrival and validates their occupation of the land” (190). Francis argues:

When Christopher Columbus arrived...he thought he had reached the East Indies so he called the people he met Indians. But really they were Arawaks, and they had as much in common with the

Iroquois of the northern woodlands as the Iroquois had in common with the Blackfoot of the western Plains or the Haida of the Pacific Coast. In other words, when Columbus arrived in America there were a large number of different and distinct indigenous cultures, but there were no Indians. The Indian is the invention of the European...The Indian began as a White man's mistake, and became a White man's fantasy. Through the prism of White hopes, fears, and prejudices, indigenous Americans would be seen to have lost contact with reality and to have become "Indians"; that is anything non-Natives wanted them to be. (4-5)

The European miscasting and attempted transformation of Natives into "Indians" had real world effects, as Francis goes on to note:

Images have consequences in the real world: ideas have results. The Imaginary Indian does not exist in a void. In their relations with Native people over the years, [non-Natives] have put the image of the Indian into practice. They have assumed that the Imaginary Indian was real...and they have devised public policy based on that assumption. (194)

While it may be "common sense" that the spectator sits still absorbing the spectacle, this arrangement does not necessarily constitute "good sense" in all cases, especially this one. In the simple act of observing the spectacle, a whole new precedent came into being whereby First Nations, cast as spectators, are alienated and depoliticized in the theatrical (and hence social) arrangement.

Jumping to Gramsci's third observation, it is also clear that the Europeans imposed their "folklore", and *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* presents an entirely new and violent cast of characters to the Turtle Island mythologies and discourse. Since that cultural introduction, whether through Jesuit missionaries, discriminatory laws, or an unethical education system, native culture has been further eroded, its people encouraged to reject past ways of thinking and subscribe to European systems of beliefs, superstitions, opinions, ways of seeing things and of acting. In Filewod's analysis of important moments in Canadian theatre, *Performing Canada*, he writes that the play:

...was a defining moment that would be replayed for the next five centuries, a moment in which the theatre enacted an imagined

authenticity even as it confirmed the extension of empire by transmuting the work of colonialism into spectacle. (xiii)

Douglas Rushkoff speaks of a "viral syringe," an initial event that injects a cultural "media virus" into the social reality of any given community. This "virus", once injected, proceeds to transform the mediascape (or matrix of discourses) of the intended social body. Culturally-speaking, Lescarbot's *masque* as the first piece of Western *literature* and *theatre*, seems a likely candidate for this concept. Not unlike the sharp point of a syringe needle, this play pierced a prosperous and autonomous civilization, injecting it with a hegemonic poison that marked the beginnings of a cultural genocide against its people, languages, and customs.

Native scholar Ward Churchill wrote *A Little Matter of Genocide* because he was provoked by insistent trivialization and denial of the American holocaust carried out by Europeans against First Nations. He notes:

The American holocaust was and remains unparalleled, both in terms of its magnitude and the degree to which its goals were met, and in terms of the extent to which its ferocity was sustained over time by not one but several participating groups. (4)

Daniel Paul recounts genocidal atrocities against the Mi'kmaq people in his book *We Were Not the Savages*, which "have been retold to persuade people of the majority society to use whatever power they have to see that Canada makes meaningful amends for the horrifying wrongs of the past" (7). He notes:

The European passion for acquisition caused incomprehensible damage in the Americas. In fact one can state without fear of contradiction by any but White supremacists that the carnage and destruction wrought upon the Americas in the European pursuit of wealth remains unmatched in human history. Four centuries after the European invasion began, all the civilizations of two continents lay in ruins and the remaining people were dispossessed and impoverished. The uncontested victors were greed and racism. (51)

In this essay I highlight the "cultural genocide" aspect of this crime, not to undermine the true and total horrors, but rather to emphasize the devastating cultural effects (beginning with *The Theatre of Neptune in New France*) that

accompanied the physical and biological components of the American holocaust. Churchill notes:

[First Nations comprised]...a hemispheric population estimated to be as great as 125 million was reduced by something over 90 percent. The people had died in their millions of being hacked apart with axes and swords, burned alive and trampled under horses, hunted as game and fed to dogs, shot, beaten, stabbed, scalped for bounty, hanged on meathooks and thrown over the sides of ships at sea, worked to death as slave laborers, intentionally starved and frozen to death during a multitude of forced marches and internments, and, in an unknown number of instances, deliberately infected with epidemic diseases (1).

He adds that “In the United States, the native population bottomed out during the 1890s at slightly over 237,000 – a 98-percent reduction from its original size” (97). In addition to suffering these physical and biological attacks, First Nations consistently had their culture undermined. For example, editors of *American Indian Theater in Performance: A Reader* Hanay Geiogamah and Jaye T. Darby note that:

...throughout the end of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century many [Native] ceremonies and dances were outlawed by the federal government, under pressure from missionaries and Indian agents. Some of these ceremonies, such as the potlatch, went underground or outwardly conformed to mainstream celebrations. For the most part, though, this ban had devastating effects on tribal communities, cutting them off from spiritual and cultural continuity and renewal. (vi)

The term “genocide” was derived from the Greek word *genos* (human group) and the Latin *cide* (to “kill” or “put an end to”) by Raphael Lemkin, and describes any “coordinated and planned annihilation of a national, religious, or racial group by a variety of actions aimed at undermining the foundations essential to the survival of that group as a group” (79). Lemkin conceived of genocide as “a composite of different acts of persecution or destruction,” and his definition includes attacks on political and social institutions, culture, language, religion, economy and national feelings of the group. Non-lethal acts that undermined the liberty, dignity, and personal security of group members also constituted genocide if they contributed

to weakening the viability of the group as a whole. The following definition appears in Article II (c) of the United Nations *Proposed Convention on Prevention of the Crime of Genocide* (1997):

Cultural Genocide, by which is meant the destruction of the specific character of the targeted group(s) through destruction or expropriation of its means of economic perpetuation; prohibition or curtailment of its language; suppression of its religious, social, or political practices; destruction or denial of use and access to objects of sacred sociocultural significance; forced dislocation, expulsion or dispersal of its members; forced transfer or removal of its children, or any other means. (quoted in Churchill, 433)

Monroe C. Beardsly also pointed out that cultural genocide breeds policies designed “to extinguish, utterly or in substantial part, a culture” (86). It is not difficult to interpret the insidious *Theatre of Neptune in New France* (the deranged first piece of Western *literature* and *theatre*) as the starting point, the viral syringe, of the cultural genocide that continues to this day.

The circumstances behind the play began in 1603, when a French gentleman, Pierre Dugua de Mons, received a fur trade monopoly for a large area between the 40th and 45th parallel in northeastern North America on condition he establish a colony there. His first expedition arrived in 1604 and selected a site for settlement on St. Croix Island. That winter, nearly half the colonists succumbed to the cold and scurvy. The following summer, after exploring the nearby coasts, Samuel de Champlain, explorer and mapmaker, and François Pont-Gravé selected a new site, named Port-Royal, across the Bay of Fundy. According to First Nations historian Daniel Paul:

The harsh climactic conditions the ill-prepared French found in northeastern North America in the early stages of their colonization efforts seemed to present them with an insurmountable barrier. Those who first settled in Mi'kmaq territory suffered terribly from the cold temperatures and disease and died off in large numbers. Eventually, in a display of compassion, but to the People's long-term detriment, the Mi'kmaq would provide the French with the knowledge and skills they needed to survive in the new environment. (53)

With the founding of Port Royal in 1605 and the help of the Mi'kmaq people, the French colonists fared much better.

Moving on to the actual performance of *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* itself, Hannah Fournier analyzes the play historically in “Lescarbot’s ‘Théâtre de Neptune’: New World Pageant, Old World Polemic”, revealing that *masque* performance was widely used as “an entry of the sort commonly offered to entering dignitaries, especially those who represented sovereign power” allowing the townsfolk to offer “reassurances of their loyalty by representatives of the various orders of inhabitants” (3). With the performance coinciding with the naval return of Sieur de Poutrincourt, the *masque* heralded French leader’s homecoming. Poutrincourt and Champlain had left on October 15 with the ship and most of the men, on another colonial adventure – a voyage of exploration. This one almost ended in complete disaster as, at a place which Champlain calls Port Fortune (at 40 degrees of latitude), the expedition was attacked and suffered a number of casualties. Champlain left a vivid description of the battle which ensued, and speaks of the loss of a number of his men. During their absence Lescarbot kept the other colonists busy tending the garden, improving the buildings, digging a drainage ditch around the Habitation, and opening paths through the woods – *and rehearsing his play*.

On November 14th, 1606, in an unconventional *mis-en-scene*, the *masque* was “presented upon the waves of Port Royal...on the return of Sieur de Poutrincourt from the country of the Armouchiquois” (*Canadian Drama*, 87). The “audience” (on the shore) was comprised of both French colonizers and Mi'kmaq First Nations (including Membertou, their *Sagamos*, or leader). Never before in the history of Western theatre had a *masque* been presented on the open water, and this point is significant according to Bowers, who suggests:

This production is at the outer reaches of what is literally known; it is performed literally on Neptune’s element in a location where such a myth has previously been unheard of...In addition, the performance is scripted with the actual reunified exploration party as its cast. The huge backdrop is entirely natural; the native onlookers are perfectly appropriate, even necessary, extras; all

props are utilitarian; and the occasion for performance is immediate and practical (490).

While Hannah Fournier suggests that “Frenchmen and Native alike must have felt that the great culture of France was powerful indeed to make itself felt in such a place, [inspiring] awe in the hearts of those natives who may have been watching” (5 – 6), perhaps it is just as likely that Membertou and his entourage had negative feelings about their roles being appropriated, in what may have appeared to be a very bizarre and offensive ritual or performance. According to an email from Mi’kmaq scholar Daniel Paul, “They thought the white man and his customs strange, but, being such gracious hosts, they would not contradict them, even though they thought them loco.”



Sieur de Poutrincourt – appropriated and played the chief’s role (Sagamos)

In *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* there is a toxic combination of cultural appropriation and imperialist dogma - the chief’s title (*Sagamos*) being appropriated by the French explorer Sieur de Poutrincourt, four dominated “Indians” (played by white French sailors) proclaiming subservience to France, general imperialistic overtones such as trumpeting and the use of cannons – all of which point towards the reframing of First Nations culture and re-casting of its people into an oppressive European social reality. Furthermore the language is to be European with a cast of characters primarily drawn from European mythology. The dramatic form, Aristotelian spectacle, is to be structured, rehearsed, and recorded. The overall subtext of the play is intended for the First Nations observers: their role as depoliticised “savages” is to sit and watch how

the colonial masters expect them to behave. Sitting on the shore with his fellow First Nations, the real *Sagamos*, Membertou, was expected to acknowledge this spectacle, and accept his role as spectator.



Sagamos Membertou, spectator to his own role being appropriated and played

The play begins with Poutrincourt arriving to port on his ship, having just returned from exploration, and awaiting disembarkation into a shallop to come ashore. Neptune, the Roman god of the sea and earthquakes appears in a boat, with six Tritons in train. Often depicted as a bearded man with long hair, holding a trident and accompanied by dolphins and fish, Neptune was reputed to have a very bad temper, and the violent storms and earthquakes were a reflection of his furious rage. The dialogue begins with Neptune addressing Poutrincourt: “Halt, Sagamos, stop here, And behold a God who has care for you” (*Lost Plays*, 38). The use of European mythology and deities is also significant in attempting to recast the first nations into servants of the European ethos. Neptune, often depicted as an angry and threatening deity, proceeds to brag and boast about his power over the seas and men who travel them, before praising Poutrincourt/”Sagamos” for his colonial efforts, even offering up a divine support mechanism:

NEPTUNE: I will always help you in your plans
Because I do not want your efforts to be in vain,
And because you have always had the courage
To journey from far away to explore this shore
In order to establish a French domain here

And have my status and my laws respected (*Lost Plays*, 39).



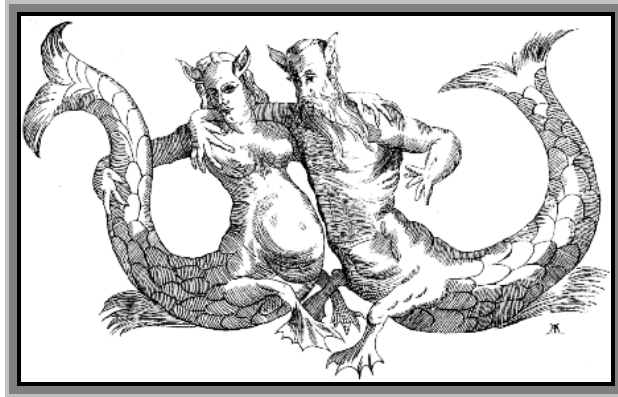
Neptune, France's servant in this play

Neptune, positively gushing by now, continues to offer allegiance to Poutrincourt/"Sagamos" and to France/"New France", and becomes completely subservient towards the end of his speech:

NEPTUNE: Therefore, go forth joyously and follow the path
Where destiny guides you, because I see Fate
Prepare a flourishing Empire for France
In this new world which in the future will proclaim
The immortal renown of de Monts, and of you too,
Under the mighty reign of HENRY, your King (*ibid*, 39).

Following Neptune's speech, a trumpet is sounded loudly, encouraging the Tritons to do the same. Poutrincourt/"Sagmamos" then draws his sword and "does not replace it in its scabbard until the Tritons have spoken" (*ibid*, 39).

Tritons, incidentally, are those strange class of mythological sea creatures with the upper half being human, while the lower is fishlike – complete with scales, fins and serpentine fish tails. Tritons, which could be male (mermen) or female (mermaids), were known to escort marine deities (such as Neptune), and characteristically blew into trumpets created from conch shells.



Tritons, Neptune's underlings

The dramatic function of the Tritons is to embolden Neptune with divine authority, hence reinforcing the importance of his subservience to everything French, as personified by Poutrincourt/"Sagamos". After sounding their trumpets, and singing "nationalistic paeans to contemporary French imperialism" (Bowers, 491), the Tritons recite a monologue each (all of them incessantly praising Poutrincourt/"Sagamos", France, etc.) Describing the colonialist effect, Bowers writes:

For a moment, the [French colonial] ideal has become real. It is even noted in the text that Poutrincourt, unprompted, draws his sword in salute as the Tritons deliver their message of praise. He thus performs seamlessly his real/fictional role: pre-eminence. (Bowers, 490).

Following the business with the Tritons, the masque takes a turn towards the more obvious: "Neptune steps aside a little to make room for a canoe in which are four Indians who approach, each bringing a gift to Sieur de Poutrincourt" (*Lost Plays*, 41). The first and second "Indians" offer gifts that "represent the practical values of sustenance, comfort, and allegiance" (Bowers, 492). The first Indian "offers a quarter of an elk or moose" (*Lost Plays*, 41), and the second some beaver skins. In doing so, they also "pledge [their] skill as homage to French domination... and even bequeath [their] own hunting territory" (Bowers, 492). The third Indian is more clearly an example of cultural appropriation.

Despite being enacted by a French sailor, “Indian #3” offers native cultural artifacts (Matachiaz) to the French “Sagamos”/Poutrincourt.



Matachiaz – beads and bracelets for special occasions

Brightly coloured strands decorated with beads of wood, pottery or glass, the "matachias," were highly valued by Native peoples. The women used them to adorn themselves on special occasions such as ceremonies, marriages, dances, feasts, the return of warriors, and funerals. “Indian #3”, handing over the important cultural artefacts (which were crafted lovingly by his wife), declares:

It is not only in France
That Cupid reigns,
But also in New France.
As with you he also lights
His firebrand here; and with his flames
He scorches our poor souls
And plants there his flag.

Cupid – the Roman god of love – is a European personification of lusty and sexual metaphors. “He” is evidently “planting his flag” amongst the First Nations’ females, and as if the sexual innuendo is not obvious enough in this passage, the next one appears to be nothing less than the gift of “love” from the female members of the nation:

My mistress, when she heard the news
That you were to arrive,
Told me that for love of her
I must come seeking you
And that I must make you gifts...
Therefore, accept gladly –
For the love of my mistress –
The present made with such affection
Which I offer you (42).

In the French version, the sexual innuendo is stronger. A footnote in the text at line 187 (see Appendix B) quotes Lescarbot: “*Ploygamie est reçue par tout ce monde-ci*” (HNF, IV, 742/716), roughly translated as “polygamy is accepted by everyone here”. Bowers believes: “the pleasures of cultural appropriation are painful. Power is transferred between Micmac and Frenchman through literal matachiaz and figurative love. Europeans will wear the native accessories, just as natives will feel the heat of European expansionist ideals...European institutional securities such as family, church, and polity are represented with one eye on the native audience and their edification” (493 - 494).

The fourth and final “Indian” is very apologetic because he has nothing to offer, having hunted unsuccessfully in the woods. He “presents himself with a harpoon in hand and, after his excuses have been made, announces that he is going fishing” (*Lost Plays*, 42). This is the final element in attempting to subvert the native population through misrepresentation: the fourth “Indian” enters the sea, claiming “I will now follow Neptune” (43), in order to try and provide the French with some bounty. Recalling that the sea is the area the French appropriated at the beginning of the *masque*, its ruler being the French-worshipping Neptune, metaphorically the fourth “Indian” is rejecting his own culture and nation in order to serve French colonial ambitions.

The *masque* concludes with Poutrincourt thanking both Neptune for his offers of security, and the “Indians” for their good will and loyalty. Neptune’s troupe then sings more praise for Neptune and France, there is more trumpeting, and “the cannons boom from all sides and thunder as if Prosperine were in labour: this is caused by the multiplicity of echoes which the hills send back to

each other. This lasts for more than a quarter of an hour" (*Lost Plays*, 43) - a very bold militaristic statement of domination and imperialism. Following this spectacle, one of "Sagamos"/Poutrincourt's companions summons up a feast and invites everyone into Port Royal to bake bread, celebrate and feast.

Arguably the play's conclusion was the catalyst for the creation of the "Order of Good Cheer". Proposed by Samuel de Champlain in the winter of 1606-07 to keep up the spirit of the little group, and also to assure a supply of fresh meat, this social club provided hearty food for the men at the French colony of Port-Royal. Every few days supper became a feast, and on a rotating basis, everyone at the table was designated "Chief Steward" and put in charge of organizing one. The men of the Order were those who dined together at Poutrincourt's table, including prominent men in the colony with whom Poutrincourt would care to dine. Membertou and Messamoet, Mi'kmaq chiefs in the area, were frequent guests. Lescarbot writes, "we always had twenty or thirty savages, men, women, girls, and children, who looked on at our manner of service. Bread was given them gratis (free) as one would do to the poor."

Ending the performance with a feast and a celebration is indicative of two things: firstly, feasts were celebratory - typically large, elaborately prepared meals, usually for many persons and often accompanied by entertainment and designed for abundant enjoyment. Secondly, feasting was an integral part of the religious observances connected with the offering up of sacrifices and with annual festivals. It was one of the designs of the greater solemnities, which required a gathering and one-ness with "God". In other words, the feast was meant to both celebrate this poisonous play in the presence of its spectators, and instruct them in the ways of European religion with a view of future conversion.

Today at the site of Port Royal is a Parks Canada "historical site", including reconstructed early 17th-century buildings representing the original "Habitation". Rebuilt on its exact original location, the reconstructed Port Royal is maintained and operated by Parks Canada and open year-round for visitors. While visitors can take in the panoramic view of the Annapolis River and Basin,

they also meet costumed interpreters and encounter period demonstrations that attempt to recreate the look and feel of historical Port Royal.



Port-Royal National Historic Site of Canada – reconstructed 17th-century buildings

Presumably the scheduled re-enactment is going to take place here, along with other events planned by the Port Royal 400th Anniversary Society, such as a re-enactment of the initial landing of Champlain at Port Royal on July 16, 2005.



Port-Royal - also known as "The Habitation"

The planned “historical” re-enactment(s) can be seen as metaphorical statements of ongoing domination, and it is unsettling that *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* continues to maintain an aura of romantic nostalgia for people like Pinto and Van Gorder of Theatre 400, not to mention Parks Canada. It is outright disturbing that, despite the obvious racism infesting the play and ongoing mistreatment of North America’s First Nations, there are big plans for re-enactment.

In the *Canadian Theatre Review* Native theatre activist Lisa Mayo of Spiderwoman Theater, a pioneer of dramatic post-colonial re-appropriation and

deconstruction, states: "Native peoples today are the survivors of a holocaust that is still continuing. Many of our ceremonies, languages and whole nations were obliterated" (54). *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* is not something that should be re-enacted lightly – its creation and performance heralded the cultural conquest and genocide against the First Nations civilization. Following Rushkoff's concept of the "viral syringe", if *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* signifies the injection site of a cultural toxin; what is needed is not another dose of the same disfiguring poison, but rather a cultural vaccination against the horrible damage that has already been done. A distinctively critical and post-colonial response is required. As Thomson Highway says, "Before the healing can take place, the poison must be exposed." The re-enactment cannot go unchallenged.

The 21st Century has heralded in a new era of increased inter-communication and critical thinking, and Native Theatre is spreading its counter-hegemonic and post-colonial messages far and wide. In *The Empire Writes Back*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin apply the term postcolonial to all cultures affected by the imperial process, from the moment of colonization to the present. The literatures of all these cultures "emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial" (2). Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins discuss post-colonialism's agenda in *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*, stating that its purpose is:

to dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create unequal relations of power based on binary oppositions such as 'us' and 'them', 'first world' and 'third world', 'white and black', 'coloniser' and 'colonized'...post-colonial texts embrace a...specifically political aim: that of the continued destabilization of the cultural and political authority of imperialism" (3).

It is also noteworthy that some of the most revered theatre artists on this continent are in fact First Nations who deal with post-colonial issues through drama. Compendiums such as W.B. Worthen's *The Harcourt Brace Anthology of Drama*, for example, reveal that playwright Tomson Highway is reaching unprecedented prominence as one of Canada's most respected artists. Drew-Hayden Taylor is also gaining in popularity, with *Toronto at Dreamers Rock* being the most-produced Canadian play in PACT theatres during the 97/98 season (according to an unpublished study by Philip Spensley at Concordia University). Importantly, among the political aims of these native artists is to give their people a voice; one that expresses resistance to the poor treatment received in post-colonial North America, and hope for a better future. Monique Mojica speaks of theatre "as an instrument of our recovery," in an issue of *Canadian Theatre Review* devoted to Native theatre in the Americas, but also speaks of "taking the language of colonization... and transforming it into a new theatrical language, borrowing the tools and techniques of European theatre to create our craft" (3). Geiogamah sees Native theatre as an important way for Native peoples to reclaim their identities from dominant society and "re-imagine" themselves. He and Darby note:

Contemporary efforts in Native theatre and film seek to reclaim images, locate sites of significance, and center Native identities in their myriad and multivocal expressions...[These] are creative acts of self-determination drawing from tribal and personal sources of power and balance – spiritual, cultural, political, and aesthetic. (v)

Geiogamah observed in an interview: "If you don't do it, then the white people will do it for you...They'll tell your story for you. They'll tell you who you are. They'll tell you what you are if you let them"(vii). Geiogamah and Darby suggest:

Grounded in ritual traditions and infused with compassion, humor, and possibility, the restorative quality of the mythic found in much of contemporary Native theatre has a great deal to offer the theatre of the twenty-first century. With unflinching candor in exposing social issues, the healing focus on integration, balance, and harmony contrasts with the emphasis on the ironic, tragic, fragmented, and

chaotic in much of Western literature and theatre...Native theatre is theatre of transformation. (xii)

Concerning approaches to Native Theatre, Geiogamah and Darby note, “As in the tradition of a talking circle, each person shares his or her views and insights, and while differences occur, out of the many voices emerge deeper understandings” (iii). They also invite people to “engage in this conversation, develop many more circles – talking and performing – and “dare to imagine” the possibilities of Native theatre in its myriad forms and performance traditions” (iii).

I believe it would be a useful exercise for circles upon circles of First Nations people, theatre activists, and others to re-appropriate, unmask, and subvert Lescarbot’s derogatory *masque*. *The Theatre of Neptune in New France*, as the first “play” ever produced in the so-called “New World” presents significant post-colonial challenges to dramaturges, theatre artists, activists, and the society at large (both Native and non-Native) in the beginning of the 21st Century. Given that Lescarbot’s racist *masque* has such an important place in Western literary and theatrical history, one wonders why *The Theatre of Neptune in New France* has never been artistically engaged with in a critical and post-colonial manner. Today there is a sense of urgency to this task – because the play is going to be re-enacted and glorified (yet again), this time with much glossy and corporate fanfare, it is imperative that a cultural intervention takes place.

Using whichever strategies are deemed most effective, one major goal of theatre activists, as Clements and Donkin argue in *Upstaging Big Daddy: Directing Theater as if Gender and Race Matter*, is to “encourage [the] actors to develop subtexts the playwrights never dreamed of” (2). In “Strategies for Subverting the Canon,” Cima also offers ideas on deconstructing and subverting objectionable plays:

What is the social function and effect of our directorial work? Which specific strategies – design intervention, cross-casting, textual changes, for example – might enable the particular audience of an individual production to see themselves anew? There is no universal formula or combination of strategies that will work best for every situation (Cima 94).

Keeping Cima's words in mind, the *SINKING NEPTUNE* project has been initiated by the OTL Radical Dramaturgy Unit in Montreal as a collective exploration of the best methods, strategies and techniques to subvert the *Neptune* text (such as Brecht's actor/demonstrator, the use of extra dramaturgical materials to juxtapose Lescarbot's work, subversive music, etc.), followed potentially by a critical performance. This process will keep in mind the words of African-American post-colonial scholar, actress, and playwright Anna Deavere Smith, who calls for a new type of player in "Not So Special Vehicles":

Actors used to be, in the days of commedia, humanitarians, gymnasts, actors, singers, psychiatrists rolled into one. **Provocateurs** [my emphasis]. The clowns and fools were willing to say what others would be shot for saying. *Who do our actors speak for? Who can they speak for?* (1077).

We intend to collectively speak on behalf of a society striving for human liberation over oppression, especially in regards to native issues.

Furthermore, given the ongoing cultural genocide against First Nations peoples, I propose a serious examination of the theatrical re-enactment itself, scheduled for November 14th, 2006. In the spirit of the *infringement* movement, it is likely that the re-enactment needs to be subverted through infiltration, culture-jamming, and possibly outright meme-warfare. In order to raise awareness on native issues and help eradicate oppression First Nations continue to experience to this day, it is likely that the initial June process and reading will be a stepping stone towards further action, action that will hopefully be networked across the land. Fortunately there is time (15 months as of July 2005) to examine this situation critically and to take whatever dramatic steps are necessary to ensure that this play and its re-enactment are dealt with in an appropriate manner. Disallowing it to be depicted as a piece of "historical" and nostalgic theatre deserving of re-enactment, tax-payer-funded Heritage Minutes, musicals, and special stamps, it must be unmasked and exposed for the imperialist and racist colonial propaganda it is. It should be culture-jammed.

This essay is an open invitation to take the text, expose its poison, and subvert it in any manner possible – in drama classrooms, on the stage, in the streets, on the radio and internet. Spread the word, and connect with others – together we can build up the cultural resistance movement, and fight to usher in an era of social justice for the First Nations people. Reinforcing the words of Geiogamah and Darby, I invite you to engage in this conversation, develop many more circles - talking and performing - and dare to imagine the possibilities of sinking *Neptune*.

***** Please see Appendix C (p. 54) to learn how you can get involved *****

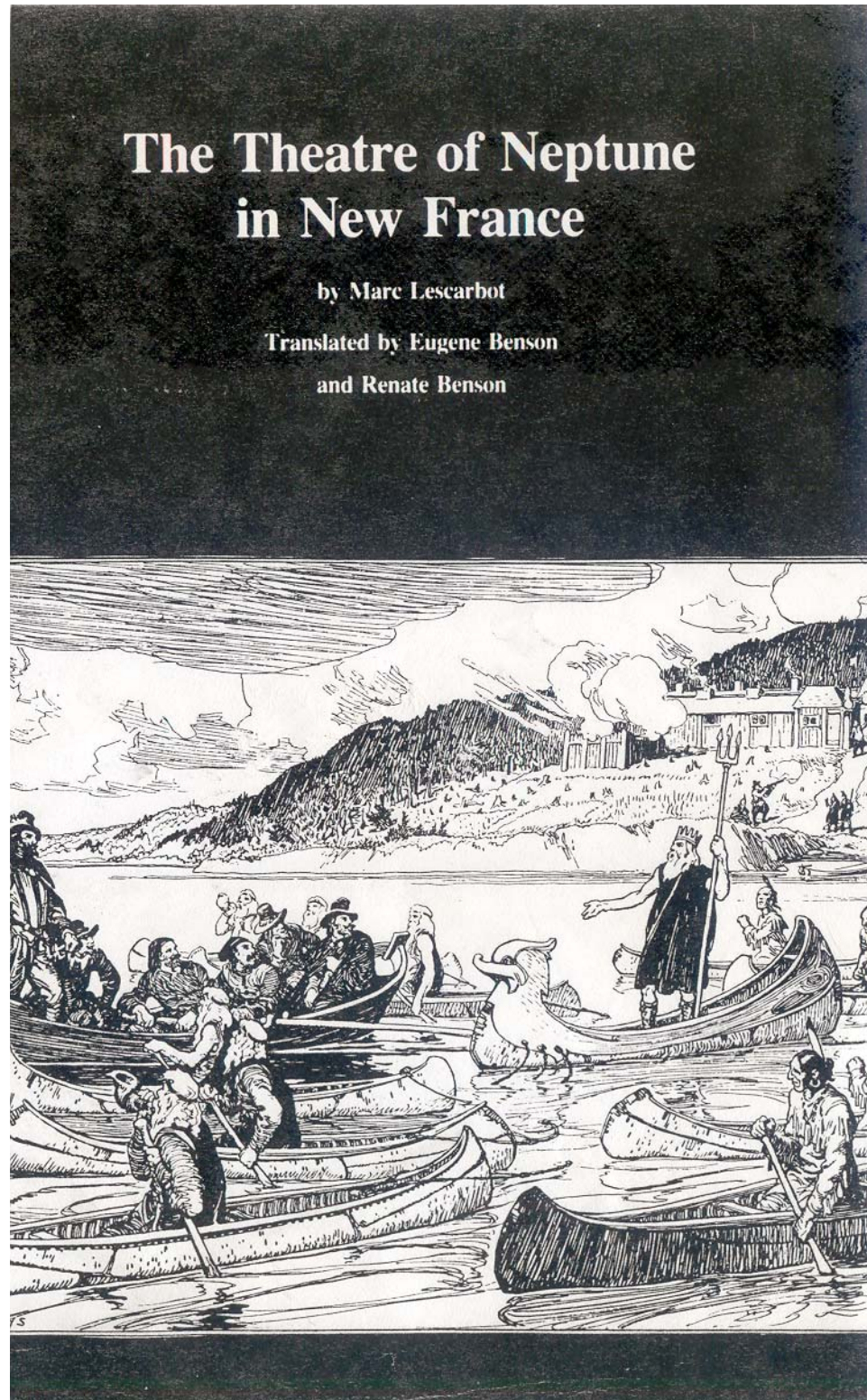
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Appendix A – English translation of original text



From Canada's Lost Plays, Vol. 4

The Theatre of Neptune in New France

CHARACTERS*

Neptune	Sixth Triton
Sieur de Poutrincourt	First Indian
First Triton	Second Indian
Second Triton	Third Indian
Third Triton	Fourth Indian
Fourth Triton	Companion
Fifth Triton	

*Not in original

Presented upon the waves of Port Royal on the fourteenth of November, sixteen hundred and six, on the return of Sieur de Poutrincourt from the country of the Armouchiquois.

Neptune, dressed in a blue cloak, wearing buskins, with long hoary hair and beard, speaks first. Trident in hand he is seated on his chariot which is decorated with his colours: the chariot is drawn on the waves by six Tritons to the side of the shallop where Sieur de Poutrincourt and his entourage having waited are now ready to leave the boat and go ashore. After the shallop is coupled, Neptune begins as follows.

NEPTUNE: HALT, Sagamos,* stop here,
And behold a God who has care for you.
In case you do not know me, Saturn was my father,
And I am the brother of Jupiter and Pluto.
Once upon a time the Universe was divided among us three;
Jupiter received the sky, Pluto the Underworld,
And I, being more foolhardy, received the sea,
And the government of this moist inheritance.
NEPTUNE is my name, Neptune one of the Gods,
The most powerful beneath the heavens' vault.
If a man wants a lucky fate
He must implore the help of Neptune,
Because he who is a stay-at-home
Deserves to be called only by the name of a cook.
I arrange it that the Fleming travels
As swiftly as the wind as far as China.
I make it happen that a man, carried on my waves,
Can see from another pole unknown stars,
And can cross the borders of the torrid zone
Where the waves of the liquid element foam.
Without me the French King would not have received

*An Indian word meaning Captain

The triumphant gift of a superb elephant from Persia:
 And, furthermore, without me the French soldiers
 Would not have planted their arms in the countries of the Orient.
 Without me the Portuguese, venturing on my waves,
 Would have wallowed without glory on their enclosed banks,
 And would not have carried away the treasures of the East
 Which the mad world foolishly adores.
 In short, without me, the merchant, the pilot, the sailor
 Would be home-bound as if in a prison
 With little chance of escaping from his province.
 Princes whom I would have separated
 Because of my deep waters could not come to the help of each other.
 Without me you too would not have had the pleasure
 Of disembarking on this land after so many brilliant deeds
 Which you performed in the French war.
 It was I who carried your vessels on my back
 When you cared to visit me.
 Also, not long ago it was I who a hundred times
 Defended you, your people, and your boat against Fate.
 So, I will always help you in your plans
 Because I do not want your efforts to be in vain,
 And because you have always had the courage
 To journey from so far away to explore this shore
 In order to establish a French domain here
 And have my status and my laws respected.
 I swear by my sacred Trident, my sceptre,
 That I will always support your enterprises.
 And I will never rest
 Until I see my waves in this area
 Pant under the weight of ten thousand ships
 Which in the twinkling of an eye do whatever you want.
 Therefore, go forth joyously and follow the path
 Where destiny guides you, because I see Fate
 Preparing a flourishing Empire for France
 In this new world which in the future will proclaim
 The immortal renown of De Monts, and of you too,
 Under the mighty reign of HENRY, your king.

After Neptune has finished speaking, a trumpet sounds loudly encouraging the Tritons to do the same. Meanwhile Sieur de Poutrincourt holds his sword in his hands which he does not replace in the scabbard until the Tritons have spoken as follows.

FIRST TRITON: You can call yourself happy (great Sagamos)
 Because a God promises you favourable assistance
 In the important matter which you are undertaking
 With a spirited and daring heart; He tempers the violence
 Of Aeolus who, always inconstant and fickle,
 At times *adesquidés*,* at times driven by envy,
 Wants to throw you and your people into danger.
 Neptune is a powerful God who will make
 This jealousy vanish in the air like smoke.
 And we, his postillions, despite the efforts of Aeolus,

*An Indian word meaning Friend

Will everywhere proclaim the fame of your courage
Which already flies through all countries.

SECOND TRITON: If Jupiter is King of the skies
Governing men below,
Neptune is also King in these places,
With equal power; and we who are
His instruments have a great wish
To see the time and the day
When you will derive pleasure from your task
After your journey is done,
So that soon in these coasts here
The glory of the mighty Neptune may resound:
And so your memory is eternalized.

THIRD TRITON: France, you have reason
To praise the devotion
Of your children whose courage
Reveals itself more grandly in this age
Than ever it did in past centuries.
They are keenly interested
In trumpeting your praises abroad
To the most unknown of peoples,
And in engraving your immortal destiny
Throughout the mortal world.
Therefore, help and support
Such a praiseworthy enterprise.
Neptune offers you his own assistance
Which will always support you and yours
Against all human power
In case someone should threaten you.
“We must never reject
The gift which a God wishes to grant us.”

FOURTH TRITON: The man who doesn't take a risk
Shows that he has the soul of a coward.
But he who with a brave heart
Defies the fury of the waves
For a glorious enterprise
Makes everyone easily believe
That he is belted and clothed
In courage and virtue,
And that he does not wish silence
To veil his name in oblivion.
Therefore your name (great Sagamos)
Will henceforth reverberate above the waves
When on the deep
You discover this new world
And plant the name of France
And the Majesty of your Kings.

FIFTH TRITON: *A Gascon speaks these verses in his own dialect.*
Here ye what I wish to say:
That old fellow, Neptune,
Bragged loudly the other day

Admiring himself like a real ladies' man.
— Once I made love
And kissed a young wench
Who was very polite and gentle;
I frequented her company every day —
Young lovers, don't trust too much
Those who have grey beards,
Because in these adventures
They trot slowly, then off they gallop!

SIXTH TRITON: Long live HENRY the great King of France
Who now has living under his laws
The nations of his New France,
Under whom we hope
Soon to see Neptune held in reverence
As much here as he once was honoured
By his subjects on the shores of Gaul,
And in all those places where the bravery and courage
Of their ancestors once led them.
Neptune, for his part, will always see
That their descendants employ themselves industriously
Embellishing this wonderful enterprise;
He will favour all their plans
And make them flourish on his waters.

This done, Neptune steps aside a little to make room for a canoe in which are four Indians who approach, each bringing a gift to Sieur de Poutrincourt.

FIRST INDIAN: *The first Indian offers a quarter of an elk or moose, speaking as follows.*

On behalf of the Indian peoples
Who inhabit these countries,
We come to render their homage
To the sacred Fleur-de-lis
In your hands, you who represent
The Majesty of your Prince;
Hoping that this province
Will flourish in piety,
In civil customs, and in everything
Which is of service in establishing
That which is gracious
And rests in Royal governance.
Sagamos, if you have any faith
In our services,
Then we will devote ourselves to you
And to your descendants.
We offer whole-heartedly our skills
Which lie only in hunting,
And all we desire
Is to live forever in your favour.

SECOND INDIAN: *The second Indian, holding his bow and arrow in his hand, gives some beaver skins as his present, saying.*

Here is the hand, the bow and the arrow
Which have inflicted the mortal wound
On this animal whose skin
Should serve (Great Sagamos)
As a warm coat for your Highness.
Accept, therefore, from one who is so unimportant
This offering which I present to your Highness
From the bottom of my heart.

THIRD INDIAN: *The third Indian offers Matachiaz, that is, sashes and bracelets made by the hand of his mistress, saying.*

It is not only in France
That Cupid reigns,
But also in New France.
As with you he also lights
His firebrand here; and with his flames
He scorches our poor souls
And plants there his flag.
My mistress, when she heard the news
That you were to arrive,
Told me that for love of her
I must come seeking you,
And that I must make you gifts
Of this little work
Which her skilled hand wrought.
Therefore, accept gladly —
For the love of my mistress —
This present made with such affection
Which I offer you;
For she is now in distress
And will not be happy
Unless I tell her promptly
Of the kindness which your Highness has done me.

FOURTH INDIAN: *The fourth Indian, having hunted unsuccessfully in the woods, presents himself with a harpoon in hand and, after his excuses have been made, announces that he is going fishing.*

SAGAMOS, pardon me
If I come in this manner,
If, while presenting myself to you,
I do not bring you any gifts.
Fortune is not always favourable
To good hunters;
That is why, having now recourse
To a more friendly master,
And after having many times
When brushing through the thickets of the woods
Invoked this Fortune,
I will now follow Neptune.
May Diana in her forests
Cherish those whom she wants;
I, for my part, have too many regrets
Because of having lost my youth
While following her through the valleys

With a thousand labours
In vain hopes.
Now I will search
Along this sea coast
To see whether I cannot find something
To provide for your kitchen:
And, if meanwhile, you have
Somewhere in your shallop
A little *caraconas**
Give some to me and to my company.

After Neptune had been thanked by Sieur de Poutrincourt for his offers for the well being of France, the Indians were similarly thanked for their good will and loyalty and were invited to come to Port Royal in order to break bread. At this moment Neptune's troupe sings a song in four parts, as follows.

Loyal Neptune, grant us
Security against your waves,
And grant that we will all be able
To meet again in France one day.

The Music finished, the trumpet sounds once more and every one takes his different route: the cannons boom from all sides and thunder as if Proserpine were in labour: this is caused by the multiplicity of echoes which the hills send back to each other lasting for more than a quarter of an hour.

Then Sieur de Poutrincourt, having arrived near Port Royal, a companion of a jolly disposition who had awaited him patiently, speaks as follows.

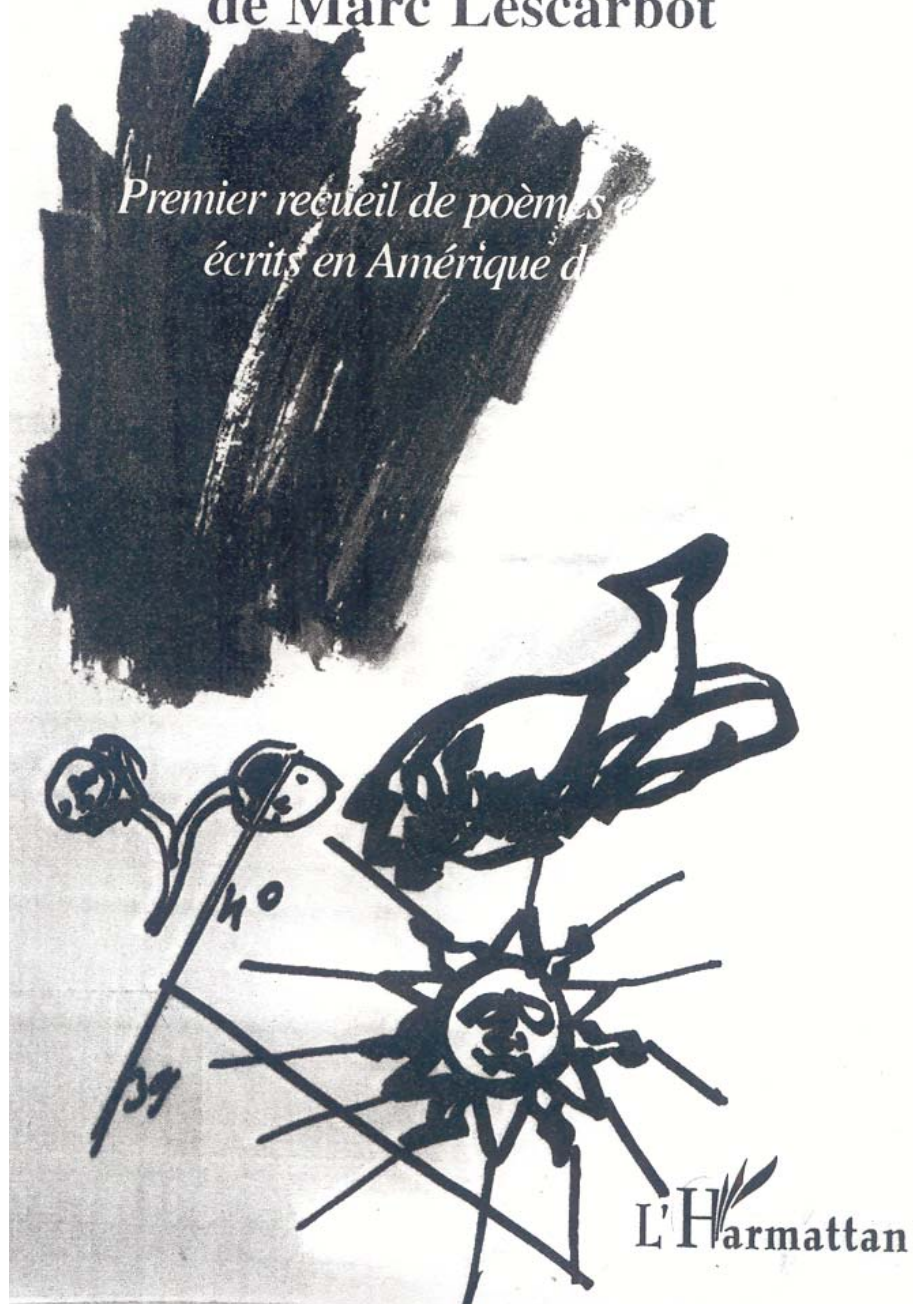
After having wished a long time (Sagamos)
For your return to this place, finally the angry sky
Now had pity on us and, showing us your face,
Bestows on us an incredible favour.
Pay attention then grillers, waiters, cooks,
Kitchen hands, bakers, makers of fricassee, tavern keepers;
Turn the pots, plates and kitchen upside down!
Let's give to each of these gentlemen his full quart;
I see that they are thirsty, *sicut terra sine aqua*.
Boy, busy yourself, give each one his portion.
Cooks, are the ducks on the skewer yet?
Kill the chickens, put the goose on a spit,
Here come jolly good companions
As free with their teeth as with their kidneys.
Enter, Sirs, for your good pleasure.
Before drinking, let each one sneeze loudly
In order to discharge all cold humours,
And fill your brain with sweeter vapours.

(I beg the reader to excuse me if these rhymes are not as well polished as an educated man would wish. They have been composed in haste. However, I wanted to insert them here that they might contribute to our History in addition to showing that we lived joyously. The rest of this story may be found at the end of Chapter 16, book 4 of my History of New France.)

*That is, bread

**LES MUSES
DE LA NOUVELLE-FRANCE
de Marc Lescarbot**

*Premier recueil de poèmes
écrits en Amérique d*



LE THEATRE de NEPTUNE

Note hors texte

Nous croyons utile, pour une meilleure perception globale de la pièce qui suit, de rassembler en une liste les personnages qui s'y présentent dans l'ordre de leur entrée en scène. Nous y ajoutons une liste des noms des acteurs et spectateurs assurés ou probables de ce "drame" ¹.

La scène se passe devant la façade du Fort, et en grande partie sur l'eau (sur un Chariot, une chaloupe et des canots.) :

Personnages :

<i>Neptune, Dieu de la mer ;</i>	<i>Premier Sauvage ;</i>
<i>Premier Triton ;</i>	<i>Second Sauvage ;</i>
<i>Second Triton.</i>	<i>Troisième Sauvage ;</i>
<i>Troisième Triton ;</i>	<i>Quatrième Sauvage ;</i>
<i>Quatrième Triton ;</i>	<i>Jean de Biencourt " Sagamos " des Français ;</i>
<i>Cinquième Triton (un Gascon) ;</i>	<i>Un Compagnon de gaillarde humeur ;</i>
<i>Sixième Triton ;</i>	<i>Choeur, musiciens, trompettes.</i>

Noms probables des acteurs et spectateurs

Dans la chaloupe et la barque :

Jean de Biencourt, Sieur de Poutrincourt ; Charles de Biencourt, son fils âgé de 15 ou 16 ans ; Samuel Champlain, de Brouage, géographe du Roi ; Robert du Pont, fils de Dupont-Gravé, blessé ; Pierre Angibaut, dit Champdoré, pilote ; Louis Hébert, apothicaire ; Daniel Hay, charpentier ; Maître Stéphane, chirurgien ; Jean du Val, serrurier, blessé ; Etienne, valet de Poutrincourt ; un moribond (dont Lescarbot tait le nom, car il avait provoqué une attaque désastreuse des Sauvages).

A Terre et sur les Canots :

L'auteur ; le Sieur du Boulet (ancien capitaine du régiment de Poutrincourt) ; les artisans et ouvriers restés au Fort ; François Addenin, domestique du Sieur de Monts ; plusieurs Sauvages.

¹ Ces noms viennent d'indications éparses, contenues dans l'Histoire de Lescarbot et les Voyages de Champlain (cf. notamment édit. 1613). Cf. aussi Harriette Taber Richardson. " the Theatre of Neptune in new France ", The riverside Press for Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1927, P. XXI et XXII).

LE THEATRE

DE NEPTUNE EN LA

NOUVELLE-FRANCE (1).

Représenté sur les flots du Port Royal le quatorzième de Novembre Mille six cens six, au retour du Sieur de Poutrincourt du país des Armouchiquois. (2)

Neptune commence revêtu d'un voile de couleur bleue, et de brodequins, ayant la chevelure et la barbe longues et chenuës, tenant son Trident en main, assis sur son chariot paré de ses couleurs (3) : ledit chariot trainé sur les ondes par six Tritons jusques à l'abord de la chaloupe où s'étoit mis ledit Sieur de Poutrincourt et ses gens sortant de la barque pour venir à terre (4). Lors ladite chaloupe accrochée, Neptune commence ainsi :

(1) Sur la définition de ce divertissement, sur son antécédence probable par rapport aux autres jeux dramatiques de langue européenne en Amérique du Nord, cf. l'étude détaillée des *Muses*, introduction 2, chap. 3 (début).

(2) Partis du Port Royal le vingt huit Août 1606 pour faire une reconnaissance vers le sud, si possible plus loin que Malebarre (aujourd'hui Cape cod), Poutrincourt et ses hommes ne revinrent que le quatorze Novembre. On comprend la joie des colons restés au Port Royal, en des temps périlleux pour la navigation. Cf. la présentation que fait l'auteur des circonstances de cette exploration dans HNF, IV, 16, p. 579/552. Pour l'appréciation du Théâtre, on se reportera plus haut à notre introduction, 2^{ème} partie, alinéas 3 et 4.

(3) Les couleurs de Neptune, c. a .d. bleu et vert.

(4) Ce divertissement, très spectaculaire comme on le voit, paraît s'inspirer des nombreux ballets mythologiques, alors à la mode, et que nous qualifions aujourd'hui de baroques. Lescarbot, demeurant au centre de Paris, avait dû., en particulier, assister au *Ballet à cheval* donné en l'honneur de la Reine Christine le 10 Février 1606, soit trois mois avant son départ, et dans lequel Malherbe avait fait le dialogue des dieux marins : " les cavaliers représentaient les quatre éléments et étaient disposés, en quatre troupes. La première représentant l'Eau, et composée de sirènes et de Dieux marins, étoit conduite par Roger de St Lary de Bellegarde grand Ecuyer, et suivie de douze cavaliers magnifiquement vêtus "(extrait de l'*Histoire* de J. A. de Thou, T. X, p. 117).

NEPTUNE

- 1 *C'est un mot* Arrête, *Sagamos*, arrête toy ici,ⁿ
 sauvage qui Et regardes un Dieu qui a de toy souci.
 signifie capi- Si tu ne me conois, Saturne fut mon pere,
 taine. Je suis de Jupiter et de Pluton le frère.
- 5 Entre nous trois jadis fut parti l'Univers, [18]
 Jupiter eut le ciel, Pluton eut les Enfers,
 Et moy plus hasardeux eu la mer en partage,
 Et le gouvernement de ce moite* heritageⁿ.
 NEPTUNE c'est mon nom, Neptune l'un des Dieux
- 10 Qui a plus de pouvoirⁿ souz la voute des cieux.
 Si l'homme veut avoir une heureuse fortune
 Il lui faut implorer le secours de Neptune.
 Car celui qui chez soy demeure cazanier
 Merite seulement le nom de cuisinier.
- 15 Je fay que le Flamen[~] en peu de temps chemine
 Aussi-tot *que le vent jusques dedans la Chineⁿ.

v. 15. 1611 : *Flameng*.

v. 1. On croirait entendre Ronsard, dans son ode " Contre les bûcherons de la forêt de Gastine " : " Ecoute bûcheron, arrête un peu le bras " (Ronsard, *Elégies*, XXIV, v. 19).

v. 8. *Moite heritage* = héritage composé par l'eau. Ce mot moite, appliqué au royaume de Neptune, revient souvent dans les *Semaines* de Du Bartas. Pour ce passage, et d'autres à suivre (notamment le discours du premier Triton), on se reportera spécialement au début de la Ière Semaine, qui commence par une invocation à Neptune :

" Toy qui guides le cours du ciel porte flambeaux
 Qui, vray Neptune, tient le moite frain des eaux
 Qui fais trembler la terre et de qui la parole
 Serre et lasche la bride aux postillons d'Aeole..."

v. 10. *Qui a plus de pouvoir*. Sur l'emploi du superlatif relatif, cf. introduction 3.

v. 15. *Le flamen*, c'est à dire les Hollandais. L'intervention des Hollandais dans la mer de Chine est tout à fait récente. Après la découverte de Macao, en 1601, ils concurrencèrent Espagnols et Portugais dans le commerce européen avec la Chine, installant une factorerie à Firando (non loin de Kiou-Siou), en 1609. Mais ce n'est qu'à partir de 1636, et dans le commerce avec le Japon qu'ils compteront véritablement (d'après Roland Mousnier, *Les XVI ème et XVII ème siècles*, coll. " Histoire des civilisations ", Paris, PUF, 1957, p. 600).

Je fay que l'homme peut, porté dessus mes eaux,
 D'un autre pole voir les inconuz[~] flambeaux,*
 Et les bornes franchir de la Zone torride,
 20 Ou bouillonnent les flots de l'element liquideⁿ
 Charlemagne Sans moy le Roy Françoisⁿ d'un superbe elephant[~]
 N'eust du Persan receu le present triomphant :
 Et encores sans moy onc* les François gendarmes*
 Es terres du Levant n'eussent porté leurs armesⁿ.
 25 Sans moy le Portugaisⁿ hasardeux sur mes flots
 Sans renom croupîroit dans ses rives enclos,
 Et n'auroit enlevé les beautez de l'Aurore
 Que le monde insenséⁿ folatrement adore.
 Bref sans moy le marchant, pilote, marinier
 30 Seroit en sa maison comme dans un panier
 Sans à-peine pouvoir sortir de sa province.
 Un Prince ne pourroit secourir l'autre Prince
 Que j'auroy separé de mes profondes eaux.
 Et toy-même sans moy après tant d'actes beaux
 35 Que tu as exploités* en la Françoisse guerreⁿ,
 N'eusses eu le plaisir d'aborder cette terre.
 C'est moy qui sur mon dos ay tes vaisseaux porté
 Quand de me visiter tu as eu volonté. [19]
 Et nagueres* encor c'est moy qui de la Parque[~]

v. 18. 1609 : *inconeuz*.

v. 21. Cette note (Charlemagne) était absente des éditions de 1609-1611 et 12.

v. 39. 1609, 1611-12 : *Nagueres encor c'est moy qui de la Parque* (vers faux).

v. 20. Sur la " Zone torride ", et les difficultés de son passage, cf. HNF/II, 4, 169.

v. 24. Allusion aux croisades, cf. AF2, v. 103 et note.

v. 25. Les Portugais sont les premiers à s'être aventurés sur les mers et sur les terres de l'Extrême Orient. Malacca fut prise (par Albuquerque) en 1511, puis Macao en 1557. L'apogée de ce dernier comptoir est presque contemporain des *Muses* : 1584-1602 (d'après R. Mousnier, *op. cit.*, p. 598).

v. 28. *Le monde insensé* : pour Lescarbot, la beauté et les ressources des terres découvertes à l'Ouest valent mieux que les trésors de l'Orient. Il revient sur cette idée aux v. 38-39 de la TM :

" Qu'on ne parle maintenant

Que des îles du Ponant..."

v. 35. Sur les exploits de Poutrincourt comme Capitaine de la Ligue, cf. l'introduction biographique, et l'Ode " A Monsieur de Poutrincourt ".

40 Ay cent fois garenti toy, les tiens, et ta barque^a,
 Ainsi je veux toujours seconder tes desseins,
 Ainsi je ne veux point que tes effortz soient vains,
 Puis que si constamment tu as eu le courage,
 De venir de si loin rechercher ce rivage,
 45 Pour établir ici un Royaume François^a,
 Et y faire garder mes statuts et mes loix.
 Par mon sacré Trident, par mon sceptre je jure
 Que de favoriser ton projet j'auray cure,
 Et oncques je n'auray en moy-même repos^a
 50 Qu'en tout cet environ je ne voye mes flots
 Ahanner souz le faix de dix milles navires
 Qui facent d'un clin d'oeil tout ce que tu desires.
 Va donc heureusement, et poursui ton chemin
 Où le sort te conduit : car je voy le destin^a
 55 Preparer à la France un florissant Empire
 En ce monde nouveau, qui bien loin fera bruire
 Le renom immortel de De Monts et de toy
 Souz le regne puissant de HENRY votre Roy^a.

v. 40. Le poète attribue à Neptune ce que l'historien attribue à Dieu : cf. en HNF, IV, 5, p. 472/73 et 446/447, le récit de deux accidents de navigation, qui eussent été fatals, sans " la faveur spéciale que Dieu a toujours montré en ces voyages ".

V. 45-46. Les deux (Royaume François et règne de Neptune) vont de pair pour le " poète gaulois " cf. la dédicace de *l'Histoire* à la France : " vos enfans (très honorée mère) noz peres et majeurs ont jadis par plusieurs siècles esté les maitres de la mer lorsqu'ils portaient le nom de Gaullois, et vos François n'estoient point reputez légitimes, si dès la naissance ils ne sçavoient nager et comme naturellement marcher sur les eaux ".

v. 49. *je n'auray de repos* : ce sera en tout cas le but poursuivi inlassablement par l'auteur ; cf. l'appel pathétique aux Responsables français : " Il faut, il faut reprendre l'ancien exercice de la marine..." (HNF, 1611, dédicace à Louis XIII).

v. 54. Tout parait en effet possible pour la France, à l'heure où le Port Royal est, en Amérique, pour reprendre les termes de Mme *Richardson* " Le seul voisin éloigné de l'inamicale Floride " (" Lone neighbour to unfriendly Florida ", *op. cit.*, p. 1).

v. 58. Il s'agit d'Henri IV.

Neptune ayant achevé, une trompette commence à éclater hautement et encourager les Tritons à faire de même. Ce-pendant le Sieur de Poutrincourt tenoit son épée nue en main, laquelle il ne remit point au fourreau jusques à ce que les Tritons eurent prononcé comme s'ensuit.

PREMIER TRITON

60 Tu peux, (grand Sagamos) tu peux te dire heureux
Puis qu'un Dieu te promet favorable assistance [20]
En l'affaire important que d'un coeur vigoureux
Hardi tu entreprends, forçant la violence d' Aeoleⁿ,
Qui toujours inconstant et léger,
N Tantot *adesquidès* *, tantot poussé d'envie,
65 Veut te précipiter, et les tiensⁿ au danger
Neptune est un grand Dieu, qui cette jalousie
Fera comme fumée en l'air évanouïr
Et nous ses postillons, malgré l'effort d'Aeole,
Férons en toutes parts de ton courage ouïr
70 Le renom, qui des-jaⁿ en toutes terres vole.

DEUXIEME TRITON

Si Jupiter est Roy ès cieux
Pour gouverner ça basⁿ les hommes,
Neptune aussi l'est en ces lieux
Pour même effect; et nous qui sommes
75 Ses suppos *, avons grand désir
De voir le temps et la journée
Qu'ayes de tes travaux plaisir
Après ta course terminée,
Afin qu'en ces côtes ici

N. m. v. 64-69 (*tes éd.*) : Adesquidès, mot de Sauvage qui signifie Ami.

v. 60. 1609 : *assistance*.

v. 70. 1609 : *desjà*.

v. 62. *Aeole* = Eole (dieu du vent chez les Grecs).

v. 65. *Et les tiens* = ainsi que les tiens. Sur l'ellipse de la forme tonique du pronom, cf. introduction 3.

v. 72. *ça bas* : ici bas ; cf. introduction 3 (démonstratifs).

80 Bien-tot retentisse la gloire
Du puissant Neptune : et qu'ainsi
Tu eternises ta memoire.

TROISIEME TRITON

France, tu as occasion
De louer la devotion*
85 De tes enfans dont le courage
Se montre plus grand en cet âge~
Qu'il ne fit onc* és siecles vieux,
Etans ardemment curieux
De faire éclater tes loüanges
90 Jusques aux peuples plus étranges,
Et graver ton los *immortel
Même souz ce monde mortel. [21]
Ayde doncques~ et favorise
Une si louable~ entreprise,
95 Neptune s'offre à ton secours
Qui les tiens maintiendra toujours
Contre toute l'humaine force,
Si quelqu'un contre toy s'efforce.*
"Il ne faut jamais rejeter
100 Le bien qu'un Dieu nous veut preter".

QUATRIEME TRITON

Celui qui point ne se hazarde
Montre qu ' il a l'ame couârde
Mais celui qui d'un brave coeur
Méprise des flots la fureur
105 Pour un sujet rempli de gloire
Fait à chacun aisément croire

v. 93. 1609 : *aide* donc.

v. 94. 1609 : *loable* entreprise.

v. 86. C'est depuis les expéditions de Verrazano (1524) et Jacques Cartier (1635)
et seulement que la France tente de constituer un vaste empire.

v. 87. Sur l'emploi de " és " : voy. la section " prépositions " de l' introduction 3.

Que de courage et de vertu
 Il est tout ceint et revetu,
 Et qu'il ne veut que le silence
 110 Tienne son nom en oubliance.
 Ainsi ton nom (grand *Sagamos*)
 Retentira dessus les flots
 D'or-en-avant, quand^a dessus l'onde
 Tu découvres ce nouveau monde,
 115 Et y plantes le nom François
 Et la Majesté de tes Rois.

CINQUIEME TRITON.

Un Gascon prononça ces vers à peu près à sa langue :

Sabets aquo que volio diro^a,
 Aqueste Neptune bieillart
 L'autre jou faisio del bragart,
 120 Et comme un bergalant se mira
 N'agaires que faisio l'amou, [22]
 Et baisavo une jeune hillo
 Qu'ero plan polide et gentillo,
 Et la cerquavo quadejou.
 125 Bezets, ne vous fizets pas trop
 En aquels gens de barbos grisos,
 Car en aqueles entreprisos
 Els ban lou trot et lou galop.

1609. Cinquième Triton (commentaire) : *en* sa langue.

v. 117 à 128. Ce discours n'est pas sans poser des problèmes d'interprétation, du fait notamment de la transcription approximative du poète. Pourtant, avec l'aide du dictionnaire gascon-français de Monsieur Cénac-Gontaut et du dictionnaire de la langue d'Oc de Monsieur Honnorat, nous pensons comprendre :

" Savez-vous ce que je veux vous dire	Qui était incroyablement belle et gentille
Neptune, ce vieillard	Et elle le recherchait, par la morbleu !
L'autre jour faisait le vantard	Voyez, il ne faut pas trop se fier
Et se prenait pour un vert-galant	A ces gens qui ont barbe grise
Il y a peu (disait-il), il faisait l'amour	Car en ces genres d'entreprises,
Et embrassait une jeune fille	On doit bannir trot et galop..."

Comme dans l'épisode de l'écolier limousin (cf. Rabelais, *Pantagruel*), le dialecte sert à camoufler quelques gaillardises.

SIXIEME TRITON

- I30 Vive HENRY le grand Roy des François
 Qui maintenant fait vivre souz ses loix
 Les nations de sa Nouvelle-France
 Et souz lequel nous avons esperance
 De voir bientôt Neptune reveré
 Autant ici qu'oncq *il fut honoré
I35 Par ses sujets sur le Gaullois rivage
 Et en tous lieux où le brave courage
 De leurs ayeuls jadis les a porté.
 Neptune aussi fera de son côté^a
 Que leurs neveux* s'employans sans feintise^a
I40 A l'ornement de leur belle entreprise
 Tous leurs desseins il favorisera,
 Et prospérer sur ses eaux-il fera.

v. I38. Les deux -Royaume français, et vocation maritime- sont liés étroitement dans l'esprit du poète gaulois ; cf., à ce sujet, la dédicace de l'*Histoire* à la France cf. HNF, p. XI) :

" Vos enfans (très honorée mère), noz pères et majeurs ont jadis par plusieurs siècles esté les maîtres de la mer lorsqu'ils portaient le nom de Gaullois, et vos François n'estoient point réputés légitimes si dès la naissance ils ne sçavoient nager, et comme naturellement marcher sur les eaux. Ils ont avec grande puissance occupé toute l'Asie. Ils y ont planté leur nom, qui y est encore "(il s'agit de la Galatie, province d'Asie mineure, occupée par les Gaulois en 278 av. JC).

v. I39-I43. La construction est un peu embrouillée : " fera que " commande " il favorisera ", et " leurs neveux s'employans sans feintise " doit être compris comme une participiale construite librement (genre d'ablatif absolu) ; leurs neveux, renvoie à " sujets " sur le Gaullois rivage (= les Français actuels). Une partie de l'obscurité vient de l'emploi d'un futur (" il favorisera ") dans une proposition de type final, et surtout du fait que cette proposition a le même sujet que la participiale. Cf. à ce sujet, la dédicace de l'*Histoire* à la France.

Cela fait, Neptune s'équarte un petit* pour faire place a un canot, dans lequel étoient quatre Sauvages, qui s'approcherent apportans chacun un présent audit Poutrincourt.

PREMIER SAUVAGE

Le premier Sauvage offre un quartier d'Ellan ou Orignac, disant ainsi :

	De la part des peuples Sauvages	[23]
	Qui environnent ces païs	
I45	Nous venons rendre les hommages	
	Deuz aux sacrées Fleur-de-lis.	
	Es mains de toy, qui de ton Prince	
	Représentes la Majesté,	
	Attendans que cette province	
I50	Faces ^a florir en pitié,	
	En moeurs civils, et toute chose	
	Qui sert à l'établissement	
	De ce qui est beau, et repose	
	En un Royal gouvernement.	
I55	<i>Sagamos</i> , si en nos services	
	Tu as quelque devotion,*	
	A toy nous faisons sacrifices	
	Et à ta generation.*	
	Nos moyens sont un peu de chasse	
I60	Que d'un coeur entier ^a nous t'offrons,	
	Et vivre toujours en ta grace	
	C'est tout ce que nous desirons.	

V. I47. Sur la rime *lis-pais*, voy. Introduction 3, versif.

v. 150-151. Sur cette inversion rare, voyez introduction 3.

v. I60. *Entier*, c.a.d.: sans arrière pensée.

DEUXIEME SAUVAGE

Le deuxiesme Sauvage tenant son arc et sa fleche en main donne pour son présent des peaux de Castors, disant :

Voici la main, l'arc et la fleche
Qui ont fait la mortele breche
165 En l'animal de quiⁿ la peau
Pourra servir d'un bon manteau
(Grand Sagamos) à ta hauteesse
Reçois donc de ma petitesse
170 Cette offrande qu'à ta grandeur
J'offre du meilleur de mon cœur.

TROISIEME SAUVAGE

[24]

Le troisième Sauvage offre des *Matachiaz*, c'est à dire, écharpes, et brasselets faits de la main de sa maîtresse, disant :

Ce n'est seulement en France
Que commande Cupidon,
Mais en la Nouvelle-France,
Comme entre vous, son brandon
175 Il allume ; et de ses flammes
Il rotit noz pauvres ames,
Et fait planter le bourdon.
Ma maitresse ayant nouvelle
Que tu devois arriver
180 M'a dit que pour l'amour d'elle
Et qu'offrande je te fisse
De ce petit exercice
Que sa main a sceu ouvrir*
J'eusse à te venir trouverⁿ,

v. 165. *De qui* : sur l'emploi du relatif, voy. l'introduction 3.

v. 181. Cette strophe et la suivante sont construites comme les strophes d'une ode. Noter la variété des formes et des rythmes.

185 Recoy doncques d'allegresse
 Ce present que je t'adresse
 Tout rempli de gentillesseⁿ
 Pour l'amour de ma maitresse
 Qui est ores* en détresse,
 190 Et n'aura point de liesse
 Si d'une prompte vitesse
 Je ne lui di la caresse
 Que m'aura fait ta hauteesse.

QUATRIEME SAUVAGE

Le quatrième-Sauvage n'ayant heureusement chassé par les bois,
 se presente avec un harpon en main, et après ses excuses faites,
 dit qu'il s'en va à la pêche.

[25]

195 Sagamos, pardonne moy
 Si je viens en telle sorte,
 Si me presentant à toy
 Quelque present je n'apporte.
 Fortune ⁿn'est pas toujours
 Aux bons chasseurs favorableⁿ.
 200 C'est pourquoy ayant recours
 A un maitre plus traitable,
 Après avoir maintefois
 Invoqué cette Fortune

v. 187. On sait, en lisant *l'Histoire*, que la " Polygamie est reçue par tout ce monde-ci " (HNF, IV, 13, 742/716).

v. 198 *Fortune* : il s'agit de la déesse Fortune, normalement pourvoyeuse de bonne-Fortune, et qui est invoquée plus bas, au v. 199. Comme dans la chanson de Malbrough, le quatrième ne portait rien !

205 Brossant* par l'epésⁿ des bois,
 Je m'en vay suivre Neptune.
 Que Diane en ses forêts
 Ceux qu'elle voudra caresse,
 Je n'ay que trop de regrets
 D'avoir perdu ma jeunesse
 210 A la suivre par les vaux
 Avecque mille travaux,
 Par les bois et par les plaines,
 Souz des esperances vainesⁿ.
 Maintenant je m'en vay voir
 215 Par cette côte marine
 Si je pourray point avoir
 Dequoy fournir ta cuisine
 Et cependant si tu as
 Quelque part en ta chaloupe
 220 Un peu de *caracona*,
 Fournis-en moy et ma troupeⁿ.

N. v. 220 (*tes éd*). [*Caracona*] : C'est du pain, en Souriquois.

v. 212. Ed. de 1609, 1611-12 : *ce vers était omis, laissant la terminaison "vaine" du vers suivant sans rime.*

v. 208. *L'epés*=l'épais.

v. 213. Lescarbot transpose ici l'habitude qu'avaient les Souriquois de consulter l'oracle de Membertou, avant d'aller à la chasse. " Il leur dit : Allés en tel endroit et vous trouverez de la chasse. Il arrive quelquefois qu'ils en trouvent, et quelquefois non. S'il arrive que non, l'excuse est que l'animal est errant ou qu'il a changé de place " (HNF, 6, 679/643).

v. 221. La paresse de ce " Sauvage " qui semble apprécier beaucoup la cuisine des Français, rappelle étrangement l'aventure de Bituani, qui ayant trouvé bonne la cuisine du Sieur de Monts (à Sainte Croix), " s'y estoit arrêté ". Mais il avait failli en perdre sa " fiancée ", que ses parents lui retirèrent, tant qu'il n'eût pas fait ses preuves de chasseur. La chasse ne lui étant pas favorable, il avait pêché force saumons, et la fille lui avait été rendue (cf. HNF IV, 4, 467-68 et 441-42).

Après que Neptune eut été remercié par le sieur de Poutrincourt de ses offres au bien de la France, les Sauvages le furent semblablement de leur bonne volonté et devotion et invitez de venir au fort Royal prendre du caracona. A l'instant la troupe de Neptune chante en musique à quatre parties ce qui s'ensuit :

[26]

Vray Neptune donne nous
 Contre tes flots assurance
 Et fay que nous puissions tous
 Un jour nous revoir en France.

La musique achevée, la trompette sonne derechef, et chacun prend sa route diversement : les canons bourdonnent de toutes parts, et semble à ce tonnerre que Proserpine fait en travail d'enfant : ceci causé par la multiplicité des Echoz que les côtaux s'envoient les uns aux autres, lesquels durent plus d'un quart d'heure.

Le Sieur de Poutrincourt arrivé près du Fort Royal, un compagnon de gaillarde humeur qui l'attendait de pié ferme, dit ce qui s'ensuit :

Après avoir longtemps (*Sagamos*) désiré
 Ton retour en ce lieu, enfin le ciel iré
 A eu pitié de nous, et nous montrant ta face,
 Nous a favorisé d'une incroyable grace^a.
 230 Sus doncques rotisseurs, depensiers, cuisiniers,
 Marmitons, patissiers, fricasseurs, taverniers,
 Mettez dessus dessous pots et plats et cuisine,
 Qu'on baille à ces gens ci chacun sa quarte* pleine
 Je les voy alterez sicut terra fine aqua !~
 235 Garson depeche toy, baille à chacun son Kⁿ !
 Guisiniers, ces canars sont ils point à la broche ?
 Qu'on tuë ces poulets, que cette oye on embroche,
 Voici venir à nous force bon compagnons
 Autant déliberez des dents que des roignons*. [27]
 240 Entrez dedans Messieurs, pour vôte bien-venuë,
 Qu'avant boire chacun hautement éternuë,
 Afin de décharger toutes froides humeurs
 243 Et remplir voz cerveaux de plus douces vapeurs^a.

V. 229. 1609-II-12 : *Il nous a fait paraître une incroyable grace.*

Remarque de l'auteur : Je prie le Lecteur excuser si ces rhimes ne sont si bien limées que les hommes délicats pourroient desirer. Elles ont été faites à la hâte. Mais neantmoins je les ay voulu insérer ici, tant pour-ce qu'elles servent à nôtre Histoire, que pour montrer que nous vivions joyeusement. Le surplus de cette action se peut voir à la fin du chap. 15. liv. IV, de mon Histoire de la Nouvelle-France.

Transition : *Proserpine*. déesse de l'Agriculture et des enfers, femme de Pluton est évoquée sans doute ici parce qu'elle eut pour filles les Furies..

v. 229. Selon le grand folkloriste et musicologue canadien, Marius Barbeau, la forme et les paroles de ce quatrain sont proches de celles des couplets d'une vieille chanson, la "*petite Galiotte*", très populaire aux XVe et XVIème siècle, et chantée aujourd'hui encore au Canada. Il est donc probable que Lescarbot se servit de son air pour accompagner ce quatrain.

v. 235. *Son K* : mis pour Karolus. Il s'agit, sans doute, d'un salaire promis aux acteurs "volontaires" du Théâtre (cf. aussi TM, v. 30).

v. 243. C'est peu après ce retour (probablement en décembre 1606), et pour continuer sur cette gargantuesque note, que Champlain et Lescarbot "pour setenir joyeusement et nettement quant aux vivres" créèrent "l'Ordre de bon temps", toujours très vivant dans la mémoire canadienne et, prolongé après tant de siècles, par plusieurs sociétés (notamment "the Order of good cheer", en Nouvelle-Ecosse). Cf. aussi HNF, IV, 17. Sur l'ellipse de "de", et de l'anaphore "le", cf. introduction 3.

Appendix C – OTL Process Strategy for Sinking Neptune

OTL intends to network and potentially collaborate with community-groups, theatre activists, critical educators, culture-jammers, and others. By making people aware of the issues and project, and inviting their own critical reactions and artistic responses, OTL hopes to assist in building a critical mass of cultural resistance to the re-enactment, and by extension bring First Nations issues into the spotlight..

Please note that anyone can create their own cultural resistance against this play. Please feel free to create your own critical response or post-colonial subversion, and get in touch with the OTL if you wish to network or collaborate.

Concerning deconstruction of the play itself, OTL will attempt to create a Montreal-based subversive performance based on the play-text - perhaps to be played in the fountain at the Place des Arts, on the Lachine Canal, or the historic Piscine Schubert. In Montreal this effort is being conducted by the Optative Theatrical Laboratories, with a process that is open to the public for those who wish to participate.

For more information and/or to get involved:

Net: <http://www.optative.net/current.html> click on "SINKING NEPTUNE"

Email: optatif@excite.com