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THE PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS FOR TERRENCE MALICK'S *THE NEW WORLD* (2005) devote considerable time to detailing the extraordinary effort of the production crew to recreate Werowocomoco, the capital of the Powhatan's paramount chiefdom, and Fort James, the first surviving English settlement in Virginia, in the period from 1607 to 1617. The hour-long documentary on "The Making of *The New World*" accompanying the DVD release of the film, for example, chronicles the shared work of a research team of historians, archeologists, linguists, anthropologists, and members of Virginia tribes to represent as faithfully as possible Powhatan and English agriculture, architecture, language, and material culture. The viewers of the featurette learn that the filming takes place only ten miles from the original location of the settlement and that Werowocomoco and Fort James are reconstructed with exclusively local materials, such as heirloom Indian corn and tobacco plants for the gardens, thousands of shell beads for Powhatan's mantle, and wild turkey feathers and deer racks provided by Robert Green, the chief of the Patawomeck tribe, to adorn Powhatan's house. As Dr. William Kelso, director of archeology for the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and chief archeologist at the original Jamestown settlement site, attests on camera, "the set is a time capsule; it fully captures the feeling of what it was like to live in Fort James." Choreographers and martial arts experts teach actors the fundamentals of seventeenth-century body language and dialect trainers help Q'orianka Kilcher, the actress portraying Pocahontas, pronounce both Algonquian language and Algonquian-accented seventeenth-century English. The producers repeat frequently that the film's director "likes the things real," that they too are committed to "solid reality," all the way down to filming without artificial lighting or computer generated special effects. And above all, that in a marked departure from the historical representations of American Indians on film, the crew is dedicated to depicting the Algonquian people of early Virginia, rather

than generic Indians. Stephen R. Adkins and Robert Green, the chiefs of the Chickahominy and Patawomeck tribes, appear in the documentary, describing their initial wariness of yet another project reinventing their old world anew and cautiously expressing "high hopes" for the film's potential to evoke among its viewers the long overdue recognition of the people who greeted the settlers of Jamestown.

And yet, the filmmakers' dedication to the faithful recreation of early seventeenth-century Tsenacomoco/Virginia[1] and all its inhabitants, showcased in "The Making of *The New World*," does not translate into an equally accurate account of the British colonial project in North America, let alone its long lasting effects, in the feature film itself. Instead, *The New World* offers yet another reprise of the largely fictionalized story of Jamestown settlement with its attendant romance of John Smith and Pocahontas.[2] While the film includes episodes needed to offer a historically accurate account of the early colonization of Tsenacomoco—not least in depictions of the beginnings of the Virginia tobacco industry and consequent displacement of the Powhatan or in frequent juxtapositions between Captain Smith and Captain Newport's lofty political ideals and the far baser actions of the colonists—ultimately, its emphasis falls elsewhere. Though it starts off as a historical drama, *The New World* transforms quickly into a romance. The film's commitment to historical realism implied in the authenticity of the reconstructed material environment is, in the end, overshadowed by its unrelenting interest in a love story of a special kind: not a story of John Smith's infatuation with Pocahontas, but of his falling for America as a new beginning, for America as an opportunity for idealist Englishmen, disgruntled by the enclosure movement, to construct a social utopia.[3] *The New World* parts company with historical facts

[1]Tsenacomoco is the name the Powhatan used to refer to their country.

[2]The accounts, whether scholarly or fictional, of the alleged Smith-Pocahontas romance are legion. Along with the numerous debunkings of this romance, they could constitute a sizable literary tradition. We now even have books on the books about Smith and Pocahontas, studies attempting to account for the development of this American discourse (see Tilton) or to describe its ultimately failed competition with that other founding American myth originating in Plymouth (see Abrams).

[3] In a move perhaps most familiar to American readers from F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous *The Great Gatsby*, a novel first published in 1925 and recreated on screen in 1974 by Jack Clayton, with the help of memorable performances from Robert Redford and

regarding Smith and Pocahontas and the complex world they inhabited in order to offer a somewhat updated version of one of the oldest myths of American nation-building: the virgin land pandering to the European settlers with the promise of new possibilities for social, economic, and political justice in the republic of land-holding citizens.

The success of Malick's resurrection of the virgin land myth depends on his deft deployment of imperialist nostalgia, a specific emotional economy first identified and described by American anthropologist Renato Rosaldo in 1989. Rosaldo saw imperialist nostalgia as a dominant emotional logic of many colonial and postcolonial societies. While paradoxical at the core, this logic served important ideological functions for the members of such societies:

> A person kills somebody and then mourns his or her victim. In more attenuated form, someone deliberately alters a form of life and then regrets that things have not remained as they were prior to his or her intervention. At one more remove, people destroy their environment and then worship nature. In any of its versions, imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of "innocent yearning" both to capture people's imagination and to conceal its complicity with, often brutal, domination. (108)

Imperialist nostalgia operates in *The New World* on at least two levels, paradoxically making both the pristine wilderness of America and the as-yet-unacculturated Powhatan objects of the viewers' presumed mourning. For example, Malick's film offsets gritty depictions of brutal daily life in early Jamestown with pastoral representations of Werowocomoco, where the Powhatan live an enviable life of justice, plenty, and pleasure. When Werowocomoco is torched by Jamestown's settlers during a punitive expedition and its people flee, Malick's camera depicts the town's destruction as an unquestionably tragic event. At the same time, however, the very same camera encourages admiration of the emptied land miraculously recovered from the wounds of the conflict. *The New World* returns, over and over again, to images of transatlantic travel and of the English arrival on American shores and their movement up its rivers and lingers lovingly over the stretches of beautiful coasts and vibrant forests, all accompanied by John Smith's

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Mia Farrow, Pocahontas serves merely as an embodiment of the idea of America for Smith, the way Daisy Buchanan did for Jay Gatsby. Unlike Fitzgerald, though, Malick holds on firmly to the utopian potential of the new world. On Daisy as an embodiment of the corrupting powers of the myth of America, see Fiedler.

voiceover rehearsing contemporary political philosophy inspired by the "discovery" of America. Malick represents the complexity of "the new world" by making sure to people it with indigenous social and political systems the English encountered on arrival. But in the film's conclusion he empties this world of its indigenous people and offers instead the vision of uninhabited America, of America as the virgin land infinitely open to European possibilities, America as the "fresh, green breast of the new world" (Fitzgerald 182) pandering here to English, rather than Dutch, sailors. Ultimately, then, the clearly embraced multiculturalist mandates of representing historically accurate material culture and the Powhatan point of view serve to strategically distract from the film's concluding return to traditional myths of the new world and the virgin wilderness, the very myths that the turn to multiculturalism in the cultural politics of contemporary America was intended to dispatch once and for all. The orientation toward historical realism and an indigenous point of view ends up serving as a kind of smoke screen behind which the film's ideological agenda regarding the European uses of the new world is reinstated surreptitiously.

Let me make clear at this point that my intention is not to dismiss Malick's film as historically inaccurate regarding the Smith and Pocahontas romance and other events attending the transformation of Tsenacomoco into Virginia. Such dismissal only perpetuates the impasse between the historically-minded among the commentators of the film, who denounce it as a reiteration of a fast aging myth, and the mythically-minded among them, who embrace it as an example of the "American Sublime" and of the director's particularly consistent cinematographic and philosophical sensibility (Garrett 1).[4] Rather than repeating the already voiced objections regarding the veracity of the Smith and Pocahontas romance, I am interested instead in what the resurrection of this particular myth accomplishes for Malick and his varied audiences. What does it allow him to suggest, or demonstrate, about the English engagement with America, at a point where the classic narratives of this engagement have been thoroughly revised by current scholarship and the multicultural ethos of US public culture?

As I have begun to suggest above, *The New World* does appear to embrace this ethos wholeheartedly. It sets out to offer an alternative to

[4]For a comprehensive and systematic review of the critical reception of Malick's film, see Sinnerbrink.

the traditional discovery and settlement narratives, which usually privilege the settler point of view to the exclusion of all others in a triumphalist narrative of the peopling and civilization of the Americas. The initial sequences of *The New World* promise major adjustments in the depiction of European and indigenous first contact. The opening credits are framed by reproductions of European maps of the continent and wood engravings depicting the landscape and its inhabitants.[5] As the blue veins of rivers gradually cross the empty white space of the map, postcolonial perspectives allow us to interpret this mapping as an invasive tear in the existing fabric of the land rather than as a discovery of a place out of a blank space of nothingness. As the engravings shift from the depictions of the new world's wondrous and abundant flora and fauna to those of violent conflicts between the colonists and the indigenous peoples, the opportunism of the accounts describing America as a blessed or hellish wilderness becomes apparent. The opera connoisseurs among the viewers are invited to conclude that Malick begins with a condemnation of English greed, given that the soundtrack accompanying these opening images features the prelude to Richard Wagner's opera *Das Rheingold*.[6] This opening salvo of archival depictions of America raises the vexed issue of historical representations of otherness, and more specifically the particular functions of Smith's maps and narratives as well as John White's and Theodor de Bry's drawings and engravings as promotional materials in the European colonial ventures. In its first self-reflexive moment, the film showcases the multiple, varied, and contesting visions of the Europeans' new world and the Powhatans' old one and signals that questions about what stories get told about that world and to what effects is one of the film's main preoccupations.

Beyond the credits, the opening sequences of the film resort to a familiar representational stereotype—the noble savages living in harmony with nature—but, importantly, those opening sequences insist that the new world is inhabited, even thickly populated, judging by the number of painted bodies crowding the frame. And the film's opening

[5]The opening takes feature fragments of John Smith's 1612 *Map of Virginia* and Theodor de Bry's engravings based on John White's sketches.

[6]In his review of the film, John d'Entremont points out that *Das Rheingold*'s prelude "evokes the moment when the mythical character Alberich, a Nibelung dwarf, steals the river Rhine's golden treasure, renouncing love in favor of wealth and power" (1024).

also insists on projecting a Powhatan point of view beginning with Pocahontas's collective address, "Come spirit, help us tell a story of our land," a proclamation that appropriates a Powhatan narrative agency for the film. To reinforce the pretext of the indigenous observer and teller, the camera is firmly placed among the Powhatan and follows their gaze into the harbor as they witness the approach of *Discovery*, *Godspeed*, and *Susan Constant*. As the subsequent shots alternate between the Powhatan looking from the shore and the Englishmen gazing from the ships, the viewers can surmise that this account will pay as much attention to how America's indigenous peoples saw and lived through the arrival of the Europeans as it will to the colonists' wonderment at and greed for the land along with their fear of its people. Indigenous and European points of view are given roughly equal time and space during the film's opening sequences, and this balancing continues throughout the film as Malick's classic voiceovers constantly shift among settler and native protagonists. This strategy helps lend credence to the producers' pronouncements about their commitment to just such a representational direction.

But soon the familiar mythical love story overtakes this representational orientation toward historical realism and indigenous points of view. The film shifts attention from the realities on the ground to those in the heart as it rewrites an aggressive settlement into a story of impossible love between Smith and Pocahontas. Smith is an Englishman caught between his admittedly often-flawed understanding of Powhatan political, economic, and social realities and the political ideals he brings from Europe. The "Indian Princess" is hardly caught between allegiances at all, so transported is she by her feelings for Smith. While Pocahontas declares that John is "like a God to her," Smith muses about America's utopian possibilities:

> Who are you whom I so faintly hear, who urges me ever on? What voice is this that speaks within me, guides me towards the best? We shall make a new start, a fresh beginning. Here the blessings of the earth are bestowed upon all. No need grow poor here. There's good ground for all and no cause but one's labor with which we will build the true commonwealth. Hard work, self-reliance and virtue. We shall have no landlords to wreck us with high rents or extort the fruit of our labor. None shall eat up carelessly what his friend gathered or steal away that which virtue has stored up. Men shall not make each other their spoil.

To Malick's credit, the viewers of the film hear Smith's declaration as they watch his crew stumble across Powhatan food stores and raid them without compunction. And yet even as it occasionally points out the irony by juxtaposing lofty ideals with the baser actions on the ground, *The New World* continues to offer and dwell on images of unspoiled land, that is, land empty but for its natural abundance of flora and fauna. As if to contradict its initially central narrative about the competition over resources between the English and the Powhatan, *The New World* culminates in the final sequence of quickly alternating shots that feature images of Rolfe's ship departing England and of American shores, empty but for flowing streams and towering forests, a sequence that fundamentally rewrites the two-hour account of the English arrival in Tsenacomoco we have just witnessed.

This conclusion is complicated, if not outright baffling, but it begins to make sense in the context of imperialist nostalgia. In terms of the film's diegesis, following Pocahontas's sudden death, Rolfe returns to Jamestown to continue his cultivation of tobacco, that American gold of the Virginians. In fact, the trip that he and Pocahontas take to England was conceived and sponsored by the Virginia Company as a public relations effort to reassure the potential English colonists regarding the viability of Virginia as a productive colony. Pocahontas's conversion to Christianity, marked additionally by her assumption of the name Rebecca, the biblical mother of nations, her marriage to Rolfe, and her graceful appearance at the English royal court offer concrete counter-evidence to accounts highlighting Jamestown's precarious foothold on the American continent and its vulnerability to hostile natives. This evidence is convincing and results in new mandates for the Company and the Rolfes, one to Christianize Virginia's Indians via Lady Rebecca's example and influence and the other to develop the tobacco industry. And yet, the film's conclusion depicts no renewed contact between the colonists and the Powhatan and none of the industrious activity of Rolfe's plantation (earlier in the film it was represented in emphatically pastoral mode: the growing plantation as a playground for John and Rebecca's budding love rather than the origin of Virginia's leading industry to come). Instead, the camera follows John Rolfe, his son Thomas, and presumed new potential colonists, as they arrive on America's shores and admire, but leave untouched, its pristine interior.

Symbolically, the film's conclusion is an opportunity to represent the English arrival in Tsenacomoco once again, this time as a discovery of a virgin land rather than as rapacious displacement of the Powhatan depicted in the first half of the film. The concluding sequences make only a brief reference to the price of that reinvention—in a fleeting image of Lady Rebecca's grave in England. Pocahontas as such does not matter to either of the two Johns, given that Malick's Smith is in thrall to America's utopian promise of social justice and Rolfe to its economic potential.[7] Instead of pausing over the grave, the final sequence moves from the flowing streams to the canopy of a forest in the American wilderness, as the singing of the birds gradually silences the orchestral music of the soundtrack, the same Wagnerian prelude that served in the film's opening to indict European colonial greed. In addition to emptying America of its indigenous inhabitants, *The New World* also offers as a final reflection the pleasure of imagining the evacuation of the English from Virginia, with all their greed and destruction, the land taking its own back. But by offering its viewers the final image of American wilderness undisturbed by any human agency (except of the implied English new arrivals who enter the forest), *The New World* prompts them to ponder nostalgically what never was in the first place, except in the European imagination.

In its disappearing of indigenous people, *The New World* is reminiscent of John Smith's accounts of his 1614 explorations of the shores of what he was the first to call New England (the event which, in Malick's film, is the reason for Smith's abandonment of Pocahontas). Smith set out for the American shores north of Chesapeake Bay on a commission from an English venture company in search of opportunities for fur trading as well as for fisheries and permanent English settlements. This would be his last successful voyage of exploration. The account he penned for his employers, published in 1616 as *Description of New England*, served as an advertisement for the potential investors and settlers. It is paradoxical at the core. Smith reports on seeing a country "so planted with Gardens and Corne fields. . . . and so well inhabited with a goodly, strong and well proportioned people" that everybody could only "approve this a most excellent place, both for health and

[7] The historic John Rolfe leaves Thomas in England never to see him again. He quickly remarries upon his return to Virginia. Thomas Rolfe makes his first visit to Virginia in 1635, over a decade after his father's death.

fertility." He concludes with a declaration that "of all the foure parts of the world that he has yet seen not inhabited, could he have but means to transport a Colony, he would rather live there than anywhere" (Wilson 73). Like Smith's account, Malick's film at first pays unwavering attention to the indigenous modes of inhabiting the land, the camera lingering over the well-planted gardens and corn fields and following closely the handsome and strong Powhatan as they go about their daily business. It also replicates the structure and logic of Smith's account to the letter by offering viewers a meticulously recreated Werowocomoco yet leaving them with the idea of untouched wilderness, the virgin land, a fully available canvas for European experimentation in social utopias. The fact that this evacuation also rids Tsenacomoco of the meticulously depicted squalor of Fort James only adds to its undeniable appeal. It is precisely this paradoxical logic that interests me here—of seeing and documenting America as vibrant with human activity yet declaring it a virgin wilderness, a logic that appears to have survived intact for four hundred years, from Smith's accounts of New England to Malick's film. Yet John Smith does not appear to have applied this logic to Jamestown, which on the instructions of the sponsors of the Virginia Company, he saw not as a permanent settlement but as a trading outpost funneling the English explorers into Virginia and American riches back to England. The first ships of the Virginia Company arrived on Tsenacomoco shores via the Caribbean and with the Spanish model of colonization. This model required a country populated with stable societies available for trade, or plunder, and with abundant waterways facilitating movement of people and goods. Thus it is no wonder that John Smith's map of Virginia, first published in England in 1612, teems with numerous Indian towns connected by a dense network of rivers. By infusing *The New World* with the aura of a mythical virgin land, Malick is retrospectively importing to Jamestown a perspective that would not be recognizable to its first colonists. Unlike Smith's account of New England, which emptied the shores of future Massachusetts and Maine of indigenous population in order to invite English settlement, Malick's film empties Tsenacomoco/Virginia of the Powhatan and the English in a gesture of imperialist nostalgia, an emotional logic eminently useful to contemporary US viewers reckoning with the brutal colonial history of their country.

In *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest*, a ground-breaking interpretation of early colonial history published in 1975, Francis Jennings points out that

> The American land was more like a widow than a virgin. Europeans did not find wilderness here; rather, however involuntarily, they made one. Jamestown, Plymouth, Salem, Boston, Providence, New Amsterdam, Philadelphia—all grew upon sites previously occupied by Indian communities. So did Quebec and Montreal and Detroit and Chicago. The so-called settlement of America was a resettlement, a reoccupation of a land made waste by the diseases and demoralization introduced by the newcomers. (30)

Where *The New World* further differs from Smith's accounts of New England is in its clear awareness of the causes and mechanisms that bring about America's widowhood. Halfway through the film, the viewers witness a punitive Jamestown expedition against Werowocomoco that results in its abandonment. Historically, this event might well have constituted the first Indian removal under the pressure of the English settlers, as the paramount Chief Powhatan relocated the town in 1609 to Orapakes, further up the Chickahominy River and away from the shore and the English settlement. But Malick does not take the opportunity to represent the abandonment of Werewocomoco as a strategic shift in the ongoing contention over land and resources between the Powhatan and the English. Instead, he borrows generously from the iconography of a vanishing race, most famously exemplified by Edward Curtis's photography. The images of the Powhatan gathering their children and belongings, fleeing the burning town, and ultimately disappearing into the smoky background readily evoke this long discursive tradition made emblematic in Curtis's 1904 photograph, *The Vanishing Race*, with its resonant caption declaring Indians "a race passing into the darkness of an unknown future" (Curtis vol. 1, plate 1). That the image of the burning cornfield left after the departure of the Powhatan abruptly cuts to black and then immediately to Pocahontas lying prostrate in a muddy ditch between two Jamestown houses offers intriguing interpretative possibilities regarding the object of her mourning, possibilities that Malick's film does not pursue.

Diegetically, Malick links Pocahontas's prostration to the departure and the (false) news of Smith's death and uses it as a starting point to develop the second romance of the film. Pocahontas fallen in the Jamestown mud—"somebody considered broken and finished" in John

Rolfe's voiceover—serves as an establishing shot of sorts for the film's second half and its central narrative of Pocahontas's conversion and marriage to Rolfe, all implying the second, proper, founding of Virginia. It is a story in which Pocahontas is lifted up from evident ruin to become simultaneously the poster child for the tobacco industry in Virginia and the mother of future Virginians. This plot line culminates in her death at Gravesend and Rolfe's return to Virginia with their son Thomas expectantly snuggled in his arms as they board the ship. Historically, Rolfe was returning with a new mandate to develop a tobacco industry in Virginia, a process that would lead to the gradual displacement of the region's indigenous inhabitants. Symbolically, in Malick's film he returns with a multicultural mandate in the person of his son with Pocahontas.[8] Ironically then, the incipient narrative of America's widowhood at the hands of European settlers is transformed into the story of John Rolfe, the widower, returning to Virginia to begin anew, literally, as Jamestown and Tsenacomoco, during his absence, miraculously revert to a state of virgin wilderness. The last sequence of *The New World* offers pristine streams and forests resonant with birds singing, the land not merely recovered from its recent wounds, but entirely fresh and new. As such, the conclusion of *The New World* invites viewers to indulge in the logic of disappearance already familiar from John Smith's accounts of New England and many other imaginative narratives of America ever since.

If Renato Rosaldo is right, this complicated rhetoric of *The New World*'s conclusion makes sense as an expression of imperialist nostalgia. On Rosaldo's reasoning, if the image of undisturbed wilderness beckoning from the screen seduces its viewers, it is because it performs important, though perhaps unacknowledged, ideological work. After all, it is far easier on the eye than the squalor of Fort James, or the smoking ruins of Werewocomoco, or even the tortuously landscaped grounds of seventeenth century England's estates. The ability to fall in love with this image, relief even at its appearance in the conclusion, testifies to an idealism which is, just like the idealism of Malick's Smith, inherently paradoxical. A yearning after unspoiled wilderness betrays a desire to be exculpated from implication in its destruction, a gesture that becomes a

[8]The contemporary Mattaponi, drawing on their oral history, insist that Thomas was not Rolfe's son but a result of Pocahontas's rape, during her captivity in Jamestown, probably by Thomas Doyle (Custalow and Daniel 62-64).

refusal of modernity and its costs. It betrays a desire to forget altogether Pocahontas's grave, that is, to forget the destruction of the indigenous world necessary to create the European myth of American wilderness. The fulfilled obligation to recreate that supposedly perished indigenous world faithfully and meticulously in art, as an image, compensates for that second desire. The painstaking historical reconstruction of early seventeenth-century America, peopled with the English and the Powhatan in Malick's *The New World*, surprisingly and paradoxically serves in the end to authenticate the idea of the virgin land. All this solid reality is expended to revive one big American myth.

In 2005, at the time of *The New World*'s release, this myth of virgin land was already woefully anachronistic. Recent historical scholarship thoroughly revised our understanding not only of the first encounters between the Europeans and indigenous inhabitants of the Americas but also of indigenous civilizations prior to 1492.[9] Researchers of the colonial period have successfully supplanted what historian Perry Miller called "the errand into the wilderness" linked with American exceptionalism with new accounts of North America before and after 1607 as a place of complex and ongoing contests over land, extractable resources, trade and political influence among a variety of political entities, indigenous and settler, all within the global context of emerging modernity and European colonialism.[10] In Virginia, the archeological finds of the original Fort James in 1995 and of Werowocomoco in 2003 have radically changed our conception of Powhatan political, economic, and social life; witness the transformation of the Jamestown Settlement site in preparation for the 400th anniversary of English arrival to Tsenacomoco and in particular exhibitions such as *The World of 1607* and *Werowocomoco: A Seat of Power*, featured at the new facilities in

[9]For a useful comprehensive account of the newest scholarship in the field, one aimed at general reader, see Mann.

[10]See Jennings for one of the early ground-breaking examples; see Kupperman, Richter, and Wilson for examples of more recent scholarly and popular accounts. For work specifically on Virginia and the Powhatan, see Rountree and Rountree and Turner. For American Indian authored accounts of Pocahontas and her relationship to Smith and Jamestown, see Gunn Allen and Custalow and Daniels.

2007-08 and 2010, respectively.[11] The latter exhibition exemplifies current trends in representing the history of Virginia and Virginia Indians by showcasing the complexity and far-reaching influence of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom, by extending the history of indigenous settlement in Virginia far into prehistoric times, and, perhaps most importantly, by linking the Powhatan to their descendants in contemporary Virginia and thus highlighting the history of their struggles for survival and recognition. That particular history has been made increasingly available through the efforts to record oral histories of Virginia Indians,[12] to write tribally specific histories,[13] and to map the Indian past and present in the state through projects such as the Virginia Indian Heritage Trail.[14]

Like "The Making of *The New World*," the account of Virginia's founding emerging from the 400th anniversary celebrations fully acknowledges this recent scholarship in history and archeology and the increased visibility of contemporary Indians in the state's shared imaginary. And yet, like *The New World*, this particular account is not devoid of its own willful misreadings of the historical record, its own myths fitted for the contemporary multiculturalist ethos. Depictions of Jamestown as a "crossroads of peoples and empires, trade routes and ways of war, and cosmologies and technologies," or as a place where "Powhatan Indian, European, and western central African cultures . . . converged in the 17th century,"[15] significantly improve on the earlier

[11]For information on Jamestown Settlement go to http://www.historyisfun.org/Jamestown-Settlement.htm; to learn about the anniversary related development of the site go to http://www.historyisfun.org/Americas-400th-Anniversary.htm; for detailed information on the Werowocomoco exhibition go to http://www.historyisfun.org/werowocomoco.htm.

[12]See for example Moretti-Langholtz.

[13]For an example, see Wood and Shields.

[14]For an excellent example of a project interested in excavating forgotten Indian history in Virginia in the name of contemporary Virginia tribes, see Karenne Wood's *The Virginia Indian Heritage Trail*.

[15]Unless otherwise attributed, all quotations in this section are from the Jamestown Settlement website.

racist narrative of conquest and civilization,[16] but in the end these most recent representations also obscure the displacement of the Powhatan and the exploitation of the African slaves. Their vocabulary of "crossroads" and "convergence" and their emphasis on cultures rather than political entities reduce what was a violent and for many participants tragic historical period into a rather innocuous play of intertwining influences, one to be unequivocally celebrated because it gave rise to the contemporary multicultural democracy that is the United States.[17] Similarly, as Roberta Rosenberg points out, celebrations of Jamestown as giving origin to lasting American legacies, such as representative democracy, cultural diversity, and free enterprise, smack of invented tradition (33), and, one might add, revert to the exceptionalist logic of earlier narratives of American history.

And yet, despite these flaws, contemporary versions of America's founding in Virginia appear to avoid the pitfalls of Terrence Malick's *The New World*, especially with regard to the representation of the Powhatan. Historic and contemporary Virginia Indians are emphatically present in these accounts, both as subjects and as authors, the latter in particular insisting on historical connections between the Indian past and the Indian present. Malick's concluding resurrection of the myth of virgin land symbolically evacuates Indians from mythical America but also from contemporary Virginia. The painstaking reconstructions of the

[16]During the 1922 dedication of the Pocahontas sculpture at Jamestown, with representatives of the Rappahanock in the audience, Cynthia Tucker Coleman provided the context for her account of Pocahontas's assistance in founding Virginia with the following: "The time had come when this fair western world was to be redeemed from the dominion of the savage to yield its wealth of soil and climate to that race which should dominate the world" (Abrams 269).

[17]The Commonwealth of Virginia's Jamestown 2007 brochure, entitled *Come Home to Virginia*, reads in part as follows:

> Virginia's 400th anniversary is a time to remind all Americans to reflect on how much our modern lives are shaped by the deeds of the three cultures brought together through life's circumstances, almost 400 years ago. The Europeans in search of opportunity in a new land, the Virginia Indians fighting to retain their land, and the Africans stripped from their homelands, ultimately united to become one nation. Their combined labor, skills, knowledge and cultural traditions are the very fabric of our modern American society. Their legacy has become a catalyst and beacon for immigrants worldwide wanting to become simply Americans.

The brochure is a publication of the Jamestown Yorktown Foundation and the Jamestown 2007 Committee.

Werewocomoco and the seventeenth-century Powhatan world are hardly a consolation here, given the time-capsule approach and capitulation to discursive tradition of the vanishing Indian. As John d'Entremont pointed out in his review of Malick's film, history does not inhere in objects of material culture but rather manifests itself in processes of change, in acts of negotiation, resistance, and adaptation (1025). *The New World* does not appear in the least interested in such processes. On the contrary, the film's concluding images betray a desire for ahistorical stasis, manifest in the stilled English gaze directed up the canopy of the American forest.[18] This image provides an impassable barrier between the Powhatan depicted in the film (depicted ultimately as vanishing into the smoke of Werowocomoco ruins) and their descendants among the Patawomeck and Chickahominy appearing in the featurette.[19] The generic constraints are hardly an issue here. Zacharias Kunuk's Inuit historic epic, *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*, links its pre-contact narrative to the contemporary Inuit by interspersing the final credits with outtakes featuring brief episodes from the film's production, episodes showcasing the film's Inuit actors in contemporary garb, behind the camera, killing time while awaiting their cue, etc., precisely the kind of materials that Malick relegated to the featurette. As a result, *The New World* dwells entirely in the past, diegetically and symbolically, fully bound to the emotional economy of imperialist nostalgia and its ideological work of exculpation.

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[18]The film's editing technique, which disrupts continuity and emphasizes the episodic nature of subsequent shots, accrues additional meaning in this context; it disaggregates the narrative and thus discourages historicist sensibility in the viewers.

[19]The majority of the film's viewers, of course, do not see the featurette.

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