# Chapter II

## Pocahontas and the Myth of Transatlantic Love

### 1. WHY POCAHONTAS?

> When the first permanent English settlers arrived in America in 1607, their sponsors had not given up hope of an integrated biracial community.
> EDMUND S. MORGAN, *AMERICAN SLAVERY, AMERICAN FREEDOM*

> A shipload of single men founded Jamestown, and yet Virginia's origin myth revolves around a female.
> ANN UHRY ABRAMS, *THE PILGRIMS AND POCAHONTAS*

The figure of Pocahontas is at the core of an American foundational myth that for a long time has been considered the first love story of the 'new world' and thus paradigmatic for casting intercultural relations in the early colonial history of the Americas as harmonious and peaceful. As a Native American female foundational figure, Pocahontas may seem less prominent than the male European Christopher Columbus and his myth of discovery (due to her gender and ethnicity), yet her story has had an enormous circulation. The romanticization of Pocahontas and her encounter with the English settlers has become one of the most enduring narratives of American culture: this story was "recast and retold more often than any other American historical incident during the colonial and antebellum periods" (Tilton, *Pocahontas* 1), pointing to the "evolution of an American narrative" (cf. ibid.) over the course of two centuries and to the debate and refashioning of this narrative in the centuries to follow.

Unlike Columbus, Pocahontas did not leave letters or diaries, and many scholars have dwelled upon the voicelessness of this American heroine, who was appropriated by contemporaries – John Smith is the only writer to actually refer to words she ostensibly addressed to him verbatim – as well as by historians, writers, and critics from the 17th to the 21st centuries. Although less historically

remote than Columbus's 'discovery,' the historical sources of the myth of Pocahontas and of her apparent romantic interest in various Englishmen thus have to be viewed with skepticism and caution. My reconstruction of the narratives about her shows how she became the centerpiece of a foundational myth that often is presented "in the guise of history" (Jenkins, "Princess" 8) and that is heavily invested in ideologies of US-American nation-building and identity politics. As much as she has been used as a trope in colonial tales of assimilation, she has also variably been cast as a foundational figure in a non-Eurocentric narrative of American beginnings.

With Sharon Larkins and Peter Hulme, the following 'facts' of Pocahontas's life can be considered as corroborated by historical evidence: that she was born around 1595; that she encountered Captain John Smith immediately after the arrival of the first English settlers at what was to become Jamestown (named after King James I of England) in 1607 (in the most prominent version of the story of this encounter she rescued Smith from death at the hands of her father, Powhatan, chief of a powerful Native confederacy); that she helped the people of Jamestown and continued to have a relationship with Smith; that Smith was injured in an accident and returned to England in 1609, Pocahontas believing him to have died; that she was abducted by Captain Argall in 1612 and held captive in Jamestown by the English; that she was converted to the Christian faith in 1613 while living in Jamestown; that she married John Rolfe in 1614 and that she gave birth to her son Thomas in 1615; that she traveled to England in 1616 and was a great success as the 'Indian princess' now called 'Lady Rebecca' at the English court; that in January 1617 she attended the famous *Twelfth Night* masque; that she was visited by John Smith during her stay and that they had one last conversation; that she died and was buried at Gravesend in 1617 on her way back to America (cf. Larkins, "Using;" Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* 140-41).

In the various retellings of her life, Pocahontas's narrative often falls into two parts: her friendship with John Smith, the 'rescue' incident, and Smith's return to England constitute the first part; the second part includes her captivity among the English, her conversion, her marriage to John Rolfe, the birth of her son, and her visit to England. In all these variations on the level of discourse, the underlying story of first contact takes on mythic significance as an allegorical narrative of the birth of a new (American) society. It is also the first American love story between the colonizer and the colonized which has us believe (at least in its conventional version) that Pocahontas was "sacrificing her life to rescue her (White) love object from her barbarian tribe, a reading which excludes the narrative of rape, cultural destruction and genocide" (Shohat and Stam, *Unthinking* 44).

The historical figure of Pocahontas, alias Matoaka, alias Lady Rebecca Rolfe has been represented as Indian 'girl,' 'princess,' female 'noble savage,' mediator, and indigenous femme fatal, depending on the respective ideological investment, ranging from national, regional, feminist, and ethnic agendas, to name only a few. This chapter tracks the myth of the 'Indian princess' and her transatlantic love story through four phases. First, it will historicize the myth in early modern discourses of expansion and in the context of early American colonial culture and history since 1607, the year in which Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement was founded and in which Pocahontas first met the English arrivals. Before 1607 we already find conventional gendered allegories of the 'new world' as a woman, a fact with which I will deal briefly in the next section. After a reconstruction of the early Jamestown years and the Pocahontas narrative in the 17th century, second, I will turn to the uses made of the Pocahontas tale in the period of the early republic and revisit the fabrication of the romantic love story between Pocahontas and John Smith in the first decades of the 19th century. Third, I will discuss the ways in which Pocahontas was made into an American 'founding mother' by various groups throughout the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. And fourth, I will look at the most recent versions of this myth in American popular culture and literature, in which the revisionism of the second half of the 20th century has led to new accentuations; rather than privileging the so-called rescue scene and the friendship between Pocahontas and John Smith, recent scholarship and rewritings often focus on her marriage to John Rolfe instead. Again, these phases and trends do not start and end in one particular year or decade; rather, they reveal discursive formations and shifts over a period of more than four hundred years.

## 2. AMERICA IS A WOMAN: A PREFACE

> The novelty of America was always perceived in overtly sexual terms.
> PETER HULME, *COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS*

To understand the troping of Pocahontas as a paradigmatic 'new world' woman and a female 'noble savage' we need to first contextualize her in a discourse that at the time of the first English settlements depicted the Americas as an allegorically feminized space. These representations were part of "a full allegorical tradition in which continents – Europe, Asia, Africa and now America – were portrayed as women surrounded by the representative attributes of their respective parts of the world" (Hulme, "Polytropic Man" 17). Hugh Honour has

examined this tradition with regard to the Americas, showing how North America as the "land of allegory" is visually embodied as woman in ambiguous illustrations by European artists such as Philip Galle, Jan Sadeler, Simon van de Passe, Theodor Galle and Jan van der Straat (cf. Honour, *New Golden Land*). In North America, the practice of imagining the continent or its regions as female is also evident in Walter Raleigh's naming of 'Virginia' at the end of the 16th century; Raleigh had been exploring the American coast in an unsuccessful attempt to establish a permanent settlement and colony at Roanoke, the coastal region of what today is North Carolina, between 1584 and 1590 – an attempt that obviously did not engender a foundational myth of American origins and that has been commonly referred to as the "lost" or the "abandoned colony" of Roanoke (cf. Kupperman, *Roanoke*). Raleigh had named the entire territory Virginia, in honor of Queen Elizabeth (1533-1603), the 'virgin queen,' who, for a time, supported his venture. This territory, Raleigh's choice of name insinuates, was waiting in supposedly feminine passivity for the European traveler to arrive and colonize it. The gender-specific attribution of America as 'Virginia' presupposes a male traveler who encounters the (virginal, i.e. empty) feminized space and takes possession of it; it is thus highly suggestive of a sexualized relationship between both, which is constructed as a libidinal bond between traveler and territory (cf. Schülting, *Wilde Frauen* 49). Therefore, in 1607 Virginia already figured as a mysterious feminine/feminized space to be penetrated, conquered, and domesticated by the English settlers.

The ambivalence that such gendered representations may entail is paradigmatically encoded already in a late 15th-century engraving of "America" by the Dutch artist Jan van der Straat on a 1619-copperplate by Theodor Galle. It depicts Amerigo Vespucci's encounter with an allegorical female figure that represents the continent named after him. Vespucci is equipped with all the insignia of a European explorer (flag, cross, and astrolabe), while a voluptuous America lies naked on a hammock, stretching out her hand and beckoning the visitor to come closer. She is part of a pastoral scene, tempting, seductive, and enticing. A closer look, however, reveals disturbing details: in the background of the picture, Natives are roasting something over a fireplace that looks suspiciously like a human leg, and another leg can be seen next to the fireplace. Eroticism and cannibalism here appear side by side, and the dangers of intercultural contact are envisioned; for all the claimed superiority of the European traveler in terms of religion and technology, the alterity of the Native is perceived as tempting and threatening at the same time and thus seems to be beyond the Europeans' control. Could this 'new world' beauty's invitation to the traveler have a hidden agenda? At the same time, this scene of seduction conceals European colonial

aggression toward the indigenous 'new world' population behind a myth of erotic encounter, perhaps even love, correlating the relationship between Europeans and Natives with the allegedly 'natural' order of the sexes: the distinguished European male is to the 'new world' native as man is to woman: i.e., superior (cf. Schülting, *Wilde Frauen* 14).

*Illustration 1: Amerigo Vespucci 'Discovers' America*


Theodor Galle, *America* (1619).

Not only has the 'new world' often been allegorically depicted as a woman, but more specifically, "[i]n English prints and engravings, [it] was often shown as an unclothed Indian princess" (Bushman, *America* 50). E. McClung Fleming has detailed the historical phases in which America appeared first as "Indian Queen," then as an "Indian Princess presented as the daughter of Britannia," and finally by representations of "an Indian Princess whose attributes were the symbols of United States sovereignty" ("American Image" 65). In fact, the Indian princess was the "oldest and most durable representation of the United States" before representations increasingly turned to classicism in the 19th century (Fleming, "From Indian" 39). The allegory of America as the 'Indian princess' thus paves the way for the troping of Pocahontas in first-contact scenarios against a backdrop of the foundational mythology of the 'new world.'

In an already symbolically feminized space, she appears as the first flesh-and-blood Native female we encounter in European narratives of North America. In fact, as Werner Sollors points out, "[a]llegories of America as an Indian princess have often been combined with Captain John Smith's Pocahontas story" (*Beyond Ethnicity* 79). The label "Indian princess" refers to her status as the daughter of chief Powhatan and describes Native tribal relations using the European classificatory system of aristocratic distinction which obviously is itself an act of symbolic domination. Therefore, the first English narrative about the first permanent English settlement in the 'new world' centers on the story of a woman native to the American continent who is discursively appropriated and put to use in various guises for the purpose of legitimizing European conquest: as an allegorical representative of the 'new world' in accordance with the connotations of exotic femininity, as a cultural mediator and supporter of European colonialism, and as a model for assimilation and conversion.

## 3. THE FIRST LOVE STORY FROM THE 'NEW WORLD'?

> [T]he story of Pocahontas and John Smith tells of an "original" encounter of which no even passably "immediate" account exists, a blank space which has not been allowed to remain empty. […] The founding but most problematic moment of that story is the "rescue."
> PETER HULME, *COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS*

> From the *Aeneid* of Virgil onward, intercultural romance was a preferred beginning of colonial narratives.
> GESA MACKENTHUN, *METAPHORS OF DISPOSSESSION*

> Pocahontas was a child at the time of her interactions with Smith.
> LEIGH H. EDWARDS, "THE UNITED COLORS OF POCAHONTAS"

The status of the focal point of the Pocahontas myth – the 'rescue' scene in which she supposedly intervenes on behalf of John Smith and stops his execution – has been the subject of discussion and scrutiny by generations of scholars wavering between enthusiastic affirmation of its truthfulness and utter skepticism. Catchy titles such as *Did Pocahontas Save Captain John Smith?* by J.A. Leo Lemay reveal the almost obsessive dedication to this question, and thus the contested origins of American mythmaking. What is at stake in Lemay's question is the Native woman's desire to save the white man and to show him

that he is not considered an intruder and colonizer in North America; in this sense, Pocahontas's "famous supposed rescue of Captain John Smith has become a rescue of America" (Edwards, "United Colors" 147) and thus a legitimization of the colonial endeavor.

For various reasons, the authenticity of the famous rescue scene has come to be doubted in contemporary scholarship. In order to fully comprehend this skepticism, we have to turn to the historical sources of the story. The textual evidence of the historical encounter in North America between the first English settlers and the indigenous inhabitants is scarce and one-sided. As to the encounter between John Smith and Pocahontas, it is Smith's own writing in his *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as Happened in Virginia* (published in 1608 and then worked into subsequent editions and versions) that we need to turn to first. Pocahontas herself did not leave any textual records, only traces in the texts of others which enlist her story in the authors' own ideological maneuvers.

In his first account of the cultural encounter with the North American natives, John Smith narrates his captivity among the Algonquians as well as the early skirmishes between English settlers and Natives, and although he mentions Pocahontas in this early document as a messenger between Powhatan and the settlers, he does not credit her with having saved his life (neither is this mentioned in his *Proceedings* of 1612). Other early 17th-century sources, such as the texts by Samuel Purchas, Ralph Hamor and William Strachey, are equally silent on the matter of any such rescue.

William Strachey, Secretary of the Resident Council in Virginia and author of *The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia* (1612), an important textual record of the colony's early history, refers to Powhatan's many wives and children, among them "younge Pocahunta, a daughter of his, using sometime to our fort in tymes past" (54). Later he recounts how

> the before remembered Pochahontas, a well featured, but wanton yong girle, Powhatan's daughter, sometimes resorting to our fort, of the age then of eleven or twelve yeares, get the boys forth with her into the market place, and make them wheele, falling on their hands, turning up their heeles upwards, whome she would followe and wheele so her self, naked as she was, all the fort over. (65)

Whereas Strachey renders Pocahontas as a kind of elfish girl (later texts would refer to her as the "forest princess"), Ralph Hamor records the details of her captivity, conversion, and marriage in his *True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia* (1615), and Samuel Purchas in *Hakluytus Posthumus Or Purchas His*

*Pilgrimes* (1625) decribes Pocahontas's fabulous reception in London, where "she carried her selfe as the Daughter of a King, and was accordingly respected" (Vol. 19 118). These are the main historical sources. Even if these texts were written by contemporaries of Pocahontas, this does not mean that they are per se more authentic or reliable than the romantic biographies of the 19th century, as the English authors had their own agenda in describing the North American natives. And still, the absence of the rescue scene, which is central to American mythology, in all of the early textual records is puzzling.

It is in 1624, 17 years after the publication of his first text on the early years of the Virginia Colony, that John Smith for the first time describes the rescue scene in his *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* in the following words, referring to himself in the third person:

> At his [John Smith's] entrance before the King [Powhatan], all the people gaue a great shout. The Queene of Appamatuck was appointed to bring him water to wash his hands, and another brought him a bunch of feathers, instead of a Towell to dry them: having feasted him after the best barbarous manner they could, a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was, two great stones were brought before *Powhatan*: then as many as could layd hands on him, dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs to beate out his brains, Pocahontas the Kings dearest daughter, when no entreaty could prevaile, got his head in her arms, and laid her owne upon his to saue him from death. (49)

Smith thus adds this rescue scene to his account of the initial intercultural contact in North America almost two decades after the incident had supposedly occurred and only after Powhatan as well as Pocahontas had died. Apart from this addition the account is quite similar to the 1608 version, and "no totally convincing explanation has ever been offered for the rescue's absence from the 1608 account" (Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* 140). Scholars have speculated – based on the premise that the scene actually took place – that Smith was at first embarrassed to include his rescue by a young girl for fear of undermining his image as a heroic soldier able to look out for himself (cf. Mackenthun, *Metaphors* 210); after all, his coat of arms was *Vincere est Vivere* – to conquer is to live. Others concluded that Smith embroidered his original version for political purposes and a more dramatic self-fashioning, and that his 1624 publication is by no means accidental in view of the occurrences in the colony.

Combining colonial discourse analysis with a New Historicist sensibility, historian Peter Hulme links the appearance of the rescue scene in Smith's 1624 account to the so-called Indian massacre of 1622 in the Jamestown area which

lastingly reconfigured English-Native relations as inimical and aggressive (cf. Mackenthun's discussion of Hulme in *Metaphors* 211). Hulme suggests that Smith could then, many years after Pocahontas's death, glance back at the primal scene of intercultural encounter nostalgically and present her as a model:

> [T]he rescue can be articulated into a narrative in which Pocahontas has an increasingly central role to play as evidence that Algonquian recognition of the values of European culture could have provided the basis for a harmonious relationship, had not the inherent viciousness of [other natives] destroyed all hope of peaceful co-operation. (*Colonial Encounters* 172)

This 'viciousness' became evident, according to the English chroniclers, in the massacre of 1622 and led to a change of English policy against the Natives. Opechancanough, an uncle of Pocahontas and Powhatan's half-brother, understood that the English settlers had come to stay and led the Algonquian resistance against the continuing incursions of the English settlers into Native land. Unsurprisingly, he is cast by the English as the prototypical 'evil savage' who shows resistance to rather than compliance with English colonialism. The attacks in 1622 killed a third of the colony's population, i.e. "more than three hundred colonists," and could have wiped out the entire colony if not for the hit-and-run tactics employed by the English, which ultimately allowed for a counteroffensive (Kelly and Clark Smith, *Jamestown* 69). John Rolfe, then already a widower who had in his last years in the colony introduced and revolutionized the planting and processing of tobacco, also died in that conflict (cf. Woodward, *Pocahontas* 190), a fact that connects the story of Pocahontas and the massacre on yet another level: whereas Pocahontas, the 'good Indian,' had loved and married John Rolfe, her uncle's 'evil scheming' later caused his violent death.

After the relations between the English and the Natives had irrevocably turned from bad to worse, Smith emphasizes the historical moment where a different course of events had still been fathomable if Natives had only followed the path Pocahontas had chosen: conversion and intermarriage. Yet, they did not. In fact, throughout the 18th century historical accounts blame Native American resistance to intermarriage and reluctance to mingle more intimately and on a broader scale with the English for the continuously deteriorating English-Native relations. It has been argued somewhat speculatively that in terms of phenotype, outward appearance and cultural habits, Native Americans were mostly repulsed by the English settlers due to their masses of facial and bodily hair and their odorous perspiration.

Another problem facing the colony in its early years was the high number of settlers who left the English settlement in order to live with the Natives and who were "rapidly and unproblematically assimilated" (Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* 143; cf. Crèvecoeur, *More Letters* 137), thus undermining any ideological construction of English superiority. Indigenization of the English, i.e. 'going native' was a common phenomenon and posed a threat to the very existence of the colony not least by harming promotional efforts in England geared toward attracting more people to settle in Virginia: what kind of colony had its residents run off into the 'wilderness' of an unknown continent to live with 'uncivilized' people they did not even know? Therefore, the story of Pocahontas came in handy for those advocating colonization and was widely used in the promotional literature encouraging further immigration from England. While the trend of 'going native' among the English settlers was hushed up, the Pocahontas tale at the same time was ideologically exploited as it advertised Native American acceptance of the superiority of the English culture. Pocahontas sided with the invaders, and became as the anglicized heroine of the American colonial romance – "the nonpareil," as Smith calls her and as she is frequently referred to in early American scholarship (cf. Garnett, *Pocahontas*) – a model for all to emulate. "Pocahontas's crossing of the cultural rift – however that crossing is interpreted – […] was quite exceptional" (ibid. 142) simply because she was the only one who did cross it. The Pocahontas narrative "has come to validate in the national psyche the presence by a mythical indigenous consent of Europeans in America" by playing off Pocahontas as the "exotic peacekeeper" against the rest of the Natives as "bloodthirsty savages" (Baringer, "Captive Woman" 2).

Coming back to Smith's text, we can register at least two further interpretive complications. First of all, Smith's text resembles other classical narratives which he obviously took as a model; Peter Hulme points to similarities between Odysseus's encounter with Polyphemus and the Cyclops in Homer and Ovid and Smith's own rendering of his interaction with Powhatan and the Algonquians (cf. *Colonial Encounters* 153f.). Even the rescue scene has features of classical storytelling drawing on an intercultural love story to dramatize cultural conflict. Smith's rescue scene furthermore resembles other parts of his own text quite conspicuously; he "claims to have been aided by beautiful ladies at least twice during his earlier adventurous career in Turkey and Tartaria […] and includes 'that blessed Pocahontas' in his list of those women who 'oft saved my life'" (Mackenthun, *Metaphors* 217; cf. Smith, *Generall Historie* 41-42). In fact, Smith is not the only one to tell such stories: we find parallels in rescue stories of other travelers of that time, as the "'enamoured princess' was a literary topos, or

trope rather, derived from Orientalist discourse" and was chosen by Smith as the "organizing discourse" of his 1624 narrative (Mackenthun, *Metaphors* 217).

After those qualifications, we should, however, take one last look at the rescue scene that Smith describes, if only to complicate matters even further. When taking the story itself at face value we may come to yet another conclusion: That Smith's experience was not a rescue in the strict sense but a kind of adoption ritual of the Algonquians. Philip Barbour first suggested this reading in his 1969 study *Pocahontas and Her World*: "The ceremony of which Smith had been the object was almost certainly a combination of mock execution and salvation, in token of adoption into Powhatan's tribe" (24). Most scholars have come to agree with Barbour that Smith did not lie about what happened and that his memory did not fail him either but that he misread the Native rituals and practices which were unintelligible to him. The thesis of the cultural misreading of an adoption ritual is based on "our conjectures on well-attested Indian practices" (ibid. 23) and has been corroborated by many scholars over the past decades. Barbour even argues that Smith had included the scene in the earlier versions of his texts but that his London editor deleted it (cf. ibid. 24).

Reading the rescue scene as a ritual of adoption also seems plausible in light of the last encounter between Pocahontas and Smith in England. Peter Hulme unravels the dialogue between Smith and Pocahontas in England briefly before her death, upon whose truthfulness we should take a chance, he suggests, because what Pocahontas tells Smith is obviously incomprehensible to him yet quoted by him at some length; these are perhaps the only 'original' words of her that we have (cf. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* 151-52). When meeting at Brentford, after years of separation and silence, Smith finds Pocahontas distant. The words she directs to him are recorded by Smith as follows:

> You did promise Powhatan what was yours should bee his, and he the like to you; you called him father being in his land a stranger, and by the same reason so I must doe you: which though I would haue excused, I durst not allow of that title, because she was a Kings daughter; with a well set countenance she said, Were you not afraid to come into my father Countrie, and caused feare in him and all his people (but mee) and feare you here I should call you father; I tell you then I will, and you shall call mee childe, and so I will bee fore euer and euer your Countrieman. They did tell vs you were dead, and I knew no other til I cam to Plimoth; yet Powhatan did command Vttamatomakkin to seeke yu, and know the truth, because your Countriemen will lie much. (*Generall Historie* 122-3)

Pocahontas reminds Smith of his duties and obligations to her and to her people. She demands reciprocity and commitment due to the ritual of adoption enacted

in 1607, which made them kin. Smith, not familiar with the Algonquian communal culture of reciprocity, seems unable, or at least reluctant, to comment on her words although he quotes them at length.

Smith's text of 1624, the *Generall Historie*, "differs from earlier texts in that it is the first English text that attempts to write a historical narrative of British America – and such a national narrative […] can only develop when it is based on a coherent and meaningful beginning" (Mackenthun, *Metaphors* 210). In 1624, the first phase of colonization – the masking and downplaying of the colonial project in the encounter with the Natives – was over: the English no longer pretended to have come to North America only temporarily (as Smith had told Powhatan during one of their first meetings), and the Natives no longer pretended that they did not mind the white presence. The English conquest of North America had begun. Smith's integration and prioritization of the rescue scene in his narrative has been tremendously effective for colonial politics, as it successfully marginalized other elements of the Pocahontas story that may have been less suitable for the making of a colonial, i.e. national myth. First, the construction of an intercultural love story effaces the story of Pocahontas's captivity among the English to such a degree that we rarely think about her as a captive at all. The genre of the early American captivity narrative on the other hand dramatizes – by inversion – the captivity of white settlers among the Natives. Rebecca Faery shows how the famous captivity narrative of Mary Rowlandson about her experiences during King Philip's War (1675/76) overwrites the story and experience of Pocahontas and thus codes captivity lastingly as the captivity of whites among 'evil savages' as a legitimizing strategy of colonial expansion (cf. *Cartographies*; cf. also Robertson, "First Captive"). Second, the construction of a romantic interest between Pocahontas and John Smith and later between Pocahontas and John Rolfe also obscures the fact that in the interim years between her encounter with John Smith and before her capture, Pocahontas supposedly had been married to Kocoum, a member of her tribe about whom we know very little. This is mentioned by William Strachey (cf. *Historie* 54). Thus, when Captain Argall kidnapped her in order to put pressure on her father Powhatan, she may have already been married. "If William Strachey's report that Pocahontas had been married in 1610 to 'a private captain,' Kocoum, were true, […] then the English had kidnapped a married woman and thus condoned bigamy" (Robertson, "First Captive" 97; cf. Barbour, *Pocahontas* 98-99). However, this earlier "shadowy marriage" (Barbour, *Pocahontas* 99) seemingly was an impediment neither to her conversion nor to her marriage to Rolfe. Pocahontas's first marriage is omitted in most of the roman-

ticized narratives about her, since it was considered to be a 'heathen' ritual without any meaning before God or the Law.

During his stay with his wife and son in England, John Rolfe writes his own promotional tract, *A True Relation of the State of Virginia* (cf. the transcription on the *Encyclopedia Virginia* webpage), to satisfy sponsors of the colony. While his marriage "symbolized an uneasy truce" (Hulme, "Polytropic Man" 168) in English-Native relations, after his return to Virginia as a widower, he was about to witness an eruption of violence that was to change English-Native relations in North America forever.

Throughout the second half of the 17th century and the 18th century Pocahontas and John Rolfe figured as "the great archetype of Indian-white conjugal union" (Sheehan, *Seeds* 175). At the same time, however, Virginia was the first colony to introduce anti-miscegenation laws: in 1662, the legislature passed the Racial Integrity Act to prohibit the intermarriage of whites and blacks as well as whites and Natives. And still, Pocahontas and John Rolfe continued to be seen as foundational figures and as a blueprint for an alternative version of what American race relations *could* have been. This crucially entailed the insight that it all had – and irreversibly so – developed differently. The solution of racial conflict and territorial disputes via intermarriage and miscegenation seemed less and less feasible. Thomas Jefferson was perhaps one of the last Americans to publicly give voice to this vision and to encourage "an amalgamation of the races as a real possibility" (Tilton, *Pocahontas* 24; also cf. chapter 5), if only to assuage Americans' guilt-ridden conscience in the face of Native displacement and death. Over all, miscegenation became an increasingly taboo subject to dwell on. Pocahontas and John Rolfe certainly were "the first, and perhaps the only, Anglo-Indian marriage in Virginia's early history" (Nash, "Image" 215). Following American independence, Pocahontas attained her iconic mythical status in American culture and literature. The utopia of interracial love that was symbolized by the Pocahontas figure develops into a myth of the past while at the same time the policy of 'Indian removal' is implemented and carried out.

## 4. POCAHONTAS AND THE ROMANTIC TRADITION

> In the woods of Powhattan,
> Still 'tis told by Indian fires,
> How a daughter of their sires,
> Saved the captive Englishman.
> WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, "POCAHONTAS"

> When I think of Pocahontas, I am ready to love Indians.
> HERMAN MELVILLE, *THE CONFIDENCE-MAN*

Scholars agree that it is after the American Revolutionary War and, more prominently, at the beginning of the 19th century that the mythical dimension of the Pocahontas narrative evolved most powerfully (cf. Young, "Mother" 395; also cf. Tilton, *Pocahontas*). Thus, it is in the age of Indian removal – an official policy of deportation resulting in the death of thousands of Native Americans on the Trail of Tears – that Pocahontas becomes a full-fledged American icon and myth.

In order to mythologize Pocahontas in the context of profound anti-Native sentiments, a number of discursive strategies had to be employed: first of all, most texts and visual representations cast Pocahontas as the savior of John Smith rather than as the wife of John Rolfe; the second part of the narrative becomes lastingly marginalized in order to avoid the issue of miscegenation – by then an even stronger cultural taboo than in the 17th century. Second, Pocahontas figures somewhat nostalgically as a heroine of the past and of an innocent American beginning. The split between "the peace-loving and Christian Pocahontas" (Uhry Abrams, *Pilgrims* 127) on the one hand and her allegedly treacherous, violent and uncompromising indigenous male counterparts on the other is continued and deepened. This profound feminization of the narrative avoided the contradictions between racial discourse and foundational mythmaking. Third, the Pocahontas narrative underwent a turn to sentimentalism that further diverts attention from the brutality of colonial politics and that champions her as a romantic symbol of voluntary cultural contact and self-chosen assimilation to the white culture.

It is in 19th-century plays, literature, poetry as well as visual culture that we find manifestations of the gendering of the Pocahontas myth that still echo in contemporary cultural productions. Pocahontas made her first American schoolbook appearance in the 1797 edition of Noah Webster's *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking*, yet the first author whose claim to fame the Pocahontas story would become was John Davis, an Englishman who had come

to the United States as a visitor at the beginning of the 19th century. Davis quickly realized the potential of this early American legend and first worked it anecdotally and in a somewhat garbled fashion into his *Farmer of New Jersey* (1800), where he made John Smith an 'Indian trader' and Pocahontas a 'squaw' who saves him. Three years later, in *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (1803) he expands the anecdote by drawing on Smith's texts, local lore, and his own imagination to recount the Pocahontas story in a "thirty-seven page segment" (Jenkins, "Princess" 14). Although his book is, strictly speaking, a travel report, Davis presents us here with the first fictionalized treatment of the topic; akin to a short story, the narrative displays markers of fictionality rather than an investment in historicism (cf. ibid.). Davis expands on the Pocahontas story and is credited by many scholars with the fabrication of the love story between Pocahontas and John Smith, a young girl and an older man by 17th-century standards. The manner in which he processed the story can be sensed from the following excerpt, a scene that follows upon Pocahontas bringing food to Smith and the Jamestown settlers:

> The acclamations of the crowd affected to tears the sensibility of Pocahontas; but her native modesty was abashed; and it was with delight that she obeyed the invitation of Captain Smith to wander with him, remote from vulgar curiosity, along the banks of the river. It was then she gave loose to all the tumultuous ectasy of love; hanging on his arm and weeping with an eloquence more powerful than words. (*Travels* 278)

While we may glimpse from this paragraph why Davis's sentimentalist narrative never became canonical, we cannot overestimate the cultural work his texts performed in the context of an American foundational ideology: he "unearthed" the story of Pocahontas; he "popularized and perpetuated it; but most of all, he romanticized it and made historical fiction of it" (Jenkins, "Princess" 19). Davis further expanded the historical material by adding *Captain Smith and Princess Pocahontas* and *The First Settlers of Virginia, a Historical Novel* (both 1805) to his oeuvre, paving the way for numerous "romantic reconstructions of the narrative in the nineteenth century" at a time "when Americans had begun to scan the colonial past in search of figures like Pocahontas and Smith who could be rewarded retroactively for their proto-nationalist sentiments" (Tilton, *Pocahontas* 33). Again, Commager's phrase of the "search for a usable past" comes to mind. With his timely but now mostly forgotten writings Davis, who is generally considered "a prolific but minor English novelist-poet" (Jenkins, "Princess" 8), secured the enduring popularity of the Pocahontas story *as a romance* in the post-revolutionary period in the United States. However, Davis

also contributed to a major shift in the reception of the story. Davis as well as the writers and poets who followed him focused mostly on the rescue scene, at times all but ignoring the story of her marriage and the fact that she had a mixed-race child with an English husband. As Jenkins puts it somewhat flippantly,

> if Smith […] made Pocahontas a sixteenth-century "cover girl for his come-hither pamphlets," then Rolfe, perhaps, made her the first of those who might be labelled "American Mother of the Year," and Davis, by his imaginative treatment of the love interests of the Indian princess, may have qualified her as the first American girl who was worthy of the title of "Miss America." (ibid. 19)

Following Davis, other American authors would take up the figure of the Native American woman and use recognizable elements of the Pocahontas story in plots of cultural contact, captivity, and love, e.g. Catharine Maria Sedgwick, who in her novel *Hope Leslie* (1827) uses the character of the Native American woman Magawisca to demythologize the Pocahontas narrative, and James Fenimore Cooper, who in his lesser-known novel *The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish* (1829) inverts the Pocahontas story by addressing the indigenization of a white captive raised by a Native tribe (cf. Opfermann, "Lydia Maria Child," and Haselstein, *Die Gabe*).

Pocahontas is mentioned by American historians from William Stith (cf. *History of the First Discovery*) and Jeremy Belknap (cf. *American Biography*) to George Bancroft (cf. *History of the Colonization*); however, unlike Columbus, she did not have a biographer like Washington Irving to sing her praises. Instead, it is in the dramatic tradition – aside from Davis's prose – that she is most profoundly commemorated. The so-called Indian plays of the 19th century popularized stories about Pocahontas and similar, fictive figures in a mode of retrospective nostalgia. The Indian hero or heroine is cast as a melancholic figure, doomed to disappear with the advance of 'civilization;' Pocahontas's assimilation into white culture and the trope of the vanishing Indian thus were two dominant modes of representing this disappearance.

In 1808, one year after the bicentennial of the founding of Jamestown, the first play in English about Pocahontas was published: James Nelson Barker's *The Indian Princess, or, La Belle Sauvage*. Barker presents the same version as Davis's texts: one individual act of heroism – Pocahontas's rescue of John Smith – is dramatized as the key moment of American national prehistory (cf. Tilton, *Pocahontas* 48). The play mentions John Rolfe, yet leaves the marriage unconsummated, a standard feature of most of the 19th-century versions, which did

not give a lot of attention to the fact that John Smith was not the only Englishman in Pocahontas's life.

Throughout the 19th century, Pocahontas plays abounded: "Pocahontas plays, as well as Indian plays in general, became a fixture on the American stage during the first half of the nineteenth century" (Jaroff, "Opposing Forces" 485). Approximately forty plays were performed between 1825 and 1869 (cf. ibid.; Quinn, *Exciting Adventures* 275). Aside from Barker's play, antebellum dramatist George Washington Custis's *Pocahontas, or the Settlers of Virginia* (1830) is among the most important ones. Custis was a descendant of George Washington; his play fit well into the nationalistic and patriotic spirit of the time and presented one exceptionally popular "Indian drama" (Tilton, *Pocahontas* 72). And yet, the publication of the play in 1830 also coincided with the Indian Removal Act, which the US Congress passed in the same year. Overall, the seeming paradox between the policy of Indian removal and the popularity of the Indian plays is compelling. As the quotation from Herman Melville's novel in the epigraph to this chapter illustrates, the idealization of Pocahontas as a foundational figure was in complete opposition to the demonization of Native Americans in 19th-century public discourse. We have already noted how 'good,' i.e. acceptable, and 'bad,' i.e. unacceptable attributes of the 'other' are distributed into complementary stereotypes, such as the 'noble savage' and the 'ignoble savage' (or 'evil heathen'): on the one hand, the championing of Native Americans as a marker of difference had a central function in revolutionary discourses that tried to dissociate the US from England: "the figure of the Indian became a convenient base upon which to build a uniquely American character" (Jaroff, "Opposing Forces" 485). Thus, Pocahontas figures in a history and tradition in which white Americans used Native Americans as figures of empowerment: "Pocahontas's consent gives the chosen people of white Americans a new fictional line of noble Indian ancestry" (Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity* 79). Eventually, those white Americans would even dress up as 'Indians' in order to protest colonial rule (the transcultural phenomenon of 'playing Indian' has been extensively addressed by Philip Deloria; cf. his book of the same title). Yet, on the other hand, in internal negotiations of difference, the indigenous population is anything but representative of America. Carolyn Karcher comments on this paradox: "white Americans win their political freedom at the expense of the Indians they exterminate and […] they achieve their cultural independence by expropriating the cultures of the peoples they have systematically debased, devalorized, and deprived of an independent identity" (Introduction xxxiii). In this discourse, Pocahontas appears prominently as "the selfless Indian princess" (Jaroff, "Opposing Forces" 486). Custis's play and the Indian Removal Act thus present two different but related

strategies of the same colonial and racist discourse of white hegemony – and "[t]he rarer actual American Indians became in the United States, […] the more accessible their history became to appropriation by a national culture in search of legitimating traditions of identity" (Loeffelholz, "Miranda" 59).

In contrast to the conventional romanticization of Pocahontas in the popular Indian plays, some dramas avoided the by then predictable racial and gender stereotypes, of which I will briefly mention two. Charlotte Barnes's *The Forest Princess* (1844) does not employ the standard repertoire of the Pocahontas narrative, nor does the author center her play on the rescue scene or on any romantic investments; rather, it "subverts popular Indian plays of the day supplying Pocahontas with a voice, granting her political status, and allowing her to reject colonial domination" (Jaroff, "Opposing Forces" 483). Its representational strategies contrast with Custis's patriotic championing of the national agenda of Indian removal.

John Brougham's 1855 parody *Po-ca-hontas, or the Gentle Savage* turns on the dramatic tradition of the Pocahontas play in order to make fun of it. His heroine is referred to as "Pokey," and Brougham's play closes with the marriage of Pocahontas and John Smith, leaving Rolfe to complain on the sidelines. Brougham – nicknamed "American Aristophanes" by his contemporaries (Hutton qtd. in Moody, Introduction 402) – ridicules the fashionable mythologizing of Pocahontas, and his play is "a wonderful parody of the archetypal Indian heroines of drama and romance, all of whom were ultimately based primarily on John Smith's representations of the original Powhatan princess" (Tilton, *Pocahontas* 75). For decades, Brougham's play was

> *the* standard burlesque afterpiece in New York and in theatres across the country. It was also popular as a soldier show in Civil War army camps. In the almost thirty years of its stage life no theatrical season in any American city was complete without a few performances of "Pokey." (Moody, Introduction 401; also cf. Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity*)

Both Brougham and Barnes present exceptions to the rule: most of the 19th-century renderings of the Pocahontas narrative focused on its first part because it seemed less problematic and offensive and could be staged as an intercultural encounter based on notions of romantic love (cf. Tilton, *Pocahontas*). The rescue scene also made a much better "colonial beginning," in the words of Peter Hulme (*Colonial Encounters* 141); obviously, the marriage to John Rolfe could not be cast as the happy ending to her aborted relationship with John Smith, if the latter was to be seen as '*the* romance of the republic:' a fateful, larger-than-life intercultural infatuation.

*Illustration 2: Portrait of Pocahontas*

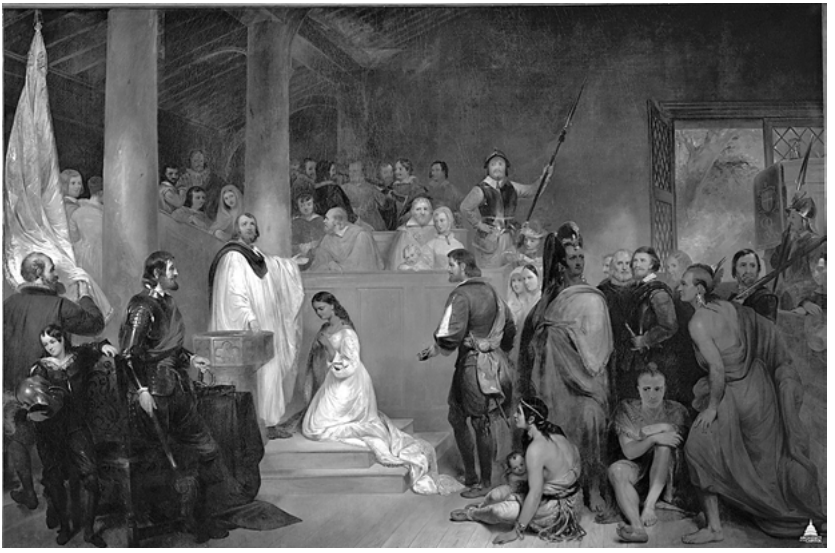

Simon van de Passe, Engraving (1616).

In visual culture the rescue scene also figures prominently: "Smith's rescue by a scantily clad Pocahontas became a favourite topic for a number of popular prints that flooded the market from the 1830s well into the 1870s" (Uhry Abrams qtd. in Tilton, *Pocahontas* 94). It is the most canonical element of the Pocahontas story throughout the 19th century and beyond, and is to this day used in American schoolbooks to teach an ideologically fraught, orthodox version of American beginnings. In the 19th century many painters tried to visualize this crucial moment in early American history – a moment without which, it was assumed, there would not have been any *American* history to begin with. These visual representations of Pocahontas range from exoticist/primitivist to classicist, either depicting her as a nude female Native or as a (to all appearances) white young woman. Let me briefly discuss the most prominent examples in American art, portraiture, and painting. The most famous portrait of Pocahontas is probably the 1616 "Matoaka, alias Rebecca" copperplate by Simon van de Passe, which

depicts her as an English lady – 'Lady Rebecca' is the name given to her by the English in reference to the biblical Rebecca, whom Abraham arranged to be brought to Canaan from his birthplace as a wife for his son Isaac. This portrait is heavily stylized – there is no trace of the Native woman, not even in her features – and follows contemporary conventions of court portraiture in order to affirm the new Christian identity of Powhatan's daughter as well as her noble background.

In the United States, the memorial culture centering on Pocahontas in the 19th century produced several works of art that particularly in terms of their location are highly important. One of them would be the 1825 relief by Antonio Capellano which is located over the west door of the rotunda of the Capitol in Washington, D.C.: "Its inclusion in the Capitol at this early date makes clear that the rescue of Smith by Pocahontas had long been perceived as a crucial generative moment in the history of the United States" (Tilton, *Pocahontas* 95). In 1825, Americans had already adopted Pocahontas as a figure of national consensus.

*Illustration 3: Pocahontas Becomes a Christian*



John Gadsby Chapman, *The Baptism of Pocahontas* (1839).

One of the most famous images produced in the 19th century, however, one which also inscribes Pocahontas into American cultural memory and whose importance cannot be stressed enough, is the painting of Pocahontas's baptism by John G. Chapman (1839), which is exhibited in the rotunda of the US Capitol, at

the 'heart of the nation.' This painting is remarkable in many ways. First of all, for its topic: it is not the famous rescue scene with John Smith, nor her marriage to John Rolfe, nor Pocahontas and her son, the offspring of this remarkable intercultural union, that we find depicted here; rather the painting shows Pocahontas's baptism, "shrewdly choosing the moment when European ritual symbolized her rejection of her own culture and her incorporation into the ranks of the saved" (Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* 170).

As part of a "Jamestown series" (Uhry Abrams, *Pilgrims* 121), Chapman had commemorated earlier scenes such as *The First Ship*, *The Landing at Jamestown*, *The Crowning of Powhatan*, *The Warning of Pocahontas* and, of course, also an image of the rescue scene, titled *Pocahontas Saving the Life of Captain John Smith*. For his work commissioned by the United States Congress, however, he depicts a different scene: the baptism of Pocahontas. Historicist in the classical sense, Chapman avoids showing Pocahontas's entire face; rather we see her profile. Tilton suggests that Chapman subordinates Pocahontas to the event that is portrayed, the baptism, and that this kind of depiction later became conventional also for representations of the rescue scene which no longer featured her as the prime actor (cf. *Pocahontas* 112). From what we do see of her, we can ascertain that "Pocahontas is lighter in skin tone than the other Indians in the painting. […] This conventional depiction allows Chapman to suggest that a blanching of any distinctively Indian racial features has occurred through this Christianization process" (ibid. 113). Her pose is reminiscent of the kneeling Virgin Mary found in nativity scenes (cf. ibid. 114). Also, she has her back turned to the other Natives, who are traditionally clad; her white gown, by contrast, symbolizes virginity, innocence, and rebirth. The English officials, Thomas Dale and John Rolfe, frame Pocahontas and Reverend Alexander Whitaker. The lighting guides our gaze to the central hierarchy between the kneeling Pocahontas and the upright representative of the English clergy. The scene, faithful to historical fact, does not include John Smith; it does include, however, various other historical figures of the colony's early history. Pocahontas to this day is the only female foundational figure or 'founding mother,' as she is sometimes referred to, enshrined in the rotunda of the US Capitol among an otherwise all-male series of prominent figures.

The choice of Pocahontas's baptism was not unequivocally accepted by all of Chapman's contemporaries. Critics such as William Gilmore Simms saw the baptism not as a "foundational scene" related to the founding of the United States (cf. "Pocahontas"). Simms, among others, chided Chapman for *not* representing the rescue scene. "By placing Pocahontas in the role of the recipient, Chapman reminds his audience that she was, ironically, a heathen at the moment

of her most Christian act (the rescue) and puts forward the idea that her baptism can be seen as a type of reward for, or a tangible acknowledgment of, her well-known heroism" (Tilton, *Pocahontas* 126). The baptism also puts her in a passive role, while she is seen as active in the rescue scene.

John Rolfe had stressed in a letter to Thomas Dale that he wanted to convert and marry Pocahontas not "with the unbridled desire of carnall affection but for the good of this plantation, for the honour of our countrie, for the glory of God" (Letter 240). The baptism scene most crucially displays the ideological twist and the central paradox in the making of the Pocahontas myth. Whereas she is seen as the Native 'other,' her baptism constitutes – in the way Chapman portrays it, at any rate – a forceful ritual of *de-indigenization*. The narrative of her baptism, i.e. the narrative of her conversion, creates a new perspective on her experience of captivity as a kind of liberation/emancipation and return:

> Pocahontas was removed, literally and spiritually, from her birth parents and was "returned" to her true father, Christ. […] Pocahontas's removal from her blood family which began with her capture by Captain Argall was maintained voluntarily because she had been educated by her God-parents to make the correct choice. (Fudge, "Pocahontas's Baptism" 24)

This was the reasoning of John Smith and others. The version of "conversion as return" appeared to be in accordance with the logic of the Reformed faith adhered to, among others, by Alexander Whitaker himself. With this rendering of events, Chapman and others have lastingly eclipsed Pocahontas's narrative of captivity in favor of one of conversion.

The painting is a milestone in the making of the Pocahontas myth, but it also points to some ambiguities in the making of the myth in the first half of the 19th century. Uhry Abrams, for instance, suggests that Chapman "seems to have been affected by the Trail of Tears, which had occurred two years before he installed his mural in the Capitol. The reality of that tragic march may explain why he featured the Indians more prominently in the final version of the painting than in the preliminary sketch" (*Pilgrims* 124), which gave them only a marginal presence. Overall, Chapman's painting relied on or took up tendencies of commemorating Pocahontas in the realm of narrative fiction, drama, and poetry. Following Chapman's painting of 1840, William McCarthy's 1842 edition of patriotic American songs includes three songs on Pocahontas (282-3, 287-8, 370-1), thus affirming her presence in yet another popular American medium.

## 5. WHOSE POCAHONTAS?

> [A]n estimated two million […] people […] to this day trace their ancestry back to the Indian girl.
> PHILIP YOUNG, "THE MOTHER OF US ALL"

While we can reconstruct the process in which Pocahontas became the protagonist in a national foundational myth with universal appeal, we can also complicate these findings by tracing the myth through the ages with more attention to detail and differences. The making of this myth may have been propelled by national ideology, yet it was also influenced by other, widely differing political discourses: while Pocahontas was claimed in the 19th century as the "first mythic Indian" (Fiedler, *Return* 64) and enthroned as a national heroic figure, she was also claimed in the name of many other agendas.

First of all, many writers and critics have drawn upon Pocahontas as the central figure of a specifically *southern* myth of origin – as the "guardian angel" of the oldest American colony, Virginia (Young, "Mother" 396), and many patriotic publications have come out of this. Much scholarship by southern critics from David Garnet to Leo Lemay has time and again stressed the importance of Pocahontas in a regionalist context of southern traditions. These publications about the South and its cultural and literary traditions also deal with Pocahontas as a central figure in southern historiographic and literary texts (cf. Kindermann, *Geschichte*). Most comprehensively and convincingly, Ann Uhry Abrams has argued for Pocahontas as an "origin myth of Virginia" (cf. *Pilgrims*), which she juxtaposes with that of Massachusetts (the Puritans and the Pilgrims, to be dealt with in the next chapter). This juxtaposition – "the Pilgrims and Pocahontas" – historically unfolds as a kind of rivalry, at times even as a battle for national dominance in which the southern heritage and legacy is frequently pitted against that of New England. Uhry Abrams places the Pocahontas story as the foundational female savior tale of Virginia in contrast to the origin myths of Massachusetts' patriarchal colony (ibid. 149). Pocahontas as a Virginian founding mother becomes particularly important in the context of the American Civil War (1861-65). In the war between North and South, Pocahontas was frequently invoked by both sides: the North tried to discredit the narrative of John Smith in order to debunk the credibility of the first white 'Southerner.' After 1860, authors from the North, among them Charles Deane and Henry Adams, fervently "challenge[d] the veracity of the rescue story" with a polemical "anti-Smith thrust" (Tilton, *Pocahontas* 172). By contrast, the South countered these attacks and affirmed the truth of Smith's narrative, in particular the rescue scene. Over

all, "Pocahontas and her narrative were crucial to the South's growing sense of otherness" (ibid.). Constructing Pocahontas as a southern ancestress and, more literally, as a progenitrix of many members of the Virginia elite, many writers and scholars, such as James Kirke Paulding, place her among the "tutelary deities" of Virginia (*Letters* Vol. 1 25). As Anne Norton writes in *Alternative Americas*:

> In the South the Pocahontas myth became increasingly expressive of a peculiar sectional culture. The chivalrous conduct in the myth recalled the Cavalier, the rank and marriage of Pocahontas assured the legitimacy of the present residents. As an Indian princess, Pocahontas united a natural, Indian, character of noble savagery and natural virtue with a conventional pre-eminence, reconciling the conflicting demands of Jefferson and an ideology derived from the Enlightenment, with the Cavalier model. As Southern sentiment for rebellion […] increased, Pocahontas was evoked with increasing frequency. These evocations associated Pocahontas as a sectional symbol with the violent independence considered characteristic of Indians in general. (183)

Thus, the story of Pocahontas became the bone of contention in a heated controversy, and it is not without irony in this context that the United States Navy, which routinely named its battleships after Native tribes and individuals, would send its battleships *Powhatan* and *Pocahontas* (the only American warship named after a woman at this point) to serve in the war *against* the southern secessionists who claimed her as their ancestor (cf. Tilton, *Pocahontas* 146). Summarily, we have to acknowledge that the attempts at discrediting the Pocahontas narrative on the part of many Northerners during the years of national crisis failed, as by that time "the name and the accomplishments of the Indian princess Pocahontas were deeply ingrained in the collective American consciousness. By the second half of the nineteenth-century, her heroic identity was far beyond the scope of any such attempts at demythologization" (ibid. 175).

Second, in a quite different vein, Pocahontas has been cast as an early American *feminist*. Mary Hays's 1803 *Female Biography* depicted Pocahontas as a model woman, as a "princess politician" and as a manifestation of "nineteenth-century resolute womanhood" (Dyer, "Transatlantic Pocahontas" 302). In varying versions, her story has been offered as a narrative of empowerment for women, investing her with a specifically female agency in a patriarchal context of male saber-rattling. In Charlotte Barnes's play, *The Forest Princess*, we have seen traces of this feminist agenda, which often also sidesteps the hyperbolic romantic fashioning of the story in favor of presenting Pocahontas as a self-confident, single-minded Native woman. The gender-specific implications and

the feminist potential of the Pocahontas myth have been addressed by various authors at different times. Particularly in the context of first-wave feminism in the United States, Pocahontas was discovered as an ancestor figure. The dissemination of the idea and trope of the 'new woman' coincided with the search for a usable feminist past. While women were campaigning for their right to vote in the US (granted in 1920 by the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution), Pocahontas was featured in a number of plays and poems that used her as a model feminist: Margaret Ullmann's play *Pocahontas* (1912) has the heroine self-confidently refuse John Smith's attempt to seduce her when they meet for the last time. Nathalia Crane's *Pocahontas* (1930) envisions in heroic couplets a worldwide communist conspiracy threatening the nation, a future which only the last descendant of the 'Indian' princess Pocahontas can avert, who in Crane's poem is enlisted to protect and to save the American nation.

Mary Dearborn examines the uses that were made in ethnic women's writing of the story of Pocahontas as "the single most important received metaphor of female ethnic identity" (*Pocahontas's Daughters* 97) in American intellectual and literary history, and identifies Pocahontas as a signifier of American femininity as well as ethnicity and as a paradigmatic model for negotiating the intricacies of a position between two and more cultures. By examining how "gender and ethnicity function in American culture" (ibid. 189), Dearborn points to "ancestry" and "community" as crucial categories in American ethnic women's writing that also give shape to the Pocahontas narrative; the poles of kinship/descent on the one hand and of love, marriage and consent on the other hand are the crucial aspects of her tale whose tension with each other American indigenous and immigrant ethnic women writers from Mourning Dove to Gertrude Stein, from Nella Larsen to Maxine Hong Kingston have time and again tried to articulate (ibid. 192). According to Dearborn, ethnic women writers are "Pocahontas's daughters" in the sense that they give voice to what Pocahontas could have said in order to "fill her silence with words" (ibid. 193) in yet another appropriation of the historical figure in the context of feminist identity politics.

*Illustration 4: Pocahontas Stamp*


US Postal Service, *Pocahontas 5¢* (1907).

Whether prototypically feminine or feminist, Pocahontas is not only claimed as a founding mother by female ethnic writers but throughout also remains a national symbol, as evidenced by the 5-cent stamp that comes out in 1907 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, Virginia. There is, thirdly, a full-fledged Pocahontas cult after World War I among a group of American modernist writers, who also discover her as an American 'founding mother' and as a central emblem of American indigenous traditions to be contrasted with European traditions. Vachel Lindsay's poem "Our Mother Pocahontas" is an early manifestation of this notion. Although this poem may not be written in a specifically modernist style, it captures the mood of this modernist sentiment very well, as this excerpt shows:

> Because we are her fields of corn;
> Because our fires are all reborn
> From her bosom's deathless embers,
> Flaming
> As she remembers
> The springtime
> And Virginia,
> Our Mother, Pocahontas.
> John Rolfe is not our ancestor.
> We rise from out the soul of her
> Held in native wonderland,
> While the sun's rays kissed her hand,
> In the springtime,

In Virginia,
Our mother, Pocahontas. (116-117)

The Pocahontas figure is to be found in the works of many modernists. In one of his short stories, Ernest Hemingway wonders "[w]ere there two sides to Pocahontas? Did she have a fourth dimension" ("Banal Story" 334), and she appears, most prominently, in Hart Crane's long poem *The Bridge* (in the part titled "Powhatan's Daughter"), which is described by Leslie Fiedler as a "handbook of American mythology" (*Return* 119). The references to Pocahontas in modernist literature reverberate with the general fascination with the 'primitive' and the exotic in literature and art typical of that period; in its specifically American variant, this fascination pursues the symbolic appropriation of Native Americans as embodiments of a primordial, authentic way of life and thus as objects of nostalgic longing (cf. Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses*; Hutchinson, *Indian Craze*).

But whether as a Southerner or as a feminist or as modernist muse, none of these framings do affect Pocahontas's status as a *national* icon; instead they seem to further magnify it. They also signal, however, the way in which the historical figure and her encounter with the English have been taken as a "blank space" (Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* 138) and have been used for different ideological inscriptions in different phases of American history.

## 6. POCAHONTAS, THE SURVIVOR – NATIVE AMERICAN AND POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVES

Pocahontas's child is crucial to the story's meaning.
ELLA SHOHAT AND ROBERT STAM, *UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM*

Survivance.
GERALD VIZENOR

Certainly the most important revisionist perspective on "America's Ur-miscegenation story" (Edwards, "United Colors" 147) is that of Native Americans, which has been articulated quite forcefully since the 1960s. Native American revisionism of the myth of Pocahontas challenges, as in the case of Columbus, the very notion of an American beginning on the terms that have been described so far. Of course, there is not *one* single homogenous Native American response to the multi-layered 'white' mythologization of Pocahontas; we can, in a brief overview, identify several tendencies which range from the deconstruction of

popular stereotypes of Native Americans in general and of Pocahontas in particular to various new interpretations of the historical moment of cultural contact between Pocahontas and the English settlers/invaders and its consequences.

Many contemporary Native American writers have tried to imagine what Pocahontas could or might have thought or said as we simply do not have any records. The Native American poet Paula Gunn Allen has given a voice to Pocahontas in one of her poems titled "Pocahontas to Her English Husband, John Rolfe," in which the speaker reminisces:

Had I not cradled you in my arms
Oh beloved perfidious one,
You would have died.
And how many times did I pluck you
From certain death in the wilderness –
My world through which you stumbled
as though blind?
[…]
Still you survived, oh my fair husband,
And brought them gold
Wrung from a harvest I taught you
To plant. Tobacco.
[…]
I'm sure
You wondered at my silence, saying I was
A simple wanton, a savage maid,
Dusky daughter of heathen sires
Who cartwheeled naked through the muddy towns
Who would learn the ways of grace only
By your firm guidance, through
Your husbandly rule:
No doubt, no doubt.
I spoke little, you said.
And you listened less
[…]
I saw you well
I understood your ploys and still
Protected you, going so far as to die
In your keeping – a wasting,
Putrefying Christian death – and you,

Deceiver, whiteman, father of my son,
Survived, reaping wealth greater
Than you had ever dreamed
From what I taught you and from the wasting of my bones. (8f.)

The poem outwardly simulates the poetic mode of Puritan poetry by women (such as Anne Bradstreet's well-known 1678 poem "To My Dear and Loving Husband") in addressing the beloved partner; yet it does not recreate the conventional topoi of modesty and submission, nor does it, as does Bradstreet's text, describe a harmonious and passionate union – rather it constructs a stance of superiority on the part of Pocahontas vis-à-vis her husband John Rolfe. Referring to the strategies of colonial othering, the speaker reverses well-known stereotypes: it is he who is 'the other' – ignorant, childlike, helpless, and dependent; it is she who rescues him not once, but many times; and yet, in his world/discourse she does not have a voice. Ultimately, she holds him responsible for her death, which is intricately connected to his acquisition of fame and fortune.

Pocahontas's "bones" mentioned in the last line of the poem are also at the center of Gerald Vizenor's postmodern rendering of the Pocahontas story in *The Heirs of Columbus*. Picking up the debates on repatriation triggered by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, the novel has a protagonist who seeks to retrieve and rebury the remains of Pocahontas, yet is murdered by an alliance of the Brotherhood of American Explorers and intelligence agents referred to as "the savages of intelligence." In this novel, which tries to deconstruct the master narrative of colonial expansion in myriad ways, much is at stake in the retrieval of these bones – which miraculously vanish in a shamanistic ritual from the rooms of an anthropological museum and thus from the archive of Native American dispossession.

From a Native American perspective, the story of Pocahontas is not a story of conversion, assimilation, and sacrifice, but a story of Native survival. This, of course, fits into a general postcolonial framework, as Shohat and Stam have pointed out (cf. *Unthinking*). Pocahontas not only survived the first contact but delivered a child that may be seen as the beginning of an alternative "cross-blood" American genealogy (cf. Vizenor, *Landfill Meditation*). Such a counter-hegemonic construction of 'national' beginnings stands in stark contrast to the strange cultural practice of whites claiming a remote – not to say metaphorical – Native American ancestry (one, however, that is contained in their 'whiteness'), such as those two million Americans who claim to be Pocahontas's kin. Apart from genealogically documented lineages there seems to be a longing for

Pocahontas as an 'honorary white' founding mother (stripped of her indigenous otherness) that registers in the ambiguous cultural trope of the "Indian grandmother," which has been described by Vine Deloria as the Indian grandmother complex:

> Whites claiming Indian blood generally tend to reinforce mythical beliefs about Indians. All but one person I met who claimed Indian blood claimed it on their grandmother's side. I once did a projection backward and discovered that evidently most tribes were entirely female for the first three hundred years of white occupation. (*Custer* 3)

The trope of the 'Indian princess' as an ancestor figure extrapolates from Pocahontas to become "everyone's Indian grandmother." Native American (Shoshone/Chippewa) poet nila northSun puns on the same trope that is no longer restricted to the Pocahontas figure – in fact, the Cherokee used to be the most 'fashionable' tribe to be descended from for a long time. In her poem "stupid questions" the speaker quips:

> you know, my great-grandmother was a Cherokee princess
> (you know, she must have been one helluva whore cause everybody has the same great-grandmother) (217)

Responding both to white colonial mythmaking and to the marginalization of women within Native American studies, Paula Gunn Allen suggests "putting women [like Pocahontas] at the center of the tribal universe" in order to "recover[] the feminine in American Indian Traditions" (*Sacred Hoop* 264). For Allen – who takes the rescue scene seriously – the fact that Pocahontas could successfully intervene on behalf of John Smith and against her father shows the absence of European patriarchal structures and the power women had in gynocratic tribal societies such as those of the Algonquians (cf. *Pocahontas* 6, 172-3). Pocahontas is imagined as part of a female continuum in the context of Allen's specific brand of Native American feminism.

Native American revisionism of the Pocahontas myth takes place in all kinds of media and art forms including poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and musical and visual culture; examples would be Native American composer George Quincy's mini-opera *Pocahontas at the Court of James I and Choctaw Diaries* (2008) or R.L. Morgan Monceaux' visual image titled "Matowaka" (1992).

*Illustration 5: Pocahontas in Contemporary Art*


R.L. Morgan Monceaux, *Matowaka* (1992).

A postcolonial perspective on the Pocahontas narrative is provided by the Caribbean-American author Michelle Cliff in her novel *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987). Her displaced mixed-race female protagonist with the telling name Clare Savage is Caribbean-born and lives in the United States as well as in Britain. At the British seaside she encounters Pocahontas:

She stood and walked toward it [the monument, HP] – from a distance her training suspected allegory. Bronze. Female. Single figure. Single feather rising from the braids. Moccasined feet stepping forward, as if to walk off the pedestal on which she was kept. A personification of the New World, dedicated to some poor soul who perished in pursuit of it. Clare came closer. It was not that at all. No; this was intended to signify one individual and mark her resting place. The letters at the base of the statue told her this … Pocahontas. (136)

Cliff's narrator tries to de-allegorize and demythologize the figure of Pocahontas, to come to her 'face to face' and to see her as another human being. Downsizing the myth in favor of the individual is a strategy that many contemporary authors have employed.

In addition, Native American representational critique in different shapes and media is flanked by white-authored critiques of the romantic myth. Early on, Leslie Fiedler has examined the troping of an "anti-Pocahontas" (*Return* 81) in American culture. The American writer John Barth, for instance, substitutes this negative image for the idealized version of Pocahontas in his postmodern novel *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960); in Barth's revision of the Pocahontas myth, Smith has to rape Pocahontas at her father's request in order to save his life and that of his men. Barth's highly ironic text points to the misogynist and racist streak in American culture and literature that performs a degradation of Pocahontas into "anti-Pocahontas," from redeeming Princess into prostitute, "a whore begging to be screwed" (Fiedler, *Return* 153). From a postcolonial perspective, this hyperbolic representation of the first contact may be read as an indictment of the predominantly violent nature of European-Native interactions. Against this background, mythologizing one Native American woman as an "Indian princess" is but a form of displacing white guilt and has never prevented the denigration and negative stereotyping of Native American women in general, thus re-affirming the virgin/whore dichotomy firmly established in Western patriarchal culture. As Leslie Fiedler points out, "princess" in colloquial diction for a long time was the derogatory expression for a Native American prostitute (ibid. 81). Similarly, expressions such as "squaw" and even "Pocahontas" have frequently been used as slurs, as the Native American actress Irene Bedard, who lends her voice to Disney's Pocahontas, remembers well (cf. Edgerton and Jackson, "Redesigning" 95).

## 7. CONTEMPORARY COMMODIFICATIONS OF THE LOVE STORY

> Captain Smith and Pocahontas
> Had a very mad affair,
> When her Daddy tried to kill him, she said,
> "Daddy-o don't you dare"
> He gives me fever, with his kisses,
> FEVER when he holds me tight.
> FEVER – I'm his Missus,
> Oh Daddy won't you treat him right.
> PEGGY LEE, "FEVER"

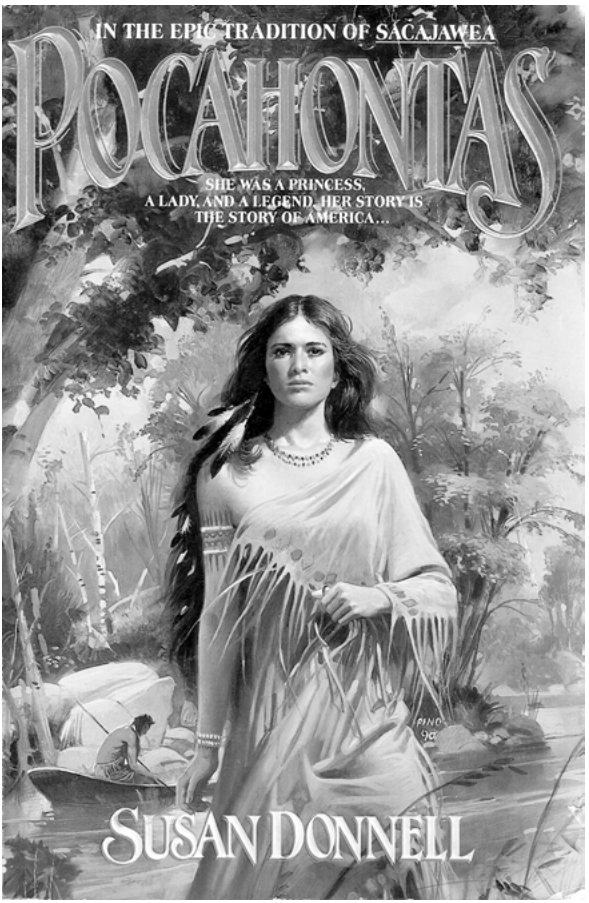
> She wanted to devour him with love. Her body acted as if it was no longer a part of the woman she knew. […] She felt as if she were part of the man whose body gave her such joy, as if his skin were hers, as if their hearts were one. At other times she felt she would swoon with the deliciousness of her captivity.
> SUSAN DONNELL, *POCAHONTAS*

> I wish I was a trapper
> I would give a thousand pelts
> To sleep with Pocahontas
> And find out how she felt.
> NEIL YOUNG, "POCAHONTAS"

In spite of Native American criticism and controversies about her status as a foundational American heroine, the figure of Pocahontas is very much alive in American popular and mass culture, and romance continues to be the central paradigm of her narrativization. In his classic study of formula fiction, John Cawelti has identified the romance formula as one prominent archetype of formulaic writing:

> The crucial defining characteristic of romance is not that it stars a female but that its organizing action is the development of a love relationship, usually between a man and a woman […]. The moral fantasy of the romance is that of love triumphant and permanent, overcoming all obstacles and difficulties. Though the usual outcome is a permanently happy marriage, more sophisticated types of love story sometimes end in the death of one or both of the lovers, but always in such a way as to suggest that the love relation has been of lasting and permanent impact. (*Adventure* 41-42)

*Illustration 6: Pocahontas in Popular Fiction*




Cover of *Pocahontas* by S. Donnell (Berkley Books, 1991).

Popular Pocahontas narratives operate with the romance formula when representing Pocahontas as saving John Smith out of love. The rescue scene dramatizes the conventional 'love is stronger than death' topos as well as the notion of sacrificial love, i.e. love as selfless altruism that makes one willing to give one's life so that the other's may be spared. In the Pocahontas narrative, this "fantasy of the all-sufficiency of love" (ibid. 42) overcomes linguistic barriers as well as cultural difference – and, needless to say, does away with all questions of colonial power relations.

In the course of the 20th century, these love plots have become more daring and more explicit in their handling of English-Native sexuality and sexual re-

lations while at the same time being hopelessly anachronistic. Susan Donnell's historical romance *Pocahontas* (1991) is one among a plethora of such retellings of the Pocahontas story as a popular love story. The author, a self-proclaimed "direct fourteenth-generation descendant" of Pocahontas, declares that she writes "from heart and history" (Author's Note viii); her novel's suggestive cover reads: "She was a princess, a lady and a legend, her story is the story of America." Again, the story of Pocahontas appears as a foundational narrative of the nation. As the second epigraph to this section shows, Pocahontas's 'captivity' is metaphorically cast as one of desire and captivation, not one of forceful abduction and political struggle. Pocahontas is completely de-indigenized on the cover of Donnell's book, apart from her dress and three feathers in her black hair, which are stereotypical attributes in Western depictions of indigenous attire. This strategy of de-indigenizing Pocahontas – which we have already found at work in many 19th-century representations – was continued most prominently in our era of late capitalism by a cultural production that brought new and unprecedented fame to the old legend: Walt Disney's *Pocahontas* (1995). This animated motion picture started a veritable Pocahontas craze fuelled by "a $125 million marketing blitz" (Edwards, "United Colors" 162) that "crested in the summer of 1995 in a wave of Pocahontas backpacks, balloons, napkins, pillows, nightgowns, cupcake tins and plastic figurines tied in to the Disney animated feature" (Robertson, "First Captive" 73). Pocahontas merchandize also included a tanned and black-haired Pocahontas Barbie doll accompanied by her animal friends, the Native 'warrior' Kocoum, and John Smith.

The Disney film has been viewed positively as a balanced, politically correct representation of first contact in North America, even as "the single finest work ever done on American Indians by Hollywood" (qtd. in Edgerton and Jackson, "Redesigning" 34), but it has also been criticized as another romantic fantasy about 'Indians' glossing over a history of genocide and dispossession (cf. ibid.), and thus, as romanticizing colonialism (cf. Turner, "Playing"). Leigh Edwards's superb analysis of Disney's *Pocahontas* takes issue with "the film's attempt to fashion Jamestown into the birthplace of multiculturalism" ("United Colors" 149). The makers of the Disney film, as Edwards points out, "change[] her [Pocahontas's, HP] age so that a romance between them [Pocahontas and John Smith, HP] becomes more feasible" (ibid. 151). After a friendship has formed and Pocahontas has rescued Smith from execution, the film includes a second rescue scene in which Smith takes a bullet for Powhatan; seriously injured, Smith has to return to England to recover, thereby providing the plot with a rationale to separate him from his beloved Pocahontas. This narrative maneuver "displaces actual miscegenation from the narrative frame" (ibid.), which the film

also does by omitting Pocahontas's relationship with John Rolfe. Visually, the film depicts Pocahontas as "an historically-impossible multiethnic body," a body that was manufactured by Disney animator Glen Keane as "an ethnic blend whose convexly curved face is African, whose dark, slanted eyes are Asian and whose body proportions are Caucasian" (Keane qtd. in Tillotson, "Cartoons" C8). Pocahontas thus incorporates multiculturalism as an "undifferentiated visual compilation of non-white ethnicities" (Edwards, "United Colors" 152) and as an "icon of Western standards of exoticized female beauty" (ibid. 154). We may consider Walt Disney's Pocahontas as a postfeminist emblem who at the same time becomes "Disney's multicultural educator" (ibid. 155); in the spirit of political correctness, even the 'new world' crop, tobacco, is exchanged for corn. Overall, the story is awkwardly sanitized: there is no mention of Pocahontas's captivity or the eruption of violence in white-Native relations. The film uncritically imagines and celebrates what Leslie Fiedler has called the US-American "myth of love in the woods" (*Return* 50). Of course, the popularity of this version of the Pocahontas narrative speaks to archetypal patterns of the human imagination. We like to think about cultural contact not in terms of violence but in terms of love and affection. The possibility of Europe and America coming together in a peaceful encounter leading to friendship and love rather than to war and genocide is a fantasy people still like to entertain.

Terrence Malick's film *The New World* (2005) offers a highly aestheticized though at the same time less anodyne version of the historical narrative that casts Pocahontas as "the perfect tribal Eve" (Weatherston, "When Sleeping" 11) for the English "Adam" in the 'new world' and that tries to do justice to the ambiguities of the narrative by telling it to its (not so happy) ending instead of leaving off after Smith's rescue and departure. For Malick, Pocahontas clearly is the first American.

Most recently, the longevity of the Pocahontas narrative in US-American culture has been evidenced by the (unadjusted for inflation) currently highest-grossing film of all times, James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009), a science-fiction version of the Pocahontas story with an anti-colonialist agenda. The film's white hero is rescued twice by the Native Pocahontas character: the first time she helps him to survive in the 'wilderness' of the fictive moon of Pandora, the second time she rescues him from his fellow colonizers. In the end, it is he who becomes completely and irrevocably indigenized, rather than her being de-indigenized. The military-industrial, (neo-)colonial enterprise from earth is successfully thwarted on Pandora – to stay with the analogy: the Jamestown on Pandora is wiped out. Cameron's blockbuster may at first glance be conventional in its enactment of intercultural romance and admittedly celebrates indigenous traditions

that are accessible only through the most advanced technology (cf. Theweleit, "Menschliche Drohnen"), yet its insistence on the indigenization of the hero from earth into Pandora's Na'vi culture constitutes a powerful critique of US-American neoimperialism. In a timely fashion, Cameron's film combines a re-fashioning of the Pocahontas story with a critique of US-American military interventionism as part of an interracial love story between a man from earth and a Pandoran woman. With the Pocahontas myth in mind, we can read *Avatar* as a comment on and as an update of a core foundational American myth in the age of globalization. In Cameron's retelling for 21st-century American and global audiences we can glimpse the subversive, anti-foundational potential and critical impetus of the revised Pocahontas myth.

## 8. CONCLUSION

> Shopworn by sentimentality, Pocahontas endures and stands with the most appealing of our saints. She has passed subtly into our folklore, where she lives as a popular fable.
> PHILIP YOUNG, "THE MOTHER OF US ALL"

Having traced the Pocahontas myth through several centuries of US-American history and culture, we find the strategy of de-indigenization intricately intertwined with that of de-politicization. In a project of encyclopedic scope, Klaus Theweleit has examined the reverberations of the Pocahontas narrative as a prime example for the sexualization of violence in the context of colonization (cf. *"You Give Me Fever"*). Beyond all seemingly innocent configurations of romantic love and intercultural altruism, Theweleit argues (in an at times impressionistic and associative style) that it is the relationship between indigenous sexuality and the violence of the colonizer that is at the center of the Pocahontas narrative – a relationship that may be specifically US-American in some ways and in some aspects, yet also fits one of the most archetypal tropes in Western cultural history from antiquity to the present. From a transnational, hemispheric perspective, we can discuss Pocahontas alongside a figure such as Malinche, translator for Hernán Cortés during his conquest of Mexico, or in the context of similar colonial romantic plots that organize libidinal intercultural energies and validate patriarchal notions of white superiority in contexts of violent colonization.

Even though Pocahontas may appear as only "half-raced" in versions of the myth that de-indigenize her, assimilate her, and claim her as a convert to Chris-

tianity and Western ways, as a figure in colonial and colonizing plots she is nonetheless "fully sexed" (cf. "Pocahontas" at the U of Virginia webpage), i.e. sexualized and eroticized according to Western standards of 'exotic beauty.' On the other hand, as Indian princess and female noble savage, Pocahontas is one of the most prominent and most ubiquitous female figures in American children's books (cf. Young, "Mother") and to this day is one of the most popular Halloween costumes for girls; thus, for better or worse, she remains every schoolgirl's (and schoolboy's) dream.

## 9. STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Which elements of the Pocahontas narrative make it so useful in the context of constructing a meaningful beginning/a foundational myth?
2. What relevance does the category of gender carry in the early colonial encounters and how does Pocahontas figure in these relations?
3. What can we say about the selection processes that had the 'rescue scene,' Pocahontas's conversion, and/or her marriage to John Rolfe appear at various instances of historical commemoration? What would you consider the most important image of Pocahontas, i.e. the most important part of the Pocahontas narrative for the construction of a national beginning?
4. Recapitulate the different ideological investments and strategies with which the Pocahontas narrative has been appropriated throughout the centuries by Southerners, feminists, etc. How do these appropriations reflect on images of American identity?
5. Analyze the lyrics in the songs by Neil Young ("Pocahontas") and Peggy Lee ("Fever").
6. Analyze the visual representation of the myth in Walt Disney's *Pocahontas* and Terence Malick's *The New World*. Which similarities and differences do you detect?
7. Consider and discuss the narrative and visual aspects of Pocahontas as the heroine of children's books, for instance by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire (*Pocahontas*, 1946); Clyde Robert Bulla and Peter Burchard (*Pocahontas and the Strangers*, 1971), and Joseph Bruchac (*Pocahontas*, 2003).
8. The trope of the "Indian princess" is most prominently connected to Pocahontas, yet, there are also other indigenous female figures who have played similar roles. Investigate the figure of Sacagawea in US cultural history, memorial culture, and filmic representations (e.g. in *The Far Horizons*, 1955).
9. Compare representations of Pocahontas and Malinche in terms of their symbolic 'careers.' Which differences and similarities can you find?
10. How does Arno Schmidt's 1953 novel *Seelandschaft mit Pocahontas* relate to the American myth?

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