

Recreation and Re-Creation: On-Site Historical Reenactment as Historiographic Operation at Plimoth Plantation

Scott Magelssen

Plimoth Plantation, a Massachusetts living history museum depicting the year 1627 in Plymouth Colony, advertises itself as a place where “history comes alive.” The site uses costumed Pilgrims, who speak to visitors in a first-person-present voice, in order to create a total living environment. Reenactment practices like this offer possibilities to teach history in a dynamic manner by immersing visitors in a space that allows them to suspend disbelief and encounter museum exhibits on an affective level. However, whether or not history actually “comes alive” at Plimoth Plantation needs to be addressed, especially in the face of new or postmodern historiography. No longer is it so simple to say the past can “come alive,” given that in the last thirty years it has been shown that the “past” is contestable. A case in point, I argue, is the portrayal of Wampanoag Natives at Plimoth Plantation’s “Hobbamock’s Homesite.” Here, the Native Wampanoag Interpretation Program refuses to join their Pilgrim counterparts in using first person interpretation, choosing instead to address visitors in their own voices. For the Native Interpreters, speaking in seventeenth-century voices would disallow presentation of their own accounts of the way colonists treated native peoples *after* 1627.

Yet, from what I have learned in recent interviews with Plimoth’s Public Relations Department, plans are underway to address the disparity in interpretive modes between the Pilgrim Village and Hobbamock’s Homesite by introducing first person programming in the latter.¹ Coming from a theatre history and theory background, and looking back on three years of research at Plimoth and other living history museums, I would like to trouble this attempt to smooth over the differences between the two sites. By doing so, I hope to offer up some of the questions that can be raised through looking at the now-familiar subject of living history² through a new historiographic lens.

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Two events will serve to set the dilemma in a historical context and to introduce the ideas in the remainder of the paper. They are poignant, visceral examples of the way issues of time, space, and history are no longer stable, unquestionable entities in living museums when ethnic and political issues, such as the Wampanoag refusal to comply with first person interpretation, are at stake.

In 1969 a momentous change occurred in the way history was being practised at Plimoth Plantation. The day before the living history museum opened for the season, Assistant Director James Deetz removed from their buildings all the antiques which had been amassed in the restored Pilgrim Village. The period furniture, Elizabethan glass windows, and oyster-shell walkways, Deetz argued, were not authentic in that they did not coincide with the colonists' economic and social conditions which new archaeological evidence indicated. The event was a scandal. Following Deetz's action, Director of the museum, David Freeman, demanded that the objects be replaced before opening to the public the next day. However, because Deetz had the support of Harry Hornblower, Plimoth Plantation's founder, Freeman's wishes were not honored and the objects remained absent from the site permanently. The wax mannequins depicting Pilgrims with buckled hats and shoes followed soon afterward.

According to Stephen Eddy Snow, removing the inaccuracies signaled the end of an attitude of "protective reverence" for the Pilgrims.³ At the same time, it launched the concept of the "living museum" that would be the model for more responsible historiographic display thereafter, and which would affirm the movement toward social history programming in the greater museum field. Now that the Pilgrims had become subjects for "rigorous ethno-historical study," the Pilgrim docents in the village shifted their interpretation from narrating the lives of their models in the third-person to embodying their roles as first person "informants," using the vast resources for historically accurate portrayal that were now available to them through the anthropological work that Deetz and his colleagues had conducted.

Thus legitimizing itself and its programming with such scientific rigor, Plimoth Plantation could invite visitors to perceive and cross the threshold between the known present and a convincingly accurate representation of the past. As Plimoth Plantation literature claims, "Once we stroll by a sign marking the line between the 20th and 17th centuries, the past comes alive with vibrant clarity."⁴

At the end of the following year's season, the second event I wish to offer took place. On Thanksgiving Day, 1970, Plimoth Plantation's *Mayflower II*, docked at Plymouth Harbor, was taken over by Native Americans in a symbolic act of protest over the way their voices had been silenced in the narrative history of the Pilgrims for the past three centuries.⁵ Although a Native American village had been a part of the plans for Plimoth Plantation from the beginning, these plans were never implemented, and up to this point, the only Native American

representation at the site consisted of wax mannequins in dioramas or randomly placed Indian characters within the Pilgrim Village played by white interpreters. The infiltration into these historical spaces by very real, very present, very Native American bodies threw the tidy separation of past and present into chaos. As Gilles Deleuze writes in "Music and Ritornello,"

For sublime deeds like the foundation of a city or the fabrication of a golem, one draws a circle, or better yet walks in a circle as in a children's dance, combining rhythmic vowels and consonants that correspond to the interior forces of creation as to the differentiated parts of an organism. A mistake in speed, rhythm, or harmony would be catastrophic because it would bring back the forces of chaos, destroying both creator and creation.⁶

The carefully constructed harmony of distinct locations of past and present, which the tourist industry could capitalize upon at this site, was disrupted by such a "mistake" on this Thanksgiving Day. It was not just that the Native Americans, refugees from Manifest Destiny, Pilgrim Forefather nostalgia, and the Puritan ideal, were reclaiming a part of the history that had been denied to them. Their temporal status disrupted the space in that it was of the present rather than the storybook images with beads and buckskin which would have fit more comfortably into this mythic portrayal of the past. They were not dressed in traditional garb, signifying any past materiality, but dressed in modern clothing. This was not the picturesque race that had apparently vanished or assimilated into the new mainstream culture some time ago, but the present one which enunciated its very incompatibility with that would-be mainstream. The appearance of the Native Americans in 1970, however, was not a resurrection. It was simply a return from the margins where they had been secreted and silenced due to the incompatibility of their narrative with the one needed to affirm notions of America—the notions which had been disseminated up to this moment through tourist attractions such as Plimoth Plantation and the *Mayflower II*.

The protest jarred the nostalgic historic reenactment from a comfortable depiction of the past into an abundance of the present, and the tourists gathered at Plymouth that day, whether seeking recreation or on some pilgrimage themselves, were denied access to another time which the sites had boasted in their literature and advertisements.

The upshot of the protests was the foundation of the Native American Studies Program at Plimoth Plantation in 1973. "Hobbamock's Homesite," the fruit of this conception, was assembled with a collection of structures that recreated what is thought to be a representation of the camp of Hobbamock, a Wampanoag

native mentioned in period accounts of Bradford and Arber, who lived in the vicinity of Plymouth and had dealings with the colonists.

However, staging seventeenth-century Wampanoag Natives presented many more inherent problems than Plimoth Plantation faced with reenacting their Pilgrims. Namely, while the Pilgrim Interpreters spoke in seventeenth century voices and performed scenes and situations that had been carefully researched from a wealth of historic documents, the evidence for the living conditions, traditions, behavior, speech patterns, and family histories of the Native Americans was not as exhaustive. A portrayal of the Indians in the newly founded Wampanoag campsite would need to be based on as much guesswork and popular conceptions as the Plimoth Plantation had been before Deetz got control. The Native American Studies Program's decision to speak in a twentieth century voice eliminated the threat of any "historical inaccuracy" by indicating that the space they occupied was no longer to be assumed as one of a different temporal quality. It is this decision and its resonances in the rest of the museum—and in the living history field—that will serve as the focus of the following pages.

Before a discussion of the representational practices of Wampanoag Interpretation Program can take place, however, it is necessary to indicate the limited extent to which the choice to use third-person interpretation has been treated in scholarly discourse. A look at the small archive of literature on the subject yields little in the manner of addressing Hobbamock's Homesite as a qualitatively different historiographic operation. In "Believed-in Theatre," Richard Schechner points out the irony of the curatorial privileging of Separatist over Wampanoag History at the museum: "At Plimoth, the Pilgrims are given top billing, while the Native Americans, without whose assistance the English settlers would have perished, are located literally off the beaten path."⁷ Schechner, though, does not mention the difference in interpretive styles which indeed separates the Pilgrim Village from Hobbamock's Homesite as much as any spatial configuration. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett does hint at the disparity between the two in *Destination Culture*, but more as a way of bringing to light a larger problem of conflicting Pilgrim histories: "Pilgrim displays past and present are in conflict, not only in relation to each other but also internally. The refusal of the Wampanoag to pretend to be themselves, their refusal to give up their Native American actuality for a more complete Pilgrim virtuality is but one indication."⁸ But Kirshenblatt-Gimblett does not significantly pause to unpack the reasons and politics behind this refusal. Stephen Eddy Snow, who has written most extensively about Plimoth Plantation, focuses mainly on his argument that Plimoth is a type of theatre, and thus, by his own admission, chooses not to treat the Wampanoag programming, "[s]ince the Native American interpreters for the most part no longer employ the first-person role playing technique."⁹ Though, in a footnote, Snow acknowledges that Wampanoag programming at Plimoth deserves a book to itself, he is unable to

devote space to the topic—because the Native interpreters do not “act,” they do not fit within his discursive categories. Given the relatively scant attention given to Hobbamock’s Homesite and the Wampanoag Interpretation Program, therefore, it becomes clear that the issues require a closer look. This is especially vital in the face of impending curatorial changes to the Homesite, in which the future of the program is at stake. If indeed first-person interpretation is to be added to the Native Wampanoag programming, the move may be a third “event” in the contextual mapping of Plimoth Plantation’s history, which may undo the gains made by the 1970 protesters and subsequent staff of Hobbamock’s Homesite.

The point at which the Native interpreters adopted a fully, twentieth-century voice (or third-person interpretation—that is, “they did” vs. “we do”), has remained unclear in my research and conversations with Plimoth staff. It has not always been this way since the adoption of the Native American Interpretation Program, and there are accounts of Native American interpreters playing Wampanoag individuals in a seventeenth-century voice, despite the lack of historical data. Snow describes (as the one exception to the Native staff’s third-person interpretation) staged meetings between the Wampanoag and Pilgrims within the Pilgrim Village during the time of his research. In these cases, Hobbamock, portrayed by Anthony Pollard, spoke in a first-person voice along with the Pilgrims Edward Winslow, Stephen Hawkins, and Myles Standish.¹⁰

As for the present programming, visitors to Hobbamock’s Homesite have the opportunity to talk with Wampanoag Interpreters exclusively in their twenty-first-century voices. Though the homesite is a living exhibit of a working family encampment, with burn-out canoes, roundhouses, and demonstrations of traditional daily practices, no attempt is made to give the illusion that this *is* a seventeenth-century Native homesite, or that its interpreters are “real-life” characters. Any confusion on the visitors’ part is corrected by the interpretive staff. For instance, during a research trip in summer of 2000, I visited with a costumed interpreter smoking a fish over smoldering coals. A group of people joined me in observing her activity. One woman asked how much longer it would be until the fish was done. “Well, it’s already done,” the interpreter explained, “but I’m leaving it on the rack for a while longer, just to demonstrate so more people can see it.” The matter-of-fact manner in which the interpreter shared her goals with the visitors let us know that she was not preparing the fish for consumption, as a Pilgrim Interpreter in the Village would have pretended. Rather, she made it clear that she was doing this for show, for the benefit of visitors’ education.¹¹

Her response was probably well rehearsed by then: Oftentimes, visitors will come to Hobbamock’s Homesite immediately after leaving the first-person environment of the Pilgrim Village and expect to engage in the same mode of conversation with the Wampanoag Interpreters, despite information to the contrary on signage and their maps/guides. I asked Tim, another Native Interpreter, stationed

in the homesite roundhouse, about how he and his colleagues deal with this confusion. He told me that the rule is to gently inform visitors that the Wampanoag Interpreters are not acting. He clarifies this by telling them, "If I was acting, I'd be speaking in a totally different language." This is usually successful in getting the point across, he added. "They pretty much understand from there."¹²

As we talked, a group of visitors entered the roundhouse. Tim invited them to sit down on the piles of animal skins encircling the walls of the structure. "Do you have a name?" One woman asked in a southern drawl. "My native name is actually 'Mosh-quo-NOH-nays,' which means Little Big Hawk," he replied, "but my English name is Tim." The visitors looked around the interior. Tim continued: "This house is called 'pet-a-KOK-in' which means 'round-house'. And the framework is made all from cedar and the covering is all cattail matting. What we're sitting on would be considered their beds. But back then there would have been much more fur. There would have been actually about six or seven inches of fur, for comfort." The same woman jumped in with a question: "Is this a typical Indian dwelling?" "Yeah," said Tim, "this is what the common families would use in the spring, summer, and fall, when they were on their planting sites. So they would spread themselves over the land in the spring, summer, and fall, to utilize land properly, for planting. And then, in the fall, when you were done with your harvest, you would take your mats off of this house, leave the framework of it here, and move inland. And that's when you see all of the families living together in one lodge. In one longhouse. And in the spring the families would move back out—" "To survive the winter?" the woman interrupted. "Yeah." "Did you have guns?" "No." "What'd you use?" "We'd use a bow and arrow for hunting." "Was there a lot of fishing?" "Oh yeah. For fishing you'd have spears and harpoons and nets."¹³ The conversation proceeded in this manner, once a comfortable atmosphere had been established, and the visitors quickly adapted to pose their questions according to Tim's interpretive style.

I spoke with another Native Interpreter, who also deals with visitor confusion over interpretive styles. "We have signs and stuff, and the orientation film that explains it, but a lot of people just don't get it," she laughed. "So, they think we're in character. They don't think we speak English, sometimes." I asked how accurate she felt Hobbamock's Homesite was in educating visitors on seventeenth-century Wampanoag practices:

I think very accurate in some respects. Everything that we have down here is from the seventeenth century, or would have been seen here in that time. Even the trade items. Everything not from trade, we make ourselves, as our ancestors would have. In a lot of the same methods. We do as much as possible in the

same way they did. We've even been back-breeding the crops, so they're the seventeenth century variety.¹⁴

There are, however, aspects of Wampanoag life that the interpreters decide are private or not appropriate to share with visitors. She told me, for instance, that there are some spiritual traditions and beliefs that are not included in the exhibits or demonstrations:

We kind of have decided what we're going to share and what we're going to keep with ourselves. . . . We talk about it beforehand. We say a lot of things that we agree upon that should be shared, and then other things that we keep sacred and hold to ourselves. We do share quite a bit considering we have a lot of things that are done to us in modern day. I don't know why, but a lot of people in other museums think that they can dig up the bones of our ancestors and call them their own. And show them in museums. So I think we do share a fair amount of what we hold spiritual to ourselves.

In the third person interpretation format, as illustrated by the conversation above, a multiplicity of historical narratives may all exist in the same plane. In this space, the interpreter could share seventeenth-century events, as do the Wampanoag's counterparts in the Pilgrim Village, but also how fights are taking place in the present over the rights museums have to own and display native artifacts and remains. In the Pilgrim Village, such conversations are unlikely, since the Pilgrim Interpreters will not "break character" and acknowledge any other present than 1627.

I asked Michelle Pecoraro, Public Relations Manager at Plimoth Plantation, about the Wampanoag Interpretation Program's choice to use third-person, versus the first person used in the Pilgrim Village. Pecoraro alluded to the fact that Plimoth has plans to eventually include a first-person facet of the Homesite:

[W]e're looking at first-person interpretation at the homesite at some point, but it's really vague right now and far away. But it's being talked about. . . . You know there are a couple of difficulties [with doing first-person interpretation at Hobbamock's Homesite]. One is the language. . . . [M]uch of it is lost, and there is a reclamation program being done in Mashpee—one of the Wampanoag communities. It's a language reclamation program to reclaim as much as they can of the language that has been lost. So there are a lot of deadlocks to do a strong—well I

don't want to say strong—an *effective* first-person interpretation there. But it definitely can be done, and if anyone can do it, we can do it here. But again, it's a long way off. I don't think it's going to happen in the next five years, even.¹⁵

Pecoraro outlined several ways in which a development toward more “effectively” implementing programming at Hobbamock’s homesite were underway. Most intriguing, especially because the subject is so touchy, is the issue of first-person interpretation within the Wampanoag Interpretation Program. Pecoraro framed the discussion in terms of the potential for achieving first-person Wampanoag interpretation, in the face of current obstacles. She did not comment on the political issues of how first person would considerably change the way interpretation is handled currently. Nor did she address the implications of a first-person-present mode of interpretation on the ability of the Wampanoag people to voice the history of what happened *after* contact with the Pilgrims. Because first-person interpretation is assumed to be the best model for costumed interpretation,¹⁶ the model is placed over the future of the Wampanoag Interpretation Program as a template for natural progression. First of all, because Plimoth is already the site known for the model of perfection, Pecoraro is allowed the claim, “if anyone can do it, we can do it here.” Secondly, the results are achievable, but only with the proper amount of time: “But again, it’s a long way off. I don’t think it’s going to happen in the next five years, even.” It is not simply a matter of human action; elapsed time is a necessity for progress.

Conforming Wampanoag interpretation to the more appealing and marketable mode of role-playing found in the Pilgrim Village would be a historiographic maneuver akin to silencing disparate voices for the sake of an organized story and a throwback to the dilemmas faced by Plimoth Plantation prior to the founding of its Native American Studies Program. The makers of history, Michel de Certeau reminds us, need to make certain elements invisible in order to establish linear narratives. The fictions that result from the portrayals of history are simulations of a supposed actual reality. What were repressed in the depiction of the Indians at Plimoth Plantation prior to 1973 were all of the events that happened in the centuries between the point of colonization and the present which were not made worthy of record by the curatorial institution governing the tourist attraction. The events of the Wampanoag peoples in those centuries were absent and only the distant past was privileged in order for them to speak to the construction of history and narrative privileged by the attraction. This past, however, was only a “tourist realism” constructed either of white performers in “red-face” or costumed wax mannequins. Tourists encountered the simulation of a past without being shown the political structures, the economics, and the exchange of symbolic capital that allowed the representation to happen.

Least visible to the tourists in the portrayal was the very touristic gaze, which constructed the Wampanoag Indians as part of a grand imagined scheme of Manifest Destiny, the triumph of the Puritan Ideal, and the establishment of a frontier, which would be pushed west through repetitive acts of conquest all the way to the other coast—in short, a creation of an American Heritage. The self, according to Michel de Certeau, is enunciated at the very moment of encounter with the other.

A structure belonging to modern Western culture can doubtless be seen in this historiography: *intelligibility is established through a relation with the other*; it moves (or “progresses”) by changing what it makes of its “other”—the Indian, the past, the people, the mad, the child, the Third World. Through these variants that are all heteronomous—ethnology, history, psychiatry, pedagogy, etc.—unfolds a problematic form basing its mastery of expression upon what the other keeps silent, and guaranteeing the interpretive work of a science (a “human” science) by the frontier that separates it from an area awaiting this work in order to be known.¹⁷

The self needs an encounter with an entity outside of itself and its language of intelligibility in order to identify characteristics that frame its own identity, which remain invisible until shocked into the consciousness at the moment of encounter. The Western sciences, according to de Certeau, are motivated by the absence of knowledge that can only be enunciated, made visible, through an Other. The irony of the scientific process is that the self forces the Other to speak with its own language of intelligibility. But at historic reenactments such as Plimoth Plantation, these gazes, structures, and containments that allow the self to enunciate its own identity are the very notions which need to be repressed in order to construct a tourist realism that is capable of conveying a surface permanence able to protect the tourist consciousness from doubt. In other words, in order for the tourist to enjoy this encounter with the Other, provided by the curators of Plimoth Plantation, the Other needs to occupy the entire field of vision, so that no thought of the self being staged for itself can be consciously conceived. When the Native Americans took over Plimoth Plantation and the *Mayflower II*, the tourist's present self was suddenly made uncomfortably visible. As the illusion of the past was shattered, the self became conscious of the glaring nakedness of the present.

The institution of Plimoth Plantation prior to 1973 had engaged in a labor to keep the repressed out of the space in which history was being presented. The history of the Wampanoag people was being “rewritten in the abyss between the idea of the repressed and the fear of its continuous return.”¹⁸ By portraying the

“living history” with wax mannequins or white performers, the bodies that replaced those of the absent Wampanoag people were aestheticized and tamed in order to allow them to continue to feed the touristic notion of American Heritage. The history enunciated in this act of touristic ventriloquism was in the language of the colonizers.

Once the Native Interpreters demanded acknowledgment, a cessation of the silencing which had occurred up to 1970, the question of where to place the Native facet of the narrative needed to be addressed by Plimoth programmers and curators. Placing the Native Wampanoag within the Pilgrim Village would disrupt the linear narrative, especially if they spoke in the third person in contrast to the first-person Pilgrims. The twentieth-century voice would conflict with the tourist realism so carefully constructed by the Pilgrim Interpreters using the various dialects studied in much detail. An answer provided itself in the discovery of archaeological evidence suggesting a former homesite along the banks of the Eel River, down the hill from the reconstructed Pilgrim village. The scientific evidence again provided the museum with the rigor and legitimacy needed to portray the site as an authentic space, rather than one which was based solely on conjecture or imagination. But the placement of Hobbamock’s Homesite apart from the main Pilgrim Village had a secondary effect, not consciously voiced in museum literature. It relegated the Wampanoag village to the edges. It drove it to the margins where it could be encountered as a “different”—an “Other” site. Understood in the context of the main site, but not obeying its rules—experienced “in addition to” and “apart from” the main site—the Wampanoag’s homesite could still offer learning opportunities, but not with the fun and entertainment found with the pilgrims.

At the same time, though, this geographic positioning offered the Native Americans the assurance of much more dignity than could be promised in the Pilgrim Village. In order to argue why, I believe it would be helpful first to unpack the play of temporal relationships occurring in the juxtaposition of the two sites, Hobbamock’s Homesite and the Pilgrim Village. To do so, I turn to the theories of Gilles Deleuze to help think through the ways we can fundamentally question time and space in order to ask different questions besides “does Plimoth Plantation make history come alive?”

Hobbamock’s Homesite is a countersite to the historic reenactment of the Pilgrim Village adjacent to it. The Pilgrim Village, mapped out according to the archaeological evidence and striated into households with carefully researched families and individual histories, is an optic space. Tourists are separate from the interpreters and encouraged not to get caught up in the action and pretend to be seventeenth-century personages as well. This would disrupt the dichotomy of old and new that allows for the production of heritage. In Hobbamock’s Homesite, though, the Wampanoag Natives refuse to speak in a seventeenth-century voice that is featured seventeen different ways by the Pilgrims in the Village. It does not

function as a mirror representation of a past space, *vis-à-vis* theatrical realism, behind the proscenium arch separating it from the spectators in the present, but is a space where pasts and presents exist simultaneously. It becomes what Deleuze would call a haptic space. The haptic, or close-range-vision view can be understood in relation to its opposite: the optic, striated space:

Striated space . . . is defined by the requirements of long-distance vision: constancy of orientation, invariance of distance through an interchange of inertial points of reference, interlinkage by immersion in an ambient milieu, constitution of a central perspective.¹⁹

In the Pilgrim village, a striated space, the visitor knows constantly the exact distance between his or her temporal position and the one performed by the Pilgrim interpreters. This distance grants the privilege of optically constructing the past from a determined, set, viewpoint.

The relationship can be explained further using the notions Deleuze explores in "Rhizome versus Trees." In the Pilgrim Village, the Pilgrim interpreters engage in a mirror representation of the Pilgrims of 1627. Such is the case with all representational art, writes Deleuze. Mimetic representation uses the binary understanding, like that found in the dichotomous tree/taproot relationship, as a way to understand the world. Since antiquity, humanity has been trapped into this limited kind of thinking, failing to recognize that nature does not exclusively work in this way.

This is to say that this system of thought has never reached an understanding of multiplicity: in order to arrive at two following a spiritual method it must assume a strong principal unity. On the side of the object, it is no doubt possible, following the natural method, to go directly from one to three, four, or five, but only if there is a strong principal unity available, that of the pivotal taproot supporting the secondary roots. That doesn't get us very far. The binary logic of dichotomy has simply been replaced by biunivocal relationships between successive circles. The pivotal taproot provides no better understanding of multiplicity than the dichotomous root. One operates in the object, the other in the subject.²⁰

The Pilgrim interpreters mirror the Pilgrims of 1627, just as the tree mirrors the taproot. This is not, indeed, a perfect mirror relationship. Alterations have

been made. Inconsistencies and approximations relate to their historic doubles the way the branches of a tree do not exactly correspond to the subterranean arrangement of the supporting roots. But a unity has been evoked by the privileging of certain elements over others in order to maintain an organized representation.

The Wampanoag village, on the other hand, is what Deleuze would call a rhizomatic system, in which the principles of connection to reality are heterogeneous. All points connect to all other points in a rhizome. The form of representation does not exist as a single taproot which connects the actor/interpreters to a symmetrical point in 1627 on the other side of the schism that separates the present from the past. Instead, by casting off the rules of realism and choosing to speak in a present voice, the Native American interpreters connect to every other point in the last four hundred years. While the Pilgrim interpreters engage in a long-term memory act, repressing all events since 1627, the Native Americans in the rhizomatic homesite embody what Deleuze posits as short-term memory or “antimemory.”²¹ Imitation and representation are not privileged as much as a deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The present day interpreters are engaging in a state of becoming 1620s Wampanoag, just as 1620s Wampanoag are becoming present day Native American interpreters. The interpreter deterritorializes the 1620s Wampanoag by becoming part of his or her culture and reterritorializes that part by transplanting it in the present day, in the way, Deleuze would suggest, that a wasp de- and reterritorializes the orchid as it becomes part of an orchid’s reproductive apparatus.²²

The Native American interpreters signify many different points in the 400 year history, as a point in a rhizome connects to a multiplicity (or infinity) of other points. But he/she also signifies nothing other than him or herself.²³ Arguably, the Pilgrim interpreters signify both 1627 Pilgrims as well as actor/interpreter self, but their silence regarding all events in the time elapsed between 1627 and the present day continually forms the schism between past and present that prevents the rhizomatic relationship found in Hobbamock’s Homesite. The rhizomatic model would dictate that the representation of history is no longer a mirror image of its real counterpart on the other side of the horizon, but one in which everything is on the same surface. The Wampanoag Interpreters are literally in the past and present simultaneously.

Such was the deterritorialization/reterritorialization that occurred with the 1970 takeover of the representational spaces of Plimoth Plantation and the *Mayflower II*. The Native American protesters infiltrated and occupied the historical space to subvert the binary root/tree relationship between past and present, and brought the entire past history of four hundred years into an abundance of surface. The events of those years were freed from where they had been categorized as unimportant to become part of the haptic landscape, where one could move through

the surface without the onus to access any hidden depth of meaning by going through the motions of "ethno-historical rigor" and archaeological digs.

In these spaces, then, there is no depth behind the boundary of the proscenium, but only an abundance of surface. By lifting the discourse out of the binary, however blurred, of past and present regions, we can explore a different modality of tourist attraction and encounter with history. In a world without this boundary, one of merely surface, as Deleuze would describe it, there is no depth that can be accessed with a labor to get beyond the front region. Pasts and presents all become part of the abundance of surface. All representation of the past is only the playing out of certain notions upon this surface, and never references a deeper actuality. Up to this point, the reality that tourists and the tourist industry constructed were only realignments of the relationships that have been granted the privilege of being and were visible.

In the binary world of present and simulated past, the institutions decide what to remember and what to repress. But in the world with no depth, the repressed emerges and becomes visible at the surface. In Hobbamock's Homesite, a haptic historical tourist attraction, the relationship of the site to history is no longer portrayed by a realistic depiction where the representation somehow corresponds to an actual reality. Rather, the depiction is all surface, not referencing anything, but a space in which past and present distinctions vanish. It is in the space of surface that what is forgotten returns in what de Certeau envisions as "shards" to disrupt linearity.

These shards are the return of the repressed, which at a given moment had "become unthinkable in order for a new identity to become thinkable."²⁴ The nearly four hundred years of Wampanoag experience that would be denied if the interpreters at Hobbamock's Homesite were to perform, as if they were trapped in a continuous recycling of the year 1627, is brought to the surface to disrupt the linearity of the narrative of history that the Pilgrim Village portrays. A depiction of history that conforms to realistic representation cannot at the same time show what has been privileged and what has been repressed, because it cannot show what is not worthy of record. The rules of realism do not allow for such a double representation. Or, if so, only when the double representation is placed into a protagonistic/antagonistic relationship. But, as in the instance of Hobbamock's Homesite, a space that is not limited to these rules of realism can bring the repressed to the surface, as well as expose the structures which have allowed the repression.

I would argue that the subversion of the touristic gaze is able to happen only because of the fact that the tourist is still in the mode of interacting with a realistic mirror image of historic reenactment as maintained in the Pilgrim Village and has not yet made the transition with the movement to Hobbamock's Homesite. This *movement* is precisely what allows it to happen. It allows for the recognition

of a shift in representational practices, which achieves a sublimity as described by Lyotard, and shows:

the unrepresentable in presentation itself, that which refuses the consolation of correct forms, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible, and the inquiries into new presentations—not to take pleasure in them, but to better produce the feeling that there is something unrepresentable.²⁵

The movement from a realistic representation of history to a rhizomatic one presents the unrepresentable idea of what has been repressed in the presentation itself. Hobbamock's Homesite utilizes the existing realistic structures of the Pilgrim Village section of Plimoth Plantation to expose what has been forgotten. This other type of space can be enunciated and defined only in relationship to that which it is not: the mirror representation as found in the main site. It would not be as possible, I would argue, to achieve this same effect if Hobbamock's Homesite were an autonomous space without the aforementioned structures of historical reenactment surrounding it. The visible subversion of the representational historiographic performance would be erased if the opposite structure were not immediately visible to the visitor. I do not think, either, that an autonomous historical depiction of a Wampanoag settlement, without the surrounding Pilgrims, would be as popular a tourist destination. The Wampanoag interpreters at Hobbamock's Homesite use their tactics in a space that is not their own for their own ends. They are tactics in the sense that de Certeau describes in *The Practice of Everyday Life*: The Wampanoag interpreters engage in a continuous movement through another terrain. They do not obey the laws of the place, since they are not defined by it.²⁶ The tactics the Wampanoag engage in will only become strategies when they can, in a sense, control the means of this heritage production. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett seeks to herald the advent of a time in which Ethnographic display of Native Peoples will not be in the hands of Eurocentric curators.

Native peoples are taking charge of the disposition, handling, access, ownership, and interpretation of their patrimony—whether artifacts or performances—the spaces in which they live and their ways of life. A new generation of museum professionals is proactively addressing the stewardship of cultural property, its presentation and interpretation in museums.

In these spaces, the objects of ethnography become the subjects.²⁷

Because of the difference that allows Plimoth visitors a recognition of a shift in representational practices, and thus that a different history is being presented

at Hobbamock's Homesite from that presented at the Pilgrim Village, the notion of adding first-person programming to the Wampanoag programming may become a move in the wrong direction. The multiplicity of narratives available to the visitor at Hobbamock's Homesite would decrease if Plimoth Plantation introduced role playing at the site to match the Pilgrim Village. It would be an act of "norming" which would ultimately disenfranchise the Wampanoag Interpretation Program. The power of difference retained by their strict use of the third person would be decentered and weakened. The contrasts would be smoothed over and the edges made indistinct. This fuzzy space would no longer retain the same potential for addressing the issues it now raises. No longer would the visitor's first question be, "Why don't the Wampanoag Interpreters speak in the first person?" Instead, there would not be a question—only an observation that the first person is used in some places in Hobbamock's Homesite and not others. The lack of a question prevents thinking about possible answers.

I hope to have shown in the pages above that the third-person mode of interpretation is an important and responsible historiographic operation. If this is the case, however, it is alarming to see that not only is the format being reconsidered by those who would favor first-person interpretation in the future, but also the ways these practices are currently being de-emphasized, or even covered-up, in promotional material and tourist literature. The remainder of my essay considers to what degree the future of Wampanoag Interpretation Program and Hobbamock's Homesite is at stake, and why the Native Wampanoag Interpreters must continually renege their politics and narrative of multiplicity every day of each summer season.

Currently, the Native Wampanoag Interpreters' non-conformity with the structures of mirror representation that "make history come alive" is not necessarily celebrated by the institution of Plimoth Plantation, nor is it a selling point for the museum as a whole. Plimoth Plantation attracts its patrons by virtue of the fact that the visitors are rewarded for making the journey and paying the admission price with an encounter with "living history." Hence, Pecoraro speaks of eventually changing the interpretive mode at Hobbamock's Homesite, or at least complementing the third-person mode with some first person programming. In the present, however, several strategies are already in place to gloss over the differences between the Pilgrim Village and the Homesite. Any element of the plantation that does not promise a first-person-type of encounter is downplayed in the promotional material. Thus, Hobbamock's Homesite, while challenging and subverting the binary of present and past is nevertheless consistently reinscribed by the literature of Plimoth Plantation as fulfilling the living history motif of the rest of the attraction. The travel book, *Plimoth Plantation: Fifty Years of Living History*, entreats the tourists to believe they are entering a different temporal space:

“At Plimoth Plantation in 1997, traveling to another age has become as natural as traveling to another town. Once we stroll by a sign marking the line between the twentieth and seventeenth centuries, the past comes alive with vibrant clarity.”²⁸ The very notion of a physical marked border between past and present plays upon the touristic desire to transgress into a supposed back region of history. Included in the description of the sights and sounds the tourist will experience in this other time is Hobbamock’s Homesite:

Leaving this “Pilgrim Village,” we find the *same* atmosphere in “Hobbamock’s Homesite.” [my emphasis]. This single Native household with its two bark-and-mat-covered structures and flourishing planted fields, is also a multi-dimensional image of the original. Although the Homesite staff does not assume roles as the Pilgrim villagers do, anyone who is in period Native costume is actually a Native American, carefully re-creating the daily life of the 17th-century Wampanoag People. The past has indeed come alive at Plimoth Plantation.²⁹

The equating of racial identity with the past coming alive is the only way for the travel book to categorize the Wampanoag into the context of living history. Their non-compliance in assuming historic roles can be glossed over by the fact that they are still re-creating history. The language of intelligibility used by the travel literature does not allow for coming to terms with the Wampanoag twentieth-century identity, and so it compensates by soothing the tourist with the assurance that the situation he or she is encountering is historical in nature (i.e., an “actual” Native American).

A 1998 Plimoth Plantation brochure entitled “Step Back in Time at Plimoth Plantation” more explicitly indicates the difference between the Pilgrim Village and the Homesite, but still maintains that the experience will give tourists a “true sense” of seventeenth-century Native life:

At Hobbamock’s Wampanoag Indian Homesite you will come face to face with Native People who will tell you how the arrival of the colonists impacted the lives of their ancestors, and continues to effect their people today. Speaking from a 20th century perspective, they will tell you about the time before the Pilgrims as well as their lives in today’s world. Some of the staff will be in period Native attire. The site itself is a re-creation of the home-site of one family, giving you a true sense of Native life in the 17th century.³⁰

This brochure warns the tourists in advance that they should not expect the same kind of interaction with the Wampanoag as with the Pilgrims, as does the "Welcome to Plimoth Plantation" map and guide from the same season:

The interpreters in Hobbamock's Homesite will speak to you in modern, 20th century English. They will explain what is known about Wampanoag history and culture of the 17th century and about the many myths and misconceptions about the Wampanoag. Native American staff wear clothing of the period while non-Native interpretive guides wear uniforms.³¹

The map and guide description of the Homesite contains no language of different temporal quality, indicated by phrases such as "true sense" and "step back in time." Yet no amount of warning in the literature can prepare all tourists to enter a site which does not fit into the living history mode. Many tourists, as detailed earlier in this essay, still want to interface with the Wampanoag interpreters as if they are living remnants of the past. In a July 1998, visit to Plimoth Plantation, I overheard a conversation between a European-American, senior man asking the young Native Wampanoag interpreter whether the cradle board she was working on was for her *papoose*. She did not respond in the affirmative, nor did she explicitly correct his implication that she was pretending to be (or actually was) a mother planning to put her craft item to practical use. She merely told him in her twentieth-century American-east-coast accent that she herself did not have a baby. This response subverted the man's touristic desire to construct the woman as a stereotype that confirmed his own view of the alterity between past and present. It forced him out of the phrasing of his questions in the second person ("Do you . . . ?" becomes "Did they . . . ?") and perhaps made the tourist aware of his own habitus that he was imposing upon her.³²

Ultimately, though, the mythical nostalgic ideal of the Native American wins the favor of the touristic consciousness on the last stop of the journey: the Plimoth Plantation Gift Shop. Here, the institution manages to repress the memory of the Native peoples' experience for good. Although tourists have been informed that the myth of the settlers and Wampanoag sitting around a common table and sharing in "the First Thanksgiving" was not only ungrounded, but laughable (The Thanksgiving feast never took place as it did in popular imagination. According to one of the costumed Pilgrim Interpreters in the summer of 1998, it would have been considered a sin to share a table with "heathens" as the Native people were regarded. Thanksgiving, as we know it, was instituted as a holiday by various presidents, most notably Abraham Lincoln, about two hundred and forty years after the imaginary event it commemorates), the shop offers numerous souvenirs that would reaffirm this myth. Smiling, rosy-cheeked, plush Pilgrims and Indians,

complete with buckled hats/shoes and feathers, respectively, hold hands on the merchandise shelves, and table decorations, candlesticks, and framed and matted prints featuring the same sentiments serve, in the end, to create a Deleuzian ritornello—a soothing refrain which protects the nostalgic touristic consciousness from doubt. As Suzan-Lori Parks writes in *The America Play*, “Some inaccuracies are good for business.”³³

In conclusion, the mode of representation exercised by historical reenactments enforce a “tourist realism” that reaffirms tourists’ notions that ideal ontological actualities are referenced by the bodies performing for them. The institutions of the tourist industry have allowed for, produced, and promoted such simulations, without the responsibility of making visible the structures that repress elements in order to fulfill the touristic fantasies of colonization and appropriation. What I have attempted to put forth in this essay is a working definition of new historiographic *in situ* display, which is not limited to realistic/naturalistic notions of representation, and which does not, therefore, cater to these fantasies. The interpreters staffing Hobbamock’s Homesite in Plimoth Plantation have reclaimed the curatorial position in order to deterritorialize the tourists’ gaze and erased the signposts marking imagined boundaries between past and present. Without the boundaries, there can be no fantasies of transgression.

The act of erasure, though, is not simple and final, but needs to be consistently repeated and maintained. In the very instant a boundary is erased, the institutions of the tourist industry will impose a new boundary to replace it, because the symbolic capital that is transacted with the transgression of a boundary is the currency with which the tourism industry operates. The boundary produces the supply and demand of fantasy, and fantasy is a commodity which is difficult to devalue.

Notes

1. Michelle Pecoraro, personal interview, 13 June 2000.

2. For a review of recent scholarship on living history museums and a discussion of the theoretical construction of temporal space, see Giorgio Agamben, “Time and History: Critique of the Instant and the Continuum,” *Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1993); Jay Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History* (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1984); Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham: Duke U P, 1999); Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1998); David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996); Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1999).

3. Stephen Eddy Snow, *Performing the Pilgrims: A Study of Ethnohistorical Role-Playing at Plimoth Plantation* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1993) 34.
4. James W. Baker, *Plimoth Plantation: Fifty Years of Living History* (Plymouth: Plimoth Plantation Publications, 1997) 5.
5. For an account of the protest, see "Indian Protest Leaves Mixed Feelings About White Man's Neglect of Red Man," *Old Colony Memorial* (Thursday, 3 December 1970) 13.
6. Gilles Deleuze, "Music and Ritornello," *The Deleuze Reader*, ed. Constantine Boundas (New York: Columbia UP, 1993) 202.
7. Richard Schechner, "Believed-in Theatre," *Performance Research* 2.2 (Summer, 1997): 77.
8. Barbara Kirshenblatt, *Destination Culture* ([Berkeley: U of California P, 1998]) 199-200. The phrase "pretend to be themselves," unproblematic within the text, is an intriguing choice for describing the performance issues related to Hobbamock's Homesite. For a discussion of the problematic nature of Native People "playing themselves," see Laura Peers, "Playing Ourselves": *Native Histories, Native Interpreters, and Living History Sites*, diss., McMaster University, 1996.
9. Snow 98.
10. 99.
11. Tape-recorded conversation, 13 June 2000.
12. Third-person Wampanoag Interpreter, personal interview, 13 June 2000.
13. Tim (third-person Wampanoag Interpreter), personal interview, 13 June 2000.
14. Third-person Wampanoag Interpreter, personal interview, 13 June 2000.
15. Michelle Pecoraro, personal interview, 13 June 2000.
16. See Anderson's *Time Machines: The World of Living History: Snow's Performing the Pilgrims: A Study of Ethnohistorical Role-Playing at Plimoth Plantation*.
17. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) 3.
18. xix.
19. Deleuze 167
20. 28.
21. 36.
22. 32.
23. Cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's statement that the Wampanoag refuse "to pretend to be themselves."
24. de Certeau 4.
25. Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1992) 15.
26. Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steve Rendall (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984) 34-42.
27. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 165.
28. Baker 5.
29. 5-6.

30. Plimoth Plantation brochure, "Step Back in Time at Plimoth Plantation."
31. Plimoth Plantation Map and Guide, "Welcome to Plimoth Plantation."
32. By habitus, I refer to an internalized set of relationships extracted from a field, as described in Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J. D. Wacquant's *An Invitation to Reflexive Society* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992).
33. Suzan-Lori Parks, "The America Play," *The America Play and Other Works* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1995) 168.