



SEARCH BLOG

FLAG BLOG

Next Blog>

Create Blog | Sign In

THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR

A LONG, STRANGE JOURNEY TOWARD A RETROSPECTIVELY INEVITABLE DESTINATION

FRIDAY, JANUARY 02, 2009

New New World: An Exchange, A Conversation, An Epigraph

By Ryland Walker Knight & Keith Uhlich



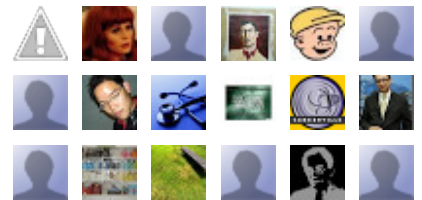
SUBSCRIBE TO

Posts

Comments

Advertise on Culture Pundits

FOLLOWERS (66)



66 FOLLOWERS

THE HOUSE ARCHIVE

▼ 2009 (6)

▼ January (6)

Directorama: Guess the MacGuffin

There Will Be Choice: Why Gone Baby Gone Is the Best 945 (87). Il Sorpasso / The Easy Life (1962, Dino ...

The Criterion Collection #112: Playtime

New New World: An Exchange, A Conversation, An Epi...

The Top 10 Films of 2008

▶ 2008 (930)

▶ 2007 (937)

▶ 2006 (404)

INTRODUCTION

The House Next Door's own creation myth is by now well-known, but once more, with feeling...

Originally [begun](#) as a solo venture by [Matt Zoller Seitz](#), *The House's* primary aim was to act as an online venue of support for Terrence Malick's *The New World*. It was exactly three years ago today (January 2nd, 2006) that Matt published [the first in a series of articles](#) parsing and illuminating Malick's masterpiece. Like the film, the blog would grow beyond its initially stated purpose, becoming a widespread collaborative effort, a home for many voices (harmonized, dissonant, solo) to speak their varied truths.

Yet even in moving forward, we'd somehow always manage to circle back where we'd come from: Matt's remained a vocal advocate for *The New World* [here](#) and elsewhere; the film has been referenced, by fellow contributors and readers, in innumerable comments threads; my [inaugural piece](#) at *The House* was a breakdown of the differences between the 150-minute Academy cut and the 135-minute theatrical cut. And so we loop 'round again on this, *The House's* third birthday/anniversary.

A few months ago, an [extended cut](#) of *The New World*, running 172-minutes, was released on DVD. Contributor Ryland Walker Knight and I began an e-mail dialogue about this version, though we only ever got through a single exchange (my fault, *mea culpa* Ry). Our e-mails are reprinted, with minor structural and clarity edits, below, though we both of us wanted to more fully mark the moment, so after a recent joint viewing of the film (Ryland having become, once more, a fellow New Yorker) we recorded a podcast conversation that expands on our thoughts—you'll find it after our initial missives to each other. And just below that is an epigraph, chosen by Ryland, that speaks to a facet of his experience with the film.

It remains only to wish all *House* contributors and readers a Happy and Healthy New Year. There are some exciting developments on the horizon in '09, and I hope you'll all continue with us on the "long, strange journey." Destination, quite happily, unknown. (KU)

AN EXCHANGE

LABELS

[2000](#) (1)
[24LiesASecond Essays](#) (16)
[5 for the Day](#) (55)
[Aaron Hillis](#) (2)
[Adam Nayman](#) (2)
[Alain Resnais](#) (1)
[Alfred Hitchcock](#) (2)
[Andrew Chan](#) (14)
[Andrew Dignan](#) (26)
[Andrew Grant](#) (2)
[Andrew Johnston](#) (33)
[Andrew O'Hehir](#) (2)
[Andrew Schenker](#) (15)
[Andrew Tracy](#) (2)
[Andrew Unterburger](#) (1)
[Anita O'Day](#) (1)
[Anne Bancroft](#) (1)
[Annie Frisbie](#) (1)
[Anthony Hopkins](#) (1)
[Antonio Campos](#) (1)
[Barack Obama](#) (6)
[Barry Lyndon](#) (1)
[Barry Maupin](#) (17)
[Batman](#) (1)
[Battlestar Galactica](#) (29)
[Battlestar Galactica: Season 3](#) (19)
[Battlestar Galactica: Season 4](#) (10)
[Benten Films](#) (2)
[Big Lebowski](#) (1)
[Big Love](#) (13)
[Big Love: Season 2](#) (12)
[Birth](#) (1)
[Books](#) (2)
[Born on the Fourth of July](#) (1)
[Brandon Soderberg](#) (3)
[Brendon Bouzard](#) (1)
[Brian De Palma](#) (6)
[Broken Trail](#) (1)
[Bruce Nauman](#) (1)
[Cadillac El Dorado](#) (1)
[Cannes 2008](#) (10)
[Caterpillar](#) (1)
[Charles Aznavour](#) (1)
[Chris Anthony Diaz](#) (5)
[Chris Carter](#) (1)



KEITH UHLICH: I feel safe saying that this is my favorite cut of the film, and I think that's mainly because more of *The New World* is, to me, never a bad thing. Malick's shown the possibilities over three released cuts; unlike Mann with *Miami Vice*, futzing around with the elements only enhances things. If I think I'm mostly going to keep coming back to this cut (and I do hope, someday soon, for a *Mr. Arkadin*-like 3-cuts comparative DVD set) it's because it feels most fully realized. I harbor a suspicion that it might be viewed (at least in immediate experience) as the most conventional because of the intertitles (chapter divisions like "A Proposal" or the brilliant, self-aware first one, "A New Start"), but I think even there Malick takes conventions of the form and twists them to his allusive/elusive purposes (the final chapter heading, "And Last," still haunts me, and I might have to make use of it in a piece someday just as homage).

If anything, the 172-minute cut brings back the dissonance I felt in the 150-minute Academy cut as regards the voice-over work. When the film was theatrically released at 135-minutes (and the following is not meant as a "shouldn't-have-done-that" observation) Malick more often matched the voice-over to onscreen action and/or let each person have their say before going to another speaker. In the Extended Cut, characters talk over each other in the voice-over, even, at several points, over their own thoughts so that two or more threads of consciousness are apparent. Smith makes explicit reference to this at one point, arguing with himself about his conflicted feelings over Pocahontas—it's in the scene where he's traveling up the river to deal with the merchant Indian, the sequence that bookends his idyllic one-on-one reverie with Pocahontas. The specific line is "cannot walk two paths at once" (a sentiment that Malick disproves).

Chris Gisonny (2)
 Chris Matthews (1)
 Cindy McCain (1)
 Claudette Colbert (1)
 Colin Farrell (2)
 Comics Column (4)
 Conversation (1)
 Cyd Charisse (1)
 Dan Callahan (49)
 Dan Sallitt (1)
 Daniel Kasman (1)
 Daniel McKleinfeld (1)
 Dario Argento (1)
 David Goodis (1)
 David Gordon Green (1)
 David Greven (1)
 David Lean (2)
 David Levinson (1)
 David Lynch (1)
 David Mamet (1)
 David Milch (20)
 David Simon (15)
 Deadwood (12)
 Directorama (46)
 Directorama: Season 1 (32)
 Directorama: Season 2 (9)
 Disney (1)
 Doctor Who (40)
 Doctor Who: Season 4 (9)
 Donald Sutherland (2)
 Dr. D'Oh (1)
 DVD Review (31)
 Easter Eggs (1)
 Eclipse Series (4)
 Ed Gonzalez (2)
 Ed Lachman (1)
 Elisabeth Moss (1)
 Elise Nakhnikian (4)
 Encounters At The End Of The World (1)
 Eric Kohn (1)
 Eric Rohmer (1)
 Ernst Lubitsch (1)
 Essays (1)
 Evan Davis (1)
 F. Murray Abraham (1)

More on that scene: The merchant Indian hands Smith a coin and Smith observes that it's "the source of all evil. It excuses vulgarity. Makes wrong right; base noble." That really resonated with me; I'm sure it has something to do with the financial crisis as well as my own fluctuating situation monetarily. It also rhymes with Smith's earlier monologue where he states of this new world that "there will be no landlords to rack us with high rents." If he only knew. I wasn't a fan of HBO's *John Adams* miniseries, but I thought it ended on an appropriately ambivalent note with Adams calling on his descendants to live up to what he and the Founding Fathers had created. It had a sense, as I think it does here, of speaking forward while looking backward. I actually hope to title a book of mine (probably a collection of film-related essays) "The Eternal Present." That's something I look for in movies, the sense that, though a story may be specific to a particular time and place, it resonates throughout all that has come before and all that will come to pass.

That gets into Malick's own methods. Go [here](#), if you haven't already, to see a YouTube breakdown of some of the references in the film. The invocation by Pocahontas in the prologue alludes to a poem by Vachel Lindsay. Among other textual referents (besides the actual diaries of Smith, Rolfe, etc) are Vergil and *The Aeneid*, Montaigne, *The Bible*, Nathaniel Hawthorne. Then, of course, the musical ones: Mozart, Wagner (a semi-ironic use, I believe, because it hints as much at encroachment and eradication as to transcendence and triumph), James Horner, etc, treading various generations. Forwards and backwards always, simultaneously.

A good place to close, save for the observation that I think more time is given, in this cut, to the development of Smith and Pocahontas' relationship, and I think the film is all the better for it.



[Fernando F. Croce](#) (6)
[Fidel Castro](#) (1)
[Film Festivals](#) (26)
[Film Forum](#) (4)
[Film Park Slope](#) (1)
[Film Retrospectives](#) (19)
[Film Society of Lincoln Center](#) (2)
[First Post](#) (2)
[Francis Ford Coppola](#) (1)
[Francois Truffaut](#) (2)
[Frank Spotnitz](#) (1)
[Fred Thompson](#) (1)
[From the short stack](#) (6)
[Full Frontal](#) (1)
[Garrett Brown](#) (1)
[Gary Giddins](#) (1)
[Generation Kill](#) (14)
[Genghis Khan](#) (1)
[Genie Grant](#) (1)
[George Bush](#) (1)
[George Sanders](#) (1)
[George W. Bush](#) (1)
[Giuseppe Puccio](#) (1)
[Glenn Kenny](#) (4)
[Godfrey Cheshire](#) (3)
[Golden Globes](#) (1)
[Gone Baby Gone](#) (1)
[Grady Hendrix](#) (2)
[Guillermo Del Toro](#) (1)
[Gustav](#) (1)
[Hannah Seitz](#) (1)
[HBO](#) (78)
[Hellboy II:The Golden Army](#) (2)
[Hillary Clinton](#) (1)
[HND at Grassroots](#) (14)
[Holly Herrick](#) (1)
[House Maintenance](#) (3)
[Hulk \(Ang Lee\)](#) (1)
[Human Rights Watch International Film Festival 2008](#) (7)
[Hyperlinks](#) (1)
[Idiot Savant Japan](#) (9)
[Immediate Impressions](#) (3)
[Indiana Jones](#) (2)
[Indie 500](#) (22)



RYLAND WALKER KNIGHT: I'm with you, Keith, and I'll take it a step further: more Malick is always a good thing. The [publicity description and solitary still image](#) from his forthcoming *Tree of Life* make me tremble and smile and lick my lips just as that (it feels) long ago promise of further versions of *The New World* surfacing in our lives. It feels so long because, as with all of us, so many things have happened since Christmas 2005. And always, in one way or form, *The New World* has been there, lurking, smiling back at me. I feel very Serge Daney here: if ever a film has watched me and marked my life, even during this brief (yet long! and full!) interval, that film is this one, this unending glimpse of sublimity.

I cannot avoid myself when I talk of *The New World*. There's plenty to talk about in the film, of course, and I will get there—it's why we're here—but, first, please indulge me. I was lucky enough to be among the select few of the public who got to see the 150-minute cut thanks to my first whirl through New York City (thank you Jann and Don and Ken Burns and, of course, Allison) and its treasures both dirty and sparkling, its opportunities cinematic and (all other forms of) idealistic. Now I've always said, and continue to say, that *The Thin Red Line* is my "favorite" film; but this *New World* was something else, something truly special. I still revere that 150-minute cut precisely because it feels so lost, because I feel its lack. (Were the suits to be brave and release that *Arkadin*-like set you propose, Keith, we would all benefit.) And yet, I was more than happy with the 135-minute cut release a month later. I brimmed, I gushed, I cried. I could not understand why certain critics failed to see its beauty. Which, of course, brought my curiosity to the Internet, finally, and to our present home, our House Next Door, our Matt Zoller Seitz, who wanted to sing so much he couldn't be contained by print! Of course I flipped!

Up to that point, that January of 2006, I had very little interest in film criticism, and less background, despite spending most of my life watching movies. So, once I tasted Agee the fall prior, and once I found Matt's cathedrals of words, I was hooked. As my friends can tell you, it's practically all I think about. (Luckily, there are other things, like basketball and fire and beer and swimming and rocks and music and dancing and jokes jokes jokes to keep our conversations lively in the light.) What I'm trying to say, no doubt, is thank you.

January 2007 saw me back in school at UC Berkeley in the Rhetoric Department, where I met more kindred. I've said elsewhere on *The House* and *Vinyl is Heavy* how much I've learned from reading Stanley Cavell, who I met (at least on the page if not equally inside of me), it feels, by chance as much as by design. To this day, his

[Ingrid Bergman](#) (1)
[Inspiration](#) (1)
[Interviews](#) (7)
[Jacques Rivette at MOMI](#) (7)
[James Benning](#) (1)
[James Ellroy](#) (1)
[James M. Johnston](#) (1)
[James M. Moran](#) (1)
[Jeremiah Kipp](#) (36)
[Jerry Lewis](#) (1)
[JFK](#) (2)
[Joan O'Connell Hedman](#) (26)
[Joe Biden](#) (2)
[Joe Lieberman](#) (1)
[Joe Reid](#) (1)
[John From Cincinnati](#) (8)
[John Gianvito](#) (1)
[John Lichman](#) (53)
[John McCain](#) (6)
[Jon Hamm](#) (1)
[Jonathan Pacheco](#) (3)
[Jonathan Rosenbau](#) (1)
[Joseph Losey](#) (1)
[Judd Apatow](#) (1)
[Justine Elias](#) (2)
[Karina Longworth](#) (3)
[Kaveri Marathe](#) (1)
[Keith Olbermann](#) (1)
[Keith Uhlich](#) (85)
[Keith's Korner](#) (7)
[Kenji Fujishima](#) (1)
[Kevin B. Lee](#) (44)
[Kevin Costner](#) (2)
[Kill Bill](#) (1)
[Kung Fu Panda](#) (1)
[Latinbeat 2008](#) (1)
[Laura Bush](#) (1)
[Lauren Wissot](#) (53)
[Lichman and Rizov "Live" at Grassroots Tavern](#) (20)
[Light Sleeper](#) (2)
[Lindsay Anderson](#) (2)
[Links for the Day](#) (719)
[M. Night Shyamalan](#) (1)
[Mad Men](#) (23)
[Mad Men: Season 1](#) (13)

influence—a style of reading that informs a style of life that brings together so many things read and lived—looms largest in my constellation in terms of, um, "literary" touchstones. (I could list those other friends and influences' names, but, well, I won't; they know their names and their places and they appreciate keeping a low profile.) So imagine my surprise when, ignoramus that I am, it dawned on me that Stanley Cavell taught Terrence Malick philosophy at Harvard. Yes, indeed, I wound up writing an Honors Thesis, titled *Acting in the World*, all about my understanding of *The New World* and its links to Stanley Cavell and, yes, Michael Mann's *Miami Vice*, among other films and philosophies and pursuits of happiness. In fact, the thing still sits there on my desktop, asking to be polished, asking (or so I dream; perhaps I hear) to seek the printed and paid light of day. Soon, I say, soon.

When I read something like Bilge Ebiri's recent essay, "[English Speakers](#)," though, I worry my words have failed. They feel so, you know, *wrought* next to the simplicity and beauty of a work like his where you sense the theory behind the words without any explicit acknowledgment. Of course, that's what I feel aligns my project with words with Malick's project with cinema: an attempt to offer an account of our "selves," always multiple and always speaking all at once, always fighting to find a harmony. Because, let's face it, the world stinks sometimes. I had to leave New York because it stunk. It grossed me out after a while. We fled, almost immediately, to the Grand Canyon, which felt like heaven, or, at some liminal level, an Eden. And, even that, right there, is idealized since, as with any adventure, there were headaches and hurt feelings and tears to go along with the bliss of waves and running through tall grass. So it makes perfect sense (right?) that here in 2009 I am back in the Big Apple. I mean, right? Ha! Well, to be honest, there are plenty of reasons; there are, again, so many things, so many voices and bodies and opportunities calling me back that I'd be a fool to sit lame and sad in my dumpy bedroom in Berkeley. It's about America. We have a great place here; we do. Even though landlords rack us with high rents, and even though money keeps falling away—through all the bad shit that's hit the fan in the past 8 years or so (and this fall season)—there remains hope. Because as much as America is tangible—is this bed and that city and those waves—America is a myth.

Terrence Malick knows this. Stanley Cavell knows this. I believe you, my good sir, know this. Many of my other Good Personal Friends, who haven't read a lick of Cavell, know this. Hell, Barack Obama is photogenic mandate proof of this.

Captain John Smith knew this. He saw and felt and made love to this. He lived this, for however brief a time. Pocahontas, too, is this myth made material, made human, made Rebecca. And yet, she's a ghost, an ideal, an element of our Oversoul, as Ebiri writes, that does, in fact, walk two paths at once. She is the new world as much as she bears witness to new worlds and wonders every day. In my thesis, I try to argue a simple observation into the ground: that Pocahontas/Rebecca's great heroic capacity is her ability to drift with the world without guile, without performing, however much she acts. Acting, here, being both action and a mask worn or a role assumed or a language learned. (I gave this counterpoint with *Miami Vice*'s always already acting-action world where things collide all too fast for us to find up, to find right, without tragedy.) I was so happy to read Ebiri's piece because, ignorant or blind as I choose to be oftentimes, it's rare to find work on Malick that deals with his interest in language in such a thoughtful manner; however, I should note that [Michel Chion's BFI monograph](#) on *The Thin Red Line* has some delicious passages, particularly about the voice. I relied on aspects of Cavell's *A Pitch of Philosophy* to talk about the voice in

[Mad Men: Season 2](#) (7)
[Maidenform](#) (1)
[Malcolm McDowell](#) (2)
[Man on Wire](#) (4)
[Marilyn Monroe](#) (1)
[Mark Walkow](#) (1)
[Marshall McLuhan](#) (1)
[Martin Scorsese](#) (1)
[Matt Maul](#) (11)
[Matt Noller](#) (8)
[Matt Zoller Seitz](#) (63)
[Matthew Weiner](#) (2)
[Max Winter](#) (3)
[Michael Joshua Rowin](#) (1)
[Michael K. Crowley](#) (4)
[Michael Nyman](#) (2)
[Michael Peterson](#) (5)
[Michael Tully](#) (2)
[Mike D'Angelo](#) (4)
[Mike Leigh](#) (1)
[Miriam Bale](#) (2)
[Mongol](#) (1)
[Moravagine](#) (1)
[Mother of Tears](#) (1)
[Movie Reviews](#) (82)
[Moving Image Source](#) (1)
[Moving Midway](#) (1)
[Mukhsin](#) (1)
[Music](#) (22)
[music documentary](#) (1)
[Music Video Round-Up](#) (3)
[Myles McNutt](#) (1)
[N.P. Thompson](#) (21)
[Nancy Pelosi](#) (1)
[Navel Gazing with Burns and Dignan](#) (6)
[Neon Genesis: Evangelion](#) (1)
[New Releases \(Theater\)](#) (56)
[New York Film Festival 2008](#) (9)
[Night Gallery](#) (1)
[Odiator](#) (3)
[Oliver Platt](#) (1)
[Oliver Stone](#) (4)
[On the Circuit](#) (1)
[Operation Filmmaker](#) (1)
[Paul Newman](#) (1)

The New World and Malick in general and even *Miami Vice*, where everybody speaks so soft and rarely yells. It boils down to arrogance. The willingness to arrogate to another voice as much as the arrogance to attempt to speak for others. This is the arrogance of philosophy for Cavell. This is clearly the arrogance of, and the problem with, (a lot of) film criticism. For instance, why should anybody care about my history with *The New World*? I'm not Serge Daney. Well, as far as I can tell, if I have any answer, any work of criticism, or philosophy, is an invitation: an invitation to share the writer's experience (of an object, like a film; of a concept, like time; of a practice, like language—or film or time or understanding—like life) and the associations produced through that passage.

This is why I'm drawn to these epistolary works of criticism: I cannot deny myself. It makes the work explicitly about my accounting for my unaccountability. In short, it's a failure from the get-go. Language tries to fix things. Just as cinema, with its desire for The Real, tries to capture and order experience. Which is why I'm drawn to the dissonances, too, Keith. This tactic of voices piling on top of one another in the 172-minute cut (and, I trust you, the 150-minute cut) is not too dissimilar from other great film artists like Preston Sturges and Robert Altman (both American Americans) who use language and voice as a space, to define a space, as much as to deliver sense and meaning to the world. But, of course, it's different here. Malick conflates the interior with the social, drifting between the two, sometimes to delicious effect, where you think you're hearing another poetic voice-over that becomes lived-through dialogue. This is more common in *The Thin Red Line* but there are a few moments of yummy confusion in *The New World*. The most striking, upon my initial viewing of the 172-minute cut, was during the extended section aboard the first ship up the river, which is mostly Smith's interior monologue, but blended with the yelps of the Naturals and the occasional imperative, like Smith's first line of dialogue, "Put in." This movement between commands and calls and cries from inside makes this river space that much more liquid.

On the whole, this cut is resolutely (!) more liquid, yet more feminine: it even starts with more water, and more (naked) bodies swimming-flying-moving through its murky blue. It's almost didactic—*this movie is about birth!* Were it not so gorgeous, and did it not parody me to my face, and did I not bliss the fuck out, I would write it off. As with [this image my father made](#) of me and my sister and his girlfriend, it's like the openings of *The New World* and *The Thin Red Line* laugh at me. This immediate encounter with what one senses as his or her most private can often provoke a laugh, if not tears. At its most reductive, it's the simple moral to join the flow. To complicate that, we might say Malick is inviting us to engage in the possibilities this liquid world affords us—for movement, for touch, for sight, for presence, for thisness. (My friend [Daniel](#) says, "Want to know a great cocktail party word that won't get you laid? [Haeceity](#). It means thisness. Try throwing that one out and see who picks it up." We like Nietzsche, it's true.) This gets at your idea of an "eternal present," Keith. I love that phrase, too. It's something I cherish, and look for in life as much as in the movies, sometimes Quixotically (cough, foolishly) and to the detriment of both threads. Last spring it felt like Pedro Costa was laughing at me, too, when he pledged an unending, stubborn and, yes, redundant allegiance to our ineluctable present. What I dig is that present also means gift. That this life is a gift. And that we get this gift all the time. So why not love this? Why not believe in this? Terrence Malick certainly seems to, and, in any event, at the end of this unruly ramble, the best I can

[Paul Schrader](#) (2)
[Peet Gelderblom](#) (49)
[Peggy Olson](#) (1)
[Peter Debruge](#) (1)
[Philip Roth](#) (1)
[Philosophy](#) (1)
[Placeholders](#) (3)
[Playtex](#) (1)
[Podcast](#) (23)
[Politics](#) (12)
[Port Huron](#) (1)
[Presidential Debate 2008](#) (6)
[Preston Miller](#) (6)
[Q and A](#) (1)
[Quentin Tarantino](#) (2)
[Q'orianka Kilcher](#) (1)
[Rahm Emmanuel](#) (1)
[Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) (1)
[Rambo](#) (1)
[Raoul Coutard](#) (1)
[Republican](#) (1)
[Revenge of the Sith](#) (1)
[Richard Nixon](#) (1)
[RIP](#) (2)
[RNC](#) (2)
[Robert Altman](#) (2)
[Robert C. Cumbow](#) (4)
[Robert Humanick](#) (1)
[Rod Serling](#) (1)
[Rosario Dawson](#) (1)
[Ross Ruediger](#) (39)
[Ryland Walker Knight](#) (24)
[S.T. VanAirdale](#) (5)
[Sal Cinquemani](#) (3)
[Salman Rushdie](#) (1)
[Sam Peckinpah](#) (1)
[Samuel Fuller](#) (1)
[San Francisco International Film Festival 2008](#) (3)
[Sarah D. Bunting](#) (1)
[Sarah Palin](#) (4)
[Satoshi Kon](#) (1)
[Scott Walker](#) (1)
[Se7en](#) (1)
[Sean Burns](#) (12)

say right now about his film/s is a big, dumb, gooey "Thanks."



A CONVERSATION: Podcast embedded below; can also be found [here](#) as a downloadable mp3. (TRT: 51 minutes, 53 seconds)



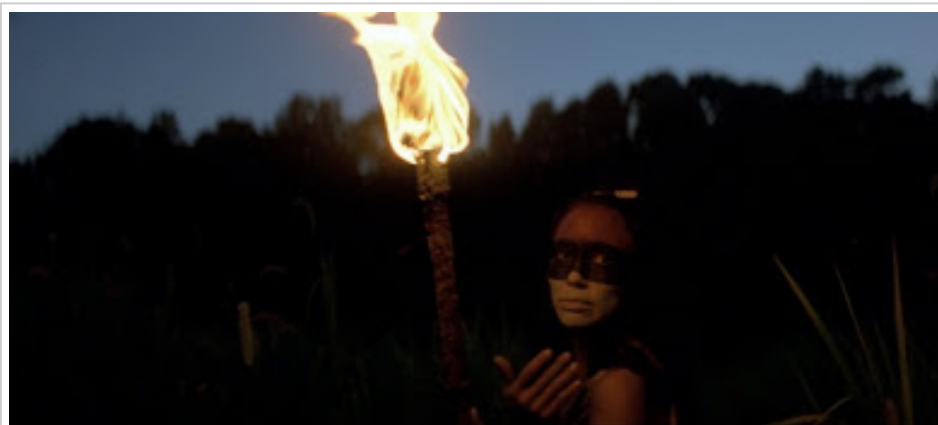
AND LAST (AN EPIGRAPH)

"Consent is, on earth, always a risk, as democracy is, and hence is always accompanied by a knowledge of being compromised. So understood, consent is the show of a readiness for change, of allegiance to a state of society responsive to a call for change. This is how I present the enduring comedies of remarriage in their conversation with society, and how I see Astaire's farewell gesture, as he merges into the shifting crowd on the pavement outside the Arcade. The question is therefore how compromised consent is shown, is made—in Locke's use of the terms—express as opposed to tacit. The idea is not to hedge consent, as if your commitment were incomplete, but to give it in the knowledge that its object is still in essential part idea, its existence incomplete. This creates a romance of America, but it tends to make those who are not ambassadors into boosters, the former uneasy about the future, and somewhat guilty because of it, the latter refusing uneasiness, and

Seattle International Film Festival
2008 (7)
Sheila O'Malley (14)
Shooting Down Pictures (35)
Short Cuts (1)
Slant Magazine (1)
Stanley Cavell (1)
Stanley Kramer (1)
Stanley Kubrick (1)
Star Wars (2)
Steadicam (2)
Stephen Kijak (1)
Steven Boone (7)
Steven Cooper (1)
Steven Spielberg (2)
Summer of '83 (2)
Summer of '83: Krull (1)
Summer of '83: Staying Alive (1)
Tarsem (1)
Ted Kennedy (1)
Ted Pigeon (3)
Terrence Malick (6)
The Black Dahlia (1)
The Criterion Collection (27)
The Dark Knight (2)
The Diatribe (2)
The Go-Between (1)
The Happening (1)
The New World (5)
The President's Analyst (1)
The Rock (1)
The Sopranos (20)
The Sopranos: Season 6 (20)
The Wire (26)
The Wire: Season 4 (14)
The Wire: Season 5 (10)
The X-Files (1)
The X-Files: I Want to Believe (1)
Theme Parks (1)
Time Out New York (TONY) (1)
To See If I'm Smiling (1)
Todd VanDerWerff (42)
Tom Cruise (1)
Tom Stempel (14)
Top 10 (1)
Torchwood (26)

proud of it."

—Stanley Cavell, *Philosophy The Day After Tomorrow*, "Henry James Returns to America and to Shakespeare"—



Ryland Walker Knight is the editor and creator of the blog *VINYL IS HEAVY*. He gets goofy at *freeNIKES!*, where he likes to talk basketball and rap, among other things. His writing can also be found at *The Auteurs Notebook* and *Reverse Shot* from time to time.

Keith Uhlich is editor of *The House Next Door*.

POSTED BY RYLAND WALKER KNIGHT AT 1:19 PM 

LABELS: CONVERSATION, KEITH UHLICH, PHILOSOPHY, RYLAND WALKER KNIGHT, STANLEY CAVELL, TERRENCE MALICK, THE NEW WORLD

9 COMMENTS:

 **Rasselas** said...

Interesting. I thought I was the only one who felt some sort of connection between *TNH* and *Miami Vice*, after I saw both in the theater. Ryland, any chance of an excerpt from that comparison piece?

1/02/2009 7:55 PM

 **Matt Zoller Seitz** said...

Wonderful work, guys. I wish I could have taken part myself, but work/life kept getting in the way.

Here's a link to an [old post](#) wherein I haul out an Emerson quote in reference to Malick and "The New World."

I totally agree that Malick and Mann are unlikely aesthetic bedfellows. That bed also contains Wong Kar-Wai. They're all practitioners of what wisers minds than mine have termed "a cinema of moments."

1/02/2009 8:56 PM

Toronto International Film Festival
2008 (2)

Travis Mackenzie Hoover (13)

TV Recap (204)

TV Review (1)

UnderGroundOnline (UGO) (13)

Understanding Screenwriting (14)

URL Change (1)

Vadim Rizov (78)

Vice Presidential Debate 2008 (1)

Video (1)

Video Criticism (3)

W.M. Akers (1)

Walt Disney (1)

Walter Hill (1)

Werner Herzog (1)

Will Lasky (3)

William Holden (3)

Willy Wonka and the Chocolate
Factory (1)

Wim Wenders (1)

Woody Allen (1)

Yasujiro Ozu (1)

Year in Review (1)

Zachary Wigon (14)

Zack Winestone (1)

THE HOUSE RECOMMENDS

All These Wonderful Things (AJ
Schnack)

Also Like Life (Kevin B. Lee)

Benten Films (Andrew Grant & Aaron
Hillis)

Beyond the Multiplex (Andrew
O'Hehir)

Big Media Vandalism (Steven Boone,
et al)

Boredom at Its Boredest (Michael
Tully)

Bright Lights After Dark

Bright Lights Film Journal

Chicago Reader (Jonathan
Rosenbaum, J.R. Jones, et al)

Cinemanía (Dan Jardine)

Cinepassion (Fernando F. Croce)

Dave Kehr (Official Site)

 Matt Zoller Seitz said...

Also, both "Vice" and "World" feature a lovestruck Colin Farrell. Lovestruck Colin Farrell = movie star. Maybe the only instance in which he equals that. (He was a movie star in "Tigerland" because his character was in love...with himself!)

1/02/2009 9:34 PM

 JJ said...

Apologies if I've posted this story before, but if I have'nt, it seems to be worth mentioning....

A couple of months ago, I got to speak to Stanley Cavell about his memories of Malick's time at Harvard. He said that he, Malick, and some of Malick's fellow students (and this was when the Harvard student body was still all-male) used to sit up late into the night in Adams House, where Malick roomed, talking about literature and philosophy.

According to Cavell, Malick was quiet and thoughtful, and did'nt speak much; but when he did, it was usually something brilliant, and revelatory, and whenever he started talking, everyone else stopped, and listened.

1/02/2009 10:59 PM

 Anonymous said...

I bookmarked this site because of the support for The New World. I was stunned at the lazy critiques the critical community threw at the film. Now, and somewhat sadly, I'm much more used to negatively reviewed films actually being very good to masterful. And then again – this site was right on the mark with Miami Vice, with perhaps not enough praise actually. Now everyone I know who is into film analysis puts both of these films on their well-deserved pedestal (and more critical pieces, such as the Vice piece in Sight and Sound, are swinging this way too). All in all, the reviews on this site are the most consistently helpful for trying to fairly review and rate films. (Also, I thought MZS's piece on No Country for Old Men was an example of more recent staple post on here.)

1/03/2009 3:51 AM

 Ryland Walker Knight said...

Thanks, everybody, for your thoughts.

Rasselas: I'm sorry, but I'm still holding onto the work for a little while longer. I talk about it some, though, in the podcast...

Matt: We understand. Thanks, as ever, for the support and friendship.

JJ: Great story. Sounds like what one would expect.

Anon: Thanks from everybody here to you over there/where.

1/03/2009 10:32 AM

 tom hughes said...

Edward Copeland on Film
Elusive Lucidity (Zach Campbell)
Film Freak Central (Walter Chaw, Bill Chambers, et al)
girish (Girish Shambu)
GreenCine Daily (David Hudson)
Hammer to Nail (Michael Tully, Tom Hall, et al)
Jonathan Rosenbaum (Official Site)
Lessons of Darkness (Nick Schager)
Like Anna Karina's Sweater (Filmbrain)
Live at the Heartbreak Lounge (Wallace Stroby)
Liverputty (Wagstaff, Jeffrey Hill, et al)
Movie Geeks United!
Movies Into Film (N.P. Thompson)
My Five Year Plan (Brendon Bouzard)
My Life, at 24 Frames Per Second (Kenji Fujishima)
No Trivia (Brandon Soderberg)
Punitive Superego (Andrew Dignan)
Reverse Shot (Michael Koresky, Jeff Reichert, et al)
Roger Ebert's Journal
Roslindale Monogatari (Michael Kerpan)
Scanners (Jim Emerson)
Self-Styled Siren
Sergio Leone and the Infield Fly Rule (Dennis Cozzalio)
Slant Magazine (Ed Gonzalez, Nick Schager, et al)
Some Came Running (Glenn Kenny)
Spout Blog (Karina Longworth, et al)
Thanks for the Use of the Hall (Dan Sallitt)
The Chicago Sun-Times (Roger Ebert)
The Man Who Viewed Too Much (Mike D'Angelo)
The Projection Booth (Robert Humanick)
The Reeler (S.T. VanAirdale, et al)
The Rued Morgue (Ross Ruediger)
The Screengrab
The Sheila Variations (Sheila O'Malley)

Great post guys, you have moved me to bring out my copy later this week.

I also *love* JJ's anecdote above, so thanks for sharing that.

1/03/2009 8:22 PM

 kai said...

Great post! Does anyone know if this cut will be released theatrically, in some way? (Because I fear that here in germany we won't even get the DVD...)

By the way: I wonder why there are no reports to be found *anywhere* (especially here at the "House"!) about Malick's new film "Tree of Life" - because the film obviously is already in post production...

1/04/2009 8:54 AM

 Tom said...

*By the way: I wonder why there are no reports to be found *anywhere* (especially here at the "House"!) about Malick's new film "Tree of Life" - because the film obviously is already in post production...*

My gut feeling is that there is no news about *Tree of Life* because Malick runs a tight ship. We won't here any advance news about it until Malick wants us to, i.e., when it's actually finished. (And anyway, it's not the type of movie which generates a lot of pre-release buzz, even if it does have Brad Pitt in it.) Which is okay with me, since no advance news of a Malick film can ever really do justice to a Malick film.

1/05/2009 6:38 AM

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

[Tomato Nation \(Sarah D. Bunting\)](#)
[Trailers From Hell \(Joe Dante, et al\)](#)
[UGO \(UnderGroundOnline\)](#)
[Vinyl is Heavy \(Ryland Walker Knight, et al\)](#)
[Welcome to Wilnervision \(Norm Wilner\)](#)
[What's Alan Watching? \(Alan Sepinwall\)](#)
[When Canses Were Classeled \(Eric Henderson\)](#)
[Zero For Conduct \(Michael Atkinson\)](#)
[Zoom In Online](#)

THE HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS

[Steve Garmhausen](#)
[N.P. Thompson](#)
[brotherfromanother](#)
[Peet Gelderblom](#)
[Jason Bellamy](#)
[John Lichman](#)
[Dan Jardine](#)
[Jonathan Pacheco](#)
[Ryland Walker Knight](#)
[andrew schenker](#)
[That Fuzzy Bastard](#)
[Alan Sepinwall](#)
[Will Lasky](#)
[Max Winter](#)
[Aaron Aradillas](#)
[Matt Maul](#)
[Z. Wigon](#)
[Lauren Wissot](#)
[odienator](#)
[chris anthony diaz](#)
[Vadim](#)
[Josh Shelov](#)
[Jeremiah Kipp](#)
[Jeffrey Hill](#)
[Andrew Chan](#)
[rob humanick](#)
[Keith Uhlich](#)
[wstrobey](#)
[barry maupin](#)
[Michael Crowley](#)