Foreword – By way of other directions

In order to go forward, one had to go back.
To go back, one had to turn around.
To turn around one had to pull over and look to see if anyone was coming.

——Linda Mussmann, *Civil War Chronicles*, 1988

It is our unparalleled glory that we have no reminiscences of battlefields [. . .] Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity?

——John L. O'Sullivan, "The Great Nation of Futurity," 1839

So now then we begin again this history of us.

——Gertrude Stein, *The Making of Americans*, 1925

Whenever it all begins again,
I will be waiting.

——Sherman Alexie, *Crazy Horse Speaks*, 1993

I went to Civil War. I did not go to an archive, though that would have been the most legitimate path to set for myself as a scholar interested in history. Instead, I went to witness battles mounted in the *again* of a time out of joint, as a scholar interested in history's theatrical returns.

As such, the direction of my travel was never completely clear to me.

This book, too, weaves a crosshatched path in multiple directions between performance art, United States Civil War reenactment, performance theory, theatre events, photography, statuary, and all manner of "live art." The questions at its base concern the temporality of reenactment and the inter(in)animation – to borrow a word from Fred Moten and John Donne – of intermedia, of syncopated time, and of theatrical acts.

In some ways, this is a "Foreword" which is not one. That is, the opening to this book – more than any of the separate chapters – takes kaleidoscopic turns in intersecting directions, touching on multiple times, variant places, and overlapping fields of academic inquiry. If there can be an orienting point, heading in, it would be that the experience of reenactment (whether in replayed art or in replayed war)

is an intense, embodied inquiry into temporal repetition, temporal recurrence. As such, an exploration of affect *as* inquiry (what in Chapter 4 I explore as the hard labor of the live) – and the promises and pitfalls of such investigation – is at the edges of every example of reenactment this book offers for analysis. The book begins, in Chapters 1 and 2, by exploring US Civil War reenactments, but it turns thereafter to theatre, performance, art, and photography, and returns, at the close, to questions of battle reenactment in the frame of art through Allison Smith's queer call to arms in her 2005 work *The Muster*. If the opening chapters suspend, though only partially, questions of the political stakes in reenactment, those political stakes – especially with regard to questions of the Confederacy – return at the end of the book, where the aim is to explore the sharp, double-edged politics (and perhaps even the hazards) of *affiliating* battle reenactment with decidedly Left-wing art practices, as well as to ask the question of what it means to *protest* then, now.

By way of other directions

"Reenactment" is a term that has entered into increased circulation in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century art, theatre, and performance circles. The practice of re-playing or re-doing a precedent event, artwork, or act has exploded in performance-based art alongside the burgeoning of historical reenactment and "living history" in various history museums, theme parks, and preservation societies.[1] In many ways, reenactment has become the popular and practice-based wing of what has been called the twentieth-century academic "memory industry."[2]

In the syncopated time of reenactment, where *then* and *now* punctuate each other, reenactors in art and war romance and/or battle an "other" time and try to bring that time – that prior moment – to the very fingertips of the present. Read from front to back, the direction of my interest and inquiry in this book seems to lead away from "war" and into "art," but direction, here, is never a linear matter and my arguments do not rest on a linear logic of "from–to" nor do they rely on the parsing tool of "continuum." Across chapters in this book, my interests (at their impossibly broadest) concern the pulse and return across (in)discrete borders defining apparent beginnings and apparent endings of events, performances, and objects of representation in a variety of venues from battlegrounds to museums of modern art to theatre stages. I am interested in repetitions, doublings, and the call and response of cross- and inter-authorships. I am interested in the citational "get-up" of the before, during, and after of any action *taking place* in or as re-action: the affected effects and after-affects of art/events posed as relative to origin(al)s. I wonder here not only about the "as if" but also about the "what if": what if time (re)turns? What does it *drag* along with it? I am interested in the attempt to literally touch time through the residue of the gesture or the cross-temporality of the pose.

Ironically, the ultimate course of this book was influenced by a great deal of reenactment art I witnessed (or learned about) in countries other than the United States – from Xavier Le Roy's 1996 reenactment of Yvonne Rainer's 1970 Chair and Pillow Dance from her *Continuous Project – Altered Daily* which I saw performed

in Stockholm, to Tania Bruguera's 1986 reenactment of Ana Mendieta's work in Cuba which she described to me at length in 2008 in Berlin as a means to "bring Ana back to Cuba" across her own body, to Jonathan Deller's 2001 reenactments of the Battle of Orgreave in South Yorkshire, England, which I viewed in documentation, to Lilibeth Cuenca's "Woman on Painting" and "Never Mind the Pollock" and "A Void," which I witnessed several times in several different versions in several European cities – to many other instances of art replaying precedent art. Such works are variously presented as reconstruction (a word preferred by Slovene theatre director Janez Janša), as reperformance (a word now common in art museums), as reenactment, or as re-do.[3] Nevertheless, and despite the global nature of the phenomenon of reenactment (as well as the phenomenon of "civil war"[4]), the focus of *this* book engages the tangled temporalities and crisscrossed geographies that interanimate a United States imaginary – though, clearly, the US imaginary is neither isolated to the US, nor uninformed by global cross-currents. In fact, contemporary scholarship on US performance has made it abundantly clear that thinking genealogically about US performance requires thinking in terms of circum-Atlantic, Pacific Rim, and hemispheric exchange.[5]

The US-specific slant of this book arose in part when I began research on US Civil War battle reenactments in the late 1990s, on the eve of the burgeoning of reenactment in art practice, and as such the force of my thought focused its energies early around what might be considered a particular US relationship to memory and futurity – as this Foreword will illustrate. During the long course of this writing, the popular pastime of US Civil War reenactment seemed at times to come very close and at other times to be leagues away from reenactments of performance art that recently have taken pride of place in such national treasures as the Guggenheim and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. What could these disparate reenactive energies – one the epitome of the "hobbyist" popular, the other the epitome of the "artist" elite – possibly have to say to each other?

Art and war: art

Helpfully, on March 10, 2010, just as I was completing this book, the *New York Times* ran an article titled "A Rebel Form Gains Favor. Fights Ensue."[6]

The article, by Carol Kino, concerned the recent upsurge of attempts on the part of art museums she termed temples of high modernism to collect and curate live performance. Kino reported specifically on a "workshop" about the preservation and exhibition of performance art held at MoMA in New York in advance of an exhibit of reenactments of Marina Abramović's performance art work. The exhibit, titled *The Artist Is Present*, was curated by Klaus Biesenbach and made possible in part by LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton Inc. It ran from March 14 to May 31, 2010, and featured documents and artifacts of Abramović's historic performance work as well as reenactments by "other people" employed by the museum. The most widely discussed part of the exhibition was its inclusion of a new durational piece in which Abramović sat live, as still as a statue, for the entirety of the open hours of the museum during the exhibit.[7] The "fights" that ensued at the workshop in

advance of the event were fights among the participant performance artists, but Kino's title "Fights Ensue" also gestures to a much longer history of battle between mainstream art establishments and rebel performance artists (sometimes feminist, other times influenced by feminism whether acknowledged or not).

> "Reperformance is the new concept, the new idea!" [Marina] Abramović proclaimed at the workshop. "Otherwise it will be dead as an art form." [Joan] Jonas grabbed a mike. "Well, maybe for you," she said heatedly. "But not for me."[8]

For the moment let us ignore the fact that reperformance is as old as . . . well, ancient Rome, to name one site of its frequent enunciation, or parlor games in Victorian England to name another.[9] Still, the battle of the "rebel art" to enter the esteemed galleries of high art museums should be approached with a great measure of irony, since so much performance-based artwork in the 1960s and 1970s (influenced by a lengthy heritage of "anti-art" avant-garde forms) was arguably more invested *at that time* in seceding from the exclusionary union of Great Masters than in joining it. Much of that work, *at that time*, was also invested in the impossibility of reperformance – what Amelia Jones has called the "heroic claims" that performance is "the only art form to guarantee the presence of the artist," a guarantee that Jones has long been articulate about debunking.[10]

Curators like Nancy Spector and Jennifer Blessing, who produced Abramović's *Seven Easy Pieces*, a series of reperformances in which Abramović collaborated with artists' estates to reenact precedent pieces of performance art at the Guggenheim in New York in 2005, deserve praise for bravely (and smartly) entering the fray of live performance to interrogate ways to re-present, in the twenty-first century, the strong current of live art in twentieth-century expression. But whatever the curators' interests, Marina Abramović herself is interested in the "correct" transmission of "seminal" works, including "extremely strict instructions," payment of copyright, and permissions to reperform[11] – and she sees the move into venerated art museums as ensuring her ability to control history from beyond the grave. Kino wrote about *Seven Easy Pieces* in her "Fights Ensue" *New York Times* article:

> Ms. Abramović saw [*Seven Easy Pieces*] as a way "to take charge of the history of performance." In the 1990s, as younger artists became interested in work of the '60s and '70s, she said she noticed that some were restaging historical works themselves, often without consulting or even crediting the originator. "I realized this is happening because performance is nobody's territory," she said. "It's never been mainstream art and there's no rules." Finding this unjust, she decided to set them herself, by recreating the works in consultation with the relevant artists and estates. Better she should do it now, she said, because "they will do it anyway when you're dead behind your back."

The tangle in Abramović's thinking in advance of herself as dead underscores that the *battle* of much reenactment, in art and in war, is a battle concerning the future of the past.

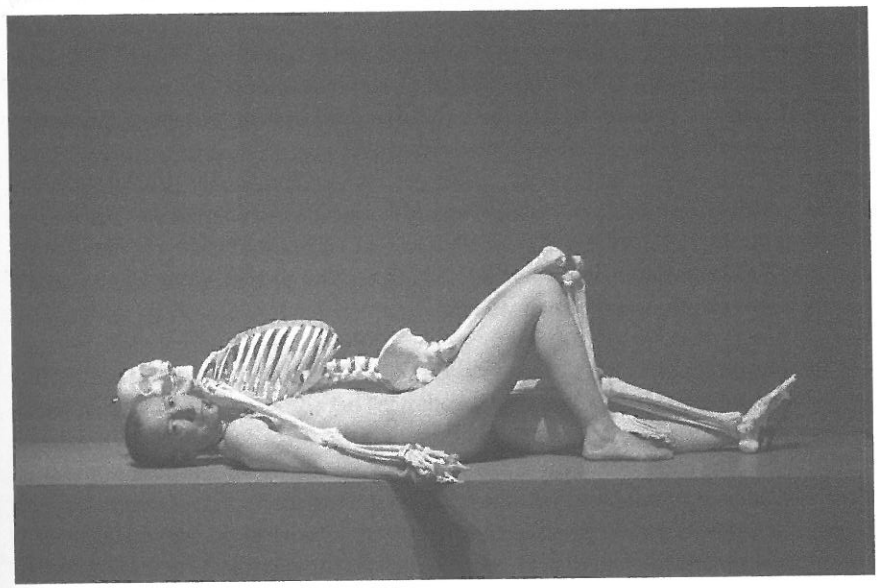

Figure 0.1 Reperformance of Marina Abramović, *Nude with Skeleton* (2002/05), 2010. Pictured in this image: Deborah Wing-Sproul. © 2010 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photo: Jonathan Muzikar.

Kino ends her article on the "rebel form" with a statement by Chrissie Iles, curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art and a scholar who has written a great deal on Abramović's work:

> "Performance challenges categorization, which was originally its point," Ms. Iles said. "But museums are about archiving, categorizing, and indexing." It's not always an easy fit, but "maybe what's interesting is the way in which the past is reframed in the present."[12]

One wonders when and what the "original point" Iles cites for performance might be taken to be – Aristotle had ideas on this, as have many others in a long history of thinkers and performance makers who grapple with art, mimesis, and repetition. But Iles is clearly referring to an "original point" of performance as concerns the modern visual art museum, and the challenge to categorization in that context is certainly correct – despite the fact that Abramović struggles to insist that performance is a discrete category, and seeks to categorize it according to a set of "moral rules" for conservation. Still, the fact remains that the visual arts have historically forgotten or overlooked other histories of performance – usually by handily dismissing them (as if nodding to Plato's doctrine of ideal forms) as stagey, fake, or *theatrical*.[13] The passion and fury in Michael Fried's 1967 diatribe against theatricality in minimalist art still rings loud and clear, and though performance

artists such as Abramović storm the museum as a "rebel form" they are oddly armed with the long-tired tools of the antitheatricalist, arguing in the name of medial specificity that performance (unlike theatre) is "pure" and "raw"[14] (an issue we will return to in Chapter 4). Similarly, though Abramović speaks often of copyright, she shies away from any association with drama or theatre, preferring "music" and "literature" as her reference points:

> My idea was to establish certain moral rules. If someone wants to remake a performance, they must ask the artist for the rights and pay for it, just like it's done with music or literature. For me, this is the honest way to do it, even if you want to make your own version.[15]

Unlike Abramović's efforts to divorce reperformance from the taint of theatricality (she speaks of having to "de-act" and "de-dance" her students[16]), much of this book, in contrast, will be about the tangle of explicit theatricality and time. It can be argued that any time-based art encounters its most interesting aspect in the fold: the double, the second, the clone, the uncanny, the *againness* of (re)enactment. This book, then, troubles the prevalence of presentism, immediacy, and linear time in most thinking about live performance. As a result, in this project I am uninterested in Abramović's "moral rules" for a practice she refers to as the linear transmission of "seminal" works of performance art, charting a patrilineage of "masters." Instead, I am curious to ask here about a more porous approach to time and to art – time as full of holes or gaps and art as capable of falling or crossing in and out of the spaces between live iterations. I am invested, too, in the curious inadequacies of the copy, and *what inadequacy gets right* about our faulty steps backward, and forward, and to the side. Rather than a unidirectional art march toward an empiric future of preservation, time plays forward and backward and sideways across the imagined community of an otherwise spatialized national plot. This book explores the warp and draw of one time in another time – the *theatricality* of time – or what Gertrude Stein, thinking about *Hamlet*, referred to as the nervousness of "syncopated time."[17]

Here, the subject is the trouble between history proper and its many counter-constituents: the resilience of the seemingly forgotten (that nevertheless recurs); the domain of error and unreliability known as flesh memory in the embodied repertoires of live art practices; the irruptive experience of what Toni Morrison has termed involuntary and traumatic "rememory"[18] and, conversely but relatedly, the irruptive experience of what Adrienne Rich has termed voluntary and redressive acts of "re-vision":

> Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for women more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival.[19]

Rich was writing about *texts*, but the same sense of "re-vision" – if coupled with re-gesture, re-affect, re-sensation – might be applicable to performances or enactments

of what Judith Butler has termed "sedimented acts."[20] Entering, or reenacting, an event or a set of acts (acts of art or acts of war) from a critical direction, a different temporal angle, may be, as Rich suggests, an act of survival, of keeping alive *as* passing on (in multiple senses of the phrase "to pass"). This keeping alive is not a liveness considered always in *advance of* death nor in some way *after* death, as Abramović might prefer in wanting to monumentalize her work to commemorate her as dead in advance, sealing her, in this way, into the archive. Rather, it is more a constant (re)turn of, to, from, and between states in animation – an inter-(in)animation (to quote Moten, to quote Donne again). For "survival," to use Rich's word, may be a critical mode of remaining, as well as a mode of remaining critical: passing on, staying alive, in order to pass on the past *as past*, not, indeed, as (only) present. Never (only) present.

If the above crosshatch of words seems more playfully poetic than cogently sensible, it is my hope that the book as a whole will elucidate my ideas. But perhaps we can close this opening section of this opening Foreword with Moten and Donne, again. John Donne used the word "interinanimates" in his 1633 love poem "The Exstasie" in which he tells of lovers lying still as stone statues while their souls intertwine, redouble, and multiply. Here, the live and the stone are inter(in)animate and the liveness of one or deadness of the other is ultimately neither decidable nor relevant. I. A. Richards, the architect of mid-twentieth century New Criticism, expropriated the term and applied it to poetic "attitudes" generally (interestingly, "attitudes" is also a nineteenth-century term for tableaux vivants). And, most interestingly for this project, Fred Moten has recently used the term "inter-inanimates" to suggest the ways live art and media of mechanical and technological reproduction, such as photography, cross-identify, and, more radically, cross-constitute and "improvise" each other.[21] Michel de Certeau, a philosopher of history and theorist of space, suggests something similar in a resonant sentence that has occupied my thought for years:

> The passing faces on the street seem [. . .] to multiply the indecipherable and nearby secret of the monument.[22]

In this sentence, to which we will return in Chapter 5, the monumental and the passing live co-constitute each other in a relationship that can be as much about forgetting (bypassing) as commemorating (monumentalizing). Rather than plotting for lineage, or privileging monument over passer-by, it is inter(in)animation that lies at the heart of my inquiry here.

Art and war: war

In 1998 I began to attend US Civil War battle reenactments to try and understand what reenactors were doing and why they were doing it. The crisis "oxymoronically known as the Civil War," as Shirley Samuels writes, or the War Between the States, or (as sometimes referred to by those sympathetic to the "rebel" Confederacy) the War of Northern Aggression, was fought in the US between 1861 and 1865, during

the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln.[23] Over 600,000 died. As textbooks will have it, the defeat of the Southern Confederacy occasioned the Emancipation Proclamation and the abolishment of slavery, but historians of various stripes continue to debate in seemingly endless reverberation the relative importance of slavery, territorial expansion, the rise of industrial capitalism, and other factors as sources of the conflict. Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865, five days after the surrender of Robert E. Lee. Civil War reenactments began forty-eight years later, in 1913, when elderly soldiers met again on their own battlegrounds. But the "particular hobby" or "popular pastime" of Civil War reenactment by "history buffs" or "enthusiasts" began to grow in the 1950s as the last people who could remember the war were passing away.[24] Many of these "hobbyists" today fight to keep the war "alive," and many would say, "it's not over."

In the course of attending Civil War reenactments, I repeatedly betrayed my own biases in that I was continually surprised by the complexities involved in the (re)actions I witnessed. Problems of ambivalence, simultaneous temporal registers, anachronism, and the *everywhere* of error were not lost on any of the reenactors with whom I spoke, despite their common depiction as, by and large, simple or naïve "enthusiasts." In affective engagement, many of them find reenactment to be, if not the thing itself (the past), somehow also *not not* the thing (the past), as it passes across their bodies in again-time. In practice, reenactors draw a distinction between

Figure 0.2 Unnamed Civil War reenactor, lying "dead" after having been carried off the battlefield to the surgeon's tent at a reenactment on June 4, 2005, at Chase Farm in Lincoln, RI. Photo by Rebecca Schneider.

living history and reenactment, but the "liveness" of the matter is key across multiple styles, as is the ambivalence of the live, or its inter(in)animation with the no longer live.

When I began attending reenactments, I had only recently completed a book on feminist performance art of the explicit body and I was very confused as to why I was attending. I often asked myself what I was doing at such events. The politics of many of these players, some of whom truly fought so that "the South should win," were decidedly not the shared politics I had enjoyed with most of the performance artists I had written about in *The Explicit Body in Performance*. What kinship could these gritty war game players – chewing on salt pork and marching about battlefields in games where, often, "an unapologetic masculinity" was romanced and even legislated – share with my previous studies? What could supremely conservative notions of authenticity – wanting to control and correct events from beyond the grave to resemble a romantic notion of men as men and women as women – have to do with feminism?[25] And yet, the questions I brought to the battlefield concerned the pose, imposture, imposition, and the replay of evidence (photographs, documents, archival remains) back across the body in gestic negotiation – something I had argued that feminist artists of the explicit body had been engaging in. If in 1989 Barbara Kruger had imaged "Your Body is a Battleground" as a moment of feminist art and indicative of "the war at home,"[26] perhaps, I thought, "Your Battleground is a Body" might have an inverse, twisted kind of resonance in historical reenactment. I wanted to travel backward through Kruger's aphorism, to find out what that might mean. Crossing time sometimes meant crossing borders of comfortable political affiliation – as will be discussed in more depth in the Afterword – and such crossing often caused a distinct discomfort at the edge of very difficult questions.

I attended multiple Civil War reenactments between 1998 and 2006 where I observed participants putting themselves *in the place of* the past, reenacting that past by *posing as if* they were, indeed, soldiers and civilians of the 1860s. I did not participate, except as a witness to their actions. That is, I did not, myself, reenact – except insofar as witnessing any event is to participate to some degree – to *have been there*.[27] Still, when the event is a reenactment of a prior event the precision in "being, there, then" opens to question: Who? Where? When? To witness a reenactment is to be a bystander, a passer-by, possibly out of step, in the leak of another time, or in a syncopated temporal relationship to the event that (some) participants hope will *touch the actual past*, at least in a partial or incomplete or fragmented manner. My presence and the presence of others who did not cross-temporal-dress (and at most of the events I attended, those who did not cross-dress were fewer in number than those who did) always served as a reminder that it was not, or not *entirely*, 1861, 62, 63, 64, or 65.

What I witnessed attending reenactments was often surprisingly more than I had bargained for and this book is about the "more" of the bargain. Because I did not participate as a reenactor, this book is not about the experience of reenacting though it is about the experience of participating in reenactment. The book is a theoretical investigation into reenactment as an activity that nets us all (reenacted,

reenactor, original, copy, event, re-event, bypassed, and passer-by) in a knotty and porous relationship to time. It is about the temporal tangle, about the temporal leak, and about the many questions that attend time's returns.

Though the project that became this book diverges significantly from my initial late 1990s research into Civil War reenactment, I became interested in the effort on the part of many battle reenactors to achieve a radically rigorous mimesis many of them feel can trip the transitivity of time. I am fascinated that for many reenactors there exists the lure: if they repeat an event *just so*, getting the details as close as possible to fidelity, they will have touched time and time will have recurred. Thus, "enthusiasts" play across their bodies particulars of "what really happened" gleaned from archival "evidence" such as testimony, lithographs, and photographs as a way, ironically, of "keeping the past alive." But they also engage in this activity as a way of accessing what they feel the documentary evidence upon which they rely misses – that is, live experience. Many fight not only to "get it right" as it *was* but to get it right as it *will be* in the future of the archive to which they see themselves contributing.

If Civil War reenactment provides a clear-cut case of the effort to play one time in another time – the effort to find "that was then" inside "this is now" – the tangle of then in now is far more widespread than the reenactment rendered explicit on American battlefields of wars past. Indeed, looking even cursorily at reenactment as a practice one is soon hounded by the paradoxes of performativity and the fecund question (one as long-beloved of feminist theory as it has been of sociology, linguistics, and performance studies) that all representational practice, and indeed all communicative behavior, is composed in reiteration, is engaged in citation, is *already* a practice of reenactment, or what Richard Schechner has termed "restored" or "twice-behaved" behavior.[28] That is, stepping back from the battlefield, we find solidly lodged in twentieth-century critical thought the notion that all bodily practice is, like language itself, always already composed in repetition and repetition is, paradoxically, both the vehicle for sameness and the vehicle for difference or change. Historical battle reenactors, heightening the level of their enterprise to extremes of the minutest possible detail, could be said to make restored behavior (always a basic ingredient in sociality) available for recognition – though, again, by the extremes of cross-temporal citation, they trip daily reenactment into *other daily*, or at least they move, using Eugenio Barba's terms, from "daily" to "extra-daily" behavior – a move Barba sees as a basic signature of theatricality in transcultural perspective.[29]

Citation, repetition, and "twice-behaved behavior," as the very material of daily behavior, provide the basis for why and how reenactors can reenact at all. Think of it this way: Battle reenactors can reenact the US Civil War because they can place their bodies in the gestic compositions – the sedimented sets of acts – that US Civil War soldiers composed when those soldiers were themselves behaving as they had been trained to behave, or as they emulated others to behave, behaviors likewise *and at the time* based on prior practices and precedent notions of what it means and what it might mean to fight. The physical act of fighting, as well as the affective mise en scene of the "theatre of war" in which the fighting took place,

both followed precedent wars and left remains – both following footsteps and leaving footsteps to follow in directions not always, or only, *forward*.[30] The relationship of a "footprint" (to use a prime example of an indexical remain from C. S. Peirce) to bodily memory, or to what Teresa Brennan has called the "transmission of affect," is here a question provoked by historical reenactment, and one taken up in more depth in the chapters that follow. That the camera and the repeating rifle were both novel and privileged tools of the American Civil War is, certainly, one reason that this particular war is so rich a site for contemporary reenactors. It is a war engorged with indexical traces and the technological signatures of a culture increasingly aware of itself as repeating, re-composed, (and as a result of the war) "reconstructed."

Certainly, there is passionate investment in how any war is to be remembered, and the questions of what happened during the Civil War, why it was fought, who "won" the Civil War, or whether the war is actually over continue to see heated debate. Some argue, against common assumption, that the war was won by the South, and others that the war is ongoing.[31] Historian David Blight, for example, sees the war as ongoing in that it is continuing to be fought through commemoration. He reads the 1913 Gettysburg reunion as a battleground on which the fight for racial justice took a beating. Interestingly, Civil War reenactors often cite this reunion as the first reenactment – when veterans approached each other from the positions they had occupied during the "real" battle, this time marching across the field to shake hands. As Blight tells us, the 1913 Gettysburg reunion was attended by over 53,000 white veterans as a "festival of national reconciliation" –a reconciliation, it must be noted, of white America with white America.[32] The reunion was presided over by President Woodrow Wilson, a Southerner who had just fired a large number of black federal employees, imposed rigid policies of segregation on those that remained, and who would, in three years time, allow the showing of the racist film *Birth of a Nation* at the White House.

Blight's point is that segregation was *enacted* as policy in tandem with, if not by means of, *reenactment*. To remember the history of Civil War *reenactment* then (odd as that twist may seem), is not only to remember those remembering the Civil War, but to remember the part played by reenactment in the ongoing history of policy in the US in terms of negotiations of civil rights, veterans' rights, attitudes toward war, terrorism, and "war on terrorism" – a point to which we will return at various moments throughout this book.[33] One need think only of President George W. Bush selecting the USS *Abraham Lincoln* as the battleship on which to stand to declare, bogusly, the war in Iraq *over* in 2003. One need think only of the 2009 Lincolnalia in the inauguration of President Barack Obama to see the push-me-pull-you struggle over the signs and symbols of the Civil War by those who would redeploy those signs and symbols to enact policy stasis or policy change.

A range of approaches

At the brink of the US "War on Terror" in the late 1990s and early '00s, and from the seemingly safe vantage point of 140 years, I traveled "back" to the battlefields

of the American Civil War: Gettysburg, Antietam, Vicksburg, and other sites that sought to pass as Gettysburg, Antietam, Vicksburg. I went to ghost the Civil War as if from its future, to peer both ahead and behind at the war's inexhaustible corpse as it twitched and jerked across the bodies of reenactors in the algebra of its own strange aftermath. I found that I wasn't entirely safe. And it wasn't entirely dead.

Who *are* these reenactors?

Artist Allison Smith asked much the same question when she called artists and activists together to create a reenactment of a Civil War battle encampment. Smith staged a reenactment titled *The Muster* as art in 2005 in New York City, asking: "Who are these people?" and "Why do they do this?" In the wake of this question, she calls for "intellectuals, activists, artists, and queers" to "engage for a moment, however audaciously, in a confederate fantasy, despite inevitable associations to the horrific institution of slavery and the perplexing persistence of Civil War battle reenactments."[34] Smith, whose art event and its questions are examined closely in

Figure 0.3 "Allison Smith, Mustering Officer." Allison Smith, 2004. *The Muster*, Mildred's Lane, Beach Lake, PA. Photo credit Bob Braine. Courtesy of the artist.

the Afterword, is indeed audacious in her call. *Despite* slavery? *Despite* horror? What can possibly be the critical status of this "despite"? Smith makes a radically uneasy affiliation between wars past and war present (the "War on Terror") in a form she calls "trench art" – wartime-art dug out of the spaces between times, between fields of inquiry, and between media – deeply discomforting sites of crossfire, where confusion between advance and retreat requires retrenchment and the critical analysis implied in *digging deeper*.

Smith staged battle camp explicitly as *camp* art, and the work's playful and carnivalesque war camp indirectly raises the question of what is *not* reenacted in popular history, a topic taken up productively in Lisa Woolfork's work on slave auction reenactments in *Embodying American Slavery in Contemporary Culture*.[35] Indeed, performance art and theatre reenactments in an art context can sometimes sit in an uneasy relationship, especially regarding the stakes of authenticity. Whether it should or not, the frame of "art" excuses errors and omissions – even expects them – in ways not excused as easily for "history." Most living history events and battle reenactments are neither framed (or re-framed) as art nor do they pretend to anything artistic – preferring instead the "authentic" and the "real." Rather, living history events and battle reenactments occur as "popular pastime" or "heritage activity" in some nether-space between theatre, history museum, religious ritual, sport, hobby, craft fair, archaeological dig, educational field trip, anthropological fieldwork, religion, and . . . yes, art installation.

Art reenactment practices contain a range of approaches. Some artists, like Allison Smith, borrow happily from some of the cross-disciplinary, cross-medial, cross-temporal, kinda-hobby/kinda-professional slipperiness of the category of reenactment as it exists more broadly in popular activities and invite "everyone" to participate. Other artists, like Abramović, disdain the popular "pastime" and reenact precedent art events in the interest of generating an elite, delimited aesthetic to be legitimated by art professionals invested in the purity of an "authentic" and "original" and (ironically) "timeless" act. Some artists try to repeat a precedent event, artifact, or act with as total exactness as possible (the Wooster Group's *Poor Theater* and *Hamlet* are composed of sections with extremely precise reenactment of precedent material, and Rod Dickinson's *Milgram Re-enactment* is invested in deliberate exactitude as well[36]). And still others feel that the true spirit of reenactment should be to "artistically" and "creatively" *interpret* a precedent act, event, or artwork to make it "original" again, not to replicate it or "slavishly" repeat it.[37]

This range of approaches is also evident in war reenactment societies and among individual hobbyists. Some battle reenactors are happy with a "come one, come all" approach to reenactment in which the past is tried on like a piece of clothing or a turn of phrase but not completely accessed. Here participants are encouraged to "get the feel" but not actually to *become*, or become overcome with, the past. However, those reenactors sometimes called "hardcore" are eager to touch an absolute and transcendent historical "authentic" through a repetition of acts as devoid of anachronism and temporal error as humanly possible. Chasing the effort at total immersion in the past, some history reenactment events take place as far away from spectators as possible as hardcore reenactors seek an experience

completely unhampered by its own (future) reception. But most reenactments are staged with spectators invited and even encouraged to take part as active participants. In such cases, spectators are sometimes treated as sports fans, or as theatre audiences. Some reenactors even imagine that spectating "visitors from the future" are fieldworkers and that the reenactors themselves are "native informants."[38]

Amidst the hyper-weird mix of seriousness, frivolity, dress-up, fake blood, real salt pork, statistics on dysentery, mock amputation, and camp humor (both in the sense of tent life and in the sense of self-aware parody) there can arise at times a quasi and queasy sensation of cross-temporal slippage. At various and random moments, amidst the myriad strangeness of anachronism at play, it can occasionally feel "as if" the halfway dead came halfway to meet the halfway living, halfway. That is, despite or perhaps because of the error-ridden mayhem of trying to touch the past, something other than the discrete "now" of everyday life can be said to occasionally occur – or recur. This something other is well known in practices linked to theatre, art, and ritual, if more alien to practices such as historiography that profess to privilege "hard" facts or material remains over "softer," ephemeral traces such as the affective, bodily sensations or (re)actions of those living too far into the future for proper, evidentiary recall. The something other that can sometimes occur at battle reenactments might be Barba's "extra-daily," mentioned above, or we could borrow the word "liminality" from Victor Turner's writing on ritual and performance to discuss the common sense of betwixt and between that occurs during the "seriousness of play."[39] Though, as mentioned, Richard Schechner argues that all human activity – daily or otherwise – involves "restored" or "twice-behaved behavior," we might use his insights to explore how the very explicit *twiceness* of reenactment trips the otherwise daily condition of repetition into reflexive hyper-drive, expanding the experience into the uncanny.

The sense of the past *as past,* even though available to "re-do," or even as available to return to, is key. Elizabeth Freeman has written of queerness in temporal reenactment, reading temporal play as cross-generational negotiation, or what she terms "temporal drag."[40] David Romàn, writing in a similar vein, has coined the phrase "archival drag."[41] For Freeman, analyzing lesbian film and fashion, reenactment actively negotiates the temporal *labor* in subject formation and the social.[42] Freeman's notion of temporal drag can be read as implicitly building upon Homi Bhabha's engagement with temporal lag – or the theory of the "time-lag" he credits to Frantz Fanon's "The Fact of Blackness."[43] In her essay "Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations," Freeman refuses to dismiss temporal replay as "merely" citational, or a matter of simulacra for simulacra's sake, instead reading for the *force* of citation in the political present. She writes:

> To reduce all embodied performances to the status of copies without originals [the past as gone] is to ignore the interesting threat that the genuine *past*-ness of the past sometimes makes to the political present. [. . .] Might some bodies, in registering on their very surfaces the co-presence of several historically specific events, movements, and collective pleasures, complicate or displace the centrality of *gender*-transitive drag to queer performativity? Might they articulate instead a kind of temporal transitivity that does not leave feminism, femininity, or other "anachronisms" behind?[44]

Here, the past can simultaneously be past – genuine pastness – *and on the move*, co-present, not "left behind."

Freeman is writing of the 1997 film *Shulie*, Elisabeth Subrin's shot-by-shot remake of an unreleased 1967 documentary of the same title about the then-unknown art student Shulamith Firestone (who went on to write the influential manifesto *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, 1970). Subrin restaged the documentary and "meticulously duplicated its camerawork," though of course the impossibility of exact replication (the background is 1997, not 1967, etc.) makes for anachronistic touches that haunt the reenactment. Freeman is keen to explore how Subrin's film taps a kind of energy in passing, and she makes clear that this is a mode "fundamental to queer performance." "*Shulie*'s promise lies," she writes, "in what the language of feminist 'waves' and queer 'generations' sometimes effaces: The mutually disruptive energy of moments that are not yet past and yet are not entirely present either."[45]

This "mutually disruptive energy" is compelling, and it is, in Freeman's words, an energy of passing, an energy of affect's transmission.[46] It is one time passing on to and as another time, but also *not quite passing*. One time almost but not fully passing in and as another time. The past can disrupt the present (as when a Civil War reenactor claims that a war is not over), but so too can the present disrupt the past (as when a Civil War reenactor claims that a war is not over); neither are entirely "over" nor discrete, but partially and porously persist. Something is different here than simply remembering, or a simple negotiation with "a time gone by." Thinking through "mutually disruptive energy" implies that the bygone is not entirely gone by and the dead not completely disappeared nor lost, but also, and perhaps more complexly, the living are not entirely (or not only) live.

I am interested in live reenactment work that strives for literal precision rather than tries to avoid it with the rubric "interpretation." Much in the way that Sherrie Levine's appropriation of Walker Evan's photographs or Andy Warhol's appropriation of Campbell's soup or Brillo boxes, or, for that matter, Duchamp's readymades challenged the modernist myth of originality and the "solo" virility of the Great White Straight Male Visual Artist at the level of the object, so perhaps does the effort toward literality in touching the *performing* past trouble the prerogatives of ownership, authorship, authenticity, and "pure" art. For while theatre and its actors, scripts, sets, and emotional dramas have never been assumed to be pure, singular, or authentic, many performance artists and their modernist theatre ancestors – pioneers from Zola to Artaud to Grotowski who eschewed theatricality and conventions of imitation – have sought authenticity, and indeed pitched theatricality against authenticity, looking instead for what Richard Schechner termed "actuals" in 1970 and what Marina Abramović terms "pure and raw" today.[47] For antitheatrical modernist theatre and disappearance-invested or authenticity-driven (even copyright-seeking) performance art, the mantra has generally been: imitation is the opposite of creation; or, it takes a Great Solo Artist

to make art or re-perform art acts; or, auratic art can't be copied because imitation destroys aura; or, true art vanishes in second hands.

The explicit replay of a time-based art troubles the prerogatives of singular artists, the assumptions of forward-marching time, and the frontier-driven development narratives of capital that – like a great perspective machine – invests in the linear geometry of vanishing points. Touching time against itself, by bringing time *again and again* out of joint into theatrical, even anamorphic, relief presents the real, the actual, the raw and the true as, precisely, the zigzagging, diagonal, and crookedly imprecise returns of time.

In Elizabeth Subrin's "meticulous duplication" in *Shulie*, Rod Dickinson's careful reenactment of the Milgram experiments, or the Wooster Group's painstaking reenactment of Grotowski's *Akropolis* as well as their hyper-reenactment of the Richard Burton *Hamlet*, what appears is very *hard work*. The labor of repetition is, in such work, rendered apparent as labor. In the Wooster Group's sardonically titled *Poor Theater*, explored at length in Chapter 4, actors deliver uncannily precise scenes together with the filmic document in a queasy reiteration in which the live actors appear ghost-like and the filmic actors appear oddly reenlivened *across* the undecidable interstices of their cross-temporal mimesis.

The effort to "redo" a performance-based piece *exactly* the same as a precedent piece – that is, not to interpret it anew, but (impossibly?) to stand again in its footprint, in its precise place – not only engages the uncanny (and theatrical) properties of the double, the clone, the second, or even simply "other" people, but

Figure 0.4 The Wooster Group's *Hamlet*, directed by Elizabeth LeCompte, 2007. Background, Richard Burton. Foreground, Scott Shepherd. Photo: © Paula Court.

also challenges the given *placedness* of an original through re-placedness, challenging the singular attributes of the auratic and "timelessness" of "master" arts through the mimetic problem-magic of the *live*. Such reenactment art traverses, performatively, Benjamin's worry over the auratic art object in "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility."[48] Perhaps challenges to the auratic and singular artwork (re)encounter, as Fried already decried in 1967, less the seeming threat of technological or mechanical reproduction than a far more ancient Western anxiety, the revenant of Plato's worry over art in the age of *theatrical* reproducibility.[49]

In the interest of thinking through theatrical reproducibility, I have previously written about solo works in relation to precedent, to call and response, in order to ask whether solo is ever singular. I have written about doubling, about repetition, about cloning, and about patricidal patriarchy's simultaneous dependence upon and anxiety about mimesis.[50] In this project, which grows out of those essays, I ask after the possibility of temporal recurrence and explore the theatrical claim lodged in the logic of reenactment that the past is not (entirely) dead, that it can be accessed *live*, as in, for example, the simplicity of the slogan I encountered on a billboard heading into Gettysburg Pennsylvania in 1999: "Lincoln Lives."

US Civil War reenactors are cited here on the same pages as theatre and performance artists. A photograph here may be approached as "live," and a live act interrogated for its production of a "still." Throughout, the theatrical – most commonly a marker of the inauthentic, fake, overblown, error-ridden, or non-serious – is here taken very seriously. In *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory*, an important work on performance, hybridity, and the "miscegenation of time," Tavia Nyong'o asks an important question:

> Most accounts of historical memory are preoccupied with truth: the possible deviation from the recorded truth that memory affords, the performative acts of reconciliation that truth-telling ostensibly effects, or else the higher truth that embodied, experiential memory somehow obtains over dry, written documents. By contrast, I am preoccupied not with the virtues of getting it right but with the ethical chance that may lie within getting it wrong. What does it mean to mistake a memory, to remember by mistake, or even to remember a mistake?[51]

Nyong'o's question recognizes the warp and woof of theatricality as always knit tightly in and through the so-called real. To ask what mistake gets right, or, what mistake corrects, is particularly pertinent to any study that takes seriously the theatricality of event in tandem with the theatricality of any historical interpretation of event. Michel Foucault, upon whom Nyong'o draws in depth, was trenchant on this point. As Foucault wrote in the essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History":

> [T]he development of humanity is a series of interpretations. The role of genealogy is to record its history: the history of morals, ideals, and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand

> for the emergence of different interpretations, they must be made to appear as events on the *stage* of historical process.[52]

Anti-foundational approaches to history – approaches, like Foucault's, that submit that all epistemic categories of knowledge and modes of knowledge production are themselves historical and must be historicized – often rely on the metaphor of the stage. Making interpretations appear, as Foucault writes, "as events on the stage of historical process" is to underscore not only an interpretation's status *as* event, taking place in time and relative to conditions of possibility that lend it authority, but also to underscore that event as theatrical, which is to say, given to be an event by virtue of being a matter of (re)production: staged, enacted, reenacted. Here the tired mutual exclusivity knit into the binary distinction between the error-ridden theatrical on the one hand and the somehow actual or pure real on the other comes undone, and we can be done with nostalgic proclamations that the map has somehow replaced the "more real" category of the territory, producing everything as "mere" simulacra. There's nothing mere about the theatrical, and moreover, theatricality, like interpretation, is not a matter of the *loss* of some prior, purer *actual*. Rather, in line with Aristotle's rejoinder to Plato, mimesis is what we *do*. To ask how to do things with mimesis might be to ask how to engage with historical process – with history – with the antecedent and subsequent real at/on any given stage of time.

The objection may be raised that terms like mimesis, theatricality, imitation, simulation, the copy, the double, and the fake cross and confuse each other across these pages. One term (say, theatricality) cannot simply slide and morph into a related term (say, imitation). That objection, however, would miss the point: *slippage* is in fact part and parcel of the very words, all related in some way to the mimetic double, that I interweave. "Theatricality" – by which I mean to reference something theatrical, or something of (or reminiscent of) the theatre – is *relative* to mimesis, simulation, doubling, imitating, copying, even if not identical.[53] Identicality is already undone in all of these words, as they are all words for the side-step operation by which one thing stands in for another thing, either as the same or as almost the same but not quite.[54] There is something, too, of *queerness* in this slip and slide.

Queer time, the jump of affect, and temporal drag are all phrases employed in this book at regular intervals. So is "again and again." My reiterations of Adrienne Rich and Toni Morrison earlier in this Foreword are not incidental asides. The tracks that run through the book have been resolutely informed by feminist, queer, and critical race theory, particularly work on what Nyong'o (citing Darby English drawing on W. E. B. Dubois and Frantz Fanon) calls "black representational space" and work Carolyn Dinshaw (drawing on Roland Barthes) calls queer historiography or "the project of constructing queer histories."[55] So, for example, while my writing here on Civil War reenactments does not always, or even primarily, focus on the significant roles race or gender played in the Civil War (whether acknowledged by reenactors or not), the very means I use to *think through reenactment at all* is fundamentally indebted to the work of others who focus on the reverberant problems of dominant history's exclusions.

My attempt here is to piece a quilt using artworks and reenactment events that question temporal singularity in crosshatch with critical theories about time and performance. I use artworks and reenactment events in tandem with critical and cultural theory not only as needle and thread, but also as seam cutters and stitch rippers, working to loosen the *habit* of linear time.[56] Thinking through sewing in fact already borrows another notion from Allison Smith, whose work *The Muster* I discussed briefly above and will return to in the Afterword. For Smith's "Notion Nanny Project," begun in the UK in 2005, the US artist built collaborative relationships with other craftspeople seeking to exchange ideas, skills, objects, and experiences around the practices and politics of the handmade. "Notion Nannies" were popular Civil War-era dolls (called Peddler Dolls in Victorian England). They were miniature representations of itinerant female peddlers who, traveling the countryside, circulated household objects, sewing notions, and home remedies, as well as news and ideas between isolated locales (and certainly between women). In a series of exhibitions in the UK and the US, Smith attended as a contemporary "apprentice, trader, craftsmaker, and storyteller," exhibiting and trading handmade items she collected along the way. Eventually, she was accompanied and replaced by a life-size doll, a clone she had made of herself in the garb of a Notion Nanny, carrying a basket filled with the objects she had collected in her cross-stitching, cross-continent, cross-century travels.

Crossing time in a "nation of futurity"

Notion Nanny Allison Smith, who was born in Manassas, Virginia, describes her investment in cross-temporality as influenced by her experiences growing up in the heartland of the US Civil War – if not exactly *during* the Civil War (she was born in 1972), still in some way enduring it. Growing up in the state of Virginia, Smith was instructed by war's performative remains in a cultural environment so tightly and intricately interwoven between then and now, that neither now nor then resolves to clearly discernable camps. Virginia is a state that prides itself not only on its history of battle, but also on its ongoing battle with history in a lively culture of reenactment. The "official" tourism website of the Commonwealth of Virginia baits the following hook for potential visitors:

> More major Civil War battles took place in Virginia than in any other state. Witness battles, ask questions and/or participate in the camp life of soldiers and their families.[57]

Note that the past tense of one sentence slips effortlessly into the present tense of another. In a sense, www.virginia.org is not peddling the history or even the memory of battlefields, but the *experience* of event, *participation* in the past, and, quite openly, camp "*life*." To "witness" and to "participate" are to attend a scene as it occurs, and thus the experience of Virginia's history is offered *in the future* when one visits or makes a "return visit" – attending again and again.

Virginia is not alone in the US roster of states inviting an experience of return. The Yankee state of Pennsylvania is home to a statue named "Return Visit" that stands in the town square in Gettysburg – a city also marked by the peddling of its past's future, its future past. The statue stands outside the David Wills House where Lincoln famously revised the Gettysburg Address on the night before delivering the speech in 1863. When I visited the house, a wax effigy of Lincoln sat at a writing desk in a second-story bedroom, his pen mid-sentence on a paper that was already fully inscribed.[58] Though it may seem complicated (if historically accurate) to present Lincoln in the process of revision, the "Return Visit" statue on the square just outside is also oddly engaged in the matter of rewriting – if to "speak the speech" (as Shakespeare put it) subjects writing to revision (as we will explore in Chapter 3). That is, amidst the bustle of passers-by, the bronze statue of a fatherly Lincoln appears to invite a bronze late twentieth-century man – a tourist Dad perhaps – to orate the Gettysburg Address himself. Bronze Dad, looking like a Duane Hanson sculpture knock-off and locally known as "Perry Como," holds a text of the Gettysburg Address as if about to speak. Meanwhile, the Bronze Lincoln gestures toward the second-floor bedroom of the Wills House where, for years, his waxen double simultaneously held the pose of perpetual revision. Passers-by often pause for snapshots, striking poses with the well known and the unknown father figures, making their own visit available for return.

Figure 0.5 Return Visit by J. Seward Johnson, Jr., placed on the Gettysburg Square in 1991. The Lincoln statue gestures to the Wills house where Lincoln completed writing the Gettysburg Address. Photo: Rebecca Schneider.

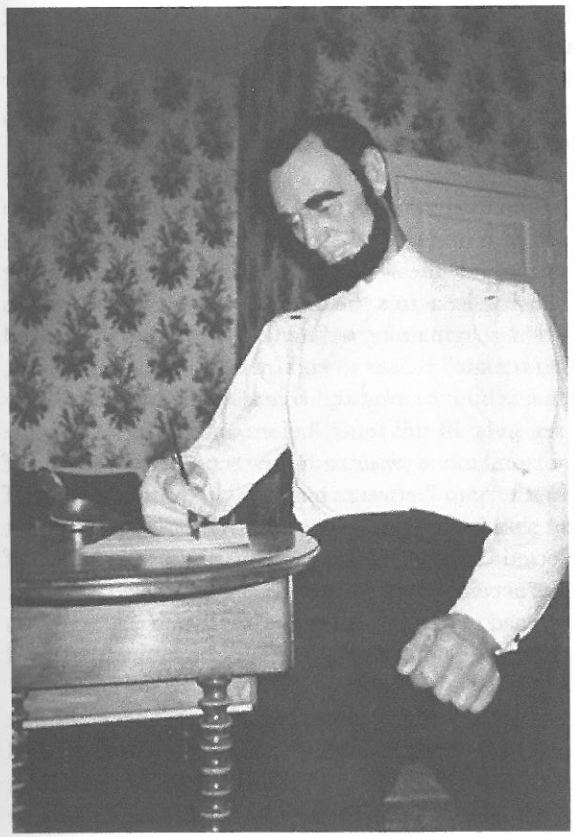

Figure 0.6 A wax effigy of Lincoln working on the Gettysburg Address at the Wills house, Gettysburg, PA, 1999. The pen is poised halfway down a page already fully filled with handwriting. He is rewriting. Photo: Rebecca Schneider.

But none of this is odd at all, considering the longstanding US investment in "the living" as proper site and substance of a past always explicitly unfinished. Recall, as quoted in the epigraph that opens this Foreword, that John O'Sullivan, the coiner of the phrase "Manifest Destiny," wrote in 1839:

> It is our unparalleled glory that we have no reminiscences of battlefields [. . .] Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity?[59]

While Lincoln's 1863 Gettysburg Address is a speech that begins with the securing of a past ("Four score and seven years ago our fathers [. . .]"), it is also a speech that remarks on memory's place less as record offered for history than as ongoing performative act – a *doing*:

> The world will little note nor long remember what we *say* here, but it cannot forget what they *did* here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly

> advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.[60]

Lincoln was helping to dedicate a cemetery with this address, and so arguably "the great task remaining before us" was quite literal as well as symbolic. And yet the bronze statues and wax effigies and relentlessly ongoing mimetic activities of living historians and reenactors at such sites across the country suggest that Lincoln's emphasis on task – on a live doing "remaining before us"– continues to resound as a literal call to action. If "to remain" means to endure or even to stay behind, to "remain before" is to endure as both *ahead of* and *prior to* – a phrase that clearly tangles or crosses temporal registers. In this sense, before and behind cannot be plotted in a straight line, and so memory *remains* a future act: not yet recalled, if also never yet forgotten. In the gap between having "no reminiscences of battlefields" (O'Sullivan) and simultaneously belonging to a *world* that "cannot forget" (Lincoln) lies the projected US national imaginary as always pitched off of the word as record and onto the act as living, doing, *live*. The logic is contradictory: the past is elsewhere, a foreign country left behind. The future is America's geography of revision, and it's up ahead that America's past (the future's past) will be (re)encountered among the (so-called) living.

Indeed, the sense that the past is a future direction in which one can travel – that it can stretch out before us like an unfamiliar landscape waiting to be (re)discovered – is familiar.[61] It is also one of the basic logics of psychoanalytic trauma theory that events can lie both before us and behind us – in the past where an event may have been missed, forgotten, or not fully witnessed, and in the future where an event might (re)occur as it is (re)encountered, (re)discovered, (re)told and/or (re)enacted, experienced for the first time only as second time. The traumatized soldier, for instance, unwittingly prepares for and re-lives a battle in the future that, due to the shock of the event in the past, he or she could neither adequately experience nor account for at the time.[62] Whether reencountered via "acting out" or "working through," the past is given to lie ahead as well as behind – the stuff and substance limning a twisted and crosshatched footpath marked re-turn.

Going back over the seams, however, let us linger a little longer over O'Sullivan's claim that the US has no memory of battlefields. The orchestration of memory in close relationship with forgetting is certainly a landmark feature of any national self-fashioning. Well before 1873, when Nietzsche theorized that *any* national history is as much composed in forgetting as it is in remembering, O'Sullivan's 1839 boast attempted to position America as uniquely a "nation of futurity" precisely because its lack of memory was specific: it has no "reminiscences of battlefields."[63] Take careful note, however: O'Sullivan neither claimed that there were no battlefields, nor that they were exactly forgotten, but simply that there would be no memory of them.

Obviously, the United States in 1839, two decades before the Civil War, was hardly innocent of battle. Even if we discount wars that were acknowledged by the nation as wars – the American Revolution (which arguably was passing from living memory by 1839[64]), or the War of 1812 (which was not) – the land was rife with battlefields, and could even be said to be one vast battleground. By 1837, 46,000 Native Americans from southeastern nations had been removed from their homelands thereby opening 25 million acres for settlement by non-native Americans. Significant portions of native populations died in the process. And, of course, many "battles" (skirmishes, massacres, and other violent separations of people from land) preceded and surrounded removal. O'Sullivan wasn't denying that battles happened. Investing in collective denial, he simply refused to remember them. The vastness of the bloody battleground that was the New World was officially disremembered as part and parcel of the bid for "futurity" the nation was making not only with its white citizens, but ultimately, in Lincoln's words, with the "world." As Herman Melville put it in 1850, "The Past is dead, and has no resurrection; but the Future is endowed with such a life, that it lives to us even in anticipation. [. . .] The Past is the text-book of tyrants; the Future the Bible of the Free."[65] The New World was "free" of history and marching forward in a blind but living *now* whose past is "dead." Only the *living* matter here, and Americans *live* the future, Melville intones – living one time in another time. The future, alive in the present, makes of the present already its own past. If there is a past, by this way of thinking it would only be of consequence if it resides in anticipation. The past cannot be resurrected, because it cannot yet have occurred. History, like the burial of the dead for Lincoln, *remains before us*.

Time is decidedly folded and fraught. In the context of the "Post-Heroic" (or antebellum) generation, of which O'Sullivan was a member, the sense of "belonging to an age later than the beginning," as George B. Forgie puts it in *Patricide in the House Divided*, could be problematic.[66] If "beginning again" was the founding principal and certain mantra for the "Heroes" of the Republic, as Gertrude Stein intones in *The Making of Americans*,[67] coming after the beginning could be tough – a kind of structural fault line in the national enterprise. How to ensure that it was *always* the beginning? Perpetual forgetting might ensure that "beginning" could be forever (re)played as "a new birth of freedom" – and this might have been one way to cope with the belatedness of America's future fathers to America's founding fathers. Live recitation would always begin again, memory would never be achieved as complete, reenactment would insist upon re-beginning. In this sense (and in the sense of the statue "Return Visit"), Lincoln is already a founding father, standing beside a "son" given to reenact the founding for which Lincoln stands. In this complicated and convoluted sense, and as many have noted, keeping the (re)founders alive through ritualized fratricidal forgetting *in tandem with remembering* becomes a kind of foundational patricidic impulse to modern nationhood – inevitably a forward played backward that institutes forgetting as an error-filled "lest we forget." In this case the mantra goes as follows: Let us not forget that we have no memory of battlefields. Let us reenact our not knowing in advance.[68]

The notion of America as youthful and innocent is basic to its mythic placeholder as "new," "live," and "now" – and it's no mistake that the romantic ideas behind this came directly upon the heels of the genocide of the Indians. This mythic place was re-forged in the mid-twentieth century with the youth movements of the 1960s and the burgeoning of performance or action-based art.[69] American innocence, lack of memory, and naïveté are ideas that still carry weight today. Even as the heritage industry and practices of battle reenactment have become something of a national obsession – a fact that would seem to suggest an investment in the very reminiscences O'Sullivan claims we lack – the idea that America is innocent of battle and ignorant of loss still thrives. As recently as 2008, the widely respected historian Tony Judt could claim in the pages of the *New York Review of Books* in an essay titled "What Have We Learned, If Anything?" that "Americans" have no true experience of loss – at least not to equal European experience – because America "did not lose vast numbers of citizens, or huge swathes of territory, as a result of occupation or dismemberment." Unless Judt does not count Native Americans among those who might be remembered on the continent as having suffered loss (whether "citizens" or not, such losses might *count*, as they do in Europe, as the result of war between nations), his claim makes no sense. He goes on: "Although humiliated in distant neocolonial wars (in Vietnam and now in Iraq), the US has never suffered the full consequences of defeat." In a footnote, Judt makes the *only* exception to his claim about American naïveté to be the US Civil War, though he insists that this exception proves the rule because the South is "backward." He writes:

> The defeated South did indeed experience just such consequences following the Civil War, however. And its subsequent humiliation, resentment, and backwardness are the American exception that illustrates the rule.[70]

If Judt's memory is any indication of the answer to the question of what we have learned, we have learned (to acknowledge) very little concerning the history of violence and loss on the North American continent. If the US Civil War stands as exceptional for Judt (as for many others), its state of exception is perhaps better described as a scrim obscuring the magnitude of the (generational) suffering of the multitudes who died in battle or were otherwise "removed" from homelands to reservation camps, plantations, or other violent displacements.

But whether one agrees with Judt and O'Sullivan that "Americans have had no true experience of loss," or whether one believes that Americans perpetuate a less-than-innocent post-traumatic stress disorder of some kind, we certainly seem today to chase the past as if memory were the most precious vanishing commodity on earth. From reenactment societies, to heritage museums and theme parks, to historical reality TV shows offering time travel to contemporary contestants, to reenactment in the work of contemporary visual artists, photographers, and performance artists – the past is the stuff of the future, laid out like game show prizes for potential (re)encounter. To visit Boston is to "take a walk through America's past"; to visit Asheville, North Carolina, is to "journey to a simpler time"; and, as already cited, to visit Virginia is to "witness battles, ask questions and/or participate in the camp life of soldiers and their families."[71] States offer literal time travel and the opportunity to "witness" as well as "participate" in a surfeit not of what *once* happened, but of what is given to happen again and again – this time for YOU.

A not-for-profit Colorado company named "You Can Live History" offers reenactment events for schools, corporations, foundations, and camps and makes explicit the bargain that is common in historical tourism: "You now have the opportunity to experience American history in a personal way!" They suggest:

> You provide the participants and location – we provide everything else to make a safe and realistic looking battle reenactment. In addition, we produce a video of the battle starring YOU![72]

Here, history begins again, taking place "as if" for the first time, now "starring YOU." The theatricality in the equation is as virulent as is the claim to authenticity – and oddly, theatricality and authenticity, sometime oxymorons, here go hand in hand. The explicit suggestion haunting much of the language of education that attends the heritage industry is that without YOU in a starring role, history might not take place – might not have taken place. History needs YOU *as futurity*. Here the historical investment is not as much about preservation as it is about regeneration.[73] History is not remembered (America has no reminiscence) as it was, but experienced as it will become. It must be acquired, purchased, begun again and again. A nation of futurity is here, still, a nation without reminiscences – unless reminiscence is relived as NOW, acquired (purchased even, copyrighted) as affective "present time" experience, beginning again.

Many have noted how America has become a kind of theme park of itself – "The Past as a Theme Park" writes David Lowenthal in a simple, catchy phrase.[74] And perhaps the present is a reality TV show taking place *as* the past. All of this might reflect the fact that in a daily world of screens and wireless proximities to everywhere, we are rarely exactly "in time" or "in place" but always also capable of multiple and simultaneous elsewheres, always a step or more behind or ahead or to the side, watching through open windows being watched, performing ourselves performing or being performed. We are passing the time by witnessing the passing time of doubling, redoubling, tripling, re-tripling, cross-, multi-, and hyper-citational events. What exactly we are witnessing, and how exactly we are witnessing, when we "take a walk through America's past" in Boston or "journey to a simpler time" in Asheville, make a "return visit" in Gettysburg, or sample "camp life" in Virginia is an open question. If events are not exactly happening (or not only happening) in a here that is *now* or a now that is *here* – where, then, is the here? And when, now, is the then?

The rapid growth of the time travel industry in the twenty-first century may seem like a "cannibalizing" of history – a condition of late capitalism disparaged by Fredric Jameson in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*.[75] But

Jameson's bemoaned flip of Enlightenment linear time back upon itself, and the resulting wrinkles and folds and swerves in direction in an otherwise straight-shot to futurity, may not be as "post" as all that, as Jameson himself acknowledges. And anyway, as many have pointed out, when linear time was "over" (marking the predicted and widely debunked "end of history"), the appellation "post" became absurd, as did the "end" of anything – most especially history. In this case, a kind of thrall to ends and to death becomes an easily recognizable (if ironically eschatological) attempt of the modern to keep on keeping on: proclaiming death and disappearance a hyper-privileged condition of the real and celebrating, at and in its own wake, a self-proclaimed obsolescence that kept it *un*-obsolete.[76] It is strange that in all the death-centered thought in the arts and humanities of the late twentieth century, so many hyperactive ghosts would behave as if death were the *only* unchecked category on their "to-do" list, as they get up every day from their graves to "take a walk through America's past." Or maybe the two facts are linked. The result, in any case, is that the dead are living everywhere.

Of course this all rings with an alarming irony today, as there are no set of battlefields more given to obsessive American reminiscence than those of the US Civil War which lay in the very near future of O'Sullivan's declaration that America has no reminiscence of battlefields. And, perhaps even more importantly, there is still no theatre of war less acknowledged (or more "forgotten") by the nation as a whole for its scenes of violence than the vast stretches of land across which 300 years of Indian removal took place before the Civil War.

While this book is not about American settlement or Indian removal, or even about the Civil War, it *is* about practices of reminiscence in relation to disappearance, remains, memory, history, artifactual preserve, and live performance. The charged web-work of remembering and forgetting is tightly laced, corset-like, across the bodies of reenactors in Civil War battles, who sometimes fight as if forgetting *again* that the past is something that comes before and the future something in distinction to the past. Instead, for them, linear time is a ruse. As if having it both ways, or many ways at once, reenactors take the "past" in multiple directions. As they line up for war every weekend of every summer of every year across the States, repetition trips into something entirely outside of linear, narrative time, and practices of live forgetting recur as the very charge to remember.

And indeed, perhaps they are not *exactly* wrong.

As Rosemarie K. Banks suggests, in a book on theatre culture in antebellum America, the traditional Native American sense of history may be instructive: "What has happened in a place is always happening."[77]

Uneasily side by side: popular heritage and high art

A recent exhibit that took place between May 2006 and March 2007 at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MOCA) titled *Ahistoric Occasion: Artists Making History* included the following foreword by Joseph Thompson, Director of the Museum, in the publication accompanying the exhibition:

> One of the strangest, most affecting and discomforting exhibits I've ever experienced is the Plimoth Plantation "live diorama" in which native Americans, dressed in historic clothing, recreate a 17th-century Wampanoag Homesite, all the while conversing with museum visitors in utterly twenty-first-century terms. Caught in a netherworld between role-playing and contemporary culture, the Native People speak of current events – Massachusetts politics, casino gambling, the socioeconomic challenges facing their kids – while patiently smoking venison, crafting dug-out canoes, and tanning animal hides. Instructive, accurate, decidedly restrained in tone – if not subtly disdainful – the Wampanoag Homesite is a peculiar form of museological theater. Inadvertent participation on stage can be deeply disquieting.
>
> At Plimouth Plantation, the Native People are adept at exploiting the trappings of history in pursuit of an agenda that is much more about today than 1678. It is, in the end, a profoundly political exhibition, with an unequivocal point of view [. . .] all wrapped up in fur and smoke, and the Plantation didactics.
>
> *Ahistoric Occasion* is a little like that, too, and the vibe is equally resonant and strange.[78]

Ahistoric Occasion, an art exhibition with work by such artists as Allison Smith and Lincoln impersonator Greta Pratt, was, for Thompson, "a little like" the Natives at Plimoth who were engaged as political performers in a ricocheting exploitation-arama that ultimately finds its closest art relative to be theatre – albeit, in Thompson's words, "a peculiar form of museological theater." The "deeply disquieting" aspects of the Plimoth exhibit seem clearly to be linked, for Thompson, to a temporal crosshatch. For him, people in the exhibit both pass as seventeenth-century ("instructive, accurate, and decidedly restrained") and do not pass ("utterly twenty-first-century"). They are "caught" between times. Thompson calls them "the Native People." But what else could he have called them: reenactors? actors? enthusiasts? models? activists? artists? museum employees? Wampanoag? Cherokee? Narragansett? Nipmuc? US citizens? For Thompson, the agenda appears to be "much more about today than 1678," but the question of how today is *not* about 1678 seems to me to clearly hang in the air of the Natives' conversation, making the question of agendas, like the question of "when," deeply vexed. The undoing of linear time is part of the nervousness or queasiness of theatricality, contributing to the uncertainty of where and how time *takes place*: today's agendas necessarily contain, recompose, recite, and *touch* 1678, *and vice versa*.

If Thompson was brave enough to call the artwork "a little like" popular history reenactment, other curators invested in reenactment are not as brave. Often, curators do what they can to completely distance themselves from that *other* history reenactment happening outside the frame of art. Inke Arns, one of the curators of the 2007–8 exhibit *History Will Repeat Itself* at Hartware MedienKunstVerein in Dortmund and KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, has stated that popular cultural reenactments are "history for history's sake," and thus, to her mind,

devoid of an interest in the present. Arns cited Nietzsche's call in *The Use and Abuse of History:* "[W]e need history. But we need it in a manner different from the way the spoilt idler in the garden of knowledge uses it." Clearly, the spoilt idlers are, for Arns, the "pop-cultural" reenactors. Despite the best efforts of Andy Warhol, artists are still, for Arns, completely distinct from the debasements of "pop culture." For her, reenactment artists make works that are "questionings of the present" and this she calls "exactly the opposite" of history reenactment outside of the art context.[79] It seems odd to assume that the art context is simply a perpetual present, especially when history reenactment framed or posed as art – and we can think of Jonathan Deller's *Battle at Orgreave* or Ron Dickinson's *Milgram Re-Enactment* and *Jonestown Re-Enactment* or Mark Tribe's *Port Huron Project* – clearly troubles boundaries between past and present and challenges any imagined dividing line between politics and aesthetics.

In some reenactment artwork, as discussed at the start of this Foreword, the historical event reenacted is a precedent performance art event. That is, art reenacting precedent art has become common alongside historical reenactment framed as art. Reenactments of Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece*, of Ana Mendieta's *Body Tracks*, of Kaprow's *18 Happenings in Six Parts*, of Vito Acconci's *Seedbed*, of Carolee Schneemann's *Meat Joy*, of Hermann Nitsch's *Orgien Mysterien Theater* and many more have recently undergone re-doing and in some cases multiple re-doings. Until recently, most '60s and '70s performance art work was considered non-reproduceable, existing only in time as one-time events, and in this way was arguably seen as "auratic."[80] Such work was considered completely contingent, lost to an irretrievable "then" that was only fleetingly "now" at the time of its singular articulation. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, photography had a great deal to do with that attitude. Performance art work of the 1960s and 1970s, captured in grainy black and whites or flickering film stock, could posit the event as having priority over its documentation. The document would stand as record that the event "that was there" was "no longer there." Photographs and film and, ultimately, video could therefore come to serve (ironically) as testimony to the event's disappearance, even positing the event as always essentially missed, fully dependent on the embodied in-time singularity of an auratic artist's embodied act.

The heatedness of contemporary debate – or, as Kino put it, "fights" of a "rebel form" in the archive of the museum – concerns the paradoxical battle to preserve the auratic live as *both* non-reproduceable (as was common to consider it mid-century) *and* recurrent (that is, like theatre, capable of being mounted *again*). The place of the documentation of the "original" event has, in this way, shifted – becoming score, script, or material for "instruction." Documents that had seemed to indicate *only* the past, are now pitched toward the possibility of a future reenactment as much as toward the event they apparently recorded. This double gesture forward and back (and to the side) was palpably evident in Abramović's exhibit *The Artist Is Present* at MoMA, where surrogates reenacted precedent Abramović performance pieces, but did so uneasily beside photographic and video documentation of Abramović's "original" actions that simultaneously adorned the gallery space. This besideness made the exhibit feel somewhat engorged with itself.

If "The Artist" was present, the question in each piece could become: which artist, where, when? Abramović in the documentation, or the "other people" in the live tableaux? Or, both? Was Abramović "present" in the documentation? And, as we will take up again in Chapter 4, was the live reenactment a document, standing as record of Abramović's acts?

As the liveness of in-time performance art work has recently become available for the re-liveness of reenactment, it is fascinating that photography, *not generally considered a medium of liveness*, has become a veritable hotbed for re-staging, re-playing, reenacting for the camera in work that mixes theatricality and documentality in tantalizing ways. Reenactment work in and for photography presses our questions quite fulsomely into the inter(in)animate tangle between liveness and documentation. Photo-performance "reenactment" is evident in the work of Sherrie Levine, Yasumasa Morimura, Gregory Crewdson, Eleanor Antin, Yinka Shonibare, Nikki S. Lee, Lorna Simpson, Jeff Wall, Bill Viola, Tina Barney, and many others (whether they accept the appellation "reenactment" or not) – in which work is staged, with *evident* theatricality, creating photographs that both document theatricality (the posing subject) and *are* theatrical (the photograph *is* the performance) – an issue we will return to in depth in Chapter 5.

In art contexts, the term "reenactment" is contested and in flux. The term "appropriation art" is arguably its most immediate precedent, even as, ironically, performance artists like Abramović are struggling *not* to be appropriated (at least not by reenactors they might not pre-approve). But if the term reenactment is fitting at all, it fits only because it is as yet porous, intermedial, and rather poorly defined. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives us the verb form "reenact": to "reproduce, recreate, or perform again" but offers only the term "reenactment societies" and briefly describes "an association whose members re-enact events (often battles) from a particular historical period, in replica costume and using replica weapons." Princeton's database *Wordnet* offers reenactment as "performing a role in an event that occurred at an earlier time," replacing *Oxford*'s reference to "again" with the phrase "earlier time" – underscoring the temporal play at the base of reenactment. As the *OED* definition makes clear, we are still most familiar with the term reenactment as applied to historical societies. Certainly, much of the reenactment work in visual and performance art bears some relation to "historical" reenactments undertaken in these societies in that the term carries with it the sense of an act or event occurring *again*, recurring across participants' bodies in time. As such, reenactment art poses a certain challenge to our long-standing thrall, fueled by art-historical analyses of performance, to the notion that live performance disappears by insisting that, to the contrary, the live is a vehicle for recurrence – unruly or flawed or unfaithful to precedence as that recurrence may threaten to be.

Recurrence, of course, contests tightly stitched Enlightenment claims to the forward-driven linearity of temporality, the continuity of time, and challenges, as well, an attitude toward death as necessarily irrecoverable loss. There is, instead, a certain superabundance to reenactment, like a run-on sentence, as if an event in time, refusing to be fully or finally "over" or "gone" or "complete" pulses with a

kind of living afterlife in an ecstasy of variables, a million insistent if recalcitrant possibilities for return (doubling as possibilities for error). The zillion details of the act of interpretation in an act of live repetition make the pastness of the past both palpable and a very *present* matter.

Reenactment troubles linear temporality by offering at least the suggestion of recurrence, or return, even if the practice is peppered with its own ongoing incompletion. There is a pointedly temporal aspect to the term unlike other terms for doubling that do not overtly accentuate time, such as mimesis, imitation, appropriation, citation, reiteration, performativity. Perhaps only the term "theatricality," through its nominal linkage to the widely varied practices of theatre – a famously time-based art of the live – carries within it a suggestion of the temporal. But theatricality's temporal register is cloaked or visored at best, and hounded by the term's inordinately vexed relationship to the imagined borderlands where war is waged between those who would police an "authentic" and those who find critical promise in the history and lineage of masquerade – critical promise, in fact, in error, and mistake.

To trouble linear temporality – to suggest that time may be touched, crossed, visited or revisited, that time is transitive and flexible, that time may recur in time, that time is not one – never only one – is to court the ancient (and tired) Western anxiety over ideality and originality. The threat of theatricality is still the threat of the imposter status of the copy, the double, the mimetic, the second, the surrogate, the feminine, or the queer. Detractors say: The then is *then*, the now is *now*, the dead are dead, lost: we cannot go back, we can only, in the spasms of our misguided traumatic remainders, lurch forward (backward and forward being the only imaginable directions). To some who ridicule the activities of reenactors as naïve, the faith that linear time is the one true time couples with an investment in the contingency offered by the linear temporal model to reassure that any *true* temporal return or overlap would be impossible because *different*. Of course, the question remains to be taken up in more depth in Chapter 3: why does difference necessarily cancel out authenticity? For those who invest in linear time as the only time, any event or act re-enacted can be dismissed as "just" or "merely" theatrical – spasmodic, hollow, and inconsequential to the long march of empiric time. The reenacted Civil War or the reenactment of precedent performance, such detractors would say, is not *the* Civil War or not *the* original art, because, to quote Richard Schechner, "it is not possible to get back to what was."[81] This impossibility seems intractable, despite the fact that one might easily suspect whether any war (or any art action) could ever have been discrete to itself, containable, occurring in singular time, or without reverberate echo, repetitive impact, or the syncopation of "twiceness" that marks behavior and, even, event.

For those suspicious of linearity and less willing to dismiss time's flexibility, mimesis and its close relative theatricality are not threats to authenticity, but, like language itself, vehicles for access to the transitive, performative, and cross-temporal real. Mimesis is always necessarily composed in what Homi Bhabha, after Frantz Fanon, has called temporal lag, and Elizabeth Freeman has spun to temporal drag. For such theorists, mimesis is not the antithesis of some discreet

authenticity or pure truth, but a powerful tool for cross- or intra-temporal negotiation, even (perhaps) interaction or inter(in)animation of one time with another time. If, to quote Stein again more fully, the "endless trouble with theatre is its syncopated time," that "trouble" is never "mere."[82] As this book will work to explore, overt imitation (one descriptor of theatricality) may even be a kind of syncopation machine for the touching of time beside or across itelf in the zig-zagging lived experience of history's multi-directional ghost notes.

> If life is the path of a straight line, then theatricality is that *same path*, but traveling along a line that is wavy, zigzagged, or any kind of indirect line. [. . .] In the theatre, not a single path should be straight.[83]

> "'Everything straight lies,' murmured the dwarf disdainfully. 'All truth is crooked, time itself is a circle.'"[84]