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Introduction: What Is Reenactment?

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V A N E S S A A G N E W

Introduction: What Is Reenactment?

AS ANYONE WHO HAS swabbed decks and gone aloft knows, reenactment is fun. It indulges the twin passions of work and play, which are generally divorced from each other. It licenses dressing up, pretending and improvising, casting oneself as the protagonist of one's own research, and getting others to play along. Of course, it also calls for discomfort and enforced self-growth. But, like the cold nose atop the counterpane, which Melville says measures the warmth of the bed, the pain only sharpens the pleasure.¹ Iain McCalman's piece in this issue, "The Little Ship of Horrors," shows that suffering also makes for a better story. Perhaps because of this winning combination of imaginative play, self-improvement, intellectual enrichment, and sociality, reenactment is booming. History enthusiasts gather weekly to enact past events, television history programs are aired to good ratings, living museums hire costumed performers, civic governments sponsor local performances on historical themes, tourists "follow in the steps" of earlier travelers, and academics venture into public history. Reenactment thus spans diverse history-themed genres—from theatrical and "living history" performances to museum exhibits, television, film, travelogues, and historiography. While there are important differences between these genres and their respective practitioners, they are linked by common methodologies, modes of representation, and choice of subject matter. They are also linked by their combined use of different medial forms and the breakdown of traditionally distinct categories such as academic historian and television personality, weekend reenactor and historical adviser.² In its appropriation of the past, this populist phenomenon favors high-concept themes—Vikings, medieval knights, pyramid builders, pirates and mutineers, cowboys and Indians, explorers, slaves, pilgrims, and soldiers. Reenactment now includes less gaudy subjects, such as the 1984 South Yorkshire miners' strike, yet the phenomenon remains overwhelmingly committed to themes that are the perennial favorites of grade-school history. The thrall of reenactment cannot be attributed merely to an interest in colorful, familiar history. Rather, its excursions are justified on political grounds; it is argued that "history from below" provides an important public service and gives voice to

hitherto marginalized positions as well as economic ones—gore, adventure, and personal transformation sell.

Passion plays and pageants remind us that in the broadest sense of the term, reenactment is not new. The recent spate of “reality”-type reenactment programs like *1900 House*, *Regency House*, and *The Ship* has precedents in “docudramas” such as the PBS production *An American Family* (1973) and MTV’s *Real World*, launched during the early 1990s.³ Alexander Cook and Katie King, contributing to this volume, point out that such programs also share structural affinities with observational film and hence often have an experimental character. While reenactment seems endemic in the United States as well as Britain and other Commonwealth countries—a cultural phenomenon whose link to the individualist, Protestant traditions of these countries bears closer scrutiny—it is not the exclusive preserve of the Anglophone world. Reenactments of the German colonial past in Namibia and the Afrikaner legacy in South Africa, fictional American Indians in Germany, and medieval crusaders in Australia point to the fact that reenactment is a global phenomenon not necessarily confined to autochthonous historical events nor even to factual ones.⁴ Reenactment often verges close to fantasy role-playing in its elastic appropriation of both the real and imagined past.⁵ Indeed, there is a general discrepancy between the mandate of reenactment—bringing the people to history—and those same people’s dislocation from the reenacted past. As historian Stephen Gapps fruitfully asks, “Why would Australians [or anyone else] want to reenact overseas history so remote from their own experience?”⁶ This anomaly suggests that reenactment performs political and cultural work that is quite distinct from more conventional forms of historiography. Even while reenactment claims to give voice to marginalized positions, those subject positions do not necessarily correlate to reenactment’s constituency in the present; postcolonials might, for example, reenact the colonial past (as colonial masters or subjects) but might just as readily choose an entirely unrelated theme such as World War II or the Dark Ages. The substitutive character of reenactment themes suggests that if reenactment performs the work of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), then this process is not directly tied to a specific historical process, conflict, or set of agents. In fact, the contrary is true. Reenactment’s emancipatory gesture is to allow participants to select their own past in reaction to a conflicted present. Paradoxically, it is the very ahistoricity of reenactment that is the precondition for its engagement with historical subject matter.

Perhaps symptomatic of a broader public interest in history, reenactment has gained urgency in the West during the past decade, drawing on the combined resources of vast numbers of reenactors, government agencies, academic advisers, event planners, corporate sponsors, merchants, and spectators. Tens of thousands participated in the reenacted Battle of Gettysburg (1998), while English Heritage’s “History in Action” (2000), a so-called multiperiod event, is reported to have featured “3,000 performers from 100 top groups, 150 displays a day in 8 perform-

ance areas plus within a huge living history area, large-scale battles, including one featuring 3 World War II Spitfires, plus drill and military displays, armored vehicles, earth fortifications, massive living history encampments, medieval falconry, drama, comedy, music, dance, cooking, photographic and art exhibits, authors' talks and book-signings, historical traders' market and a huge grand parade.⁷ Such medial-temporal extravaganzas reflect the extent to which the market is imbricated in historical representation and the fact that a range of commercial operations has arisen specifically to meet its demands. These include businesses specializing in period costumes, sets, and accessories, as well as event-planning agencies that cater to television and film by coordinating reenactments, providing scripts, sourcing specialist walk-ons, and offering general "historical advice." Additional services extend to managing living-history displays and organizing "costumed historical talks for schools, museums, corporate hospitality events, themed weddings and children's parties."⁸ The marshaling of considerable public and private resources and the indisputable public appeal of such reenactments raise pressing questions about the broader significance of reenactment's place within the history industry, the academy, and society at large.

Historians like R. G. Collingwood, E. P. Thompson, Michel de Certeau, and David Lowenthal have loosely appropriated reenactment as a historiographical tool, seeing in it the possibility for furthering historical understanding by acknowledging the essential otherness of historical agents and conveying this awareness through sympathetic and differentiated studies of the liminal and the everyday.⁹ These interventions notwithstanding, scholars have generally been slow to engage with the possibilities and problems posed by reenactment, and to date there have been few scholarly studies of this phenomenon, whose genealogy and grammar have yet to be adequately understood.¹⁰ To a large extent the examination has been left to journalists and writers such as Tony Horwitz and Jenny Thompson, whose popular works depict reenactment from the perspective of the amateur ethnographer and expose a subterranean world inhabited by passionate enthusiasts with a shared pan-epochal vocabulary, common set of reenactment practices, and deeply held beliefs about history.¹¹ The writer William Dalrymple—like Gerald MacLean and Donna Landry, who in this volume discuss past and prospective journeys to the Middle East—sees this form of reenactment, referred to here as "retrospective travel," as a means of engaging with the past in order to promote cultural understanding in the present. Reenacting an earlier journey may thus be a gesture of utopianism as well as one of witnessing and mourning.¹²

Such work sheds light on reenactment as a popular cultural phenomenon with a salience in the present. Yet reenactment also speaks directly to the academy. Television and film producers, museum curators, history buffs, and university students are only too ready to remind academics that their authority is compromised: historians must justify their interpretations, and history writing

and teaching must meet the needs of the marketplace. With its vivid spectacles and straightforward narratives, reenactment apparently fulfills the failed promise of academic history—knowledge entertainingly and authoritatively presented. As Katie King suggests here, this charge might be too readily dismissed by academics. After all, reenactors take their history seriously—their credibility is measured by their conversancy with period minutiae and their fidelity to the “authentic”—and they uniformly believe that reenactments both “bring history alive” and test common assumptions about the past. As a Confederate hobby reenactor is reported to have said, “I hate to call it a hobby, because it’s so much more than that. We’re here to find the real answers, to read between the lines in the history books, and then share our experience with spectators.”¹³ The contributors to this volume, committed to the epistemological, ethical, and political dimensions of history writing, have taken such claims seriously in order to question whether reenactment can in fact uphold its promise. Can it, as a form of public history, contribute to more dynamic and accessible ways of conveying knowledge about the past, as Iain McCalman and Alexander Cook ask in their essays? And as Kader Konuk asks in her discussion of “ethnomasquerade,” or dressing as the Other, is it a useful tool for furthering historical understanding?

While some scholars argue for reenactment’s interrogative possibilities, these possibilities tend to be circumscribed. Its proper domain is the technical—bridge building, celestial navigation, or ship fothering (repairing the hull with a sail), for example—problems that can be solved by testing. Hence, we find reenactment preoccupied with the minutiae of daily life—dress, diet, bodily maintenance, domestic space, material objects, the management of human relationships, and the organization of time. Its mode is agglomerative—discrete pieces of information are gleaned and corroborated through firsthand experience. Reenactment thus emerges as a body-based discourse in which the past is reanimated through physical and psychological experience. Suffering features largely in this medium: reenactors testify, for example, to the trials of sail handling; the privations of hunger, claustrophobia, and seasickness; the humiliations of powerlessness, homesickness, and fear; and the unparalleled exuberance of landfall. This is what Edmund Burke would have called the “sublime,” the strongest emotion the mind is capable of experiencing. Up close, they are objects that excite ideas of pain and danger, and from a certain distance, delight.¹⁴ What arises from such sublimity, however, is mastery: skills are acquired and manual tasks accomplished, fears and aversions overcome, and the body and mind brought into a state of regulation. Once inhabiting this psychological and physiological space, hobby reenactors describe a condition referred to as “period rush”—a state of complete absorption in the reenacted event—followed by difficulty transitioning out of the past and into the present.¹⁵

Reenactment’s central narrative is thus one of conversion from ignorance to knowledge, individualism to sociability, resistance to compliance, and present to past. These conversion experiences take the form of testimonials: reenactors

attest to profound experiences that are markers on the hard road to knowledge. They begin as novices (referred to in the reenactment community as “farbs”), undergo trials, acquire skills and experience, and are finally inducted into a community of dedicated reenactors.¹⁶ The epistemological implications of this conversion-testimonial structure are twofold. First, knowledge is the result of individual experience, and, second, it is perceived to be true. Trauma, privation, emotional disturbance, and transformation leave their marks on the body and psyche, and it is to these wounds and scars that reenactors testify. This places conversion narratives beyond interrogation—such experiences can only be validated, not disputed—and leaves reenactment with problems of legitimization and corroboration. How can individual experience become a generalized proposition? For instance, does a reenactor’s fear of the futtock shroud—a precipitous section of tall-ship rigging—correlate to the common fears of sailors? And as a discourse about history, does a reenactor’s fear tell us anything about the fear, indifference, or pleasure of the eighteenth-century sailor? Further, all reenactors are historical interpreters, universally authorized to testify by the weight of their own experiences. This gives rise to competing interpretations but not a means of adjudicating between them.

Reenactment deals with this crisis of authority in two ways. First, in the absence of a privileged voice, extremity assumes paramount importance. As the intensification of experience, it creates a hierarchy of legitimacy: the most intense manifestation of suffering is most authorized to occupy the voice of history. The greatest suffering not only makes for the most compelling story, but it also sets the reenactor above other reenactors within a homosocial community and sets him (less often her) apart from the present. Male reenactors claim, for instance, to have starved themselves in order to become convincing Civil War soldiers, and women bound their breasts to disguise their femaleness. Another reports, “I would always squint. Women’s eyes are larger than men’s, so they really give you away.”¹⁷ Embodying the role through disciplining the body is not just good method acting; it is considered a means of knowing history from the inside, and the emaciated or myopic infantryman has a compelling basis on which to testify what it was like to have “gone back.” Second, an insistence on “authenticity” grounds historical claims that might otherwise lack legitimacy. Reenactors decry sloppy costumes and what is perceived to be inauthentic behavior.¹⁸ They vie to create the appearance of historical fidelity and position themselves within a hierarchy of the genuine: whereas the “farb” is liable to wear hand-knitted chain mail and fight with a plastic sword, the hardcore reenactor will go to extreme measures to ensure that his uniform and equipment conform to the requisite standards and that his body is sufficiently chastened. A German reenactment Webmaster instructs would-be reenactors that although it might be necessary to make some sartorial compromises, “If one doesn’t have the right outfit it’s better to go as a beggar than try and be a lord.”¹⁹

Such preoccupation with extremity and authenticity easily slips into a *reductio ad absurdum*—ever-higher production values for reenactment events and participants subjected to increasingly dire situations in order to try to narrow the mimetic gap. It also begs questions that were posed during the BBC's reenactment of Captain Cook's first voyage, a venture in which I was a consultant participant—"How much eighteenth century is enough?" Were antimalarials and sunscreen crimes against history? Did safety harnesses lessen the terror that was necessary to our experience of the past? (Fig. 1) Should we have been flogged? Many reenactors clearly thought so. In their view, it was only through the utmost fidelity to the scripted eighteenth century that history could be truly apprehended. Moreover, only genuine discomfort and privation could elicit convincing testimonials to the conditions of Georgian seafaring.

Such debates show that reenactment has appropriated the language of relativism—each reenactor offers his or her own version of the past—but not its lessons about the constructedness of history. This emerges as a problem of representation: history is seen as an unassailable set of facts that awaits a good script. For example, reenactment societies may importune their members to prepare for upcoming events by "going to their history books" and contacting an authorized sutler to be properly kitted out.²⁰ In circumventing the problem of interpretation, such a view of history overlooks the fact that the raw substance of present-day reenactments was already highly mediated at the moment of its initial enactment. Taking the Cook voyages as an example, journal sources, travel accounts, and paintings show that the voyagers invoked earlier models and were thus engaged in a form of reenactment themselves. Only in the literal sense would Cook claim, for example, to have gone not just "farther than any other man has been before me, but as far as I think it possible for man to go" when sailing deep into the Antarctic Circle.²¹ In another sense, Cook and his fellow voyagers were not entering a discursive *tabula rasa* at all. They staged their "first discoveries" according to classical *topoi*: Polynesian islands were constructed as an Arcadian paradise, indigenous peoples given Greek names, and their dress, appearance, and behavior depicted along classical lines.²²

Cook's stay in Dusky Bay in 1773 is a case in point. Georg Forster, one of the second voyage naturalists, depicts a tableau-like scene in which the Europeans' arrival ushered in the beginnings of society. "The superiority of a state of civilization over that of barbarism could not be more clearly stated," he says, "than by the alterations and improvements we had made in this place. . . . This spot . . . we had converted into an active scene, where a hundred and twenty men pursued various branches of employment with unremitting ardour:

Qualis apes aestate nova per florum rura
Exercet sub sole labor. VIRGIL²³

Forster concludes, "all around us we perceived the rise of the arts, and the dawn of science, in a country which had hitherto lain plunged in one long night



Fig. 1. Going aloft on the replica of Cook's ship *Endeavour*. Photo credit: Simon Baker.

of ignorance and barbarism!"²⁴ By invoking Aeneas watching the founding of Carthage, Forster frames the voyagers' presence as a foundational moment in the history of New Zealand, one that was invested not just with local significance but also with the imprimatur of classical tradition.

Yet in and of itself, the encounter at Dusky Bay was not particularly noteworthy: there were no violent skirmishes or reports of sexual traffic; no possession ceremonies, significant hospitality exchanges, or important trading episodes took place; the naturalists made no major botanical or zoological discoveries; the environmental impact was comparatively slight; and the local indigenous inhabitants seem to have been comparatively undisturbed by the voyagers' visit. Unlike Tahiti or Tonga, islands also visited by Cook, Dusky Bay was not destined to become a site of ongoing cross-cultural exchange or future European settlement. Here nothing much happened; it was the classical staging that invested it with historical meaning. As a result of this staging, however, Dusky Bay has been transmitted as one of *the* significant episodes of the second voyage, serving theories about stadial development, race, music, and a host of other anthropological, sociological, biological, and cultural theories.²⁵

What are latter-day reenactors to make of this? To script the Dusky Bay episode as 120 sailors encamped in a remote South Island fjord, engaged in tree felling, building, repairing, botanizing, star gazing, and painting, would pare away what late-eighteenth-century voyagers thought they were doing, what they

wanted to be seen to be doing and why. Paradoxically, such a reenactment, by reducing history to the discrete event, would lack a means of retaining (and exposing) what historian Greg Dening calls the “theatricality” of history—historical agents staging events, often self-consciously, for a particular effect.²⁶ Rather, reenactment performances in the present would likely swamp those of the past.

Aiming for a more differentiated mode of history writing is *Cook's Sites: Revisiting History*, a photo essay by anthropologist Nicholas Thomas and photographer Mark Adams. The book deals with Cook's topographical sites, material objects, and travelogues, and with the discursive apparatus (museums, libraries, and memorials) that structures this material. Adams and Thomas's purpose in revisiting Cook's landing places in New Zealand was, they say, “to rediscover the risk and possibility” contained within the encounters between Maori and Europeans during the 1770s. “If there were multiple potentialities in cross-cultural relations,” they add, “if other things could have happened then, those other things may happen now. An engagement with history may not enable us to anticipate the future, but it should make the past less predictable.”²⁷ Thomas and Adams thus use current experience to interrogate the past. In their view, reenactment can both destabilize historical interpretations and help rethink the present by asking, for example, how cross-cultural contacts might have transpired differently and whether colonialism was a necessary outcome. By refusing the inevitability of past events and suggesting conditional futures, Adams and Thomas pose a metaphysical question that cannot be answered.²⁸ However, this historical fallacy does not, perhaps, detract from its heuristic usefulness. It opens up the past as a realm of foreclosed possibilities and interrogates the specific conditions of those foreclosures. The object is not a historical account of the past “as it really was” but an opening to more fruitful interpretations.

As I have pointed out elsewhere, the privileging of experience tends to sacrifice broader interpretative questions, investigating the self in place of the political.²⁹ Indeed, reenactment is often avowedly apolitical, purporting not to take a stance vis-à-vis the past. Regardless of whether it is the Waffen SS or Allies, European voyagers or indigenous peoples, reenactors evince a bipartisanism that rests on a general indifference to political specificity.³⁰ This positional interchangeability precludes certain forms of historical inquiry. Questions such as how cross-cultural contacts were forged, why some peoples were contact-friendly and others not, or whether early contact laid the groundwork for founding colonies remain not just opaque but unasked. To date, reenactment has also proved to be ethically unencumbered. Unlike conventional forms of academic historiography, which are to some extent constrained as well as held accountable by the socially and politically marginalized, reenactment is far more transgressive in its embrace of warfare and various other forms of violent subjugation.³¹ In her discussion of the writer W. G. Sebald in this volume, Julia Hell questions just some of the moral,

political, and epistemological implications that arise from confrontations with the catastrophic past. Todd Presner, on the other hand, suggests that the very nature of “holocaustal” modernist events might demand new narrative strategies such as those suggested by Sebald’s loose form of reenactment.

As a vehicle for historical inquiry, broad interpretative questions are the very ones that reenactment must pose by inquiring into the ethics and politics of historical representation. Rather than eclipsing the past with its own theatricality, reenactment ought to make visible the ways in which events were imbued with meanings and investigate whose interests were served by those meanings. Reenactment’s central epistemological claim that experience furthers historical understanding is clearly problematic: body-based testimony tells us more about the present self than the collective past. Yet, reenactment is a cultural phenomenon that cannot be overlooked. Its broad appeal, its implicit charge to democratize historical knowledge, and its capacity to find new and inventive modes of historical representation suggest that it also has a contribution to make to academic historiography.³²

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Notes

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1. “We [Queequeg and I] felt very nice and snug, the more so since it was so chilly out of doors; indeed out of bedclothes too, seeing that there was no fire in the room. The more so, I say, because to enjoy bodily warmth, some small part of you must be cold, for there is no quality in this world that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself. . . . But if, like Queequeg and me in the bed, the tip of your nose or the crown of your head be slightly chilled, why then, indeed, in the general consciousness you feel most delightfully and unmistakably warm.” Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1992), 55.
2. Reenactment is characterized by its disregard for disciplinary specializations and the distinctions between lay and professional expertise. Indeed, in its explicit attempt to undermine academic privilege, reenactment purveyors, including television and film producers, hobbyists, and “living history” organizers, all favor the nonspecialist even while enlisting the services (and imprimatur) of academics. The BBC production *The Ship* is a case in point. Of the six participating “historians,” two were trained as historians, three were literary critics, and one was an anthropologist. However, filmmaker Christopher Terrill’s express aim was to privilege the immediacy and “authenticity” of the unschooled over the “talking head-historian.”
3. Edward D. Miller, “Fantasies of Reality: Surviving Reality-Based Programming,” *Social Policy* 31, no. 1 (2000): 6–7.

4. See, e.g., Larissa Förster et al., *Namibia-Deutschland: Eine Geteilte Geschichte* (Wolftratshausen: Edition Minerva, 2004); George Steinmetz and Julia Hell, "Legacies of Colonialism: Namibia, 1904–2004. A Photo Essay," forthcoming in *Public Culture*; Katrin Sieg, *Ethnic Drag: Performing Race, Nation, Sexuality in West Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002); and *The Australasian Register of Living History Organizations* (accessible at <<http://www.arlho.net>>). Of the approximately two hundred registered Australasian organizations, the overwhelming majority deal with non-indigenous historical themes and at least half with the medieval.
5. The Society for Creative Anachronism is perhaps the best-known example of this.
6. Stephen Gapps, "Authenticity Matters: Historical Reenactment and Australian Attitudes to the Past," in *Australian Cultural History* 23 (2003): 108.
7. EventPlan Web site, accessible at <http://www.eventplan.co.uk/history_in_action.htm>.
8. EventPlan Web site, accessible at <<http://www.eventplan.co.uk/Home%20Page.htm>>.
9. See R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), *Heterologies: Discourses on the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), and *The Possession at Loudun* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Giuseppina d'Oro, "Reenactment and Radical Interpretation," *History and Theory* 43 (May 2004): 198–208; Wim Weymans, "Michel de Certeau and the Limits of Historical Representation," *History and Theory* 43 (May 2004): 161–78; Karsten R. Steuber, "The Psychological Basis of Historical Explanation: Reenactment, Simulation, and the Fusion of Horizons," *History and Theory* 41 (February 2002): 25–42; and David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
10. With increasing numbers of graduate students focusing on reenactment, this is likely to change. See, for example, the recent PhD dissertation by Stephen Gapps, "Performing the Past: A Cultural History of Historical Reenactments" (PhD diss. University of Technology, Sydney, 2003). See also William H. Dray, *History as Reenactment: R. G. Collingwood's Idea of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Jim Drobnick and Jennifer Fisher, eds., *Living Display: Rethinking Human Exhibition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming); and Jim Cullen, *The Civil War in Popular Culture: A Reusable Past* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).
11. See, for example, Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 1998), and *Blue Latitudes: Boldly Going Where Captain Cook Has Gone Before* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002); William Dalrymple, *In Xanadu: A Quest* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989), and *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey among the Christians of the Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997); and Jenny Thompson, *War Games: Inside the World of Twentieth-Century War Reenactors* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2004).
12. Dalrymple contrasts Islam's traditional tolerance of religious minorities with the present in which "tolerance is . . . wearing distinctly thin." His journey to Byzantine sites in the Middle East aims to recoup that religious pluralism as well as mark its passing:

- "I wanted to . . . spend six months circling the Levant, following roughly in John Moschos's footsteps. . . . I wanted to do what no future generation of travelers would be able to do: to see wherever possible what Moschos and Sophronius had seen, to sleep in the same monasteries, to pray under the same frescoes and mosaics, to discover what was left, and to witness what was in effect the last ebbing twilight of Byzantium." Dalrymple, *From the Holy Mountain*, 19–21. That such a gesture does not necessarily achieve its stated aims is evident from responses to Dalrymple's book. See, for example, the popular online review by Georges Melki, accessible at <<http://www.amazon.com/gp/cdp/member-reviews/A2E82WVTOB862D/002-3881435-5634412>>.
13. Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 136.
 14. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. David Womersley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), 86.
 15. "I could care less what I wear in the rest of my life, but out here [on the reenactment battlefield] I'm obsessed with my clothes. It's like I'm searching for the Holy Grail, except it's not a cup, it's a bit of gray cloth with just the right amount of dye and the exact number of threads." Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 387–88.
 16. The etymology of the word "farb" is unknown.
 17. Lauren M. Cook, quoted in "When Janie Came Marching Home: History Buffs Tell the Story of 250 Women Who Fought in the Civil War," *New York Times*, Saturday, March 23, 2002, A17. See also Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 10–12, and Kip M. Grun-ska, *From Farb to Pard: A Story of Civil War Reenactment* (n.p.: Writers Club Press, 2003).
 18. Reenactment Web site, accessible at <<http://www.haw-hamburg.de/pers/Lueddecke/reenact>>.
 19. *Ibid.*
 20. The 21st Michigan Volunteer Infantry, a Civil War reenactment group, for example, specifies that participants' "actions and appearance" be authentic. The group provides a list of sutlers selling uniforms, weapons and other equipment. Site accessible at <<http://www.21stmichigan.org/uni.htm>>.
 21. John C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook. The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure, 1772–1775* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1961), lxxxvi.
 22. See, for example, the naturalist Joseph Banks's practice of renaming Tahitian notables: "Our two freinds [sic] the cheifs [sic] of the west came this morn to see us. One I shall for the future call Lycurgus from the justice he executed on his offending subjects . . . the other from the large size of his body I shall call Hercules," in John C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks, 1768–1771*, vol. 1 (Sydney: Public Library of New South Wales in association with Angus and Robertson, 1962), 258.
 23. "As the bee carries out its labor at the beginning of summer, throughout the flowering countryside under the sun." Virgil, *Aeneid* (1.430–31).
 24. Georg Forster, *A Voyage Round the World*, ed. Nicholas Thomas and Oliver Berghof, vol. 1 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 105.
 25. See, for example, my article "A Scots Orpheus in the South Seas; Or, Encounter Music on Cook's Second Voyage," *Journal for Maritime Research* (May 2001): 1–25. Accessible

- at <http://www.jmr.nmm.ac.uk/server/show/conJmrArticle.97>. See also Klaus R. Scherpe, "Die First-Contact-Szene. Kulturelle Praktiken bei der Begegnung mit dem Fremden," in *Weimarer Beiträge* 44.1 (1998): 54–73. For an alternative reading of the Dusky Bay episode, see Nicholas Thomas's "Liberty and License: New Zealand Societies in Cook Voyage Anthropology," in *Oceania: Visions, Artifacts, Histories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 71–92. Thomas views the Europeans' contact with the Dusky Bay Maori as an instance of frustrated European expectations. On classical representations of the Pacific, see Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, 2d ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).
26. Greg Denning, *Mr. Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power, and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 372–74.
 27. Mark Adams and Nicholas Thomas, *Cook's Sites: Revisiting History* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, and Canberra: Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University, 1999), 9–10.
 28. On the fallacy of metaphysical questions, see David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: HarperCollins, 1970), 12–14.
 29. Vanessa Agnew, "What Can Reenactment Tell Us about the Past?" September 2002, *BBC–History*, accessible at http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/programmes/theship/history_reenactment_01.shtml.
 30. A typical disclaimer reads: "This Webring is **NOT** about/for skinhead, racist or other right-wing groups. I know that the feeling is, that because someone reenacts WWII German, there is a perception that they might have leanings towards these kinds of beliefs. I am here to tell you, **it just ain't so**—reenactors are for the most part apolitical and do NOT want to see/hear this stuff. If your site is about/for racist subjects, or you are a hate-group or are trying to recruit for some group who espouses hatred or intolerance, this Webring is **NOT** for you" (original emphasis). *Deutsche Reenactmentgruppen Webring*, accessible at http://www.reenactor.net/ww2/aa-drgrupe_ring-1.html; see also *Deutscher Volkstum Wehrmacht*, accessible at <http://www.adeq.net/volksarm.htm>. The inclusion of such disclaimers may be legally motivated, particularly in Germany, where Holocaust denial is against the law, and in the United States, where hate speech may also be prosecuted. However, the avowedly apolitical stance of many reenactment societies is also true of less incendiary groups. EventPlan, the agency that organized a reenactment of the 1984 Yorkshire miners' strike for television, claimed to be "accurate and non-political," something it aimed to achieve by consulting the local community and former miners as well as policemen. Howard Giles, "Recreating the Battle of Orgreave," accessible at <http://www.historicalfilm services.com/orgreave%20article2.htm>.
 31. David William Cohen draws attention to some of the difficulties of replicating, for example, slave experience in "The Production of History" in *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations*, ed. Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 300–10.
 32. Natalie Zemon Davis's book *The Return of Martin Guerre* and the new form of history writing identified by Robert Darnton as "incident history" could be seen as a productive rapprochement between historiography and reenactment. The questions

raised—"How can we know what actually happened? What delineates fact from fiction? Where is truth to be found among competing interpretations?"—unsettle tidy notions of the past. See Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), and Robert Darnton, "It Happened One Night," *New York Review of Books* 51, no. 11 (2004): 60.

