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Ambivalent Bereavements:

Embodying Loss in the Twenty-First Century


Figures 1 & 2. *Fallen Leaves* by Menashe Kadishman, Jewish Museum Berlin

Embodying Screaming

In the centre of the Memory Void constructed in an angular cavity of the Jewish Museum in Berlin is the installation *Shalechet* (*Fallen Leaves*). In it, sculptor Menashe Kadishman invites visitors to tread across a bed of screaming iron faces – faces that have been cut in an image reminiscent of Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893), but that are instead multiplied and made more horrific for their uniform anonymity. Over 10,000 'open-mouthed' and 'coarsely cut' faces (Jewish Museum Berlin) flank the floor of the Memory Void to demarcate a pool of silently wailing objects.

In Munch's *The Scream*, a fire-red sky circles a lone body, its head held between two arms, looking out in what is possibly protective horror at the so-called "scream" of nature. [1] Fredric Jameson has reflected on the decay of the self-possessing modern subject depicted

by Munch, to argue that Munch 'underscores' a 'waning of affect' by constructing an image that tries but fails to express vocality through paint (2001: 14, 16). In Jameson's reading, *The Scream* offers 'an embodiment not merely of the expression of . . . affect but . . . a virtual deconstruction of the aesthetic of expression itself' (11). If the paint in Munch's *The Scream* embodies both affect and its inexpressibility, Kadishman's cold, metal, disembodied faces become oddly visceral for their suggestion of the pure mechanics of death accomplished by Holocaust concentration camps. These heads have no torsos let alone arms, and in the pause of their collective utterance situate themselves as uncannily animate; trying but failing to express more than their iron visages will allow. To use a Freudian reference, their scream, amongst other things, vocalises the horror of 'being robbed of one's eyes' (Freud, 1955: 230).

Not seeing nor speaking, the expressivity of Kadishman's faces amplifies the unspeakability of a certain history, conveying what Holocaust survivor Charlotte Delbo has characterised as the speaker's 'bursting throat' in one of her poems (1995: 127). [2] For Vivian Patraka, the unspeakability produced by the Holocaust positions it as a 'crucial signifier of not only Jewish but human suffering and atrocity' (Patraka, 1999: 13). In subsuming the category of the unspeakable, the Holocaust becomes a narrative that forms the locus by which ensuing traumatic events might be known. The impetus towards utterance and its simultaneous breakdown – so evocatively conveyed by Delbo's affective image – is hence distinctive not only of the unspeakability of one history, but of the tandem history of "unspeakabilities" that attend both fields of trauma and performance studies.

Indeed it is the role of the 'un' that underpins this essay, as it connects to paradigms of memory, loss and mourning and for what it suggests of performance studies' own contributions to both the thinking and the doing of a contemporary politics of remembrance. Caroline Wake and I have elsewhere observed that to write about performance's relation to traumatic memory 'is to write at the intersection of two prefixes' where 'notions of the "unspeakable" familiar to trauma discourse' become positioned 'alongside notions of the "restorative" or "repeatable" familiar to memory discourse' (Trezise and Wake, 2009: 1). [3] While theories of the "un" emerge in ideas of the 'unmanageable' (Patraka, 1999: 10) or the 'unknown, unknowable' (Saltzman, 2006: 10) that cling to the trauma referent, 'the terminology of the "re"' – as Elin Diamond has made clear – 'acknowledges the pre-existing discursive field, the repetition – and the desire to repeat – within the performative present' (1996: 2).

In this essay I consider how the torsion between the repeatable and the unspeakable that performance studies so vexedly seems to inhabit (or to choke upon, like a bursting throat) might enable a rethinking of twenty-first century iterations of loss. These iterations centre around practices of embodiment and the attendant performativities of subjectivity that are produced by contemporary memorial sites. While the collection of muted faces held by *Shalechet* might compel a practice of "seeing", the installation also demarcates a practice of walking which animates a practice of sounding. Visitors to the museum are invited to step across the faces in a wobbling act of trespass. In doing so, the faces speak – or rather, they clank. The chain-rattling sound of modernity grinding to a halt echoes against an

unwitting dance. Their timbre evokes an underground antechamber or the clatter of death-trains, or jangles as a chorus of bells or even rain. [4]

In its invitation for interactivity, *Shalechet* marks out not only the unspeakable but the repeatable – the improvised steps of tourists who corporeally cathect the *un*speakability held by the installation's containment. Emil Hrvatin has argued that in the act of the scream '[t]he breakdown of the subject has already occurred . . . the scream relates the condition of the subject for whom help always arrives too late' (1997: 87). Hrvatin references Slavov Zizek's reading of Jacques Lacan, who 'determines the *object small a* as the bone that got stuck in the subject's throat'. A scream, thereby, is a 'voice that cannot . . . enter the dimension of subjectivity' (88, emphasis added). The account of negated subjectivity occasioned by the scream is made palpable in Kadishman's faces which *sound themselves* through the bodies that walk over them. While this practising of memory involves the provisional lending of subjectivity to those who have lost it, this self-other relation between object-face and tourist is the very act that occasions their cry: the bursting of the throat, the bone that gets stuck. In this repetition, subjectivity begets it own annulment. Help has arrived too late.

My reading of *Shalechet's* positioning of the tourist is one of three interrogations of practices of embodiment as they connect to paradigms of loss in key memorial sites situated across Central and Eastern Europe. I ask what continues unchallenged, and what is coercive, about embodiment in memory practice. Whose bodies are made to count – *to feel* – and whose, exactly, are to *be felt*? How are we not only "touched" by pain, but why is it pain, alone, that should *touch*? I house my discussion within a theory of ambivalent bereavement which marks the work undertaken by the tourist between the repetitions, negations and reformulations of cultural ideas of loss. The notion of ambivalent bereavement unpacks the interactions of discursive and corporeal literacies (modes of knowing, repeating and practicing) by which we come to perform memory in the new millennium.

I argue that the affective engagement enabled by the practitioning of embodiment in contexts of memory can strike an uncomfortable performativity between *feelings of* and *feelings for*, whereby the tourist might perform as a becoming-empathetic subject who reinscribes hegemonic histories of loss. In particular, I unpack the contexts that might give rise to what I have elsewhere called an ethico-political critique of embodiment, which 'explains not only how tourists engage with the aesthetics of remembrance, but how they are enabled to take on the social subject position – and hence cultural identity – embedded within the tenet's of a site's aesthetic program' (Trezise, forthcoming). This form of critique is pitted against practices in which the tourist performs the effects of embodiment as a "just" rejoinder to the grievances of a traumatic history.

Feeling Otherness

Shalechet opens out the potentially complex engagement experienced by the tourist when meeting traumatic remains. In a sense, the installation marks a friction between referencing

loss and embodying it, where the scream that cannot enter subjectivity positions the tourist as generative of a corporeality which is itself caught within, and reproductive of, a politics of the unspeakable. This friction might be conveyed via Diana Taylor's characterisation of archive and repertoire, whose contradistinctions are found in the archive's comprising of 'documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change' and the repertoire's alternate enactments of 'embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing . . . all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge' (2003: 19, 20). While focused on understanding knowledge practices through the terms of memory (rather than a specific conundrum of reference per se), Taylor's anticipation of the mutual determinacy of archive and repertoire is what is important here. She explains that:

> Multiple forms of embodied acts are . . . in a constant state of againness. They reconstitute themselves, transmitting communal memories, histories, and values from one group/generation to the next. Embodied and performed acts generate, record and transmit knowledge. . . . Materials from the archive shape embodied practice in innumerable ways, yet never totally dictate embodiment. (21)

The commingling, unstable relationship between archive and repertoire means that practices of embodiment become discursively heightened when undertaken as marked reconstitutions of the past. This is because – to borrow Patraka's phrase – a 'Holocaust performative' not only accounts 'for the goneness, but also for the historical real undergirding it' (1999: 6). That contemporary cultural mnemonics leave a space for the body in their representational practices is hence not accidental, but as I argue, nor is it necessarily always useful. It is the positioning of the body as the locus for the stagings of memory that can be considered vexatious in regards to a contemporary critical politics of remembrance. This is because the very act of embodiment itself gains a tautological agency when made the *repertoire* of what are particularly traumatic histories.

When studying the iterations of 'space' and 'place' made by US Holocaust Museums, Patraka has pointed to how, '[i]n a museum of the dead, the critical actors are gone' and it is instead 'the museum-goers (along with the guards) who constitute the live, performing bodies' (1999: 122, 121). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has also discussed the metonymic and mimetic capacities of artifactual remains in museum economies more generally (1991). But while Patraka argues, assumingly via Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, that 'a Holocaust museum can constitute a particular metonymic situation' for how 'inanimate material objects document and mark the loss' (122), the metonymy created by the very fact of 'live performing bodies' continues to be somewhat understated. This is despite the fact that the corporeality of any spectator at a trauma site *over*-signifies – it is marked by the deictic move undertaken by the site to reference bodies that were lost. This means that the act of embodiment is particularly predetermined when contextualised in relation to histories of loss, violence and death. What *Shalechet* proposes is hence multifaceted. The repertoire of the site is itself an instruction and induction into *repertoire*: tourists repeatedly embody a

kind of embodiment that will ultimately (and inversely) teach them of disembodiment (or death): the ontological status of the object-faces.

In this way, *Shalechet*, like other sites that deal with traumatic histories, positions the tourist as the stager of what Ann Cvetkovitch and Ann Pellegrini call an 'archive of public sentiments' (2003, np). Here, the body is necessarily implicated in both an act of feeling, and what Cvetkovitch and Pellegrini highlight as the '*discourse* of feeling' that has arisen with vengeance in the 'merging of the therapeutic and the titillating' as constructed by television talk shows (2003: np, emphasis added). Cvetkovitch and Pellegrini explain that the discourse of feeling shifts trauma from the individual and makes collective the *affective* force by which it might be known. At the same time, the 'constant state of againness' that is experienced by social subjects in the transmission of culture more generally inscribes a repertoire of feeing *feeling* in the case of *Shalechet*, in which the very undertaking of repertoire is made emphatically, duplicitously, embodied via the Holocaust referent. This is because undertaking an act of embodiment, as offered by a Holocaust memorial, is an invitation to understand embodiment in relation to its 'other': disembodiment, or death.

Writing on affect, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick produces a sense of how "feeling" might be "felt" by musing on the textile artworks of Judith Scott in the photography of Leon A. Borensztein. For Sedgwick, Scott's sculptures convey 'a sensibility in which fibers and textures have particular value, relationally and somehow also ontologically' (2003: 24). The cover of *Touching Feeling* envisions Scott hugging a sculpture in the shape of a large ball composed of wool, fibres, strands and ribbons, that both enfolds nest into egg, and produces egg out of nest. What Sedgwick terms the 'haptic absorption' deployed by the image of Scott's nest-egg embrace works outwards to make her physical act of touch "touching" in both a textural and figural sense (22-3). The production of affect 'dissolves' the sight of the viewer into a 'transaction of texture', and the very fibre of the work is what impacts us sensorially, sentimentally (22).

That the 'intimacy [that] seems to subsist between textures and emotions' (Sedgwick, 2003: 17) can be deployed in the name of an 'archive of public sentiments' is what is important for an analysis of the coercive complicity potentially opened up for the tourist when visiting sites of traumatic memory. Tourists, like Scott, are often placed in relation to texture's ontological productivity. In Kadishman's faces, for example, they are invited to haptically absorb the object-faces as a way of co-producing empathic engagements between themselves and otherness. This link between affective "touch" and empathic "feeling" has, in the lead up to the twenty- first century, marked a newer wave in memorial practices at large. Alison Landsberg argues that the trend 'reflects a change in what counts as knowledge', such that cognition is now complemented with 'affect, sensuousness, and tactility' (1997: 77, 76). Jill Bennett has likewise argued that the affective communicability of traumatic sense memories enables images to 'function across intersubjective boundaries and fold back into social memory' (2002: 348).

As Sara Ahmed has noted, however, such delineations – in their very process of inscribing empathy across 'surfaces' – actually operate to produce ideas of self and otherness *through*

the way that affective engagement leads to the contingent institution of feeling – or what she terms the 'sociality' of emotion (2004: 8). In this sense, a practice of "feeling" otherness as enabled by corporeal play gives way to a cultural politics in which 'the very surfaces of bodies' delineate 'being emotional' and come to be 'seen as a characteristic of some bodies and not others' (4). The *feeling of* self and other as a practice of *feeling for* the other is not solely the project of the self-possessing tourist, but is rather tied to an investment in the circulation of emotion as social and political effect. "Feeling" emotion through haptic absorption is hence intertwined with the production of that emotion as a means of delineating self from other, and in sites of trauma/memory, mourned from mourner.

Practitioning Embodiment

As I made clear in the introduction to this volume, memory in the twenty-first century is beset by the slipperiness of first person texts and their contexts (Trezise 2009). The "glocalised" nature of the production of meaning lends deep suspicion to any mode of cultural operation – but particularly those with a vested interest in remembering over forgetting, or witnessing over repression. As Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin put it, memory and history are *regimes*: what they 'produce as knowledge is also contingent upon the (contestable) systems of knowledge and power that produce them' (2003: 11). This idea is revealed through Ann Kaplan's observations, via Wendy Brown, that we now exist in 'a culture of . . . addiction to "wounded attachments"' (Kaplan, 2005: 22). In this particular memory regime, the 'sensationalized reporting' of 'images of suffering provided without any context or background knowledge' elicits a practice of what Kaplan terms 'empty empathy' or vicarious trauma (22, 93, 87).

These phrases explain how the social subject is implicated in the terrains of traumatic memory that circulate contemporary life – the 'archive of public sentiments' that we each grow to inhabit. While Kaplan suggests that empty empathy is linked to a 'feeling of hopelessness, of not wanting to believe people have to suffer' (2008: 16), practicing empathy emptily also suggests a relation to the wounds of the other that is somehow marred by false pretense. It suggests a sense of selfhood that is particularly singular for its assumption that it is the "self" who must relate to "this" other. Where Cvetkovitch and Pellegrini respond to the question 'can the subaltern speak?' with 'why should the subaltern want to speak to us?' (2003: np), a similar retort here might be: why should another desire "our" empathy, whether it is empty or not? In Ahmed's view, empathy is already empty for how it 'remains a "wish feeling", in which subjects "feel" something other than what another feels in the very moment of imagining they could feel what another feels' (2004: 30).

To advance a theory of ambivalent bereavement is hence to attempt to mark the mobilisation of affective productions of loss as it is staged via bodies. Ambivalence is not empty: it is precarious, undecided. It also engages a *duplicity* of feeling such that one 'can be excited by anger, disgusted by shame, or surprised by joy' (Sedgwick, 2003: 19). In Zygmunt Bauman's reading, ambivalence occurs 'when we are unable . . . to choose between different alternative actions' (1991: 1). In this, it is a hallmark of modernity for how

it is both tamed by the 'labour of classification' but also functions as its 'side-product' (3). Containing a similar account of internal contradiction, only etymologically, is the term 'bereavement', whose verb 'to reave' stems both from acts of plunder, robbing and stealing and acts of violation or breakage. To be bereaved is not only to be dispossessed, but to be *broken by* loss. This shifts the outwardness implied by Kaplan's 'empty empathy' to focus on the interiority of the self's experience as it produces the idea of the other. That is, by shifting to a context of ambivalent bereavement, we understand that a pretense of empathic relations built around the cultural apparatus of loss ultimately produces certain kinds of selfhood as its end effect. In this analysis, the "selves" in question are the equipped, well-heeled, first world tourists who are compelled, by their own pathologies of subjectivity, to quite literally "purchase" pain. In my argument, ambivalence and bereavement are the twin experiences of contemporary memory tourism, engaging the tourist in a problematic pedagogy of embodiment that most often enables the suffering other to continue to suffer.

Twenty-First Century Memories

As the twenty-first century West has made clear, there are currently two predominant paradigms for the practising of memory contemporarily. Within the excesses of a culture that has now well superseded the ends of history, we firstly witness a condensation of the temporality between an act of loss and its resurrection in mnemonic form. Andreas Huyssen positions this temporal shift as a marker of the demise of high modernity, with its investment in progress and the trusted 'telos' of development, to reflect the transformation of the *function* of temporality in generating the postmodern subject, a shift brought about by 'complex intersections of technological change, mass media, and new patterns of consumption, work, and global mobility' (2003: 27, 21). It is interesting that what Huyssen has elsewhere called a collective 'amnesia' is firstly positioned as part of a greater cultural milieu: his argument suggests that memory happens differently because time itself is experienced differently (1995).

In this sense, there is a duality of cultural practices: an excessive 'musealisation' in which 'the United States and Europe [have] kept building museums and memorials as if haunted by the fear of some imminent traumatic loss' (1995: 5), and a coexisting oblivion, which marks the 'forgetting of memory itself: nothing to remember, nothing to forget' (1995: 9). Such spontaneous *memorialia* exist in the form of gatherings of flowers, photographs and candlelight vigils on street corners – now infamous for their proliferation in the wake of instances such as the death of Diana and more recently 9/11, occasioning a new kind of social script for the collectively urban bereaved. Active 'musealisation' is public rather than institutional, instantaneous and occurs on a scale that, however unconsciously, seems to be crafted for the media cameras which co-create it.

The temporal efficiency that marks a traumatised space creates a second paradigm for the production of memory. It operates in tandem with a converse practice of excess mobility that sees everyday "pilgrims" travel to the sites of traumatic events that denote the experiences of others. As noted by A.V. Seaton (1996), tourists *travel* to trauma. Alongside Huyssen's reading of the condensation of temporality is a paradigm of geographical

displacement. Yet, while the experience of condensed temporality enables an expression of grief *in* and *for* one's own place, geographical mobility transfers the ownership of traumatic experience into a codified set of behaviours that are undertaken to "understand" the loss of an other in a place that is *not* one's own, but rather becomes provisionally "owned" through the ways in which its spatial parameters are practiced.

The confluence of temporal condensation and geographical pilgrimage coalesced by the tourist's behaviour might be understood in instances such as the remarkable rapidity by which the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina became *touristed*. In one anecdote, the bus company Gray Line Tours rerouted its former trip to New Orleans to offer 'an eyewitness account of the events surrounding the most devastating natural disaster on American soil' whilst maintaining 'the utmost sensitivity to the thousands of local residents still trying to get their lives back in order' (Consumer Affairs, 2003). The tour, observed one resident, ventured tourists into terrain that would be normally avoided: the slum districts that a city likes to hide (BookofJoe, 2006). What was being championed by Gray Line was not the culture but the *disaster* of the place, the place as a site of trauma. [5] And yet, as Kaplan has observed, while the narrative of Katrina as 'a "natural" disaster' justified its proliferation through 'images of devastation', it also continued the 'unconscious racism' embedded in such practices of seeing (2008: 16, 18).

By travelling to sites of devastation, tourists mark their difference from a place but also become co-creators of its meanings. According to Edward Casey, place and memory are intertwined such that place 'serves to *situate* one's memorial life, to give it "a name and a local habitation"' (2000: 184). Memory is hence a "place *for* places" – a storehouse of localities that connect to significant events, people and times (187, emphasis added). Importantly for the tourist, Casey also argues the inverse: place is practiced *through* memory and provides 'situations in which remembered actions can deploy themselves' (189). The codeterminations of place and memory given in Casey's phenomenology are important because they reveal the ways in which meaning is deployed through a combination of site and body. In this respect, Casey's analysis is significant because it reveals that providing certain 'situations' for the 'deploy[ment]' of 'remembered actions' presumes that particular forms of embodiment, as they occur through a place, are predetermined by that place.

The stakes for this kind of correlation become paramount when the context for the production of meaning includes a 'Holocaust performative', which, as Patraka has said, insists that the 'goneness' recuperated by repertoire also attends to the 'historical real undergirding it' (1999: 6). This reading of place neglects to understand that the terms of a place's structures for embodiment themselves participate in the contingency of memory as a cultural regime. Place does not pre-exist the way that it is re-experienced: this is the citational propensity of all repertoire, whether or not its performativities are politically resistive or coercive. As Sedgwick puts it, a move to question the 'essential truths' of performance through considering 'phenomenology and affect' must ask 'what motivates performativity and performance . . . and what individual and collective effects are mobilized in their execution?' (2003: 17).

Sedgwick's suggestion that practices of embodiment may be invested in the maintenance of cultural normativities unrests the presumption of the "innocence" of acts of embodiment from some of the cultural apparatus to which they usually attend. Maria Tumarkin offers the notion of the 'traumascape' to consider the tensions in this point: '[b]ecause trauma is contained not in an event as such but in the way this event is experienced', she writes, 'traumascapes become much more than physical settings of tragedies: they emerge as spaces, where events are experienced and re- experienced across time' (2007: 12). The "doing" of a site as a repetition of certain kinds of experience privileges the role of the body as the co-producer of the site's prevailing meanings, and the 'Holocaust performative' enables the importance of repertoire to be foregrounded via a Caruthian notion of traumatic belatedness. By this, the body is the central agent of meaning because it is an *inheritor* of the *otherness* of experience, enabling place to perform memory but also becoming what Celia Lury has called 'prosthetic' (1998) and what Marianne Hirsch terms 'postmemorial' (1997) for how it experiences the so-called feelings of others.

While the performativities of Holocaust*ness*, as reassembled by a place, need to be actively constructed in order for their phenomenological potential to be made manifest, the very presumption of the "innocence" of embodiment participates in the critically adverse meanings such sites can perpetuate. The management of the memory of place hence becomes a question of how place regulates repertoires of *feeling* feeling in tourists, particularly where the category of the loss of "experience" is the referent being recuperated.

Losing Loss

Paradigms of loss suggest paradigms of recuperation. How we think loss's relation to the body impacts how we think about the role of memory in formulating social subjectivities and hence relations of power – particularly those forged between bodies who have lost, and those who rehearse the losses of others (such as tourists). To argue for loss's inherent performativity is a crude theorisation when the occasion of loss necessitates the suffering of somebody somewhere. And yet, to understand loss as a truth-effect signals the enrapture commodity cultures experience for engaging with the trauma of the other. Loss's truth-effect in this sense is the performative formation of subjectivity itself. Judith Butler considers this point when she argues that loss is fundamental to the human condition. Loss, she writes, 'follow[s] from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure' (2004: 20).

The sense that we are possessed by countless possibilities for loss illuminates the ways in which we operate as social bodies that hold on to other bodies. For Butler, the grief that follows loss is not only an acknowledgment of dispossession, but also a demonstration of 'the thrall in which our relations with others hold us, in ways that we cannot always recount or explain . . . in ways that challenge the very notion of ourselves as autonomous and in control' (23). With this comes the feeling that through loss, we both lose something and lose our incorporation with it, as Butler asks: 'Who "am" I without you?' (22). And yet, Butler also explains that loss presents us with an enigma – 'something is hiding in the loss,

something is lost within the recesses of loss' (21-22). The losses suffered through histories of genocide, slavery and colonisation occur against the sense that we are now at loss's epicentre – the loss of loss itself. In a separate essay, Butler in fact pinpoints these kinds of multiple losses as 'a new political agency', one that, for the purposes of this discussion, anticipates how we might re-think the consequences of practitioning embodiment in acts of memory (2003: 467). She hence signals how the formation of this agency is contradictory, where it is, from the outset, a privilege to be "in" the loss of loss: a position that those in the thrall of trauma aren't able to experience.

Hirsch and Lury both begin their analyses with photography to mark out the terrain of the prosthetic or post- memory – operatives that challenge the conventional role that the body comes to play in cultures of loss. Both of their studies emphasise the *ambivalent* nature of the belated memory – one that opens up a range of responses to its script, but that also democratises or commodifies an individual's claim to traumatic experience. Lury's observation is made with regards to the new opticities opened up by technology: our capacity as social subjects for self-invention is enlarged by exposure to new planes of vision. In this we become consciously prosthetic, incorporating the semiotics of otherness into our practices of self-making. Hirsch is differently concerned with the inheritance of traumatic pasts, where second and third generation family members are given to eek out the reparations needed to overcome familial wounds.

As such, postmemory is invested in performing the present as an act of compulsive but resistant "looking back". Importantly, Hirsch considers this as an equally emotive and critical endeavour, asking 'is our generation not constructed, collectively, in relation to . . . ghosts and shadows, are we not shaped by their loss and by our own ambivalence about mourning them?' (1997: 266). As a kind of reticent mourning, foregrounded by Butler's loss of loss, Hirsch offers critical intervention into memory's hierarchies of victimhood – hierarchies that have become reasserted by what Naomi Mandel has noted as memory's driving rhetoric of unspeakability (2006). In this, Hirsch asks: '[w]hat relationship can one have to the traumatic events of one's parents' lives – horror? ambivalence? envy? a negative nostalgia?' (244). [6]

Following Butler, Hirsch and Lury, the practice of ambivalent bereavement – here considered as the staging of loss *and* its loss – situates itself within the excesses of trauma culture to encourage us to think about memory and its losses on different terms. It is the very practising of embodiment that is both heightened and troublesome when coming to understand the performativities of memory entailed by sites that treat loss. This is because staging of the tourist's ontology in response to traumatic histories alone speaks to the referent the site itself beholds. In such contexts, Vikki Bell argues that attention must be given 'to how the subject's embodiment is produced, how it literally incorporates the lines of force and knowledge that surround it in a process that is ongoing' (2007: 17). For Bell, practitioning embodiment is accomplished in a tension set up between Foucauldian and Butlerian lines of thought: disciplinary power 'produces forms of embodiment that actively partake in their own subjection', which entails the 'citing' of the 'I' in a process of 'materialisation' through vectors of power (14, 15). Via Sara Ahmed, this process of

materialisation of self and other – the citational 'I' – could be seen to produce the subjectivity of the tourist as *empathetic* through its delineation of the 'surfaces' by which the other comes to be *felt*. It could be argued that the tourist, in fact, becomes a practitioner of embodiment, for how the "doing" of the trauma memorial performatively positions them as becoming-empathetic, engaging a practice of subjectivity that is built around a highly ambivalent mechanics of bereavement.

Scenarios of Return

What is significant about Bell's reading for the analysis that will now follow is the multiplicity of *paradigms of* embodiment that are produced for the tourist in order for them to claim what Patraka terms a 'provisional' subjectivity (1999: 123) – one forged through the liminality of the site, and possibly reintegrated at the close of the engagement with site. These sit alongside Casey's assertion of the phenomenological interdependence of place and memory to *dis*-place a territory's claim on the body and to instead reinsert the practitioning of embodiment as that which makes a trauma memorial contingently meaningful. Bell explains:

> When Elin Diamond . . . suggests that 'the body is never fully subsumed in impersonation' (1997:180), this incomplete submersion is not to be comprehended as between the real and the acted, the before and the after, but between different simultaneous modes of embodiment as the body moves through necessarily different sets of relations. (26)

It is the 'simultaneous modes of embodiment' that are produced for the tourist by the trauma memorial as the tourist body moves through 'different sets of relations', that become paramount to understanding how vectors of power are maintained by a site.

These vectors of power – built through performative constellations between *feeling as* and *feeling for* – cumulate to reproduce ambivalent bereavements; complex experiences of the torsion between the 'archive of public sentiments' and corporeal knowledges of loss. As will be discussed below, these vectors work, in fact, akin to Diana Taylor's notion of the scenario which attempts to capture practices that sit between the poles of 'mimetic representation' and 'socially regulated patterns of appropriate behaviour' (2003: 55), asking us 'to wrestle with the social construction of bodies in particular contexts' beyond what is signified by systems such as narrative (29). While for Taylor, the colonial scenario of discovery feeds a reading of various theatrical and cultural stagings of imperialist histories, contemporary memorial sites position the initial scenario – the "meta" scenario of colonial discovery against a scenario of return.

Memory tourists stage acts of return to places that were never theirs. Rather than seeking the authentic in the primitive other, they seek the authentic through feeling through the form of a *temporal* other – the past is often the lynchpin of their desire. In this respect, the repertoire of memory tourism repeats the scenario of travelling *back* – a kind of re-discovery framed around what the performative nature of the 're' can strike as "truthfully" past, for

the present. The cumulative effect of the experience of trauma memorials hence might be understood as the circumstance whereby the 'formulaic, portable, repeatable, and often banal' operates 'as an act of transfer' (54), constructing lines of "truth" between experiential touch and what it is to *feel* – to have been "touched". Such lines of "truth" enable a scenario that both performs returning, and tries to return, resulting the construction of a range of becoming-empathic subjectivities which often only enable the tourist to be *touched* by their own capacity *for feeling*. The variations in this form of cultural memory practice mean that the provisional subjectivity of the tourist is often *produced* as the point of focus, through the histories of the lost other.

Budapest: Becoming Empathetic

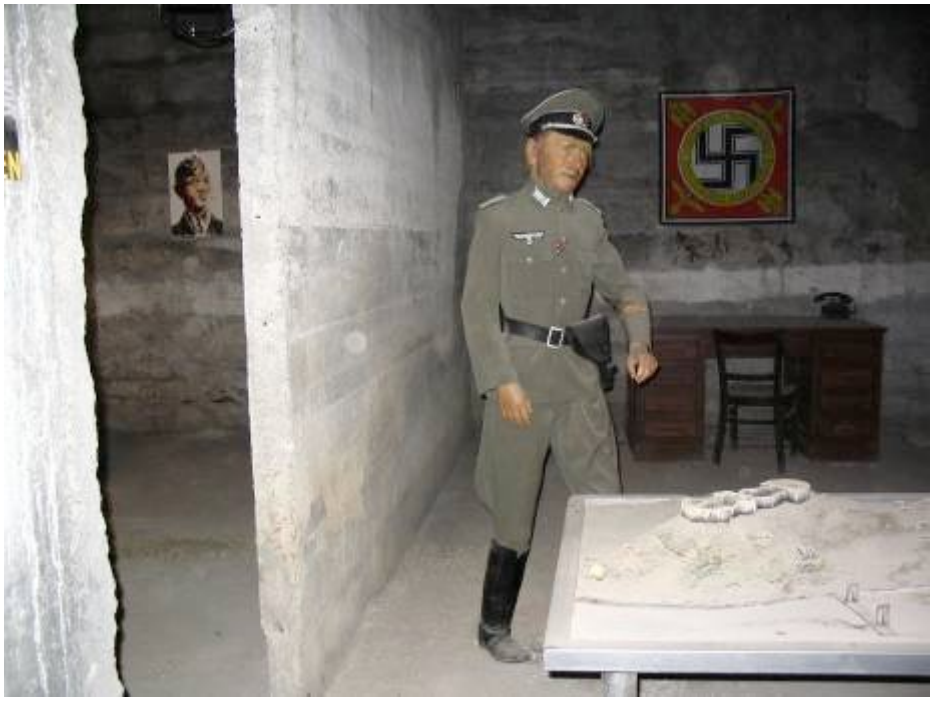

Figure 3. Waxwork Nazi Figure, Budapest Citadel Museum WWII bunker

On opposite sides of the Danube River in Budapest sit two counterparts to a singular history. In Pest, left of the bank, rests a series of 60 shoe pairs plotted along the promenade. Like many other metonymic significations of the Holocaust, these empty iron shoes generate the presence of the absence, and the absence of the presence, of the Jewish citizens who once stood there before being shot into the river in a series of raids on ghettos and factories undertaken by the Nazi Arrow Cross Party in 1945. Cast in 1940s design, their toe tips face the water marking an orderly spacing along the stretch of the palisade. The shoes are worn and have "character", as in the scratched and bent heels of some, or the fretting laces of others. In their collective stance, they almost signify a kind of peaceful provenance (they seem self- possessing) as much as we know that their spatial conformity actually pronounces their utmost docility. The bodies in these shoes were petrified, in shock, already beaten, bruised and violated, in disbelief at the fate that was unravelling before them.

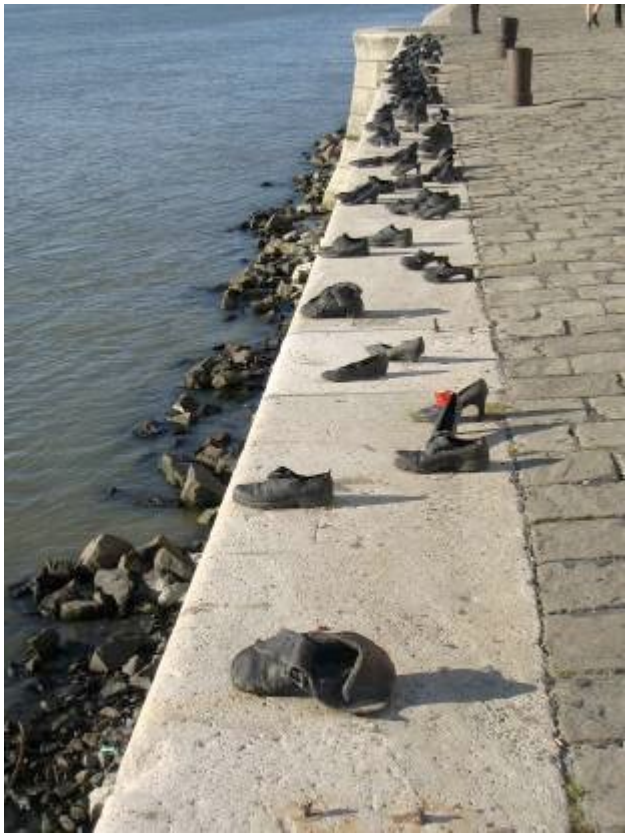

Figure 4. *Shoes on the Danube Promenade* (2005) by Gyula Pauer and Can Togay

Across the river, vertically high on Buda's Gellért Hill is the Budapest Citadel, a white-stoned fortress built in the nineteenth century by Austro-Hungarian Emperor and King Franz Joseph. It is crowned by a 14 metre tall Liberation Monument and hides within the hill a WWII bunker, converted into a museum that documents the progress of the war, focussing on the siege of Budapest in which Russian forces ousted the Germans. The bunker museum is, as one blogging tourist has described, 'over the top strange, the wierded [sic] thing I saw in Europe!' (J eff, Flickr). This is because it chooses to stage its past by being 'populated by the most bizarre wax figures i [sic] have ever seen' and for the doubly 'strange way these figures have ben [sic] posed' (J eff, Flickr). [7]

My interest in these twin sites is in how the tourist is positioned not only as co- creator of their meanings in relation to the history of Hungarian Jews, gypsies and homosexuals in World War II, but in how the tourist is corporeally positioned *between* them. Both sites are reproductive of a scenario of return and both consider how the 'formulaic, portable, repeatable, and often banal' might operate 'as an act of transfer' (Taylor, 2003: 54) to enable the tourist *to return*, and hence to position them as a becoming-empathetic subject in relation to traumatic pasts. In my reading, the tourist firstly becomes, to paraphrase Joe Kelleher, a co-creator of the 'suffering' of the 'image' of the shoes. The shoes appear to suffer by looking like wilted, dying, lost, dead objects – being both discards of the dead and personifying their former owners. As Kelleher intimates in his reading of the image repertoire of Societas Raffaello Sanzio, that an image should suffer 'involves something of

me, isolated as I am over here on this side of the image and already long after the event' (Kelleher, 2004: 192). When images suffer, they perform affect, or even constitute a kind of promise for the performative embodiment that is to be engaged by their spectator. In the shoes' performance of suffering, they both communicate and usurp the empathic role that the tourist is asked to take up.

While the tourist is roused to both see suffering, and then to vicariously 'suffer', they become complicit in the kitsch presence of the Nazis in a very different way. In this respect, both sites are significant for the site-specific history that they attempt to cathect through constructions of loss, engaging a phenomenological certainty with regards to the kinds of embodiment that the tourist might undertake. While the shoes mark an *in situ* event of brutal violence, the citadel marks the *in situ* history of Nazi occupation: together, they demarcate the tourist's apprehension of the traumascape along victim and perpetrator lines. While their oppositional geographies engage 'simultaneous modes of embodiment' as the tourist moves through conflicting 'sets of relations' (Bell, 2007: 26), the complex nature of the tourist's reading occurs in the way that the lines of sight drawn between the open, visible, marked absence of victims' bodies flanking the Danube, sit against the hidden-but-whole, mimetic figurine of the uncannily returned Nazi. Together, these generate affective performativities of loss, which work in tandem to create a practice of ambivalent bereavement.

Vivian Patraka has noted that the function of the shoe in relation to traumatic histories is to effect affect in the body of the viewer, and ontologically, to stage 'at once absence and presence' (1999: 128). In Patraka's reading, the piles of shoes collected at the US Holocaust Museum 'metonymically represent the huge body of shoes collected by the Nazis, which in turn, metonymically represent the murdered people who wore them, and in so doing convey the unmanageability of the history to which they point' (127-28). They further hold an undeniable affective force: 'the shoes smell (from their own disintegration) and thus involve our bodies in making memory' (128).

Akin to, but distinct from, the discarded piles of odorous shoes kept in Holocaust museums, the Budapest shoes carry their weight *differently*. Indeed, these shoes – first installed in 2005, having come after all of those other shoes – seem loaded with the over-familiarity of their signification. While on the one hand they offer a strong *poesis* for how they signify absent bodies in a temporality of standing (in this, the tourist is caught having to imagine the body *in* the shoes, in order to then read their absence), they also discompose the moment of embodiment the tourist might align with the shoe, with the unmanageability of their excess as a *trope* of loss (in this, the tourist has possibly repeated, or will repeat, this repertoire with other Holocaust shoes). These shoes, working alongside their counterparts across the European and US Holocaust touristscape, work pedagogically to signal the requirement of the tourist to practice embodiment. This occurs alongside (but not necessarily secondary to) the particular historical/traumatic meanings to which the embodying is connected.

While artworks such as *Shalechet* invite a complex interrogation of the act of standing in somebody's shoes, the Danube shoes – particularly as a rehearsal of other Holocaust shoes – reinsert an equation between embodying loss and practitioning empathy, where the spectator's body is affectively engaged to *feel* the presence of what is no longer there in order to become *touched by* loss. To recall Sara Ahmed's suggestion, the process by which we culturally construct emotions occurs through an affective engagement with 'surface' that is seen to inscribe self from other. In the Danube memorial, tourists mark a continuity between two enactments of loss in which they affectively sense the other, and then meet the other through empathy. In the first, they sensorially *feel* their positioning in relation to the absence of the body that is not in the shoe. In order to perceive the other, the tourist undoes the act of destruction by re-perceiving a presence that is no longer there. Their act of perception is spatial and corporeal as much as it is specular, and in this, their body is complicit in the absence that the shoes construct.

In the second, they *feel for* the loss of what is absent – this is particularly acute when they are part of its re-deconstruction. And yet, as Ahmed would point out, this *feeling of* self and other as a practice of *feeling for* the other is highly contingent on how otherness is produced by the social distribution of emotion. She explains, '[s]ubaltern subjects become invested in the wound, such that the wound comes to stand for identity itself' (2004: 32). Butler's 'who "am" I without you?' here comes to purpose: the otherness that the shoes produce keeps the mourned subject tied to the wound, such that the repertoire of becoming-empathetic equally becomes tied to tourist identity. A practice of *feeling of* hence not only begets a result of *feeling for,* but the two practices occur as one: embodiment produces the terms by which wounded otherness is generated.

The composition of spectator subjectivity in the Danube shoes is made more complex for their diagonal positioning in relation to the hidden waxwork Nazis. The weight of the engagement that the shoes inscribe between otherness and loss is counteracted by the manifestly "dead" presence the waxwork Nazis stage in their citadel bunker. Looming in mock mid-combat, the Nazis stand awkwardly, their postures almost registering the kind of looking that they receive as they pretend to go about their business of plotting war. The space is pungent with histories of clandestine inhabitation. Its walls are mouldy cement, but hold sequences of photographs that work as windows to the outside, documenting the devastation of Budapest in another time. In one, a woman emerges from a demolished building holding a bundle. *What is she carrying – clothes or a child?* The vivid recollection staged by the photographs – attempting to recall a Barthesian 'this-has-been' (1981: 79) and embellished further by the affective condition of the citadel itself – is radically undone by the ridiculous Nazi figurines who stand like Tussaud mannequins, guilty of how they *might just come to life*. Interestingly, there is no place to stand *in their shoes*. Their shoes, in fact, are "full" with presence, even if it is nullified by a waxy mimetic realism. While the shoes position the tourist in alignment with victim subjectivities, the waxwork Nazis give little space for the tourist to develop complicity with perpetrator violence.

The politics of inscribing empathetic relations to others can be seen in Ahmed's consciousness of the cultural distribution of emotion as power (who is seen to be a "feeling"

subject and who "feels" what emotion about whom). Dominick LaCapra notes how this politics is fleshed out through victim and perpetrator paradigms in memory politics, to displace the emphasis on empathy and argue for a multiplicity of perspectives from which we might understand history. He explains:

> The inability to recognize oneself, at least potentially, in Himmler may derive from insufficient insight into the self – from what may be radically disorienting or even blinding if it is seen. In other words, it may . . . be due to repression or even to the denial of the other within oneself. (1998: 34)

The materialisation of self and other as given by both the Danube shoes and the waxwork Nazis makes very clear that the tourist is to delineate the 'surfaces' by which both "others" (victims and perpetrators) come to be *felt*. In LaCapra's terms, this can be seen to produce the tourist as 'blinded', where it is only one kind of other
– the other who has been wounded – who is the cause for affective engagement, and hence for the production of empathetic response. What we *feel* when we *feel* hence aligns practices of traumatic memory with victimhood, such that the corporeal construction of difference marks a relation of power between subjects.

In this sense, the 'wish feeling' of empathic engagement is truly duplicitous – or ambivalent – as Ahmed has argued: 'subjects "feel" something other than what another feels in the very moment of imagining they could feel what another feels' (2004: 30). By positioning themselves as cleanly non-complicit in the crimes of the past, tourists carry out their own kind of 'repression or even . . . denial of the other within oneself' and instead assume the production of a self whose performativities result in the experience of merely being touched by their own capacity for feeling.

Munich: Performing Returning

I have elsewhere discussed how, in sites of traumatic memory, the 'materiality of the bodily performs itself in contrast to the absent bodies that comprise the scene of trauma itself. Liveness ultimately stages its ontology as an act of return in place of the disappeared' (Trezise, forthcoming). I repeat this idea in conclusion to emphasise that a scenario of return entailing the 'Holocaust performative' is nowhere more clearly enacted than at the traumascapes of Holocaust concentration camps – the literal geographical reminders that works such as Kadishman's *Shalechet* have attempted to draw upon in order to reflect the terms oftheir "unspeakability".

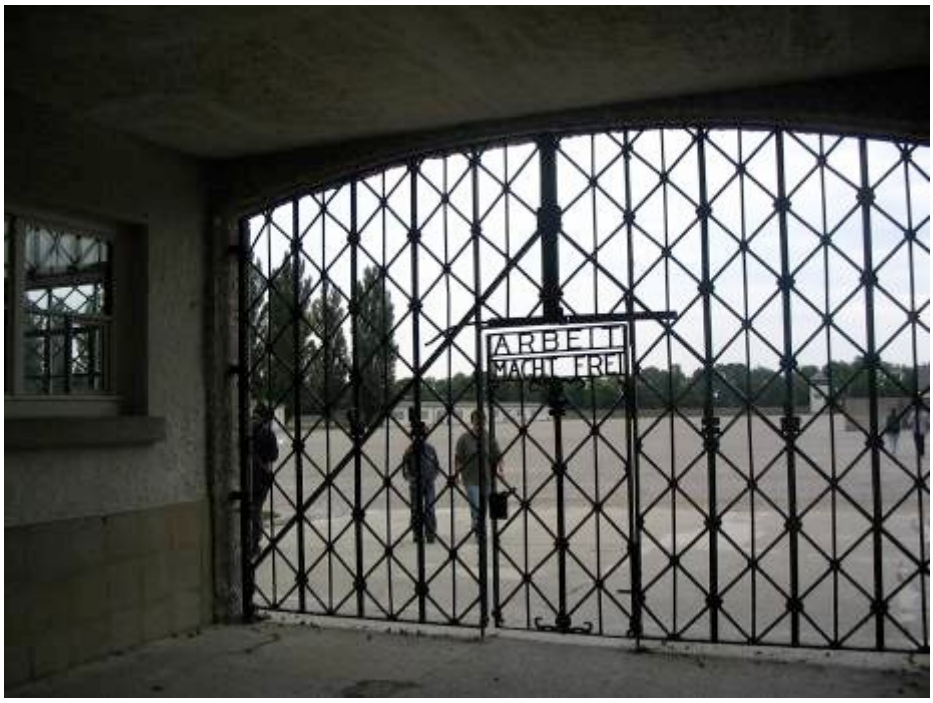

Figure 5. Dachau Memorial gates

Travelling to Dachau concentration camp 16 kilometres outside of Munich city, the tourist becomes engaged in another installation of the performativities between *feeling as* and *feeling for* that are staged through embodiments of loss. As a tourist, I travelled to Dachau by train and then walked in a queue to the gates. Our patterning on the landscape was oddly placed against the kinds of regulated repertoires that I imagine enforced trainloads of captives to this site. Even our entry and arrival registered a certain tension between what our spatial choreographies mis-recognised of the histories that must haunt the place. In this, the kinetic, phenomenological, corporeal activity undertaken by our act of return summoned a gap between two histories of repertoire that now frame the function of the landscape. If the experience of affect is tied to a cultural politics of emotion, that is in turn tied to hegemonic histories of representation, then perhaps the corporeal repertoire of becoming-other along the contemporary Holocaust tourist traumascape should incorporate the kinds of otherness to which we are most often blinded. Re-framing the kinetic, phenomenological, corporeal activity that marks the gap between two histories on a site such as Dachau might enable tourists to generate an awareness of whom they dis- and re-embody without questioning, and whom they provisionally "become" as a result.

If the practice and experience of ambivalent bereavement can be thought of as transformative – or as 'a new political agency' to borrow Butler's phrase – it is surely through the way that it enables us to become aware of the thrall by which loss holds us as social bodies. Ambivalent bereavement performs a relationship to the discursive parameters and experiential modes attendant to uncritical embodiments of loss. Loss here comes to attain a surface structure – a semiotic to be produced and consumed, detached

from historical experience. It also, however, becomes the signal of that which is sacred, which cannot be embodied. Ambivalence might emerge in the surfeits of consumer culture, but also as a rhetorical strategy for meeting the complexity of staging traumatic remains in twenty-first century cultural life. In this sense, it is possibly the critical experience of ambivalence itself – in Bauman's terms the inability 'to choose between different alternative actions' (1991: 1) that is itself the hallmark of a newly empathic practice. Further, this kind of practice might otherwise recognise, as Sara Ahmed has done, that performative empathic subjectivities as produced at sites of memory tourism most often 'sustai[n] the very difference that [they] may seek to overcome' (2004: 30).

Endnotes

[1] *The Scream of Nature* was the original title given to the work.

[2] The full sentence from Section II, stanza IX 'The Men', reads:

> Gently he returned / from whence he disappeared / returned to tell me / he died for the past / and all the future times / I felt my throat burst / my lips wanted to smile / since I was seeing him once more. (Delbo,1995: 123).

[3] I am indebted to one of many conversations with Caroline Wake for her very neat conceptualisation of these parameters. I've since taken them up and mulled upon them some more, but the initial credit to articulating these ideas is hers.

[4] Readers can find video recordings of this process on youtube which convey the quality of the sound: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhY8blCuBvs (date accessed 10 September 2009).

[5] Baz Kershaw describes spectacle as a mode that 'deals with the human in inhuman ways' in 'Curiosity or Contempt: On Spectacle, the Human, and Activism', *Theatre Journal* 55.4 (2003): 591-611, 594.

[6] Hirsch is actually quoting Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* in *Family Frames*, p244.

[7] You can find an internal panorama of the bunker here: http://www.panoramicearth.com/357/Budapest/Citadel_-_Bunker (date accessed 10 September 2009).

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Editorial Note

Performance Paradigm issues 1 to 9 were reformatted and repaginated as part of the journal's upgrade in 2018. Earlier versions are viewable via Wayback Machine: http://web.archive.org/web/*/performanceparadigm.net