Re-performance, Mourning and Death: Specters of the Past

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Abstract

This research conducts an in-depth analysis into the recent trend for creating re-performances, interrogating the relationship between re-performance and issues of death, loss and memorial. The interrogation is underpinned by a combination of philosophical and psychoanalytic discourses on mourning and loss with performance studies theories, particularly those relating to re-performance and the documentation of performance. Thus, it draws on work by performance studies scholars, such as Peggy Phelan, Diana Taylor, and Rebecca Schneider and philosophers, including Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and Simon Critchley, to develop an original framework for theorising re-performance. By positioning these discourses in relation to one another, this research examines a new area of investigation within the field of performance studies. The thesis questions whether re-performance strengthens and at the same time destabilises performances relationship to death and its status as an ephemeral art form. It argues that re-performance creates a bodily archive, in which performances can be stored, and that it, therefore, prevents them from disappearing. Through its analysis of re-performance related work by artists including Martin O’Brien, Sheree Rose, Bob Flanagan, Ron Athey, Julie Tolentino, Hannah Wilke and Jo Spence, this research equates this process of re-performance with acts of mourning and memorial. It asserts that re-performance enables performance to prepare us for loss because although the initial performance disappears, it leaves behind echoes, traces and specters. The thesis goes on to argue that these echoes and traces can be used to
create re-performances which are haunted by the specter of the initial or earlier versions of the performance. Hence, whilst acts of re-performance bring the past back to life, they also provide performance with a future. Linking this to notions of mourning, the thesis contends that both acts of mourning and acts of re-performance are transformative and are therefore predicated towards both the future and survival.
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Introduction - Why this Research?

This thesis develops a novel approach to exploring the relationship between performance and death\(^1\), with particular reference to re-performance. Re-performance, often referred to as re-enactment (an issue that I will discuss later on in this introduction) is a recent trend in performance art. As Rebecca Schneider explains “Reenactment” is a term that has entered into increased circulation in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century art, theatre, and performance circles’ (2011: 2). Its influence has been particularly seen in performance art, which is interesting when considered in relation to the fact that when performance art began some artists refused to document their work.\(^2\)

Schneider emphasises the relationship between re-performance and performance art when she states that, ‘The practice of re-playing or re-doing a precedent event, artwork, or act has exploded in performance based art’ (2011: 2). As such, it is necessary to examine the impact re-performance has on our understanding of performance. This necessity is born not only out of the increased interest in the practice of re-performance, as highlighted by Jones and Heathfield in their 2012 text *Perform, Repeat, Record* in which they examine instances of re-performance including ‘Yoko Ono’s redoing of her most

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\(^1\) This thesis’ focus on death is specifically related to human death and does not include animal death, which has been explored by some performance artists.

\(^2\) Although in the United Kingdom the term live art would normally be used to describe the performances that this thesis investigates, I have chosen to use Performance Art instead because many of the artists and performances that are analysed come from an American context and are linked to the 1960’s and 70’s when Performance Art was more widely used.
famous performance, the mid-1960s *Cut Piece*’ which they assert is a ‘prominent examples of this recent trend’ (2012: 89 emphasis in original). It is also necessary because of what Philip Auslander describes as the ‘ontological characteristic’ of performance ‘its disappearance’ (1999: 112). Many Performance Studies scholars, including Peggy Phelan, have argued that performance is ephemeral. Indeed Erika Fischer-Lichte states that during the 1960’s and 70’s there was a ‘performative turn in the arts, abandoning commercialized artifacts and commodified works of art in favour of transient and ephemeral performances’ (2008: 70). The recent trend for re-performance, I assert, threatens to destabilise performance’s ontology by preventing it from disappearing and, therefore, destabilising the emphasis on de-commodification that Fischer-Lichte has highlighted. It is this element of danger and destabilisation that makes re-performance such a crucial area of research.

The notion that re-performance destabilises the ontology of performance is particularly pertinent as we currently live in a world in which everything appears to be changing and the threat of annihilation is ever present. This may have always be the case, but modern technology and weaponry are developing at such a fast pace that is seems almost impossible to keep up. We live in a world in which everything perishes, and this perishability is a global issue. Global warming and the issue of plastic waste emphasise the ways in which even the very planet on which we live can be considered to be in peril. There are also other threats including: nuclear war, terrorism and more daily acts of violence, such as gun and knife crime, all of which can make life feel fleeting and fragile. It is in this context, the thesis argues, that whilst re-performance
destabilises performance’s ontology it also provides it with a possible future, and that in the current world finding a future and a way to survive feels more important than ever.

The thesis, which is positioned within the context of performance studies, explores re-performance as a means of bringing performance back to life in the present, and, therefore, enabling it to survive. It questions the implications that this has for Peggy Phelan’s highly influential depiction of ‘performance as a rehearsal for death’ 1997: 3), explaining that ‘billed as rehearsal, performance and theatre have a special relation to art as memorial’ (1997: 3). Phelan’s use of the term memorial is interesting because a memorial is something which preserves, which remembers. It stands in for the lost object, reminding us that it existed. Memorial and remembering are part of the process of mourning, and when, re-performance is viewed as a memorial, I contend that it helps us to prepare for our own death and the deaths of those we love. I argue that this is relevant in the current global climate of war and terrorism, where the threat of death is omnipresent. In her 2004 book Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence, which was written in the context of post 9/11 America Judith Butler discusses this threat and describes the current political climate as one that is a ‘cycle of revenge’ (2004:10). Butler goes on to discuss the possibility that ‘non-violent, cooperative, egalitarian international remain the guiding ideal’ (2004: 17). Butler’s comments suggest that we currently live in a world where the ‘guiding ideal' (2004: 17), is in danger of being overthrown in favour of a system in which ‘violence only brings on more loss, and… only leads, again and again, to the dry grief of an endless political rage’ (2004: XIX).
This research conducts an in-depth analysis into Peggy Phelan’s claim that ‘theatre and performance have especially potent lessons for those of us interested in reassessing our relations to mourning, grief and loss’ (1997: 3). The research asserts that re-performance changes what theatre and performance have to teach us about these concepts, by contending that because re-performance prevents performance from disappearing entirely. Moreover, this research investigates the possibility that re-performance changes those ‘especially potent lessons’ that performance can teach us (Phelan 1997: 3). This research investigates the possibility that re-performance changes the lessons that theatre and performance have to teach us about death by enabling us to witness the processes of mourning, grief and loss because they are mirrored in acts of re-performance. This is one of the key concepts that the thesis examines, and which this introduction outlines. The introduction also presents the key texts with which the research engages, particularly the performance studies texts, which include Peggy Phelan’s 1997 *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*, Diana Taylor’s 2003 *The Archive and The Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* and Rebecca Schneider’s 2012 *Performing Remains: Art and War in times of Theatrical Reenactment*. In addition, this introduction explores the concepts of the multiplicity of death, dying as a process and re-performance as a means of bringing performance back to life.
Research Methodologies

This research project is based upon the investigation and analysis of performances by a range of artists who have been selected as case studies for the thesis and builds upon the exploration of ritual, repetition and re-performance that I conducted for my MA dissertation. In my dissertation I examined instances of repetition within performance art and, whilst this research was predominantly focused on repetition in relation to ritual, the dissertation explored the desire to repeat actions, behaviours and performances. This led to an interest in re-performance, specifically the desire to re-perform and considerations of why re-performance has become such a prominent area of performance art practices over the last 20 years. The MA dissertation also explored the work of artist Marina Abramović, including her re-performance projects Seven Easy Pieces (2005) and The Artist is Present (2010). My research into Abramović’s re-performance of her 1975 piece Lips of Thomas as part of Seven Easy Pieces focused on notions of scaring and the ways in which scars can be seen as relics or leftovers of many live art pieces. In Abramović’s case I was specifically interested in the notion that the act of re-performance could be considered an act of re-opening an old wound, as in her re-performance of Lips of Thomas Abramović was cutting open the scar tissue from the initial performance. From this I developed a fascination with the remains of performance, which has been developed through the current research project. It is from my engagement with these acts of re-performance and the writings about these and other instances of performances that my interest in re-performance began and the idea for this research project
developed. This interest was particularly sparked by my reading of Phelan’s *Mourning Sex* which caused me to consider the relationship between re-performance, mourning, loss and death. The consideration of this relationship has become central to the research project.

Thus, throughout the research project this thesis has drawn upon performance studies texts such as those by Phelan, but also Schneider and Taylor, which have already been mentioned, placing it firmly within the tradition of Performance Studies. In addition to this, the research draws upon a range of philosophical texts including Derrida’s *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (1994), Freud’s ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ (1917) and ‘The “Uncanny”’ (1919), Julia Kristeva’s *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1987) and *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980), as well as Judith Butler’s *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004). It also utilises Simon Critchley’s *The Book of Dead Philosophers* (2008) and Deleuze’s writings on time, such as *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* (1983) and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1985). By situating the aforementioned philosophical treatises in dialogue with the performance studies theories, this research sheds light onto an area of performance studies that is yet to be discussed, that of the relationship between re-performance and death. Although works, such as Phelan’s *Mourning Sex*, examine the relationship between performance and death, this research focuses more specifically on the ways in which acts of re-performance disrupt or destabilise this relationship. The emphasis on re-performance, combined with its focus on non-linear notions of time and the cyclical nature of both life and
death and performance, means that re-performance provides the thesis with a unique lens through which to examine existing concepts within performance studies.

The philosophical writings of Herbert Blau, specifically his 1987 essay *The Eye of Prey*, were also considered as part of this research project due to their emphasis on the relationship between performance and haunting, which is central to this thesis. In *The Eye of Prey* Blau asserts that ‘if there is an Eternal Return, the performance always returns’ (1987: 173) and ‘that’s why we find ourselves, at the uttermost consummation of performance, in the uncanny position of spectators. It is uncanny because, in some inexplicable way...., we are seeing what we saw before.’ (1987: 173; emphasis in original) were examined as part of this research project due to their emphasis on the relationship between performance and haunting, which is central to this research project. However, Blau, like Marvin Carlson, who in his 2001 text *The Haunted Stage: Theatre as Memory Machine* argues that ‘one of the universals of performance, both East and West, is its ghostliness, its sense of return,’ (1), Blau focuses on examples from theatre. Thus, their writing about haunting differs from this research project’s orientation. Whilst their writing is rooted in the haunting created by the repetition of the word and the power of language this thesis is specifically concerned with the notions of haunting that are present within the body, created by bodily and often visceral actions. As such this thesis takes its examples and influence from performance art rather than theatre, and concentrates on a dialogue with those performance studies sources comparatively focused on performance.
The performance art case studies chosen for the research have been investigated through existing critical writings on the artists and specific performances, as well as the archival footage of their works, supported by research conducted at The Live Art Development Agency (LADA). The exception to this is Martin O’Brien’s 2015 performance, *Anatomy of a Bite*, which was witnessed live. The artists Martin O’Brien and Dani Ploeger were also interviewed as part of the research project, and the insights gained from these interviews are used when discussing their practice. Ploeger and O’Brien were chosen for interview because they are both British-based and the youngest of the living artists, making them more easily accessible for interview. Thus, they provide an insight into notions of re-performance and bodily transmission as part of a younger generation of artists who engage with the works of previous generations.

Case Studies

The case studies chosen for this research were carefully selected because all of the performances which are analysed within the project can either be considered re-performances or engage with issues that this thesis asserts are pertinent to re-performance. This includes artists who explore issues related to illness, dying, death, loss and mourning within their practice. It develops on performance art’s frequent engagement with death ³, from performative

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³ As displayed in performances including Gina Pane’s *Death Control* (1974), which includes ‘a close-up of Pane’s face with live maggots crawling across its surface’ (Black 2002: 2). The familiar idea of the rotting corpse being eaten alive by maggots is a striking representation of death in Pane’s performance. There
memorials to works which foreground illness and bodily fragility. As well as those which engage in re-birth and the multiplicities of life and death, all of the case studies are concerned with the issues that I outlined in my opening paragraphs as being pertinent to both this thesis and the current political climate.

The research employs the term initial performance when discussing the earliest or earlier manifestations of performances on which re-performances are based and using this definition the thesis questions whether re-performance can be viewed as a way of documenting performance and enabling it to continue “living” in the present, by making visible the echoes and traces of the initial performance. In light of this, the thesis argues that performance does not always disappear entirely but that it can become a more permanent entity and that it can be made to remain through re-performance. This research uses the term re-performance rather than re-enactment, choosing it because re-enactment can be too narrow and reductive a term to be usefully employed in relation to the broad range of works that are examined in this research. The term re-enactment, for myself and Schneider, is suggestive of a deliberate attempt to re-create a past performance as accurately as possible. This is highlighted by Schneider when she states that ‘if they [re-enactors] repeat an event just so, getting the details as close as possible to fidelity, they will have touched time and time will have recurred’ (2011:10; emphasis in original).

are also more recent examples of performance art’s engagement with death, such as artist Sebastian Horsely’s Crucifixion in 2002. Horsely ‘paid £2,000 to be crucified in the Philippines’ as part of the islands’ Easter ceremonies (Milner 2002:1).
However, I argue that the term re-performance also encompasses performances that are not direct re-enactments, but which still resemble the initial performance in notable ways. The term re-performance incorporates performances which do not necessarily repeat the performative actions of the initial performance but which examine the same issues or concepts. As well as performances, such as those by Anne Bean and Lynn Hershman Leeson, in which artists seek to re-perform themselves. It also includes examples of intratextuality, where performances within the body of an artist’s work can be seen as re-performances of one another. An example of work which could be considered a re-performance, rather than a re-enactment, is Martin O’Brien’s 2015 performance *Anatomy of a Bite*, which closely resembled Sheree Rose and Bob Flanagan’s 1994 performance *Autopsy* but did not attempt to replicate or re-create the performance exactly. Yet, despite this deliberate shift in terminology, this research significantly develops some of the key ideas and questions raised in Schneider’s text by linking them to Phelan’s discussion of performance’s ephemeral state. It develops Phelan’s theorization that ‘Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations’ (1993: 146), whilst displaying that it can, as Schneider asserts, be re-enacted.

As highlighted, the work of Martin O’Brien (1988-) was selected as a case study for this research because some of his performance work also serves as re-performances of Bob Flanagan’s (1952-1996) earlier work. Flanagan was a performance artist who also suffered from cystic fibrosis and died from the illness in 1996, aged 44. Flanagan created performances with his partner,
Sheree Rose (1941-), which explored his life with cystic fibrosis. Flanagan and O’Brien’s practice shares similar concerns with living with cystic fibrosis. O’Brien’s practice examines his life with cystic fibrosis through his deployment of ritualistic acts and durational performances, which use mucus to highlight his illness and make his body’s fragility visible. However, this isn’t the only similarity. Both artists have also created work with Rose and their collaborations are examined throughout the thesis. The particular relationship between the three artists is unique and is analysed for what it can teach us about re-performance, repetition, loss and death. Additionally, O’Brien and Rose’s work also considers their relationship with death. Despite the age gap – he is in his early thirties and she is in her seventies – O’Brien’s life expectancy is dramatically shorter than Rose’s and, as such, they both examine issues of ageing and bodily fragility, which the research also considers. One of the critical concerns explored in reference to Martin O’Brien’s practice is his body’s fragility in relation to his illness and his use of bodily fluids in his performances. These concerns are also analysed in the work of artist Ron Athey (1961). Athey, who is 56 years old and HIV positive, creates performances which involve bloodletting. This thesis compares that bloodletting to O’Brien’s use of mucus, as both fluids provide the signs and symbols of the artists’ illnesses and frailties.

The work of Hannah Wilke (1940-1993), and specifically the video installation *Intra-Venus Tapes* (2007) is also investigated in relation to making illness visible and as an example of how re-performance can allow us to witness the past, as in the installation we witness Wilke’s death in the certain knowledge that it is a past event, that we are not witnessing it in real time. Here the
research examines *Intra-Venus Tapes* in relation to what the thesis argues is the human desire to leave something of ourselves behind after our deaths, to allow part of us to remain. This desire is also explored in relation to artist Jo Spence (1934 - 1992) and her photographic works; *Narratives of Disease* (1989) and *The Final Project* (1992). In a similar manner to Wilke’s *Intra-Venus Tapes* Spence created *The Final Project* whilst she was battling with leukemia, and the project explores her illness and eventual death in 1992, aged 58. *The Final Project* can be seen as a re-performance of her earlier work *Narratives of Disease* because *Narratives of Disease* documented Spence’s battle with breast cancer, whilst *The Final Project* applied the same focus on making what was then her terminal illness visible.

This thesis is concerned with our desire to create projects, such as *Intra-Venus Tapes* and *The Final Project*. This desire, which the thesis asserts is the desire to leave something of oneself behind after death, is also analysed in relation to the work of artists Carolee Schneeman, Jill Hocking, Andrew Henderson, Briar Bates and Tom Joslin. Schneeman’s exhibition *Mortal Coils* (1994-1995) was her way of memorialising the lives of friends whom she had lost. Whilst it was not in and of itself a re-performance because it is analysed in relation to ways of memorialising those we have lost, it is linked to the key concerns of re-performance; loss, mourning, death and memorial. These key concerns are also what enable the thesis to position *Mortal Coils* alongside works such as those produced by Hocking, Henderson, Bates and Joslin. Hocking, who died from cystic fibrosis, in 2004 at the age of 24, created a cabbage leaf blanket, which she lay under as part of an installation piece. The
rotting cabbage leaves symbolised her illness and bodily fragility but also enabled Hocking to take control over the way in which her life, illness and body were presented. This is similar to Andrew Henderson’s 2016 performance Taking it to the Grave. Henderson, who suffered from lymphoma and died shortly after the performance at the age of 28, created the piece as a way of acknowledging his illness and impending death. Comparisons are drawn between Henderson’s performance and Tom Joslin’s video diary Silverlake Life: The View from Here which was produced in 1993. Joslin, who died of AIDS in 1991 created the film as a form of memorial, a record of his life and subsequent death. I assert that in these case studies, performance and film provided the artists with the means to take charge of their lives, bodies and memories. These performances removed the medical lenses through which they had been viewed during their illnesses and enabled them to gain ownership over how they would be perceived and remembered. It also meant that they left something of themselves behind, so that they would not disappear once they died.

This notion of taking control over the way in which you are mourned and remembered is also analysed in relation to the work of artist Briar Bates and her performance, Ankle Deep: A Water Ballet (Kiely 2017: 1). Ankle Deep was Bates’ way ‘to commemorate her death [by] — instructing her friends to perform a water ballet in the wading pool at Volunteer Park’ (2017: 1). Ankle Deep was performed by Bates’ friends following her death and although she wasn’t present at the performance she was fully involved in its creation. Bates’ friends performed the piece ““because Briar told us to,” Morgan said’ and Bates was involved in choreographing and rehearsing the performance (2017: 1). The
performance differs from Hocking’s, Henderson’s and Joslin’s because it was performed after her death and therefore, she did not participate in its performance. However, I contend that it served similar purposes, allowing Bates’ to gain ownership over the way that she was remembered; control that she was not able to have over her body, her life or her death.

These concepts of control and authorship are contrasted with what I argue is Wilke’s lack of authorship in *Intra-Venus Tapes*. Wilke began the project of *Intra-Venus Tapes* without knowing that she wouldn’t see it through to its conclusion. Bates on the other hand, was aware that her project would be fulfilled after her death. This difference is crucial in terms of authorship because whilst Bates was able to plan the project in such a way that she could retain authorship of it Wilke did not have the same opportunity, meaning that she was unable to retain authorship of *Intra-Venus Tapes* following her death. *Intra-Venus Tapes* was begun by Wilke when she was diagnosed with lymphoma and completed by her partner Donald Goddard after her death in 1993, at the age of 52. Goddard’s completion of the project can be considered a re-performance as Goddard inevitably re-shaped the project when he took it over in order to complete it. This raises questions about the authorship of the performance, whether it was retained by Wilke, or passed on to Goddard after her death. My positioning of the work as a re-performance suggests that Goddard took over authorship of the project, but that Wilke retained a presence, as a specter haunting both the work and Goddard as he continued creating the work. The work of Athey’s is also investigated in relation to re-performance, specifically his collaborative re-performance of *Self-Obliteration #1 Ecstatic*
The performance is analysed in terms of the relationship between Athey's initial performance and his and Tolentino's re-performance, as well as their collaborative relationship and the implications that re-performance has for notions of authorship as well as loss and mourning.

The idea of non-linear time runs throughout the thesis and is applied to all case studies and performers, as it is used to examine the ways in which re-performances are haunted by initial or earlier versions of the performance and suggest the possibility of future re-performances. The thesis asserts that through both photography and re-performance echoes and traces can be made to remain and the past can be brought to life in the present. In the case of Wilke and Spence's work, which has already been discussed, the thesis contends that their work destabilises linear notions of time because it makes their lives visible after their deaths. The research argues that re-performance disrupts the linearity of time by enabling a performance, like a specter, to exist simultaneously in the past, present and future. This argument has been developed from Derrida’s concept of the specter and specifically his questioning of time in relation to the specter. Derrida asks 'what is the time and what is the history of a specter? Is there a present of the specter? Are its comings and goings ordered according to the linear succession of a before and an after' (1993: 48)? These questions inform the ways in which this research explores non-linear notions of time in relation to re-performance.

This argument is made however, with the knowledge that a re-performance is never the same as the initial performance. This concept is explored specifically through the work of artist Dani Ploeger. His performances,
Electrode (2011) and Ascending (2013), are investigated as examples of re-
performances, which inevitably fail in their attempts to re-create the initial
performance fully or exactly. Ploeger’s work was also selected as a case study
for this thesis because of the intratextual relationship between the two
performances, which, this thesis contends, can be considered re-performances
of one another.

The case studies of artists, Aliza Shvartz, Lynne Hershman Leeson and
Anne Bean are slightly different from the others included in this thesis.
However, they have been used to explore notions of multiplicity, uncanniness
and re-birth which work with the thesis’ focus on examining the relationship
between performance, re-performance and death. Aliza Shvartz caused
controversy in 2008 with her untitled performance, in which she inseminated
herself with donor sperm before taking an abortifacient and collecting the
resulting blood for use in an exhibition. Despite the fact that Shvartz’s work is
not a re-performance in the same way as the other case studies it is still linked
to notion of repetition and multiplicity because of Shvartz’s repeated acts of
insemination and possible abortion, as well as the fact that she potentially
multiplied herself, if she conceived. It is these notions of multiplicity and re-birth
which link Shvartz’ work to that of Hershman-Leeson and Bean. From 1974 -
1978 Hershman Leeson performed the character of Roberta Breitmore and in
2012 Bean moved to a town where no-one knew her where she lived as the
character Chana Dubinski. In both cases the people who interacted with
Breitmore and Dubinski were unaware that they were participating in a
performance and treated them as if they were actual people. In each case
Breitmore and Dubinski were also created using elements of Hershman Leeson and Bean’s personalities and histories so that rather than being fictitious characters Breitmore and Dubinski were multiplications of the artists who created them. Due to the fact that Breitmore and Dubinski were created by Hershman Leeson and Bean respectively, this thesis analyses their relationship to life and death and the ways in which the Hershman Leeson and Bean gave life to Breitmore and Dubinski whilst simultaneously multiplying their own lives.

**Themes and Theories**

Throughout the rest of this chapter, I will outline the key themes that are examined in this research. This thematic organisation enables me to place the theories and case studies in dialogue with one another and highlight how this provides interesting and original insights into performance’s (and re-performance’s) relationship with death. It also reflects the thematic focus of the chapters themselves. The chapters have been arranged thematically so that the structure of the thesis itself reflects the processes of mourning and re-performance which it analyses. The first chapter of the thesis introduces the key themes and theories but the remainder of the thesis examines each thematic focus in turn, beginning in chapter two with notions of death and finitude. Whilst chapter three explores the remains of both performances and lives and chapter four focuses specifically on the concepts of loss and mourning. The final two chapters investigate notions of legacy and memorial, considering the possibilities for the future and survival.
Echoes and Traces

In *Mourning Sex* Phelan uses the discourse of psychoanalysis to investigate the work of mourning and loss. She discusses the nature of loss and our desire to hang on to that which we have lost. Phelan analyses art, performance and film and presents us with an image of mourning as a desperate struggle to keep the object of mourning alive. The crux of the issue, for Phelan, is the fact that ‘not even the dead will hold still: they do not leave us all at once, which would be horribly violent but clear’ (1997: 41). In death, as in performance, there are always echoes and traces left behind. I contend that by creating something which disappears, but leaves echoes and traces that we endeavour to hold onto, in our quest to try and re-capture the essence of the thing that has disappeared, re-performance prepares us for death. Phelan claims that performance prepares us for death because it disappears. Yet, if re-performance prevents performance from disappearing, then it could be the case that performance can no longer prepare us for death. However, aided by Rebecca Schneider’s theorisation of re-enactment, this research argues that far from weakening Phelan’s claim, the existence of re-performance strengthens the relationship between performance and death.

In her 2011 text, *Performing Remains*, Schneider explores both civil war and theatrical reenactments stating that in reenactment there is ‘a syncopated relationship to the event that (some) participants hope will *touch the actual past*, at least in a partial or incomplete or fragmented manner’ (2011: 9; emphasis in original). Schneider discusses ‘temporal leaks’, which she describes as the ability to touch or, in some way, step into a time in which we do not belong
Schneider also talks about ‘following footsteps and leaving footsteps to follow in directions not always, or only, forward’ in relation to civil war re-enactments, stating that ‘the fighting [which] took place both followed precedent wars and left remains’ (2011: 11; emphasis in original). This ability to touch the past, to create something which neither fits entirely into the past or present, is the creation of a temporal leak. This notion is also explored by Derrida in relation to the specter. Derrida states that ‘at bottom, the specter is the future, it is always to come, it presents itself only as that which could come, or come back;’ (1993: 39). The specter then, like re-performance, confounds notions of linear time by allowing performance to come, or come back. Re-performance, according to Schneider’s concept of simultaneously following and leaving footsteps to follow and Derrida’s notion of specters of the future, is a way of allowing performance to continue. It is a way of documenting performance without losing the ephemerality, which Phelan in her 1993 book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, claims is the essence of performance.

Schneider recognises that re-performances are never the same as the initial performance, when she states that ‘the “original” recurs, occurring always and only in and through difference’ (2011: 131). In this way, Phelan and Schneider’s viewpoints, far from being oppositional, do in fact work together. Re-performance allows performance to be saved and documented whilst remaining performance, but never the same performance. Re-performances are created using the echoes, traces and leftovers of the initial performance, but they differ from the initial performance. Therefore, the initial performance still disappears. It just does so slowly, until all that is left of the initial performance
are the memories conjured when we witness the re-performance. In a similar way, when someone dies, they leave behind echoes and traces which we often keep and treasure because they conjure memories of the lost other. These memories comfort us, or as Phelan claims in her story of one of the first paintings, ‘console [us], make [us] feel less lonely’ (1997: 120-121).

**Bodily Transmission: The Bodily Archive**

Memories, however, will inevitably fade and evidence of precedent acts or events need to be stored in some form of archive in order to survive. In this research I explore the notion of bodily transmission as a means of storing performance, keeping a performance “alive” and preventing it from disappearing. A key question that this research addresses is whether re-performance, when seen as a form of bodily transmission from one body or performer to another, can be understood as a way of memorialising performance, creating what I describe as a bodily archive of performance. I am not the first person to ever use the term bodily archive. Indeed Andre Lepecki used the term in his 2010 essay ‘The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances’. However, Lepecki predominantly uses the term in relation to dance whereas this thesis examines acts of performance art. Lepecki does discuss Julie Tolentino’s project *The Sky Remains The Same*, which is also one of the case study performances in this thesis, but I assert that my use of the term still differs from his in crucial ways. Lepecki’s concept refers specifically to acts of re-performance, which he terms re-enactment, whereas this project also
employs the term bodily archive in relation to initial performances in which the artist’s body becomes marked by the performance. Thus, the term is used in relation to performances by artists such as Ron Athey and Marina Abramovic, whose bodies become an archive of their performance history as they are wounded, bleeding and scarred through their performances. In Diana Taylor’s 2003 book *The Archive and The Repertoire* she uses the term repertoire to discuss embodied transmission and documentation versus the traditional language-based archive (this is discussed in more detail below). Taylor’s writing will be drawn upon as the thesis explores the idea of bodily archiving and remembering. Here the work created by Ron Athey and Julie Tolentino, and, specifically, the 2011 project *The Sky Remains the Same*, is analysed in order to examine this concept of bodily transmission and the ways in which it can allow the performance to outlive the initial artist. Their work sees Tolentino witness Athey's performance before presenting her re-performance, and I assert that notions of bodily transmission are present due to the nature of the performance. Additionally, I argue that this idea of passing on links to the questions raised earlier in relation to re-performance as a means of keeping performance “alive”. By passing on a performance from one body to another, the future of the performance becomes more secure, in the sense that the body of the initial performer is no longer required to ensure its survival. Thus, the performance can have a life in any number of bodies and is no longer reliant on the body of the initial performer. This is, as I contend in chapter one, significant in the current cultural and political climate where death appears to surround us as we face the very real threats of war and terror every day. I postulate the idea
that the desire to retain a performance is similar to the desire that we have to hold onto the leftovers and memories of the loved ones that we have lost.

Here, Diana Taylor’s concept of the repertoire will be used to explore notions of bodily transmission. Taylor uses the term repertoire to describe an act of collective and cultural remembering (2003). We find performance as an outlet for public grief as well as a way of remembering those who have disappeared and become lost to us in one way or another. Taylor describes acts of collective remembering, coming together to remember, to mourn and to memorialise those who ‘disappeared’ (2003: 161). This thesis will argue that bodily transmission and the passing on of a performance from one artist to another, whilst not an act of mourning, is an act of witnessing and remembering. It is a way of archiving and retaining a performance and perhaps, an acknowledgement of the frailty of the human body. Performances need to be passed on from one body to another in order to endure because all bodies are fragile.

This concept of bodies as ephemeral and the need for performances to be passed from one body to another in order to survive raises questions of survival, death and finitude. The term finitude is used throughout the thesis to refer to the fact that everyone and everything has a life span, that no-one is immortal, and nothing lasts forever. This thesis’ understanding of finitude focuses on the term in relation to earthly mortality rather than any religious

4 In The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas Taylor talks specifically about events in Chile but her concept of collective mourning or remembering can be usefully applied to a range of other contexts, such as those explored in this research.
connotations of the term. Thus, finitude is used in relation to notions of bodily fragility, loss, death and mourning. The notions of finitude and bodily fragility are particularly pertinent when considering the work of Athey and Tolentino. Due to the fact that Athey is ‘HIV positive’ his illness brings his survival into question (Palmer 1998: 1). These questions are explored through the nature of the performance and, in particular, the use of bloodletting. Athey and Tolentino’s bodies can be described as precarious because they are endangered due both to Athey’s illness and Tolentino’s proximity to his seemingly “dangerous” body. The use of blood in the performance is crucial to the notion of precariousness as the close proximity of the artists’ bodies means that there is potential for the blood to cross the boundaries between the two bodies. This concept of precariousness will be employed in order to denote and explore notions of bodies on the edge, bodies operating on boundaries, whose nature or state of being is somehow at risk or under threat. Athey and Tolentino appear to be under threat of death. Additionally, their bodies operate on boundaries. They do not fit easily into the categories of sick or healthy but operate in a liminal space, a space described by Victor Turner as ‘betwixt and between’ (1969: 65). Athey and Tolentino are, I assert, bodies which exist in the space between life and death. They are very clearly and visibly alive but at the same time their use of blood and wounding is a visceral reminder of the fragility of their, and indeed our own, bodies.

Moreover, Athey and Tolentino operate on boundaries because theirs are bodies that refuse to be easily defined or categorised. They cannot be delineated according to cultural perceptions of masculinity or femininity.
Furthermore, at times during the performance the boundaries between their bodies are not always visible as they merge into a mass of blood and flesh. The nature of the performances, in which blood drips, leaks and oozes out of the performers’ bodies, serves to further this blurring of bodily boundaries, meaning that there are moments in which the bodies that are witnessed can’t easily be identified as belonging to Athey or Tolentino. Therefore, it can be said to be crossing and transgressing boundaries. It is for this reason that The Sky Remains the Same also provides a basis for examining gender roles in performance and re-performance. The fact that Tolentino, as a female artist, re-creates the work of a male artist allows the research to examine the way in which the physical body of a performer affects the perception of a performance. It enables the thesis to question whether Tolentino’s status as a woman disrupts notions of body-to-body transmission that occur in her re-performance. It also provides the opportunity for the research to question whether Tolentino’s re-performance, especially the nature of the re-enactment which positioned her body next to Athey’s, feminises his body as an erotic object, or masculinises hers as capable as being as tough as his. Seeing the same actions performed by a male body and then a female body disrupts notions of gender difference because the actions are the same, but the bodies performing those actions differ. This blurs the lines between the bodies of the two performers. In a sense the two bodies are intertwined. They share a physical space and a set of performative actions. As such, it is not always easy to define where Athey’s body, or indeed his performance, ends and Tolentino’s begins. However, once again notions of gender disrupt this blurring of bodies, performances and
boundaries because the gender difference between the performers prevents their actions from being read in the same way and, therefore, interrupts the notion of bodily transmission.

**Haunting and Specters**

The concept of bodily transmission or passing on is also explored through the work of artists, Sheree Rose, Martin O'Brien and Bob Flanagan. The work created by both Rose and Flanagan and Rose and O'Brien is similar in form as it explores sadomasochistic ideas, with Rose presented in the role of dominant sadist and, first Flanagan, then later O'Brien, fulfilling the role of subservient masochist. Here it is not Flanagan’s or O'Brien's presence which conjures notions of passing on but Rose's. It is her body and the role that she plays in the performances which invokes the similarities between the performances and, therefore, the notions of bodily transmission. Rose's work with O'Brien appears to be haunted by her earlier work with Flanagan because she acts as the body through which the transmission from Flanagan to O'Brien takes place. Thus, it is her presence which causes the work to appear haunted by Flanagan's ghost. Flanagan may not be physically present in the work created by Rose and O'Brien, but that does not stop him being present as a specter who haunts the performance. We can see Flanagan in O'Brien's body, which is beaten, whipped and bruised by Rose in the same way that Flanagan’s was in the past.

Notions of gender are also examined here as Rose is positioned as the mother figure through which Flanagan’s work is passed onto O'Brien, the
feminine vessel which breathes life into Flanagan’s performances. This concept of Rose as a feminine mother figure is however, disrupted by the knowledge that Rose is an active participant in the performances. In her role as sadist to their masochist, she whips and beats Flanagan and O’Brien and, therefore, has agency in the performances.

The analysis of Rose and O’Brien’s work is informed by Jacques Derrida’s text *Specters of Marx*, in which Derrida employs the term specter, stating that ‘it is flesh and phenomenality that give to the spirit its spectral apparition, but which disappear right away in the apparition, in the very coming of the revenant or the return of the specter’ (1994:6; emphasis in original). The specter then, according to Derrida, appears as something more tangible than the ghost or the spirit. When he speaks of the specter, Derrida speaks of flesh and visors and helmets, solid objects, things which one can touch and feel. However, Derrida does not lose the elusiveness normally associated with ghosts and spirits by choosing the term specter. On the contrary, he emphasises the somewhat illusory nature of the specter in his discussion of what he terms ‘the visor effect’, where he presents the specter as someone or something which is always there, always watching us even when ‘we do not see who looks at us’ (1994: 7; emphasis in original).

Derrida refers to the specter of Marxism, which he claims haunts Europe, suggesting that the specter of communism is one which terrifies the powers of Europe because it is a ‘specter of communism then to come’ (1994: 37; emphasis in original). Specters, according to Derrida, are terrifying not only because they act like spies, watching us from behind their helmets or visors but
because they speak of something which is not necessarily or not only past. Derrida uses Hamlet’s words ‘time is out of joint’ in relation to the specter, suggesting that the specter can speak of the past and the future simultaneously (1994: 10). Thus, the specter does not seem to remain in its own time but is able to travel between times. This research argues that it is in this way that Flanagan's specter returns to haunt Rose and O'Brien's performances.

The idea of the specter is entwined with Derrida's notion of hauntology, in the sense that both speak of the future and present as well as the past. As Derrida has stated, hauntology and the specter speak to ‘repetition and first time, but also repetition and last time since the singularity of any first time makes of it also a last time’ (1994: 10; emphasis in original). Derrida speaks of the singularity of the first time whilst simultaneously describing repetition and the last time. This suggests that time is not only linear, but it can become ‘out of joint’ through time travelling specters who haunt the present and future from their position in the past (1994: 18). These specters refuse to stay in their own time, relentlessly pushing forward into a time where they should not belong. Flanagan does not belong in O'Brien and Rose's performances; he haunts them like Derrida's specter, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, refusing to stay in the past.

The Process of Dying

The notion of time being ‘out of joint’ is also at issue in the work of Hannah Wilke, Jo Spence and Tom Joslin (1994: 18). Wilke, Spence and Joslin's work
explores their illnesses and subsequent deaths but, this thesis argues, that they do so in such a way as to present dying as non-linear process. In the work that they create using film and/or photography spectators do not witness the linear progression of an illness, from health until death. Instead spectators are presented with the concept of dying as something that belongs neither in the past, present or future but which speaks to all three simultaneously. Dying is presented, in a similar way to re-performance, as a process. As such, this work provides insights into performance’s relationship with death and, in particular, into questions about performance’s ability to prepare us for death. Wilke’s Intra-Venus Series (1993) and the subsequent Intra-Venus Tapes (2007), as well as Spence’s The Final Project (1992) and Tom Joslin’s Silverlake Life: The View from Here (1993), allow the research to explore the relationship between witnessing performance and witnessing death. In Intra-Venus Tapes, an exhibition produced fourteen years after her death; spectators can witness Wilke’s physical deterioration during her battle with Lymphoma. In the tapes, Wilke appears like a specter, her presence haunts the exhibition in which she appears very much present and alive. The fact that we are able to witness this so long after her death raises questions about performance’s ability to ‘respond to the psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially for death’ (Phelan 1997: 3). How can performance, if it disappears as it is being performed, respond to this need when long after Wilke’s death we can still see her, very much alive and present? This issue is explored by Phelan in her analysis of the film, Silverlake Life: The View from Here, created by Tom Joslin, and the thesis examines Phelan’s analysis in relation to both Silverlake Life and Intra-Venus
Tapes. Phelan discusses the temporal boundaries crossed by watching the dead, alive, if not always healthy, on film. She explores Joslin’s desire to make the film and argues that in film Joslin remains, even after his death, when she states that ‘cinema is one place where the still-moving body leaves a trace’ (2013: 156). This thesis draws upon Phelan’s analysis of Joslin’s film to inform my own investigation of his, Wilke’s and Spence’s work, as the thesis questions what it means to witness another’s death after the event and the implications that this has for performance’s claims to ephemerality and its ability to respond to ‘a psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially for death’ (2013: 3).

As outlined earlier in this introduction, some of the artists that make up the case studies suffer(ed) from chronic or incurable illness. They have been chosen because their illnesses are explored through the work that they create and, as such, their work presents us with images of sick and/or dying bodies. It is the presentation of these bodies in performance that makes them of particular interest to this research. The status of these bodies as sick or dying places them on the borders of life and death, and, therefore, presents dying as a process rather than a state; a process through which the health of a body deteriorates slowly until it arrives at death. Throughout the research, a distinction is drawn between death and dying. The term death is used to describe the state of a body or person which is fixed. Contrastingly, dying is used to describe the process through which a person or body must pass in order to go from being alive to being dead. It is the concept of dying as a process that this research is interested in, as it provides a conceptual framework for exploring performance’s relationship with death. Furthermore, it
raises questions about the ephemerality of performance. Bodies on the boundary of life and death are ephemeral; they will cease to exist once the process of dying is over, similar to the way in which performance arguably ceases to exist once it has ended. However, these bodies leave echoes and traces behind, much like the echoes and traces that performances leave behind as documentation.

Afterlives, Survival and Re-performance

These echoes and traces can be seen as the afterlife of performance, the things left behind which enable the performance to be re-performed and re-created. This thesis asserts that acts of re-performance are also acts of survival. They enable performances to survive, albeit in a transformed state, and I contend that this process of transformation and survival is crucial to performance’s and re-performance’s relationship with death. In his exploration of philosophical notions of death in, *The Book of Dead Philosophers*, Simon Critchley quotes the philosopher Zhuangzi as saying that ‘death and life are never-ceasing transformations’ (2008: 56), and this research draws parallels between the transformations involved in re-performance and those involved in dying and death. I argue that the transformations within re-performance enable performances to disappear slowly, fading away with each transformation, rather than instantaneously, and that this mirrors the process of mourning. Thus, this enables re-performance to prepare us for death and helps us to survive the deaths of those we love. As Critchley states, ‘it is the deaths of those that we
are bound to in love that undo us’ (2008: 9). And I assert that in order to survive those deaths we have to find a way to make meaning from the loss in the same way that re-performances make meaning from the echoes and traces of performances.

The question of how to survive the loss of others is further explored in relation to Judith Butler’s 2004 text Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence, in which she discusses the ‘the transformative effect of loss’ and asks ‘Who “am” I without you? (2004: 21,22). What Butler makes clear is that when we experience the loss of a loved one it changes us and this links to Phelan’s assertion that ‘Narcissism emerges not out of an excess of self-love, as is commonly assumed, but rather as a “militant” acknowledgement of loss’ (1997: 130). Phelan proposes the idea that narcissism is a means of self-preservation, of surviving the loss of the other. However, Phelan’s use of the term militant is suggestive of the fact that this kind of grief can generate agency and it is this notion that the thesis explores in relation to monuments and memorials. This thesis analyses performances such as Silverlake Life, Taking it to the Grave and Ankle Deep, contrasting them with other memorial forms such as The Aids Quilt and The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in order to explore the ways in which memorials can be performative and the interrelation between monuments and less traditional forms of memorial. The research argues that temporal memorials can work alongside monuments, in much the same way as performance documentation and bodily archives can work together, in order to provide a fuller insight into past performances as well as the lives of the dead.
Thus, this enables performance to play a significant role in preparing us for loss and death.

Having outlined the key concepts and questions raised by this research and introduced some of the key theorists, texts and terms, which will be drawn upon throughout the research, I will now briefly introduce the content of each chapter.

**Chapter One – Re-performance, Death, Mourning and Survival: A Theoretical Discourse**

The first chapter of the thesis draws together the main theories which underpin and influence the research, outlining the links between the theories and the ways in which they are brought together in order to develop this thesis’ understanding of the relationship between performance, re-performance and death. The artists whose work makes up the case studies for this thesis are also introduced as the chapter explains the ways in which the theories will be applied to the artists’ work and the reasons why these particular artists and performances have been selected for analysis. The first chapter builds upon this introduction by highlighting the main ideas that are developed throughout the rest of the thesis, providing a more detailed outline of these theories and concepts and the specific ways in which the research employs them. Therefore, this sets these concepts up for more detailed analysis later on in the thesis.
Chapter Two – Desire and Fear: Death and Finitude

The second chapter of the thesis focuses on examining the re-performance works of Ron Athey with Julie Tolentino and Sheree Rose with Martin O’Brien and Bob Flanagan. The re-performances analysed in this chapter are done so in terms of what they can teach us about the fragile nature of bodies and the concept of finitude. They are also positioned in dialogue with Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection and Freud’s theory of melancholia. Through this dialogue, which the chapter also links to the Derridian notions of haunting and specters, the research argues that specters can be viewed in re-performances and examines the ways in which they are made visible. It draws upon Julia Kristeva’s notion of abjection and analyses the combination of fear and desire that we experience when witnessing performances in which bodily boundaries become blurred and there is a risk of contamination. If a re-performance is haunted by the specter of an earlier version of the performance and the performance, as I argue, can be seen as a means of passing on from one body to another, the two bodies cease to be separate entities. They become intertwined and the boundaries between them become blurred. Thus, this suggests that the bodies of the performers are at risk of losing ‘the integrity of one’s “own and clean self” (Kristeva, 1982: 53). The blurring of the bodies’ boundaries risks collapsing the boundary between the two bodies, placing them in an abject space in which self and other can no longer be easily separated.

In addition to its focus on re-performance this chapter will analyse works by artists Martin O’Brien and Ron Athey, which investigate abjection through their use of bodily fluids, in O’Brien’s case, mucus and in Athey’s, blood. The
chapter will analyse the ways in which the use of these fluids explores the notion of abjection and links this to ideas about corpses and dying which Kristeva examines, describing the corpse as, ‘the most sickening of wastes, [...] a border that has encroached upon everything’ (1982: 3). The chapter will form a link between these concepts (re-performance, abjection, illness and bodily fluids) by arguing that in illness and dying, as in re-performance, the body’s integrity cannot be guaranteed. Kristeva states that ‘the corpse, seen without God and outside of Science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life’ (1982: 4). When viewed in this way, illness and dying appear to encroach upon the body, infecting the body, taking over the body, until the point of death: ‘Death happens when the illness within the body surmounts the health within the body’ (Phelan 2013: 159). At the point of death, the body ceases to be a body and becomes a corpse, the ultimate object of abjection.

Drawing links between Phelan and Kristeva’s arguments this chapter contends that in re-performance and in performances which use bodily fluids, as in death, the boundaries of the body become blurred, insecure and misaligned, allowing for slippages, failures and transgressions. This includes the slippage between the bodies of the initial artist and the re-performer and the transgression of publicly displaying bodily fluids, which are usually confined within the body, and the failure of the body to be able to rid itself of illness. It ultimately displays the failure to prevent death from trespassing upon and taking over the body. The chapter also asserts that this use of bodily fluids, together with the desire to re-perform pieces in order to intercept their disappearance,
serve as pertinent reminders of the fact that our bodies are fragile and our lives finite.

Chapter Three – Echoes, Traces and Remains

In the third chapter of the thesis I build upon the second by accepting that re-performances differ from both the initial performance and each other in several ways but arguing that in spite of their differences re-performances always contain remnants of the initial performance. Here, the research draws upon the Derridian notion of the Specter in order to argue that re-performances are always haunted by the initial performance because the remnants of the initial performance form the basis of the re-performance and are therefore visible in the re-performance. Using the case studies of Martin O’Brien’s 2011 performance Mucus Factory and his 2015 piece, Anatomy of a Bite, as well as Julie Tolentino and Ron Athey’s 2011 performance, Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic, and Dani Ploeger’s performance Electrode (2011), this chapter asserts that re-performances powerfully evoke memories of the initial performance. In so doing, they present possibilities for the return of the initial performance by providing us with new insights into and ways of understanding the initial performance.

In addition to its focus on re-performance this chapter also explores Richard Schechner’s concept of aftermath, analysing the ways in which bodily remains, such as blood and mucus, can be seen as the aftermath of a performance. I question whether these objects can be used in conjunction with other archival materials in order to document performance. This chapter also
explores the concept of intertextually / intratextuality as the chapter examines the ways in which certain actions or gestures are re-iterative and appear throughout the body of an artist's work, as a way of documenting their earlier work. By placing these concepts in dialogue with one another this chapter is able to argue that documentation and live performance, just like traditional archives and bodily archives, are not merely two sides of a binary opposition, but can in fact work together in order to enhance both our understanding of previous performances and performance’s relationship with death.

Chapter Four—Loss and Mourning

The fourth chapter of the thesis analyses performance’s relationship with death in more detail, building upon the discussion of the way in which performance prepares us for death and loss in chapter two. This chapter focuses on examining the relationship between performance and mourning. Through an exploration of mourning and melancholia, drawn from Freud and Kristeva, this chapter argues that performance, and re-performance in particular, prepare us for death by enabling us to understand dying as an ongoing process. Amongst the case studies addressed in this chapter, are Martin O’Brien and Sheree Rose’s work Dust to Dust (2015), Jo Spence’s exhibitions, Narratives of Disease (1989) and The Final Project (1992), as well as Hannah Wilkes video exhibition Inra-Venus Tapes (1990-1993). The case studies in this chapter are used to explore re-performance’s relationship with death and are examined through a dialogue between Barthes’ writing on photography and death in Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography and Rebecca Schneider’s analysis of re-performance (which she terms reenactment) in Performing Remains. By
bringing these texts together and placing them in dialogue with one another, this chapter argues that discussions of the relationship between photography and death can be pertinently applied to the relationship between death, performance and re-performance. It contends that doing so can further our understanding of the possible ways in which performance and re-performance prepare us for death and loss.

Chapter Five – Re-performance, Legacy and the Future

The fifth chapter of this thesis draws conclusions from the ideas and concepts explored in the earlier chapters, pulling together ideas of re-performance and the impact that it has on performance’s relationship with death. This chapter focuses on the notion of legacy, expanding upon the earlier discussion of bodily archives this chapter introduces the notion of re-performance, creating a legacy of performances, developing on what Diana Taylor termed a ‘repertoire’ (2003). This chapter explores the notion of legacy in more detail, questioning our desire or need for a legacy. Drawing upon Simon Critchley’s recent work The Book of Dead Philosophers (2008), this chapter explores Critchley’s concept of a philosophical death and discusses it in relation to Freud’s notion of life and death drives. This chapter questions our desire to leave something behind and our seeming inability to accept that death is the one thing from which we never return.

In examining this desire, the chapter will also draw upon examples of performances of illness and dying, such as Marina Abramović’s 2005 performance, Seven Easy Pieces, her 2010 performance, The Artist is Present,
Martin Nachbar’s 2000 performance project, *Affects/Rework* and Jill Hocking’s *Cabbage Leaf Blanket* performance (2002). The chapter will argue that performances such as these are linked with the concept of legacy, both of an artist seeking to gain control over their legacy and of legacies as being passed on through re-performance. The notion of legacy is also linked to the idea of survival and the desire to create and leave a legacy behind in order to ensure that you will be remembered.

**Chapter Six - Mourning and Memorial:**

The final chapter of the thesis builds on the previous chapter’s focus on legacy by moving towards an exploration of memorial. It analyses various kinds of memorial, from traditional memorials, such as *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial* to performance as memorial in pieces such as Briar Bates’ *Ankle Deep*. Drawing upon Metchild Windrich’s 2014 text, *Performative Monuments: The Rematerialisation of Public Art*, and Thomas Laqueur’s 2015 book, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, the chapter questions the motives behind creating memorials, arguing that performance as memorial can work alongside traditional forms of memorial to further enhance the relationship between performance and death by helping us to find more personal ways to memorialise those that we have lost. Supported by Peggy Phelan’s discussion of mourning, and specifically, her analysis of Tom Joslin’s *Silverlake Life: The View from Here*, this chapter questions what it is to witness and to survive the death of the other and the role that memorials play within the process of mourning. In addition, the chapter also examines the relationship between
ephemeral memorials and re-performance, arguing that both acts reflect the ways in which the dead, just like performance, do not disappear but are transformed and continue to exist in these transformations.

The focus on memorial and comparisons between the traditional forms of memorial and performance as memorial leads the chapter to question the reliability of memorials and monuments, asking what might happen if we created false documentation and/or fake memorials. This question is asked in relation to Valie Export’s 1969 performance Action Pants: Genital Panic and a series of photographs which she created to commemorate the performance, but which have in many ways come to serve as documentation of the performance. Here, the chapter argues that much like ephemeral memorial performances, less traditional documentation can offer a valuable insight into a life or performance.

Notions of fakery are also examined in relation to performances in which artists have created “life”, such as Anne Bean and Lynne Hershman Lesson’s creations of alter egos or second lives. The chapter argues that the existence of these alter egos and the documentary proof of their lives can be considered fake because they were not actual people. However, it also questions the ways in which their existence was tied to the artists who created them, contending that they were part of the artist. In this sense, the chapter explores notions of multiplicity, asserting that the “lives” created by the artists served as multiplications of the artists themselves, allowing them to live more than one life. The chapter analyses these notions of multiplicity and false documentation in relation to loss, death, memorial and re-performance exploring the
relationships between traditional memorial forms and archival documentation and the fake documents, false lives and ephemeral memorial performances that appear in the case studies. It asserts that the two apparently opposing sides are interrelated and that it is this interrelation which allows for a relationship between performance, re-performance and death.
As outlined in my introduction this thesis argues that the current global climate is one of war, death, terror and rupture. In her 2004 text *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, Judith Butler described how on September 11th 2001 ‘US boundaries were breached, an unbearable vulnerability was exposed, [and]... a terrible toll on human life was taken’ (2004: XI). Since then there have been more attacks, more boundaries have been breached, more lives have been lost. The London Bombings on July 7th 2005, the terror attacks in Paris which took place on November 13th 2015 and the bombings which took place in Brussels on 22nd March 2016, to name but a few. Not forgetting the loss of life in the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. Violence and death surround us, they envelope us. It feels as though everywhere we look we see destruction, horror, annihilation, and death is the end, the one thing from which we can never hope to escape. The relationship between re-performance and death, I argue, is central to our understanding of the concepts of death, loss and mourning. Phelan has asserted that ‘performance and theatre are instances of enactments predicated on their own disappearance’ (1997: 2), and I claim that it is the correlation between performance and disappearance which allows performance and re-performance to have an integral relation to the concepts of loss and death. Mourning is crucial to this relationship because the relationship between re-performance and death is particularly pertinent when considered in relation to the loss of loved ones. The lost other, like the lost
Phelan has argued that ‘the affective outline of what we’ve lost might bring us closer to the bodies we want still to touch’ (1997: 3). The lost other lingers, or their echoes, traces and leftovers do, in the form of an affective outline. I utilise the term affective outline to describe a range of objects, such as photographs and videos, that are left behind after a performance and/or a death. However, I also employ the term to denote less traditionally archivable materials such as the blood and mucus used in Ron Athey and Martin O’Brien’s performances and the clothing and jewellery of lost loved ones. It is my assertion that in order to survive the loss of the other, the deaths of those we love, we must find a way to create something new and meaningful from those leftovers. Re-performance serves as a metaphor for this process, as it is in re-performance that the leftovers and remains of the initial performance are transformed into something both new and meaningful.

However, that new performance is haunted by the specter of the initial performance. In the current climate, where the threat of death appears to be very real, re-performance serves as an important metaphor for us in understanding our own relationship with death, loss and mourning. In witnessing re-performances, we can understand how something meaningful can be made out of the leftovers of death and loss, and in a Europe haunted by the specters of war, terrorism and the rupture caused by Great Britain’s recent split from the European Union. It is now more important than ever that we learn to find a way to create something new and meaningful from the death, destruction and terror that we face. As Simon Critchely notes ‘in learning how to die we
might also be taught how to live’ (2008: 6). If we can find a way to create something new and meaningful from death, then perhaps we can find a way to understand that, whilst death may be the end of a life, it does not have to mean complete annihilation. And if we can do this, perhaps as Critchley claims, we can learn to live free from the ‘terror… of the inevitability of our demise’ (2008: 1).

The concern with survival and finding ways to create something meaningful from death and possible annihilation are, I contend, critical in the current cultural and political climate and will be introduced thematically. This thematic introduction will serve to illustrate the ways in which the work draws the theories together, reading them in relation to one another, in order to offer new insights into the concepts that they explore. Each of the themes will be presented in relation to the artists whose work they will be used to examine throughout the thesis. This will therefore serve as a way of outlining how the theories will be applied to the case studies chosen for this research (as outlined in the introduction) providing an insight into how applying these theories to acts of re-performance, allows for new critical readings of them.

Re-performance and Temporality: The Return of the Specter

One of the key concerns of this thesis is the notion that both lives and performances create and leave leftovers and throughout the writing I assert that these leftovers are integral to re-performance’s relationship with death.

This notion of leftovers is linked to Derrida’s concept of ‘Hauntology’, as outlined in Specters of Marx: The state of the Debt, The work of Mourning and
the New International. Derrida describes ‘Hauntology’ as the ‘logic of haunting’ (1994: 10). Derrida asks, ‘what does it mean to follow a ghost? And what if this came down to being followed by it, always, persecuted perhaps by the very chase we are leading? Here again what seems to be out front, the future, comes back in advance: from the past, from the back’ (1994: 10). Thus, Derrida suggests that haunting is not a one-way road but a circuitous route where we are followed by the very thing for which we are searching. In this context of hauntology where, the past is not only behind but also in front of us and where time is not linear but rather an endless loop which folds back into itself again and again, each time becomes ‘a first time’ and also ‘a last time’ (1994: 10). In Derrida’s view, hauntology means that first time and last time and past and future are not dichotomous opposites, but exist in a constant state of flux, where the last time does not always follow the first time and the future does not always follow the past.

This sentiment is echoed by Rebecca Schneider who puts forward the notion of reenactment as a way of keeping performance alive, of bringing it back to being in the present. She states that ‘entering, or re-enacting, an event or a set of acts (acts of art or acts of war) from a critical direction, a different temporal angle, may be … an act of survival, of keeping alive as passing on’ (2011: 7; emphasis in original). The suggestion here is that re-performances retain something of the initial performance, they are haunted by the specter of them, and in this way bring the initial performances back to life in the present. This concept is one which underpins the theoretical discussions throughout this thesis, from discussions of the ways in which re-performance blurs the
boundary of time to the argument that performance does not always, or at least not entirely or instantly disappear once it is over. By placing these ideas alongside arguments such as those made by Peggy Phelan in *Mourning Sex* and Diana Taylor in *The Archive and The Repertoire*, this research interrogates the ways in which re-performance and bodily archives work together to enable something of performance to remain, to be left behind.

Derrida also discusses hauntology in relation to Karl Marx and the communist manifesto and, in doing so, presents us with a picture of the world, or, at least Europe, which is crawling with ghosts and in which everyone seems to be haunted by someone or something. In his reading of the communist manifesto, Derrida claims that Europe is haunted by the specter of communism, stating that ‘haunting would mark the very existence of Europe’ (1994: 3). Derrida goes on to say that ‘the specter is the future, it is always to come, it presents itself only as that which could come or come back’, thus suggesting that what makes the specter so terrifying is the fact that it cannot be contained by the past or by singularity because it is defined by its ability to come back (1994: 48). In the current cultural and political climate, it is no longer the specter of communism which haunts Europe but the specter of death, and specifically those deaths related to terrorism and subsequent wars. Butler has described post 9/11 America as being engaged in ‘cycles of violence’ (2004: XII), and this is not just the case in the US. The violence that has taken place globally, either of acts of terrorism, or acts of war, has seen a dehumanisation of death. Drone strikes take away the human element in the act of killing whilst, as Butler suggests, ‘the humans who are imprisoned in Guantanamo do not count as
human; they are not subjects protected by international law’ (2004: XVI). In this climate, death appears justified, necessary in order to prevent the borders (which both Butler and I have described as being breached through acts of terrorism) from being breached again. The fear of death, the threat of violence that may be inflicted upon a nation, has led to acts of war and violence being inflicted upon other nations. It is this fear and the acts of violence to which it leads that, I contend, are the current specter haunting Europe and the US.

Throughout this thesis, Derrida’s notion of the term hauntology will be employed to explore the ways in which re-performances are haunted by the specters of earlier versions of the performance. I will utilise Derrida’s term ‘specter’, which he prefers to the term’s ‘ghost’ or ‘spirit’. He differentiates between the terms by stating that ‘it is flesh and phenomenality that give to the spirit its spectral apparition, but which disappear right away in the apparition, in the very coming of the revenant or the return of the specter’ (1994: 6; emphasis in original). The specter then, according to Derrida, seems to be something more palpable than the ghost or the spirit. However, the corporeality of the specter is fleeting and ephemeral, disappearing almost at the very moment it appears. The specter, I contend, can momentarily appear visible and present, but almost instantaneously it disappears back into the realm of the apparition, leaving us questioning whether it was ever there at all. This is one of the reasons that I employ the term as I argue that through re-performances earlier versions of the performances can be made visible again. It is the visibility of the specter that draws me towards the term, as specters are both visible and somatic, but also virtual and transitory. This notion of the specter as
simultaneously visible and invisible is highlighted by Derrida’s assertion that ‘we do not see who looks at us’ (1994: 7). This statement again emphasises the idea of the specter as something of which to be afraid, presenting it as almost predatory, sneaking around unseen, but seeing all. Using Hamlet and the ghost of Hamlet’s father as a point of reference, Derrida claims that ‘even though in his ghost the King looks like himself, that does not prevent him from looking without being seen’ (1994: 7). The specter, this ‘carnal form of the spirit’ (1994: 6) seems to take on a rather sinister presence, something that watches us but does not always reveal its watching, choosing instead to hide behind its visor and only revel itself to us when it wishes. Thus, Derrida suggests that the specter is always present but not always visible. Hamlet sees the ghost of his father whereas Gertrude and Claudius do not. Thus, this suggests that the specter is an active agent who decides when they are seen and by whom, rather than a passive bystander who is brought into being through the act of re-performance. It is also interesting to note that Derrida’s primary example of the specter comes from performance. This performance which is rather different from the ones that concern this thesis, but a performance nonetheless, hence highlighting the links between performance, death and haunting.

According to Derrida then, specters are terrifying, not only because they act like spies, watching us from behind their helmets or visors, but because they speak of something which is not necessarily or not only past. Derrida uses Hamlet’s words ‘time is out of joint’ in relation to the specter, suggesting that the specter can speak of the past and the future simultaneously (Derrida 1994: 20). It does not remain in its own time but appears to be able to travel between
times. Again, using Hamlet as a reference, Derrida states that ‘Hamlet already began with the expected return of the dead King. After the end of history, the spirit comes by coming back’ (1994: 10 emphasis in original). Hamlet’s King belongs to the past, he lived and died in the past, but Derrida suggests the specter of the King is here in the present. The past then, through the specter, can exist in the present. The specter also seems to hold the possibility of its return. Hamlet’s father does not visit him just once. The specter returns many times, hinting at the notion that the specter is capable of existing not only in the past and the present, but also in the future. This is another reason that I use the term specter throughout the thesis. It serves to illustrate the ways in which re-performances operate on the boundaries of time, in liminal places where past, present and future can all be glimpsed concurrently. The specter lends itself to, and is, in a way, entwined with, the notion of hauntology, in the sense that both speak of the future and present as well as the past. As Hamlet and Derrida have stated, ‘time is out of joint’ and, as such, hauntology and the specter speak to ‘repetition and first time, but also repetition and last time, since the singularity of any first time makes of it also a last time’ (1994: 10; emphasis in original). Derrida discusses the singularity of not only the first time but also the last time, thus arguing that each repetition is singular. Its status as a repetition does not make it any less unique. Each repetition is both a first time and a last time. This suggests that time is not only not linear, but that it can become ‘out of joint’ through the time travelling specters who haunt the present and future from their position in the past (Shakespeare Act 1, Scene 5 and Derrida 1994: 20). They do not remain in their own time, but rather they appear again and again in
times to which they don’t seem to belong. This is also the case with re-performances. As Rebecca Schneider has asserted in re-performance, ‘past, present and future occur and recur out of sequence’ (2011: 35; emphasis in original). Through re-performance, performances, like specters, can remain, can survive and can exist in both the present and future, rather than being confined to the past. These concepts of haunting, specters and repetition are explored in a variety of ways throughout the thesis but are particularly significant to the research into the performances created by Sheree Rose and Martin O’Brien. These performances are re-performances of Rose’s earlier works with Bob Flanagan and are, therefore, haunted by Flanagan’s specter, which is made visible in and through O’Brien’s body.

**Time is Out of Joint**

Rebecca Schneider explores notions of nonlinear time in her 2011 book *Performing Remains*, in which she examines both civil war and theatrical reenactments, and the way in which they cause what Schneider terms ‘temporal leaks’ (2011: 10). Schneider’s decision to explore civil war reenactments alongside re-performances is interesting when considered in connection with this research’s interest in the relationship between re-performance and death. Civil War reenactors are taking the places of the dead, even those who were not killed in battle are no longer living. As such, the act of reenacting a Civil War battle can be considered an act of bringing both the past and the dead back to life in the present. This idea is underscored by Schneider’s statement that in Civil War Reenactments ‘it can occasionally feel “as if” the halfway dead came
halfway to meet the halfway living, halfway’ (2011: 14). Here Schneider speaks to the sub summation of self and other, past and present and living and dead, suggesting that through re-performance we can create liminal moments in which there is no clear boundary between any of these states.

Schneider also talks about ‘following footsteps and leaving footsteps to follow in directions not always, or only, forward’ (2011: 11; emphasis in original). This suggests that reenactment is a way of allowing performance to come back, to exist not just in the past, present or future but be repeated. The crucial part of Schneider’s comment is ‘not always, or only, forward’ which suggests that she is not talking about moving in a linear direction but in a circuitous nature in which past, present and future appear as if in a loop (2011: 11; emphasis in original).

Reenactment or re-performance is a way of documenting performance without losing the performative aspect to which Phelan refers in Unmarked: The Politics of Performance when she argues that ‘performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented or otherwise participate in the circulation of representation of representations: once it does so it becomes something other than performance’ (1993: 146; emphasis in original). It appears to me that Schneider postulates reenactment as a means of allowing performance to continue to live in the present. With the eternal possibility of re-performance, performance could feasibly have no beginning or ending. Like Derrida’s time travelling specters, re-performance holds the promise of return. On the surface this seems to oppose Phelan’s view, in which any attempt to save or document performance destroys its ephemerality, but
Schneider recognises that reenactments are never the same as the first time. Each re-performance is somehow marked as different, and, in this way, Phelan and Schneider’s viewpoints far from being oppositional do in fact work together. Through my analysis of re-performances created by Ron Athey, Julie Tolentino and Dani Ploeger I argue that reenactment, or what I refer to as re-performance, allows performance to be saved and documented whilst remaining a performance, but never the same performance. By examining the similarities and differences between, for example, Ron Athey’s initial performance of *Self-oblimeration #1 Ecstatic* in 2009 with Julie Tolentino’s re-performance of it in 2011, as part of her project *The Sky Remains the Same*, I assert that whilst each repetition may be unique it is still haunted by the specters of previous versions of the performance.

**Death, Absence and Leftovers: Dead, Not Dead and Not, Not Dead**

As highlighted above the idea of leftovers is crucial to this thesis and the relationship between re-performance and death and underpins the exploration of death and absence which is central to the research. In the absence of his mother, which followed her death, Roland Barthes searched through photographs of her. He was trying to find that one picture which for him captured the essence of his mother. He eventually found it ‘in the Winter Garden Photograph’ (1981: 72). This photograph, Barthes claims, did not re-produce or contain his mother, as he says that ‘what I have lost is … a quality (a soul) : not the indispensable, but the irreplaceable’ (1981: 75). It does, however, contain something of her essence and this causes Barthes to want to hold onto
it, to keep it as a reminder of that which he has lost. Barthes is, of course, writing about photography, but this thesis explores the ways in which his ideas can also be fruitfully related to performance and particularly re-performance. By placing Barthes’ writings on photography in conjunction with Rebecca Schneider’s exploration of re-performance in her text, *Performing Remains*, the research analyses the relationship that both performative photography and performance art re-performances have with death, absence and loss, asserting that both art forms provide ways for the dead to remain. They enable the dead to appear alive in the present. Therefore, allowing spectators to witness the Derridian specters which haunt the performances and exhibitions that this research examines. This witnessing, much like any act of spectatorship is ‘an individual experience’ and not all spectators will experience the specter in the same way, or indeed at all (Freshwater 2009: 24). A spectator’s response to a re-performance will be determined by their own previous experiences of spectatorship. As Freshwater explains in *Theatre and Audience* ‘our responses to performance are generated by individual preoccupations and experiences,’ (2009: 23). This is particularly pertinent to spectators’ responses to re-performances. Their knowledge and/or experience of the initial performance will impact upon their reading of the re-performance and in the case of audience members who were present at both performances the experience of a re-performance may invoke their own, personal memories of the initial performance. They may be haunted by the specter of their own previous experience.
I explore the relationship between re-performance, death, absence and loss, arguing that re-performances exist in a liminal state (liminality is something which I mentioned earlier in the chapter). Like the specters discussed earlier, re-performances do not exist solely in the past, present or future and the dead do not entirely disappear. As I have already argued, they refuse to remain in their “own time”, disrupting linear notions of time by forcing those witnessing them to acknowledge that what they are witnessing is both the past happening in the present and the possibility of it reoccurring again in a future re-performance.

This concept of liminality is explored using Richard Schechner’s concept of Me, Not Me and Not Not Me, which Schechner describes as the self-incorporating the other in performance. The Me (performer) takes on behaviours of the Not Me (the character), combining the two to create the Not, Not Me. and I argue that within re-performance, as with performative photography, what we witness is the subject being neither Dead nor Not Dead but Not Not Dead. Although there is a distinction between re-performance as a live act involving a body in a space, observed by spectators and performative photography, in which the act of posing for the photograph is the performance and this performance takes places only for and in front of a photographer, the element of Not Not Dead is visible in both cases. Schechner highlights the sense of merging the self with the other in Me, Not Me and Not Not Me when he states that ‘elements that are “not me” become “me” without losing their “not me-ness”’ (1985: 111). I contend that this is also the case in both photography and re-
performance as both allow the dead to appear alive, thus the Dead and Not Dead converge, creating the liminal realm of Not Not Dead.

Through both performative photography we are able to transgress the boundaries of time and witness someone’s death many years after the event. Thus, this enables us to see them as simultaneously dead and not dead, present and absent, in the past and the present. This argument is used to analyse the performative photography of Hannah Wilke and Jo Spence (which, as I explained in the introduction, this thesis argues also function as re-performances), arguing that the photographs they created of themselves dying enable us to witness their deaths over and over again, several years after the event actually occurred. Our ability to witness these deaths multiple times disrupts linear notions of both time and death. We can re-wind, re-play and re-visit these deaths over and over again, supporting Phelan’s statement that ‘the body itself does not stop moving; cinema is one place where the still-moving body leaves a trace’ (1997: 156). Although Phelan’s argument is made in relation to cinema, which is something I address later on the chapter I contend that it is also applicable to the photographic works of Wilke and Spence. Whilst this ability to re-visit the death of the other may initially be seen as a traumatic experience and when it is considered in relation to Barthes’ exploration of the relationship between photography and death, rather than being traumatic, this act of witnessing and re-witnessing death can be seen as one of survival. Each time we witness the death we survive it again. The ability to survive the deaths of those we love is crucial in the current climate of war and terrorism where those deaths can be both violent and unpredictable. As Judith Butler argues in
Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence ‘when we lose some of these ties [to others whom we love] by which we are constituted, we do not know who we are or what to do’ (2004: 22). Surviving the loss of a loved one then, is about rediscovering who we are in light of that loss. In order to rediscover ourselves we must understand what it is that we have lost, both in the other and in ourselves, and that in this process of mourning and discovery the ability to re-witness the loss, re-visit the site of trauma, can aid us in understanding how to survive it.

Notions of survival are also explored by Diana Taylor in her text The Archive and The Repertoire in which she discusses the ability for something to be passed on, kept alive and remembered somatically. Taylor terms this ‘the repertoire’, an embodied form of remembering and states that ‘embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge’ (2003:21). In the repertoire actions, knowledge and memories are passed from one body to another through a process of bodily transmission. Taylor asserts that ‘the live performance can never be captured or transmitted through the archive’ (2003: 20). This assertion makes it clear that live performance needs to be embodied, something which Taylor further emphasises when she states that ‘embodied memory, because it is live, exceeds the archive’s ability to capture it’ (2003: 20). Taylor’s argument is that the transmission of knowledge, which the repertoire allows for, is something which cannot be achieved without the live body. Taylor also explores the relationship between ‘the Archive’ and ‘The Repertoire,’ which, she asserts, is one of interdependence, claiming that ‘the repertoire ... expands the traditional archive’ (2003: 26). This claim is one that I investigate
throughout the thesis as I examine the various ways in which the archive and the repertoire work together in acts of re-performance. This is explored through my analysis of Martin O’Brien’s performance work and specifically his 2015 performance *Anatomy of a Bite*.

Taylor examines the ways in which performance can become an outlet for public grief, as well as a means of remembering those who have disappeared and become lost to us in one way or another. In recent years there have been many public demonstrations of grief, from the One Love concert in Manchester in June 2017\(^5\) to the graffiti messages in Brussels\(^6\) following the terror attack there in March 2016. It is clear that as a society we need to find some way of making sense of and memorialising events and Taylor asserts that the repertoire can be seen as a means of doing this.

This is clear in the chapter entitled, ‘Lost in the field of vision witnessing September 11’, in which Taylor recalls her need to photograph the horrific events that took place around her. She states that ‘aware that a historical event was overtaking my capacity to understand it, I too wanted to contain the moment and freeze it for later’ (2003: 241). For Taylor, the only way to ‘contain the moment’ was to photograph it, to create a document of it which she could use later on to help her understand what she had witnessed (2003: 241). Creating art has always been a way of understanding and exploring events and for Taylor the photographs she took on September 11\(^{th}\) would serve

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\(^5\) The One Love concert was held in June 2017 to honour the victims of the terror attack on the Manchester Arena in May 2017.  
\(^6\) Following suicide bombings in Brussels in March 2016 citizens of Brussels wrote messages using chalk on the public square outside the Brussels stock exchange in response to the attacks.
to memorialise the incident. These photographs, however, belong to an archive, perhaps not one to which another individual could go and look, but Taylor’s own archive, her personal collection of photographs. They are documents and as such can be stored and contained in a traditional archive. Nevertheless, Taylor asserts that there are other ways in which things can be remembered, ways which can be just as valid and important as archival documentation.

Taylor’s emphasis on the body and her positioning it as central to the concept of the repertoire is something on which this thesis develops further by introducing the new concept of a bodily archive. The research employs the term bodily archive in a similar way to that in which Taylor utilises the term repertoire. It uses it to describe a corporeal, somatic way of knowing or of transmitting knowledge, from one body to another and of retaining this knowledge within a single body in the cases of re-performances by the initial artist. The research project has chosen the term bodily archive rather than repertoire because it foregrounds the role the live, physical bodies of performers play in the retaining and transmitting of knowledge that occurs within the bodily archive. This, however, does not mean that bodily archives are in opposition to traditional archives but, as Taylor suggested, the two ‘exist in a constant state of interaction’ (2003: 21). This ‘constant state of interaction’ (2003: 21), is one that I explore throughout the thesis by examining the ways in which more traditional archival materials are used to help create re-performances. I also explore it through a consideration of the ways in which re-performance captures the live, ephemeral nature of performance, which other archival materials are unable to retain and the ways in which re-performances leave their own echoes and
traces, which may or may not be considered archivable. Again, these notions are examined specifically in relation to Martin O’Brien’s 2015 performance *Anatomy of a Bite*.

The concept of echoes and traces is investigated in relation to the work of artists Ron Athey and Martin O’Brien, and in particular their production and use of bodily fluids within their work. These fluids provide the performance with remnants, or to quote Richard Schechner, an ‘aftermath’ (2013: 246), but are not objects which can be considered traditionally archivable. Like Schneider, Taylor explores ways in which performance can be ‘saved, recorded, documented’ without becoming ‘something other than performance’ (1993: 146). And like Schneider, Taylor turns to bodily transmission in order to achieve this.

**Witnessing Loss: The Desire to Hold On**

Whilst Phelan’s arguments in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* may not obviously fit with Taylor and Schneider’s discussions of reenactment and the repertoire, on closer analysis both concepts highlight the inability of the archive to capture or document performance, which was also Phelan’s point in *Unmarked*. This relationship between performance, loss and death is explored further by Phelan in her 1997 book, *Mourning Sex*. Here, Phelan uses the discourse of psychoanalysis to explore the work of mourning and loss. In a series of chapters, some of which are written performatively, Phelan discusses the nature of loss and our desire to hang on to that which we have lost. Within the text Phelan explores art, performance and film and presents us with an image of mourning as a desperate struggle to hold onto the object of mourning.
In a chapter entitled, ‘Infected eyes: Dying Man With A Movie Camera, Silverlake Life: The View from Here’, Phelan examines the film created by Tom Joslin, a filmmaker who ‘died of AIDS on July 1, 1991’, and discusses the temporal boundaries crossed by watching the dead, alive, if not always healthy, on film (1997: 154). She explores Joslin’s desire to make the film, stating that ‘all of his desperation… is reserved for making Silverlake Life’ (1997: 156). The consequence of this is that Joslin’s main concern is avoiding annihilation, ensuring that even though his body will die, something of him will remain. It is evident in Phelan’s discussion that in film Joslin remains even after his death. As discussed earlier in relation to haunting, specters and Barthes’ analysis of photography Phelan’s assertion is that ‘cinema is one place where the still-moving body leaves a trace’ and that ‘time stops without a living, moving body, but that the body itself does not stop moving’ (1997: 156). The crux of the issue for Phelan is the fact that ‘not even the dead will hold still: they do not leave us all at once, which would be horribly violent but clear’ (1997: 41). The fact is that in death, as in performance, there are always echoes and traces left behind. For me, it is these echoes and traces which mean that ‘theatre and performance respond to the psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially for death’ (1997: 3). They do so by creating something which disappears but leaves an aftermath which we endeavour to hold onto in our quest to try and re-capture the essence of the thing that has disappeared. For example, this was evident in Barthes’ desire to find the photograph which, for him, captured the essence of the Mother he had lost. This desire is viewed as nostalgic, a desire to hang onto
the good times of the past but this helps us not only to remember the good times but also to create new meaning from the people and events of the past.

Phelan’s ideas about mourning, and specifically her assertion that ‘theatre and performance respond to a psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially for death’ (1997: 3), inform my analysis of the reason’s artists feel compelled to re-perform past performances. Using this notion as a starting point, the thesis explores the relationship between re-performance, death and mourning, analysing our desire to hold onto what we have lost and what Phelan describes as ‘the possibility that something substantial can be made from the outline left after the body has disappeared’ (1997: 3). As I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this research argues that it is this possibility which drives the human desire, even need, to hold onto the lost object, even if what we end up holding onto is not the lost object but a stand in. Whilst we may not be able to hold onto the lost other, Phelan argues that what we can hold onto may still be substantial and may even help us to process and come to terms with the loss. Re-performances, then, may enable us to find a way to survive the loss of others. With this in mind I contend that the relationship between re-performance and death is particularly significant when considered in connection with the deaths of others, and our ability to survive these deaths. As such, the relation between re-performance, mourning and melancholia is also pertinent.

Mourning and Melancholia

In his 1917 essay ‘Mourning and Melancholia’, Freud explores and compares these two conditions, suggesting that they share many of the same symptoms
but differ in some fundamental aspects. Freud suggests that one of the key differences between the two conditions is that ‘we rely on its [mourning’s] being overcome after a certain lapse of time’, whereas melancholia is a longer-term affliction (2001: 244). Freud’s notion is that whereas mourning is a process of letting go, coming to terms with, or at least accepting the loss of the other, melancholia is about not being able to accept that there is something to mourn. Freud describes the features of melancholia as being similar to those of mourning and suggests that melancholia may even be caused by a blockage to the normal process of mourning. He asserts that in mourning ‘nothing hinders these processes from proceeding along the normal path… this path is blocked for the work of melancholia’ (2001: 257). The blockage to which Freud refers is the inability to accept that there is a reason to mourn. Both conditions can be caused by a loss of some form or another. Mourning ‘is for the most part occasioned only by a real loss of the object, by its death’ (2001: 256). Melancholia, it seems, is caused by us failing to detach ourselves from the lost object and it is the inability to detach that is of interest in this thesis. Freud states that ‘just as mourning impels the ego to give up the object by declaring the object to be dead and offering the ego an inducement of continuing to live so does each single struggle of ambivalence loosen the fixation of the libido to the object by disparaging it, denigrating it and even as it were killing it’ (2001: 257). Implicit in this statement is the notion that during both mourning and melancholia one attempts to distance oneself from an object. Our relationship with that object is severed and in the case of mourning we are forced to find a way to separate ourselves from the object in order for us to survive its death.
This idea is also present in Butler's analysis of mourning in *Precarious Life*, where she states that ties between ourselves and others 'constitute what we are' and are 'ties or bonds that compose us' (2004: 22). What both Freud and Butler assert is that the self is not independent but is created through shared bonds and relationships with others and that in mourning these ties or bonds are severed. However, melancholia may be caused by someone being unable to detach themselves from the lost or dead object, and in their attempts to do so they disparage and denigrate the lost object in order to try and survive its loss. In this way mourning and melancholia are linked. We become melancholic because we are unable to separate ourselves sufficiently from the lost object in order to mourn its death and instead remain entwined with both the object and its death. This sense of us being entwined and entangled with the lost object, unable to accept its loss is present in the act of re-performance.

In re-performance the self takes on the role of the lost other, repeating their actions in order to re-perform their works. Sufferers of melancholia live in a state of psychic death, unable to live without the lost object, unable to survive its death but also unable to die with it. Comparatively, those who engage in re-performance are unable to re-create the initial version of the performance but remain haunted by its specters, thus unable to detach themselves from it in order to mourn its loss. Within this research, Freud's concept of melancholia is also used to explore the relationship between performance, re-performance and death as I assert that re-performance, despite its melancholic nature, helps to prepare us for loss because it reminds us that the dead, whilst dead, do not disappear instantaneously or entirely.
Julia Kristeva uses the analogy of a black sun to present us with an image of melancholia as ‘an abyss of sorrow, a noncommunicable grief’ that cannot be explained through the symbolic system of language (1989: 3). Instead of trying to explain it through language Kristeva draws upon the narrative of dreams and an analysis of art. Kristeva explores these narratives as well as other art forms in order to seek out what they can teach us about depression and melancholia. Throughout the thesis I draw upon Kristeva’s notion of melancholia in order to explore the ways in which the act of re-performance can be seen as a melancholic one. Kristeva’s writings on melancholia are developed from Freud’s earlier writing on the subject and builds upon his description of the condition to present us with an image of melancholic death, describing the sufferer of melancholia as ‘already elsewhere, absent, a living corpse’ (1989: 74). She uses the term ‘embodying death’ to describe someone ‘being as if she were dead, playing dead’ (1989: 74, 73; emphasis in original). It is this relationship between life and death that I examine through my writings on re-performance and its relationship with death and disappearance. In re-performing past pieces artists are engaging in a melancholic act, becoming the living corpse that Kristeva describes. They are ‘playing dead’ by repeating the actions of a past performance, creating a new performance, which, is haunted by the specter of the previous performance (1989: 73; emphasis in original). This argument is made in my analysis of Martin O’Brien and Sheree Rose’s performances and, in particular, their creation of Dust to Dust in 2015, in which O’Brien played dead and acted as a stand in for Bob Flanagan. The connection between the specter and the living corpse, as
described above, is clear. Both the specter and the living corpse are terms which denote something tangible, visceral and physical. Thus, the living corpse provides the specter with a body, making it visible through the act of re-performance.

The act of ‘playing dead’ can arguably be seen as unhealthy because it appears as a refusal to move on (1989: 73; emphasis in original), an inability to leave the dead in the past and a desire to join the dead, rather than the living. If acts of re-performance can, as this work will argue, be seen as melancholic acts, they can also be viewed as unhealthy acts. That is, these acts embody the melancholic desire to hold onto or join the lost other and a refusal or inability to move on, which according to Freud, is the aim of mourning.

Kristeva emphasises the relationship between melancholia and death, and melancholia and mourning when she states that ‘depression, like mourning, conceals an aggressiveness toward the lost object, thus revealing the ambivalence of the depressed person with respect to the object of mourning’ (1989: 11). Those who are not transformed into a state of psychic death through melancholia are, instead, Kristeva seems to suggest, transformed into hateful, vengeful beings who hate themselves because they hate the other and they have implanted the other within the self. Their anger towards the other then, is inverted and becomes melancholic hatred of the self, or, in Kristeva’s words, ‘the complaint against oneself would therefore be a complaint against another, and putting oneself to death but a tragic disguise for massacring an other’ (1989: 11). Melancholia then, according to Kristeva, is the inability to accept the loss of the other, which leads to the lines between the self and other becoming
blurred, as the self plays dead, taking on the role of the other, and inverting their anger with the other, absorbing it into themselves. Parallels can be drawn between this internalisation of feelings towards the other and the way in which artists embody the work of others when they engage in acts of re-performance. Both are acts which suggest an internalisation of the other, and a desire to subvert the boundaries between self and other in such a way that they appear to be one, albeit a fluid, permeable, unstable one. That one is, of course, different from either the self or other but subsumes the self and other in such a way that the specter of the other can be glimpsed within the self.

**Survival verses Annihilation**

The arguably melancholic desire to save and document performances can easily be viewed in relation to our desire to hold onto the people and things that we have lost. This research contends that our desire to hold onto things, which are by nature ephemeral and which it is therefore impossible to retain indefinitely, is fueled by our fear of the finality of death. Drawing on Simon Critchely's 2011 text, *The Book of Dead Philosophers*, in which he asserts that ‘what defines human life in our corner of the planet at the present time is not just a fear of death, but an overwhelming terror of annihilation’ (2011: 1; emphasis in original), Critchley's use of the term annihilation means something worse than death. As I suggested earlier, we live in a world where death and terror surround us, and this is a crucial factor in our current relationship with death. Terrorism, war, nuclear weapons; these are concepts which are familiar to us and notions which speak of mass murder, multiple deaths and in many
cases no body or official grave to mourn. This is the kind of terror to which Critchley is referring when he describes ‘a terror both of the inevitability of our demise with its prospect of pain and possibly meaningless suffering, and the horror of what lies in the grave other than our body nailed into a box and lowered into the earth to become wormfood’ (2011: 1). This implies that the terror of annihilation is the terror of pain, illness, dying and death but also of what happens to us after death and the notion that once we die, we cease to exist. Critchley’s use of the term annihilation implies total destruction and disappearance, not just death. It is not the actual event of death that we fear but the belief that death is the end, that once we die, we vanish forever. The annihilation of which Critchley speaks, is our total obliteration and the knowledge that eventually our lives may be forgotten, our graves untended and our loss no longer mourned.

This idea is something that Thomas Laqueur picks up on in his text, The Work of the Dead, in which he states that ‘the dead we imagine do not want to be forgotten and are reluctant to go, and we - the living - are reluctant to let them go or forget them lest thereby we truly lose them’ (2015: 62). Implicit in this statement is the suggestion that as long as we remember the dead, we never truly lose them. Laqueur questions our motivation to bury the dead when he asks ‘do the dead matter?’ and asserts that ‘even as we … deny that the holy exists anywhere in our world, especially in a dead body, we still want our special bodies, our special dead’ (2011: 35, 43). Dead bodies do matter, they are crucial to the process of mourning and to preventing those who must survive the deaths of others from falling into melancholia. The body is proof of
the death, the gravesite or the urn are places for us to mourn and signifiers that there is indeed something to mourn. Without those signifiers we become more vulnerable to melancholia as we struggle to accept the reality of our loss. This concept is also explored by Butler in *Precarious Life* in which she asserts that following September 11th the US government refused to publicly acknowledge the deaths of those it killed as part of the War on Terror, arguing that ‘those who remain faceless or whose faces are presented to us as so many symbols of evil, authorize us to become senseless before those lives we have eradicated, and whose grievability is indefinitely postponed’ (2004: XVIII). What Butler is arguing here is that when deaths go unacknowledged, when there is no monument, no gravesite, no acknowledgement of loss, we are unable to grieve or mourn those loses. This refusal to acknowledge these deaths is a political act which serves to reiterate ‘the conditions of loss and victimization that come to justify a more or less permanent war,’ (2004: XIX). If the only deaths that are acknowledged or discussed are those inflicted upon the west, then war can be justified because the west can be viewed solely as the victims of terror without consideration of the terror they inflict upon others when retaliating. In his 2003 essay *Necropolitics* Achille Mbembe argues that ‘the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die’ (2003: 11). By only acknowledging the deaths of those who die as a result of terrorist attacks and not those who die as a result of the war on terror governments express their sovereignty, their right to decide ‘who must die’ (Mbembe 2003: 11) and those ‘whose grievability is indefinitely
postponed’ (Butler 2004: XVIII), because their deaths are not publicly acknowledged.

The gravesite or urn also serve another significant purpose in the process of mourning, they are leftovers of the lives that are no longer lived and as such they serve not only as a signifier of death but also of life. There was a life, there is now a loss to mourn and as long as that loss is being mourned, that life is being remembered and annihilation is being avoided. With this in mind Butler’s argument about some lives and deaths being ungrievable also seems to suggest that without grief and without mourning the other does not simply die but is annihilated and this has serious consequences for a world in which so many deaths in the name of the War on Terror go unacknowledged. In much the same way that as long as a death is being mourned the life has not been annihilated and as long as a performance is being re-performed it will also avoid annihilation. By ensuring that something of us remains after our deaths and enabling those left behind to create something new and meaningful from our echoes and traces, as happens in re-performance, perhaps we can stave off annihilation. Critchley claims that ‘death and life are never-ceasing transformations’ (2011: 56), and this is also the case with re-performance.

Re-performance can be seen as a means of preventing performance from disappearing, of creating something from the things left behind. The initial performance lives on, in and through, the re-performance, which it haunts like one of Derrida’s specters. It is transformed from the initial performance into the re-performance, much like the ‘never-ceasing transformations’, which Critchley claims occur between life and death (2011: 56). Thus, I draw parallels between
the transformations that exist in re-performance and in life and death, claiming that re-performance has important lessons to teach us about life and death. Death does not have to mean annihilation. Life, like re-performance, can be transformed into something new and meaningful but that in order for this to happen, a performance must be re-performed, and a life must be acknowledged and mourned.

This thesis will employ each of the themes discussed above in relation to one another, weaving a non-linear path back and forth between each of these notions and enabling them to speak to both each other and the chosen case studies in order to provide new and original insights into the relationship between performance, re-performance and death; a relationship which, may enable us to understand the world in which we live. This is a world haunted by the specters of death, war and terror but not of those events that have gone before, of those that are currently happening and those that are yet to come.
Chapter Two - Desire and Fear: Death and Finitude

This chapter will explore the relationship between finitude, death and abjection in performance and re-performance. Focusing specifically on the performance work of Ron Athey with Julie Tolentino, and Sheree Rose with Martin O’Brien and with Bob Flanagan, this chapter will analyse the relationship between the bodies of the performers and the way in which their performances are received. In doing so, the chapter aims to develop an understanding of the relationship between desire and fear and the ways in which they converge by drawing upon Julia Kristeva’s theorisation of abjection. It will relate the concept of abjection to notions of finitude and death through exploring the embodied frailties of the performers. All bodies have their frailties, every body will die one day and, as Kristeva states ‘the corpse represents fundamental pollution’ (1989: 109). Thus, death is the ultimate abjection and ‘the human corpse is a fount of impurity and must not be touched’ (1989: 109). The case studies in this chapter remind us of our body’s finitude and, therefore, foregrounds bodily abjection. The term finitude is used to describe the way in which everything has a life span, nothing will last forever. In relation to re-performance the term is used to examine the ways in which re-performance can help develop our understanding of how to deal with loss and death.

All of the performances examined in this chapter are either re-performances or deal with issues related to re-performance, such as death and finitude. The case studies will be used to explore the ways in which the artists’ differing non-normative bodies affect these re-performances. I am using the
term non-normative in the sense that Rosi Braidotti defines in her 1994 text *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, which states that ‘Western thought has a logic of binary oppositions that treats difference as that which is other than the accepted norm’ (78). I will draw upon this definition to explain the ways in which the performances discussed in this chapter can be considered to be non-normative. Through an analysis of Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection, as outlined in her 1982 book, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, and specifically her notion of abject bodies, this chapter argues that these bodies’ status as non-normative and other, combined with the nature of their performance work, causes the bodies of the performers to become abject bodies. This is intertwined with an analysis of Petra Kuppers’ writings on disability art and performances to suggest that these bodies are ones which seek to use their performance work in order to make manifest their illness, their position as sick and dying bodies, thus re-enforcing their bodily abjection. I argue that Athey, Tolentino, Flanagan, Rose and O’Brien’s open, bleeding, wounded, weeping bodies exemplify Braidotti’s description of the monster, which she states is, ‘the bodily incarnation of difference from the basic human norm’, and goes on to describe as ‘a deviant, an an-omaly... abnormal’ (1994: 78). The fact that Athey, O’Brien and Flanagan all suffer(ed) from chronic illnesses further emphasises their status as non-normative because they deviate from the socially accepted norm of the healthy subject. The ways in which their performances make their illnesses visible enables an understanding of how they deviate from the “norm” because
we can see evidence of their illness flowing out of their bodily orifices and reminding us of our shared mortality and finitude.

They are bodies that operate in liminal states and which destabilise socially constructed norms through their subversive performance practices. The prominence of the body in Athey, Tolentino, O’Brien, Flanagan and Rose’s performances, specifically their abuse of their bodies, their breaching of their bodies boundaries and their foregrounding of bodily fragility, create subversive performance practices. These subversive practices are considered non-normative because they highlight the fragility of our own bodies and cause us to question our wholeness and completeness as subjects. The performances present bodily orifices and holes in such a way that we are each reminded that our position as a subject is precarious and dependent upon our relation to the other. Our subjectivity is determined by our opposition to the other, as presented to us in these performances, but it is also brought into question by the breaching of the bodily boundaries that separate the self from the other, reminding us that our subjectivity, like our bodies, is permeable and fragile.

Throughout this chapter the relationships between the artists will also be examined in terms of the impact it has upon their re-performance work. At issue is the desire and fear that we feel in witnessing these performances, and the chapter questions whether this differs as the body of the artist presenting the performance changes from performance to re-performance. The fact that all of the artists present performances, which can be considered non-normative in one way or another, allows for an exploration of different notions of non-normativity and of how the ways in which the artists deviate from the “norm”
affects the reception of the performances and re-performance that they create. The chapter also questions whether the re-performances are received in the same way as the initial version of the performance.

Moreover, the chapter examines the ways in which the re-performances that they create contain echoes and traces of the initial or earlier versions of the performance, which causes the re-performances to become haunted by them. This is integrated with an exploration into the concept of re-performance as a ‘bodily archive’ in which performances can be housed in order to prevent them from disappearing. Through its analysis of several re-performances and their initial performances this chapter questions whether the different physical body of the artists affects the re-performance’s ability to be viewed as a form of bodily archive. The concept of a bodily archive is related to Diana Taylor’s concept of repertoire, as defined in her 2003 text, *The Archive and The Repertoire*. This chapter questions our desire to hold onto that which is lost and asserts that re-performance can also be seen as an act of remembering or memorialising the lost other. Through re-performance, even when the re-performance is performed by a different body, the initial performance remains. The result of this, this chapter asserts, is that re-performance becomes a way of inscribing loss upon the body. These questions are linked to writings on mourning, grief, loss and melancholia, such as those suggested by Freud in his 1917 essay ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ and Julia Kristeva’s 1987 book, *Black Sun*. The Chapter, therefore, argues that the kind of bodily transmission and remembering that re-performance enacts is an act of grieving but not one of
letting go. Thus, it links this to notions of death and finitude, asserting that re-performance is a way of understanding both loss and death.

Dangerous Bodies: The Risk of Contamination

The orifices, wounds and bodily fluids make Athey and O'Brien's bodies dangerous. They are a source of fear for those with whom they come into contact because they contain the risk of infection. This is particularly pertinent in relation to the performance practices with which they are engaged, as the excess of bodily fluids in Athey and O'Brien's work is also suggestive of contamination. In *Regimes of Hardship* (2012) O'Brien repeatedly beats his chest, causing him to cough up excess mucus, whilst in *Self-obliteration #1* (2009) Athey cuts himself, causing himself to bleed heavily. These actions, when considered in relation to the artists' illnesses, can be seen as both dangerous and transgressive; in O'Brien's case, dangerous to himself and in Athey's dangerous to both himself and others. This is due to the risk of infection involved in Athey's work, which is not present in O'Brien's.

In light of their performance practices I contend that the bodily transmission that occurs between artists such as these is also perceived as dangerous, as it suggests a risk of disease and contamination through leaking, bleeding bodies, bodies without boundaries, bodies full of wounds and holes. Thus, this links the act of bodily transmission to the concept of death and finitude, because whilst bodily transmission presents multiple possibilities for performance to continue it also highlights the vulnerability of the body. The fact
that Athey is HIV positive is pertinent here because HIV is transmitted by contact with infected blood and in the performance Athey’s “infected” blood was leaking and pouring from his body. As an audience member at one of Athey’s performances, McGrath felt that his position placed him at risk. McGrath points to this risk in his article, ‘Trusting in Rubber; Performing Boundaries During the AIDS Epidemic’ when he asks ‘what if the pressure of Athey’s blood increased suddenly, causing blood to spurt out, leap the two feet from him to me, locate some break in my skin?’ (1995: 24). He feared Athey’s body and his proximity to it. McGrath viewed Athey’s body as dangerous because it was wounded, cut and bleeding. In this sense his illness appeared to be oozing out, putting the audience at risk of contamination and possibly death.

This raises interesting questions in relation to wounds and holes. Would McGrath fear Athey’s body if it was not wounded, if the illness was contained inside Athey’s body as opposed to leaking out of it? In *Powers of Horror* Kristeva states that holes and orifices have long been considered dangerous and transgressive when she notes that ‘anything that leaks out of the masculine or feminine body defiles’ (1982: 102). This is supported by Amelia Jones’ analysis of Athey’s work, in which she states that, ‘I still feel his suffering as like mine, or at least as pointing to aspects of my experiences that make me aware of my fear of finding myself cored and flayed as Athey seems to seek out in his work’ (Jones 2009: 50). Jones seems to fear the actual wound, as if it may somehow transfer itself from his body to hers. Athey’s wound, his hole, is an opening and as such is a signifier of the fact that the body is porous and
permeable. I contend that Jones fears the wound because it reminds her of her own permeability.

Whilst McGrath and Jones fear different aspects of Athey’s body, both fears are of his orifices because openings and wounds are suggestive of the fact that self and other are not binary opposites. This, therefore, implies that that which has afflicted the other may also afflict the self. Jones states that ‘at its most effective the wound has the capacity to defy the absolute binaries of self/other and real/representation. It exposes the impossibility of the self and other being the same and yet also of their being complete opposites’ (2009: 52). This can also be said of the blood which pours or flows from the wound. In both cases the spectators’ fears are born out of the notion of leaking. The open wound and the blood which leaks out of it pose a risk because they are no longer contained inside the body of the other. They flow freely and, therefore, raise the possibility that wounds, illness and even death may be transferred from body to body through openings, orifices and wounds. Kristeva makes it clear that Self/Other isn’t a fixed binary but a breachable boundary when she states that ‘the boundary between subject and object is shaken, and when even the limit between inside and outside becomes uncertain,’ she also describes it as ‘the ambiguous opposition I/Other, Inside/Outside – an opposition that is vigorous but pervious, violent but uncertain’ (1982: 141,7).

Kristeva asserts that concern about the security of the boundaries of others provokes concern about one’s own boundaries. Seeing Athey’s boundaries being violated alerts the spectator to the possibility that their own boundaries are also open to violation. Thus, bodies such as those of Athey and
O’Brien are bodies operating beyond boundaries in several ways. Bodily fluids transgress the boundary between inside and outside. These artists status as human beings with incurable illnesses positions them on the boundaries of sick and healthy, life and death.

It is the fact that these bodies operate on boundaries which draws attention to their abject bodies. Kristeva writes that ‘it is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite’ (1982: 4). This is why Athey and O’Brien’s abjection and actions arouse fear in some of those who witness their performances. Their audiences fear the other’s abjection because in breaking the boundary between self and other the artists raise the possibility that the self could also become abject. The otherness of the body presented in performance threatens the security of the spectator’s subjectivity. Kristeva states that ‘The body’s inside ... shows up in order to compensate for the collapse of the border between inside and outside. It is as if the skin, a fragile container, no longer guaranteed the integrity of one’s “own and clean self” (1982: 53). This throws the spectator into a state of fear and confusion as they begin to realise that without the protection of skin the boundary separating inside and outside is broken. This in turn, leads them to question whether the boundary between self and other can be broken just as easily.
Inside/Outside: Wounds and Bodily Boundaries

Jones discusses the wound as a site of both fear and desire, stating that ‘the wound we perceive as actually violating the body of the other, ripping into the skin, making it bleed, penetrating its orifices or forging new holes, pricks us with fear and desire’ (2009:53). I contend that this desire is abjection and this is supported by Kristeva’s assertion, in relation to the wound, that ‘urine, blood, sperm, excrement then show up in order to reassure a subject that is lacking its “own and clean self”’ (1982: 53). Kristeva is arguing that the bodies wounds and orifices exist as a constant reminder of bodily excess, the fact that the self cannot be contained. As such they are reminders of bodily abjection. She asserts that ‘the abjection of those flows from within suddenly become the sole object of sexual desire – a true “ab-ject”’(1982: 53). Here Kristeva’s use of the term ‘ab-ject’ points to the etymology of the term which means to cast out. The Oxford Dictionary explains that it comes ‘from Latin abjectus, past participle of abicere ‘reject’, from ab- ‘away’ + jacere ‘to throw’ (2018: 1). Kristeva’s use of the terms in relation to bodily fluids points to the fact that they are an excess, a waste and something to be discarded. Despite the fact that Kristeva uses the term to describe the combination of fear and desire that we experience when we are faced with our own bodily wounds and fluids and although Kristeva is talking about the wounds of the self, whilst Jones is discussing our responses to the physical wounds of the other, both in effect are proposing desire and the bloody wound are linked through abjection. We desire the abject, but this desire scares us, so we negate it, replacing it with repulsion. Sickened by our desires we refuse them, hide them and try to deny them. Fear and desire, like inside
and outside are not dichotomous opposites. It is the lack of certainty, the fragility of the borders between inside and outside, and self and other, as represented by the open wound, lead to the combination of fear and desire that is abjection.

In analysing Jones’ fear of the wound being transferred from the other to the self, there is clearly a link between this and Kristeva’s discussion of abject bodily fluids which flow from the self, leading to both fear and desire. Jones states that we fear Athey’s wounds because we view them ‘on some level as a violation of bodily coherence that we feel could happen to us’ (2009:50 emphasis in original). Notions of fear and abjection are further enhanced, as we can see from McGrath’s article, by the knowledge that the bodily fluids we witness flowing from Athey’s wounds are infected. They do not merely speak of the loss of the ‘own and clean self’ to which Kristeva refers but also to the risk of illness and possibly death, the ultimate abjection (1982: 53). It is almost impossible to view Athey’s performances without acknowledging his illness, and that the notion of his body as one in the process of dying will always affect the way in which his work is viewed.

**Visible Illnesses**

Whilst I contend that Athey’s work seeks to make his illness visible, in doing so it simultaneously reminds us that whilst it may be dying his body is most certainly not dead. Dead bodies do not bleed, they do not move, and they do not speak. In this sense, Athey’s work is suggestive of the notion that dying is a
process and reminds us that death is the end of that process rather than the process itself. As I have already explained performance artist, Martin O'Brien, also uses bodily fluids in performance and I will analyse his work in relation to Athey's in order to examine the way in which they simultaneously make the artists' illness visible and use the visceral nature of their performances to remind us that they are still alive. O'Brien suffers from Cystic Fibrosis, a chronic lung disease which significantly reduces the life expectancy of sufferers. In his 2011 performance, *Mucus Factory*, O'Brien repeatedly beat his chest in order to release excess mucus. O'Brien then collected the mucus in pots before combining it with glitter. The act of beating someone's chest in order to get them to cough up mucus is a recognised treatment for Cystic Fibrosis sufferers, however, O'Brien’s repeated use of the technique, followed by his collection of the mucus and his ‘artificial attempt to use mucus as a substance for vanity and pleasure’, cause the performance to become abject (O'Brien 2012: 2). O'Brien’s mucus, much like Athey’s blood, symbolises his illness and therefore his use of it in performance reminds us that his body is that of someone who is chronically ill. His body is also considered to be non-normative because of his illness and his use of a medical procedure in performance serves to highlight this fact, presenting O'Brien’s body as a medical body. Whilst O'Brien’s subsequent attempts to use the mucus for pleasurable purposes exemplify Jones and Kristeva’s comments about abjection, we fear O'Brien’s body because it reminds us of the fragility of our own bodies and indeed our lives.

This exemplifies Kristeva's assertion that 'excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.) stand for the danger to identity that
comes from without: the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death’ and it is this threat that we feel when we witness O’Brien and Athey’s performances (1982: 71). The blood and mucus symbolise decay, infection, disease and the corpse and, as such, of life threatened by death. They also remind us that this threat comes from something outside the self, something other than the self. Hence, the fear of infection and contamination that McGrath describes feeling when witnessing Athey’s performance.

In their everyday lives Athey and O’Brien’s illnesses are not always visible in the way that ‘people with physical impairments are ... hypervisible, instantly defined in their physicality’ (Kuppers 2001: 25). Therefore, the work they create seeks to make the invisible visible. O’Brien’s durational performances, which involve prolonged periods of physical exertion, often bring his illness to the forefront of his work. His repeated beating of his chest in order to loosen mucus in Mucus Factory led to the production of excess mucus. The production and subsequent use of the mucus caused O’Brien’s illness to become visible. In this way, O’Brien presents his body as one which is sick or dying, forcing spectators to bear witness to his illness in a way that they would not otherwise be able to. Athey’s use of bloodletting in his performances can be said to serve the same purpose. The presence of his blood represents his status as HIV positive and brings the issue of his illness to the forefront of his work.

In a conversation with Martin O’Brien, Athey stated that ‘in 1980 I started making performance, which including bloodletting. I understood this, and
actionism in general, as an expression beyond language. But pre-public awareness of HIV, blood was blood in a 70s body art context. Then during the height of the AIDS pandemic, any blood spilled conjured up HIV,' (Athey 2012: 1). Athey was aware that his use of blood in performance, together with public knowledge of his HIV positive status, would cause his work to be read in relation to the AIDS epidemic and therefore to make his illness visible. This also affects the way in which his work is received. For example, the controversy resulting from his 1994 performance *Four Scenes in a Harsh Life*, in which he ‘incised a scarification pattern into the back of Darryl Carlton, made imprints from the wound, which was then run out on lines over the audience. Carlton, not HIV positive, became guilty by association, and the story went, that blood was either dripping or being thrown onto the audience’ (Johnson 2014: 2). This is highlighted by Jennifer Doyle’s comment that

anytime someone bleeds in the presence of others, there are of course protocols one must take to minimize risk of exposure to blood-born agents. These protocols are in fact a part of his performances. Athey is HIV-positive and developed his "signature" work in the midst of the AIDS crisis. So, the fact that his work confronts us with our limits regarding things like blood and fear of contamination is not incidental to either its poetics or its meaning (2008: 2).

Doyle’s understanding of Athey’s work is clearly influenced by her knowledge of his status as HIV-positive, which she reads as central to the meaning that she makes from the piece.

The work of visual and performance artist Hannah Wilke, and in particular, her *Intra-venus series* 1992 and 2007, despite using a different methodology to that of Athey and O’Brien, also serves to make her illness
visible. In *Intra-venus* Wilke created a series of photographs and videos which documented her battle with lymphoma and her subsequent death. Her work shows the physical affect her illness had on her body as well as the way it affected her life. By documenting her illness in this way, Wilke created a visual record of her illness, confronting us not only with her sick body but her dying one. The deterioration of Wilke’s health is inescapable and forces us to acknowledge her slow decline and eventual death.

Similarly, in her controversial 2009 performance, *Involuntary Dances*, artist Rita Marcalo attempted to find ways in which her illness could be performed. The 24-hour performance, saw Marcalo, who suffers from epilepsy, trying to induce seizures. In Marcalo’s description of the performance she states that ‘to present my ‘involuntary dances’ to an audience, I threw a 24 hour ‘performance party’. The party incorporated various audience-participation activities such as quizzes, structured improvisations, etc. During this party I put myself through a series of experiences which were likely to lead me to having an epileptic seizure’ (2012: 1). Marcalo goes on to state that she broke ‘all the rules: drinking alcohol and coffee, eating dark chocolate, smoking cigarettes, coming off her medication and going without sleep’ (Gardner 2009: 2). The work caused controversy as some ‘disability charities and the tabloid press turned on the piece and its creator, branding both it and her irresponsible’ (Verrent 2012: 1). It is not relevant to the context of my argument to enter into either of these debates here, however, it is interesting that Marcalo herself describes the performance as her seeking to find ways of presenting her epilepsy, of developing her own understanding of it and of trying to make it visible in a world
in which many believe that such illnesses should be kept hidden, that they are part of the private rather than the public sphere. She states that her ‘idea[was] to just present it’, indicating that she wanted to position her illness at the forefront of her work (Marcalo 2012: 2). In her 2007 text, *The Scar of Visibility: Medical Performances and Contemporary Art* Kuppers states that ‘Western biomedical science, with its visualizing power, sometimes tells different stories about our insides than the narratives that common sense can make knowable’ (33). I contend that the work of all of these artists seeks to make the invisible visible and to explore illness and disability within the context of Performance Art. Attempting to make knowable those stories that appear beyond comprehension and present them as messy, frail human bodies rather than neatly contained and defined medical bodies.

**Surviving with Illness, The Living Corpse**

Artists, such as Athey, who seek to make their illnesses visible in their performances present their body as one which has survived death. This brings into question Phelan’s notion that performance prepares us for death because it disappears once it is over and in doing so reminds us of the fleeting, transient nature of life. Athey’s work contradicts this notion because his body is presented as one which has survived death, or at least is a body which is dying slowly, piece by piece and drop by drop rather than disappearing instantaneously.

In her 1997 text *Mourning Sex* Phelan explores this notion, claiming that ‘not even the dead will hold still: they do not leave us all at once, which would
be horribly violent but clear. They fall away from us piece by piece until we
cannot bear the withering decomposition of their form of relation to us’ (1997:
41). Athey’s performances have a peculiar relationship with death and dying
because the use of blood is a strong, visceral reminder of the illness which
threatens to kill him, and as I argued earlier in the chapter, possibly infect us,
but simultaneously it serves as a pertinent reminder that he is still very much
alive.

Rather than challenging Phelan’s claim, performances such as Athey’s
strengthen it because spectators are reminded not only that he is dying but,
perhaps more pertinently, that he is not yet dead. His body is one in the process
of dying and wounding is part of the process of life but also part of the process
of dying. Performance serves to prepare us for death precisely because it does
not disappear all at once but bit by bit. Artists like Athey force spectators to
watch as they disappear almost unbearably slowly, ebbing and flowing away so
that spectators are compelled to watch in horror as a mass of blood and flesh
are paraded before them, reminding them that death is not instantaneous but a
terrifyingly slow and painful process, a process which, when it happens to
others, they must witness and somehow find a way to survive.

Linking back to my earlier discussion of the use of blood and wounds in
his work and the Kristevan concept of abjection, I argue that Athey’s
performances also prepare us for death by breaking down the traditional
boundaries that exist between self and other. His use of wounds and blood blur
these boundaries, causing spectators to consider the pain and wounds of the
other as if they were our own. Phelan claims that ‘the hole in the body is the
physical mark of the separation between one and the Other. That hole stands as beckoning lure and unbreachable threshold’ (1997: 32). The hole or wound serves to separate the body of the self from that of the other, but the blood leaking from the wound also positions the wound as an orifice, something penetrable which opens up the body of the other and, therefore, the possibility of contamination and even merging of the self and other.

As such, it promotes a longing towards the ‘unbreachable threshold’ of the other and a desire to cross the boundary between self and other (Phelan 1997: 32). It also, however, reminds us that this boundary does exist and forces us to separate the self from the other in order to survive the death of the other. Failure to do so; as Freud tells us in his 1917 essay ‘Mourning and Melancholia’, will prevent the normal process of mourning and lead to a state of melancholia. Freud describes the features of melancholia as being similar to those of mourning and suggests that melancholia may even result from an inability to mourn when he states that ‘in it [mourning] nothing hinders these processes from proceeding along the normal path… this path is blocked for the work of melancholia,’ (2001: 257). This blockage is something which prevents the separation of the self from the other and may well occur as the result of bodily identification, such as that described above. If we view the wound as an opening, an opportunity for the self to enter into the other, then witnessing the wounds of the other could play a vital role in understanding how to separate the self from the other and therefore in understanding how to prevent mourning becoming melancholia.
Linked to this notion of separating the self from the other, I will now analyse the performance work created by Martin O'Brien and Sheree Rose, arguing that the style and content of their performance, combined with the personal associations between the artists causes the self/other boundary to be crossed, thus leading to them embarking upon the path of melancholia, rather than that of mourning. I will also suggest that their performance is haunted by the earlier work Rose created with Bob Flanagan and, therefore, causes a bodily transmission to take place between Flanagan and O'Brien.

**Bodily Transmission**

Performance artists, Bob Flanagan and Martin O'Brien both suffer(ed) from Cystic Fibrosis. Flanagan and his partner, Sheree Rose, created ‘work that provocatively explored themes of pain/pleasure and sadomasochism, illness and death’ (O'Brien 2013:1). They worked and lived together in a masochistic partnership, in which Flanagan ‘lived as her [Rose’s] full time slave’ (O'Brien 2013: 1). In 2012 Rose collaborated with O'Brien in his performance project *Regimes of Hardship*, during which ‘O'Brien relinquishes control over his body to Rose, who decides on the duration and intensity of each part of the regime, much like the experience of pain within illness to which the body must submit’ (O'Brien 2013: 2). The regimes to which O'Brien submitted included BDSM practices, such as Rose beating O'Brien, using a scalpel to ‘cut her initial into Martin's chest’ and making him ‘kiss her feet’ (Brown, 2012: 1). This description of the performance highlights Rose's activity and agency within the piece and when considered independently from notions of re-performance and body
transmission Rose occupies a subject position within the piece. However, because of this thesis focus on re-performance and its reading of *Regimes of Hardship* as a means of bodily transmission from Flanagan to O'Brien Rose’s role is considered in a different way, namely as the person who enables the bodily transmission to take place.

Rose’s collaboration with O’Brien in *Regimes of Hardship* explores, and in some ways builds upon, her earlier work with Flanagan. In both cases Rose takes on the role of the sadistic female, torturing her partner, who hands over control of his body to her. In O’Brien’s description of the performance he claims that ‘the legacy of their [Rose and Flanagan’s] practice is considered’ and it is certainly difficult not to transpose readings of Rose and Flanagan’s work onto the performance (O’Brien 2013: 2). Rose’s presence in both pieces and the exploration of masochism, allows traces of Flanagan’s work to be seen in O’Brien’s, and because of this, Rose and O’Brien’s work can be viewed as a re-performance of Rose’s work with Flanagan.

Rose’s presence in both performances represents a generational passing on, a bodily transmission from one artist to another (from Flanagan to O’Brien). In *Regimes of Hardship* Flanagan’s body is replaced by O’Brien’s, allowing his work to be witnessed by a new generation of artists and audiences, as O’Brien’s body breathes new life into Flanagan’s work. Flanagan’s death, from Cystic Fibrosis, in 1996 prevents him from being physically present in the work Rose and O’Brien created in 2012, but his presence is still visible due to the similar nature of the performances created as well as the fact that both Flanagan and O’Brien suffer(ed) from Cystic Fibrosis. For these reasons Rose’s
work with both Flanagan and O’Brien is inextricably bound together, and O’Brien and Rose’s performance cannot be analysed without considering her earlier work with Flanagan.

Because Flanagan is unable to be physically present in the performance the bodily transmission from Flanagan to O’Brien takes place through the vehicle of another body, that of Rose. I contend that there is a maternal nature to the role that Rose plays in *Regimes of Hardship*, because it is through her female body that the transmission occurs. Without Rose's physical presence Flanagan’s specter would not be visible in the performance and therefore, she plays the maternal role of life giver, breathing new life into Flanagan through O’Brien’s body. However, notions of Rose as a mother figure become problematic when we consider the masochistic nature of the performance. The idea of a loving, nurturing mother figure does not fit with seeing Rose repeatedly spank and beat O’Brien, causing him considerable pain. This raises the question of whether the masochistic nature of the performance prevents it from being viewed as an act of bodily transmission and subverts the image of Rose as a mother figure or strengthens the links between Flanagan and O’Brien's work because both artists use masochism as a means for creating performance.

Sadomasochism played a significant role in both Rose and O’Brien’s work and their relationship. Prior to her relationship with Flanagan Rose had been married and she describes how following her divorce one of her ‘goals in life was to empower women’ (Rose 2009: 96). Rose goes on to explain that following her divorce ‘I decided that I was going to be the aggressive one’
(2009: 97). This led to the sadomasochistic nature of Rose and Flanagan’s work and relationship, work that Rose continued with O’Brien following Flanagan’s death. Thus, it can be argued that Rose’s work with O’Brien was not just a way of continuing to explore her relationship with Flanagan but also a way for her to continue her interest in feminism and empowering women.

The Masochistic Mother-Figure

Giles Deleuze’s introduction to Leopold Von Sacher-Masoch’s 1991 book Venus in Furs explores the idea of a masochistic mother figure and I apply his notion of the mother figure within masochism to Rose’s role in her performances with Flanagan and O’Brien.

Deleuze uses the fantasy of the three mothers in which he argues ‘a point of great significance ... is the symbolic transfer or redistribution of all paternal functions to the threefold feminine figure: the father is excluded and completely nullified’ (1991: 61). Deleuze goes on to question why the masochist wishes to be beaten asking, ‘is it not precisely the father-image in him that is thus miniaturized, beaten, ridiculed and humiliated?’ (Deleuze 1991: 60). He also asserts that ‘the formula of masochism is the humiliated father’ (Deleuze 1991: 60). Following Deleuze’s claims I assert that it is the father who is beaten and humiliated and the mother who inflicts the pain, enabling Rose to play the dual roles of mother and sadist. This has further connotations for the performance when we consider Deleuze’s claim that ‘what the subject atones for is his resemblance to the father and the father’s likeness in him’ (Deleuze 1991: 60). Flanagan is placed in the role of father because he is from an older
generation of artists and he created work with Rose, which shared the same masochistic nature as Rose’s work with O’Brien. Therefore, we can view O’Brien and Rose’s work as O’Brien atoning for the sin of being like Flanagan. This likeness is created by the fact that both men suffer(ed) from Cystic Fibrosis and, therefore, share symptoms and bodily frailties which cause O’Brien’s body to resemble Flanagan’s. O’Brien, therefore, is being punished for his deviation from socially accepted norms, his failure to fulfil the role of a healthy, heterosexual, dominant male subject. This failure can be seen to be the result of his likeness to Flanagan (the father figure), hence his desire to expel the father and any likeness between the two. This, of course, raises questions concerning who plays the Father figure in Flanagan and Rose’s work, as the same argument can be made for Flanagan’s desire to occupy the masochistic position as O’Brien’s, but who does Flanagan resemble and why should he punished for this likeness? These questions are worth noting because they generate a sense of genealogy which fits in with my concept of bodily transmission. They highlight the possibility that O’Brien is one in a long line of “fathers and sons” whose bodies and performances participate in acts of transmission.

Deleuze also states that ‘the oral mother as the ideal of masochism is expected to assume all the functions of the other female figures;’ (1991: 63). What this comment suggests is that the figure of the torturer in masochism is not so much a torturer but a torturess; that it is possible to be both a mother figure and a sadist, as the oral mother takes on the roles of all the female figures and cancels out the father figure, leaving the masochistic subject solely
at the mercy of his mother(s). Deleuze claims that ‘the threefold division of the
mother literally expels the father from the masochistic universe’ (1991: 63-64).
Whilst this supports my argument that Rose fulfils the role of mother in her work
with O’Brien, the nature of the performance itself challenges Deleuze’s notion of
the Father being expelled. Although Rose can be assigned the dual roles of
mother and sadist, in her fulfilment of these roles she does not banish Flanagan
but makes him visible. Through her presence in O’Brien’s work, and the
masochistic nature of the performance, we are reminded of Rose’s earlier work
with Flanagan and therefore his specter can be seen haunting the performance.
Flanagan’s presence also raises questions about the role of Flanagan as the
father and my notion of Rose as the vessel through which Flanagan’s work is
passed on to O’Brien. Could it be that in punishing O’Brien for his likeness to
Flanagan, Rose is actually creating or accentuating this likeness? Or did
O’Brien select Rose to play this role precisely because she would remind him of
this likeness and, therefore, fulfil his desire to be punished for it?

In relation to the second idea, I contend that O’Brien wanted to be
reminded of why he was being punished, why he deserved to be beaten and to
explore the similarities between himself and Flanagan whilst simultaneously
being punished for his perceived sins. These sins of course extend beyond his
likeness to Flanagan to his perceived sin of being ill. His lack of health, his
inability to embody the dominant masculine subject position because of his
illness and his sexuality could all be viewed as “sins” within a social structure
where the norm is a healthy, heterosexual male. This does not however, mean
that O’Brien is passive or powerless. His performances explore the limits of his
body and physical endurance, therefore, his body in performance signifies the fact that illness and/or disability does not equal weakness. This is also the case in Flanagan’s work. As this image of him, looking like a superhero complete with a cape and mask, shows his performances do not present him as weak or feeble. Instead, he appears, strong, determined and resilient. It is this appearance which, for me, prevents him from being limited to the passive role of the masochist or the role of abolished, banished father. Instead he appears as an ever present, somewhat threatening, specter.

Figure 1: Bob Flanagan Supermasochist

Deleuze suggests that the father ‘though abolished in the symbolic order, nevertheless, continues to act in the order of the real, or of experience’ (1991:64). As such, despite being abolished, the father remains present. Deleuze describes the ‘aggressive and hallucinatory return of the father in a world that has symbolically abolished him’ and this argument provides a way of reading Flanagan’s presence in Rose and O’Brien’s work (1991: 64). Flanagan’s physical presence is not a necessary component of the performance. O’Brien fulfils the role that Flanagan once played and therefore Rose and O’Brien abolish Flanagan from the physical world of their performance. However, they cannot succeed in banishing him entirely and the
echoes and traces of him are present throughout the performance. Every time Rose spanks O’Brien, Flanagan’s body is being re-inscribed onto O’Brien’s. Flanagan’s presence is beaten into being and comes to existence, in a rather hallucinatory fashion, on O’Brien’s body. The bodies of O’Brien and Flanagan become interwoven until it becomes impossible to look at O’Brien without seeing Flanagan. In this way, O’Brien as the father figure, returns to the world of the performance from which he had been banished. Returning as a terrifying specter, who haunts the work Rose and O’Brien create, and reminds us why O’Brien seeks out such punishment.

The Object of the Mother

By positioning Rose in the role of mother figure and as the vessel through which the bodily transmission from Flanagan to O’Brien takes place, I am placing her firmly in the role of the feminine other. She is the other that provides a mirror for Flanagan and O’Brien; they are able to fulfil the role of masculine subject because she occupies the opposite position of feminine object. This fits in with Braidotti’s claim that ‘women have been physically and symbolically dispossessed of a place from whence to speak’ (1994: 119). Even when she plays the role of the dominant sadist Rose is unable to occupy the dominant subject position and finds herself reduced to the status of empty vessel. I have not examined Rose’s performance in its own right, rather I have interrogated it in relation to bodily transmission between Flanagan and O’Brien. Therefore, Rose becomes almost excluded and invisible. In this sense, rather than the Mother banishing the Father, as discussed earlier, it is Rose who is banished.
She disappears as the focus is on seeing Flanagan through O'Brien. This reading of the performance is troubled by the fact that Rose is actually extremely visible in the performances she created with both Flanagan and O'Brien. It is Rose’s presence which enables comparisons to be drawn between Flanagan’s and O’Brien’s work and without her the transmission would not occur. Furthermore, the sadistic role she plays in the performances pushes her into an active, aggressive and traditionally masculine role. However, Deleuze argues that the role of the sadist, far from being dominant, is prompted by and works in conjunction with her masochistic victim when he states that ‘she enjoys hurting and torturing others, but it is significant that her actions are ... performed in concert with a man,’ (1991: 41). Deleuze’s use of the term ‘in concert’ suggests that Rose and Flanagan work together as equal partners (1991: 41).

Rose’s position as the mother and the sadist disrupts the subject/object dichotomy, much like my earlier argument that the use of wounds and orifices disrupts the self/other dichotomy. These two notions are linked through the concept of abjection and the role of the mother also fits with this, as Braidotti states ‘the mother’s body as the threshold of existence is both sacred and soiled, holy and hellish’ she goes on to describe it as ‘attractive and repulsive, all-powerful and therefore impossible to live with’ (1994: 81). For me, this summarises Rose’s role within the work. She is sacred, vital, essential even. She is the mother figure who allows O’Brien to resemble Flanagan and therefore enables Flanagan’s specter to reappear. Bradotti describes the ‘dual function of the maternal site as both life- and death-giver, as object of worship and terror’ and when seen in this light Rose becomes much more than an
empty vessel, she becomes the life giver, without whom there would be no return, no haunting and no specter, only death and disappearance.

As I have argued, O’Brien and Rose’s work is haunted by Flanagan’s specter and this raises questions about what O’Brien is looking at when he sees Rose as the mirror through which his subjectivity is constituted. When looking at Rose, O’Brien is actually looking through her to the father (Flanagan), if this is the case, what impact does this have upon Rose’s ability to occupy the subject position? If O’Brien only sees Flanagan when he looks at Rose then Rose never truly occupies the subject position, she serves only as a mirror through which Flanagan and O’Brien can observe one another and as the vessel through which Flanagan’s specter becomes. Despite being reduced to the status of mirror or vessel the role that Rose plays in enabling the bodily transmission between Flanagan and O’Brien to take place is still vitally important, without her the transmission would not be possible. The argument here is that this transmission is from Flanagan to O’Brien and not from Rose to O’Brien, which suggests the impossibility of a female body occupying the dominant subject position. Rose cannot occupy the subject position in her relationship with O’Brien because he simply uses her as the mirror through which he creates his own subjectivity.

I will now analyse Rose’s relationship with Flanagan in order to see whether it is possible for her to occupy the subject position in this relationship.

Deleuze has argued for the separation of Masochism from Sadism in order to present an image of the masochistic male who remains dominant. Deleuze suggests that it is the masochistic male who creates the sadistic
female, rather than the other way around, placing him firmly in control. Using examples from Sacher-Masoch’s writing Deleuze highlights the reluctance of some of the females to take on their roles as sadists. When seen from this perspective Rose is still unable to occupy the dominant subject position, instead she becomes a reluctant and somewhat passive object, a tool in her male partner and subject’s desire to fulfil his masochistic role. Once again, the female is denied the right to be a subject. This concept is troubled by the nature of the performances Rose created with Flanagan and O’Brien because, as seen in the image below, she appears striking and dominant which suggests that she does in fact occupy the subject position. Thus, destabilizing Deleuze’s reading of the female sadists’ role within masochism.

![Image of Sheree Rose and Martin O’Brien](image.jpg)

**Figure 2: Sheree Rose and Martin O’Brien *Regimes of Hardship***

Even in the role of mother to a son and/or the role of sadist the concept of the female subject remains an impossibility. Even when a woman appears to occupy this position, it is actually a carefully constructed facade designed to
support masculine fantasies of masochism and the Lacanian mirror phase. Despite Rose’s dominance she serves to enable Flanagan to be glimpsed through O’Brien, making her role in the performance vital, but only allowing her occupation of the subject position to function within the confines of the Lacanian mirror phase.

**Bodily Transmission and The Male/Female Binary**

This inability of the female to occupy the dominant subject position is inked to the pervasive dominance of culturally conditioned masculine and feminine roles and gender binaries, which will now be explored further, as I examine the concept of bodily transmission in relation to the work of performance artists, Ron Athey and Julie Tolentino, questioning whether bodily transmission can still occur in cases where the artists are of different genders. The bodily transmission and haunting that is visible in O’Brien and Flanagan’s work are present for several reasons; Rose’s presence in both performances, the fact that both artists suffer(ed) from Cystic Fibrosis and the fact that both artists are male. I question whether bodily transmission can still occur in cases where the artists are of different genders.

In his 2009 piece *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic*, Athey wore a blonde wig, which was pinned to his head. Athey, who was naked apart from the wig, began to vigorously brush the wig. He then removed the wig and the pins that had been holding it in place, causing his head to bleed. A series of actions, including yoga poses, holding and lying between panes of glass followed. These actions caused Athey’s head wound to bleed and the panes of glass to become
smeared with blood. In his review of the performance the performance Daniel Mufson states that when Athey ‘remove[s] the wig, we see that it has actually been pinned into the skin of his head, and he bleeds profusely as he removes the pins. He takes the glass panes out of their holders and starts to drip blood on them’ (Mufson 2009: 1). In 2011 Athey re-performed this piece alongside fellow performance artist Tolentino as part of her ongoing project, *The Sky Remains the Same*. *The Shy Remains the Same* is a project in which Tolentino re-performed performance art works that had previously been performed by other artists. Tolentino worked in conjunction with these artists, using her body as an archive for their performances. Tolentino and Athey’s re-performance of *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* poses pertinent questions about the role gender plays in bodily transmission. Is it possible for a female artist’s re-performance of a male artist’s work to be haunted by the initial performance? If so, does this haunting differ from that described above in the case of Martin O’Brien and Bob Flanagan, and in what ways does it differ? How central is the gender and or body of the artists in enabling haunting and transmission to take place?

In order to answer these questions this thesis will analyse the performance in relation to gender theory and in particular the writings of Judith Butler, which will be used in order to consider different ideas of the way in which gender and, importantly, the differences between genders are constructed. In her 2004 text *Undoing Gender* Butler examines notions of gender, trying to ‘combat forms of essentialism which claim that gender is a truth that is somehow there, interior to the body, as a core or as an internal essence, as something that we cannot deny, something which, natural or not, is treated as
given’ (2004: 212). Butler’s statement stresses the ways in which gender has traditionally been viewed as a binary opposition.

If man and woman are perceived as binary opposites, defined in their relation to each other, as that which the other is not i.e. man is not woman and woman is not man, it seems easy to assert that bodily transmission between Athey and Tolentino are prevented, or at the very least disrupted, by their differing genders. If Tolentino, as a woman, is defined by virtue of the fact that she is not a man (like Athey) and Athey in turn is defined as being a man because he is not a woman (like Tolentino), then how can he possibly be visible in her performance, in her body? These questions are heightened when we consider the nature of the performance being discussed. *Self Obliteration #1 Ecstatic* is a Performance Art performance, and this means that the body of the performer is central to the piece. The performance is created by and enacted upon the body. It is the body (bloody and visceral) that performs and if Tolentino’s body is not only not Athey’s body but is crucially defined by its difference from Athey’s body, how can his body (and therefore his performance) be seen in hers? When considered from this perspective the style of the performance appears to prevent Tolentino’s work from being haunted by Athey’s earlier performance. Instead, Tolentino’s work can only be read in relation to its difference from Athey’s, not for the similarities that they share.

Butler, however, suggests other possibilities of gender, which take into account ‘the complex ways in which gendered lives are crafted and lived’ (2004: 5). Butler argues for a concept of gender which sees gender as being in process, not static or biological, but socially constructed in such a way that the
boundaries between one gender and another are permeable, allowing for people to occupy different gender positions at different points in their lives (2004: 5). Butler asserts that gender is a social construct and that ‘one does not “do” one’s gender alone. One is always “doing” with and for another’ (2004: 1). This raises the possibility that gender is not a permanent and predetermined thing but something which can change and develop. What Butler is saying is that one may choose to perform one’s gender differently at different times in their life, for different reasons and for different audiences. Crucial to this idea is Butler’s insistence that gender is constructed socially rather than individually. The nature of a social construct means that it must be created with and for others and, therefore, implies that one’s gender is not fixed or stable, but a constantly changing and developing entity, which one consciously constructs in order to meet one’s needs and desires, or perhaps even the needs and desires of others. She also argues that there may be more than two genders, a notion which disrupts the binary opposition between man/woman, male/female (2004: 90). If there are more than two genders, then man and woman cannot be defined simply by their opposition to one another. This notion disrupts the heteronormativity that is implied by the dominant culturally conditioned binaries. This impacts upon our ability to see a male body in a female artist’s performance. If male and female cease to be binary opposites it becomes easier to see a male body in a female artist’s performance because it allows for a more fluid and interchangeable understanding of gender.

Such fluid border crossing of gender could appear in evidence through Tolentino’s repetition of Athey’s performance. Through the bloody, painful
wounds that we see these two bodies inflict upon themselves, Tolentino seems to masculinise her body by showing it to be as tough as his. Yet, equally Tolentino’s duplication and so enhancement of Athey’s actions with the blonde wig could appear to further emphasise the performance’s feminisation of his form. Indeed, *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* presents Athey’s body as an eroticised object and here I assert that this notion of hyper-femininity is further highlighted by Tolentino’s repetition of the performance because of the fact that her body is female, a fact that is overtly staged by her nudity. In his discussion of Athey’s work in *Pleading in the Blood: The Art and Performances of Ron Athey*, Dominic Johnson describes Athey’s work as exploring ‘manifestations of visceral excess’ and ‘high-camp glamour’ (2012: 31). *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* exemplifies this, as the excess of blood in the performance is counterbalanced by the presentation of Athey in a blonde wig, which represents stereotypical notions of filmic glamour. Early in the performance, before he pulls off the wig, before the blood, Athey brushes the blonde wig, pointing to representations of glamourised hyper-femininity, before destabilising this image of himself by tearing off the wig, causing his scalp to bleed. Later on in the performance, when he repeats these actions alongside Tolentino, notions of glamourised hyper-femininity are once again present as they both brush their blonde wigs. Yet, despite the overt presentation of her female body, Tolentino also subverts ideas of femininity and glamour through her removal of the wig and presentation of her body covered in blood. It highlights that underneath the culturally constructed concepts of masculinity and femininity, all bodies share a vulnerability and fragility.
The Sky Remains the Same but everything else changes?
I suggest that although Tolentino’s gender is clearly different from Athey’s, it is not the most significant factor affecting the transmission between the two artists. The main thing that causes Tolentino’s performance to differ from Athey’s is her presence. In the 2009 performance, Athey’s first of Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic, Tolentino was not present as she was in the 2011 re-performance. In the 2011 piece Athey re-performed Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic before performing it again alongside Tolentino. The fact that Athey performed the actions twice in 2011 causes his re-performance to differ from his initial performance. In addition, the fact that Tolentino performed alongside Athey marks her performance as different from his by positioning her as both witness to and re-performer of his work. This very clearly presents her performance as a re-performance of or response to Athey’s. This is the crucial difference between the 2009 and 2011 performances, not the fact that Athey is male and Tolentino female. However, this does not necessarily mean that the artists’ differing genders has no bearing upon the way in which the performances are read and received.

Male/Female and Masculine/Feminine
One of the critical questions that a female artist re-performing a male artist’s work, or vice versa, raises is whether the female artist’s body, in this case Tolentino’s, feminises the male artist’s body or whether the male artist’s body, in this case Athey’s, masculinises hers? Using Butler’s notions of gender and her argument that ‘new forms of gender are possible’ I suggest that there are more
than two genders therefore they cannot function in binary opposition to one another (2004: 30). This means that Tolentino’s re-performance of Athey’s work could feasibly neither feminise his body or masculinise hers.

The act of re-performance, particularly the nature of this re-performance in which Athey’s original performance becomes doubled (being performed by first himself and then alongside Tolentino), further confuses the male/female, subject/object and self/other binaries. How do we read these two bodies in relation to each other? And when we are presented with them side by side in the performance space performing the same set of bodily actions, we must read them in relation to each other. To suggest that Tolentino’s repetition of Athey’s performance masculinises her body by showing it to be as tough as his seems a logical reaction to the bloody, painful wounds we see these two bodies inflict upon themselves. Owing to the fact that they are two bodies, one male and one female, performing the same set of actions, their similarities become much more apparent than their differences, thus blurring the lines between masculine and feminine and throwing into turmoil the notion of them as two halves of a dichotomous pair.

This blurring of lines and boundaries is further enhanced by the knowledge that both artists concerned are homosexual. Stereotypical views of homosexual men are that they are feminine and similarly stereotypical views of homosexual women are that they are masculine. As such, reading the re-performance as an act which feminises Athey’s body or masculinises Tolentino’s appears to be relatively easy but, reading the performance in this
way simplifies the complex nature of the gender roles at play here and forces Athey and Tolentino into gender stereotypes into which they do not fit.

Athey’s large frame and body covered with tattoos and piercings combined with the violent and bloody nature of the actions he performs in Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic clearly do not fit with the image of a feminised, homosexual male body. The level of self-inflicted pain and the visceral, bloody nature of the performance in conjunction with Athey’s physical appearance seem to negate the notion of homosexual men being feminine. Whilst Tolentino’s much smaller frame makes it difficult for her to be read as butch or masculine, the physical nature of the performance which serves to prevent Athey’s body from being feminised also prevents Tolentino’s from being read as feminine. The masculine/feminine dichotomy is too simple to be a useful tool for analysing the work because the idea of a masculine/feminine binary and the notion that homosexual bodies merely possess the traits more commonly associated with the opposite gender discounts myriad other gender possibilities. Gender, as Butler asserts, is a much more complex concept than this and should not be limited to the masculine/feminine divide and Athey and Tolentino’s performance serves to prove Butler’s point by crossing the gender boundary and refusing to remain on what could be seen as the correct side of the divide.

Their refusal to conform to gender norms or stereotypes makes them subversive bodies. Butler has asserted, people who do not conform to heterosexual norms are often seen as dangerous because of the threat they pose to the male/female or masculine/feminine binary. She states that, ‘gender
is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are both produced and naturalised, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalised' and I contend that Athey and Tolentino’s work threatens this binary on two levels (2004: 42). Firstly, the fact that both artists are homosexual destabilises the idea that desire and sexuality are normally heterosexual, as Butler claims ‘the “am” of “I am a man” encodes the prohibition “I may not love a man,” so that the ontological claim carries the force of prohibition itself’ by desiring the other who is the same gender or sex as themselves (2004: 199). Tolentino and Athey stage a desire, which does not conform to the perceived norms of their gender. According to Butler, homosexual desire destabilises gender norms because the whole notion of desire hinges on the relationship with the other and the concept of otherness is based on the model of sexual difference and she states that ‘homosexuality in particular leaves gender behind’ (2004: 184). Bearing in mind the concept of sexual difference, homosexual desire only makes sense to those who understand male and female as binary opposites within a Butch Femme aesthetic, which as discussed above, Athey and Tolentino do not fit into. Without this aesthetic, homosexual desire appears as desire for the self rather than the other, thus destabilising the premise of desire and the subject/object dichotomy. In this way, Athey and Tolentino refuse to conform, not only to the heterosexual norms which govern desire, but also to the norms which enable heterosexuals to make sense of homosexual desire, which is based on the notion that homosexual women are butch and homosexual men are feminine.
If Tolentino’s actions masculinise Tolentino’s body as being as tough as Athey’s they must also serve to masculinise his body. Her body cannot be as masculine as his if his body is feminised, and the representation of his body as masculine, or Butch, disrupts notions of sexual desire and the masculine/feminine binary. What Tolentino and Athey present us with is a concept of bodies, gender and sexuality that are not fixed or stable but moveable and playful in such a way that the lines between male and female and masculine and feminine become blurred. This blurring of bodies is physically enacted in the performance space during the performance, in which it can at times be difficult to state definitively where one body ends and the other begins. The physical boundaries of the body become blurred and this confuses the gender binary because we cannot easily separate the masculine body from the feminine one.

Bodily Transmission and The Body as Archive

The similarities between their performances is re-iterated by the title of Tolentino’s project (of which Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic was a part), The Sky Remains the Same. Her use of the words ‘same’ and ‘remains’ indicate that something of the initial performance remains in the act of re-performance. She also describes the project as one in which performances are archived, asserting that her project is one which seeks to capture performances, breathing new life in to them and preventing them from disappearing. I argue that Tolentino uses the term archive in a similar way to this research in order to denote a bodily archive, in which work is stored in and on the body rather than a
traditional archive. This also implies that she understands her work as being haunted by Athey’s and embraces this. Tolentino states that *The Sky Remains the Same* is a project in which she ‘invites select collaborators to choose a work from their own performance history to archive into/onto the artist’s body’ (2008: 2). This provides an insight into the reasons behind Tolentino’s re-performance and why she chose to copy his actions directly. In so doing, she turns her performance into a re-performance of Athey’s, rather than a response to or re-creation of his work. Tolentino’s rhetoric of archives and inscription is suggestive of the fact that she is driven by a desire to memorialise his work through her performance and her emphasis on the similarities between the two performances suggests that she wishes her work to be read in relation to Athey’s. This notion is enhanced by the fact that Tolentino and Athey performed together. I claim that this positions her as a witness to his work places her in the role of faithful pupil who studies another’s and seeks to create it herself. This is suggestive of the fact that she wants her performance to be as similar to Athey’s as possible.

However, as I mentioned earlier, it is the fact that Athey performed alongside Tolentino, which serves to mark her performance out as different to his initial version of *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic*, when she did not share the performance space with him. The fact that Athey had already performed the piece once and then repeated the performance alongside Tolentino further highlighted the differences between this and the initial *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* from 2009. In 2009 there was a single artist and a single performance but in 2011 we see two artists and arguably two separate performances, albeit
of the same work, and this doubles the repetition. Tolentino’s performance was not a repetition of Athey’s initial performance but a repetition of a repetition. This of course raises questions about which performance Tolentino is re-performing, is it the initial Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic or Athey’s repetition of it? And how does this affect the nature of her repetition and the way in which it is received? These issues are exemplified in the image below in which Tolentino and Athey can be seen together.

![Figure 3: Ron Athey and Julie Tolentino Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic (2011)](image)

At first glance these questions may not appear that important, why does it matter which of Athey’s performances Tolentino is re-creating? Surely both performances were the same? But to think this way is to miss a vital point about the bodily transmission, which takes place between Athey and Tolentino during the re-performance. Athey himself re-performs Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic and this performance is markedly different from his initial presentation of the piece. As I have already noted the fact that in 2011 Athey performed the piece twice,
serves as a marker of this difference, but there are also other factors which signify the difference between this and earlier versions of the performance. The date, the time, the place of the performance are all different and even though the work is being re-performed by the same artist Athey’s body is not the same body upon which the initial performance was enacted. This is because Athey’s body has already been, very physically, marked, wounded and scarred by the initial performance. Therefore, in the re-performance, Athey can be said to be re-tracing past steps, re-opening old wounds and breathing new life into them in the present performance. If we consider this in relation to Taylor’s notion of repertoire, or as a kind of bodily archive, Athey’s actions during the re-performance can be seen as him delving into his own bodily archive in order to repeat the performance.

Tolentino’s re-performance then is different again. In a sense, her actions are the same as Athey’s, a re-tracing of steps, but the steps that Tolentino re-traces are not her own, they are Athey’s. Therefore, the wounds that Tolentino can arguably be described as re-opening must undergo a process of bodily transmission because they are not her wounds, they are Athey’s.

When it is read in this way, Athey’s own re-performance becomes central to the bodily transmission which takes place. He re-performs for Tolentino, gifting her his performance, by inscribing it upon his body. She then inscribes it upon her own body so that both artists’ bodies are marked with the same wounds, the same cuts, the same performance. Thus, Athey is entrusting his work, his legacy, to Tolentino who takes on the role of archivist, within my use of the term and the sphere of bodily archives, faithfully collecting and storing the
work in order to prevent it from disappearing. It is Athey’s own repetition, which makes the process of bodily transmission between the artists possible, as it positions him and Tolentino alongside one another and suggests that they are working together in order to try and hold on to Athey’s performance.

This transmission, however, is disrupted by the fact that Tolentino is not Athey, her body is not his and, in the same way that Athey’s repetition of his earlier work is not the earlier work, Tolentino’s performance is not Athey’s. This, for me is the predicament facing performers who seek to create re-performances. No matter how carefully Tolentino studies Athey or how hard she tries to copy his movements, actions and gestures exactly, and indeed no matter how successful she may be in her attempts, her performance can never be the same as Athey’s. I firmly believe that re-performance can serve as a means for archiving performance, for allowing it to continue past the life of the initial performance and, in many cases, past the life of the initial performer. However, the archive created by re-performance is not a traditional one. It is a bodily archive which relies on physical bodies and their presence in the performance space. Whilst many performance studies scholars argue, as do I, that this is the only way to capture a live and transient art form, the bodily archive can be a difficult space to negotiate.

The fact that we are bodies in process, which never stand still and never remain the same, means that it is impossible for a re-performance, even when performed by the initial artist, to be the same as the initial performance. Therefore, something is lost during process of transmission and that the performance contained in this bodily archive is not the initial performance. This
raises questions about the value and usefulness as an archive, which I will address later on in the thesis. For now, I argue that in performances such as Athey and Tolentino’s *The Sky Remains The Same/ Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* a bodily transmission does occur between the two artists as the performance is passed on from one to the other. However, during this process of passing on the performance itself is transformed and is differentiated from the original performance, allowing the later performance to memorialise the earlier one but never to become it.

**Repetition, The Copy, The Fake**

In her text *Mourning Sex* Phelan discusses loss and mourning, asking ‘is history a cable? a telephone? a faded memory? a painting we keep copying?’ (1997: 119). Phelan’s questions identify two key concerns for re-performance as means of archiving performance. Her use of the terms ‘cable’ and ‘telephone’ are suggestive of a dialogue and the possibility of communication with the past. The kind of bodily transmission I have discussed in relation to the case studies in this chapter fit with this notion of communicating with the past. Through their performances and re-performances, the artists enter into a dialogue with one another, using their performances as a means of bodily communication, which enables them to transcend barriers of time, space and death. Despite the fact that initial performances and their re-performances may have been created at different times, in different locations and in the case of Flanagan and O’Brien, in spite of Flanagan’s death, the performances are able to enter into a dialogue with one another and provide audiences with new ways of understanding the
performances, through their references to one another. Through their bodily communication history is passed on, the history of one artist is given to another, and because of the physical nature of the performances, this history is given new life in the artist’s body.

Phelan’s use of the words ‘memory’ and ‘copying’ imply that the act of copying, or in this case re-performing, is also an act of remembering. She is suggesting that repetition creates memory or at least recalls memories, which then prevent us from forgetting that which we have lost. It is through this process, we are able to hold on to the lost object, in this case a performance, and prevent it from ever disappearing entirely. This does not mean however, that the object remains intact, in its initial form for all eternity. Rather, the object is shaped, changed, transformed through this continual process of repetition and recollection so that, as discussed above, in relation to Atthey and Tolentino’s work, what we end up with is a remnant rather than a replica or the lost object itself. This is insinuated by Phelan’s question ‘is history... a painting we keep copying?’ (1997: 119). As Rebecca Schneider asserts in her 2012 text, Performing Remains, the copy is not the original, it is always marked as different, ‘the first time was true ... the second time, the third time, the nth times are not actual’ (2011: 180; emphasis in original). The term copy is often seen as derogatory, copy is synonymous with fake, or imitation. However, this does not mean that it does not have value. I contend that re-performances have immense value for artists and for the history of performance. In Unmarked: The Politics of Performance Peggy Phelan states that ‘Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of
representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance’ (1993: 146). Re-performance is never the original performance, but it is a means through which we can capture the nature of performance. I assert that even with modern technology re-performance is the only way to keep hold of an art form in which the body is so central because it allows artists to pass performances from one body to another. Phelan has also claimed that ‘the desire to preserve and represent the performance event is a desire we should resist. For what one otherwise preserves is an illustration, a pop-up anatomical drawing that stands in for the thing that one most wants to save, the embodied performance’ (1997: 3). I argue that performance documentation such as photographs, video footage or text, fails to capture the bodily nature of the performance event. As Athey has stated ‘documentation is really manipulative... it’s still a gaze that the camera forces you to take on’ (2014). As such, despite the fact that the performance itself is re-shaped during the process of bodily transmission, I contend that re-performance and the bodily archive play a central role in preserving performance.

**Bodily Archives, Memorial and Melancholia**

As Taylor has highlighted, the notion of written verses bodily archives is bound up with the concept of a patriarchal society in which language; both the spoken and written word is privileged over the body. This is highlighted by her statement that ‘it is only because Western culture is wedded to the word, whether written or spoken, that language claims such epistemic and explanatory power’ (2003: 24). Taylor goes on to explain that the repertoire
‘transmits live, embodies actions’ and ‘as such traditions are stored in the body’ (2003: 24). The notion of traditions being stored in the body highlights the visceral nature of the repertoire and allows me to apply Taylor’s ideas to the traditional archive versus the bodily archive. In doing so, I assert that the kind of bodily archive I have described above, and in particular the concept of bodily transmission between artists, provides a space for bodily remembering, memorialising, grieving and mourning.

This notion of bodily transmission also serves to link it to the concept of Melancholia. The act of trying to hold onto something which we have lost can be read in relation to the melancholic failure to detach the self from the lost other. In his 1917 essay ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ Freud claims that melancholia occurs when the path of mourning is blocked by an inability to let go of the lost other. He states that ‘in it [mourning] nothing hinders these processes from proceeding along the normal path through the preconscious to consciousness. This path is blocked for the work of melancholia,’ (2001: 257).

Therefore I argue that Rose and O’Brien seek to keep Flanagan alive through their performance and their performance is a melancholic refusal to separate the self from the lost other, something Freud insists is vital to the process of mourning when he describes the demand that ‘all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object’ (1917: 244). However, this reading of acts of re-performance is problematic when we consider Athey and Tolentino’s work. Athey is still very much alive, as can be seen by the bloody, visceral nature of his own re-performance of *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* and this, of course, raises questions about Tolentino’s desire to memorialise him...
when he refuses to occupy the position of lost other. In Athey and Tolentino’s case her project *The Sky Remains the Same* is an act of grieving for an anticipated loss, rather than a loss which has already taken place. The fact that Athey is HIV positive, as discussed above, means that his is a body which exists on the boundary of life and death and is, therefore, under constant threat of death, making him hyper aware of the fragility of life. I suggest then that Athey and Tolentino are not seeking to keep the lost other alive, but to ensure that something of the self survives after their death.

What is represented in performances such as O’Brien and Rose’s, as well as Athey and Tolentino’s, and indeed in re-performance in general, is a fear of death as the end, a fear of or refusal to let go. Rose and O’Brien’s performance presents an image of them as unwilling to let go of Flanagan and thus seeking to make his spectral presence visible in their work.

The same can be said of Tolentino’s work, she appears unwilling to allow Athey or his performance to disappear. Therefore, *The Sky Remains the Same* must be considered in relation to the notion of legacy. Therefore, the bodily archive, that I have argued re-performance creates, must be considered in relation to a traditional archive, which Taylor describes as a place where things are ‘selected, classified, and presented for analysis’ but should also be understood as a possible legacy for performance (2003:23). Taylor contends that ‘the archive and the repertoire exist in a constant state of interaction’ and that they do not form ‘a binary’ (2003: 28). Taylor also states that ‘the repertoire, expands the traditional archive’ and it does so by creating a living legacy of performance (2003: 36). I claim that bodily transmission is the most effective
way in which performance can continue to live beyond the life of the initial performance, because it is the only way to capture the transient and ephemeral nature of performance. Whilst, as discussed above, re-performance as archive has its limits and can be problematic I feel that it is also the most useful way that performance can create a performative or bodily legacy, the most valuable way in which it can leave something behind for future artists, audiences, theorists and critics.

O'Brien and Rose's work is different to Tolentino and Athey's, in the sense that, in her own rhetoric about The Sky Remains The Same project, Tolentino is clear in her use of the term archive, describing the performance as an ‘intimate exchange and trace of ephemeral performance [which] aims to archive the impossible, the inquiry of a work’s potential and an irreplaceable piece of one’s past’ (2009: 1). O'Brien and Rose's work is different because they do not discuss it in terms of re-performance. On his website O'Brien states that in his and Rose's work ‘the legacy of their [Rose and Flanagan’s] practice is considered’, but he does not enter into discussions of re-performance (2012: 2). O'Brien, therefore, acknowledges that his work with Sheree Rose will conjure memories of her work with Flanagan, but he doesn't seem to be consciously trying to evoke those memories.

Despite the fact that this clearly distinguishes O'Brien and Rose's work from Tolentino and Athey's, the performances still share many similarities, in terms of their use of bodily transmission and their use of performance as memorial. In Mourning Sex Phelan states that ‘performance and theatre have a special relation to art as memorial’ and I assert that re-performance is central to
this relationship (1997: 3). Re-performance, as described above, prevents performance from disappearing because it allows the initial performance to become inscribed upon a new body. Thus, re-performance enables performance to “cheat” death because even though the body is finite and will die the performance can continue in a different body.
In this chapter I intend to explore what Schechner terms the aftermath of a performance. As I explained in the introduction an aftermath consists of those things left over and/or behind; those things that I call the echoes and traces of performance. My interest here is in how these echoes and traces can be used as a means of remembering and re-creating or re-performing a piece. In this chapter I will build upon the notion of bodily archives that I developed in chapter two in order to question more traditional notions of archives. I assert that the physical remnants left behind after performances, such as Athey and O’Brien’s, provide a more useful insight into the performances than traditional archival materials such as photographs, video footage and some forms of critical writing about performance. Athey’s performance *Self Obliteration #1 Ecstatic*, which was also analysed in the previous chapter, and Martin O’Brien’s performance *Mucus Factory* will be used as case studies and the aftermath of these performance events will be examined in relation to Schechner’s notion of aftermath.

Athey’s *Self Obliteration #1 Ecstatic* was described in the previous chapter in relation to Athey’s re-performance of it alongside Julie Tolentino as part of her project *The Sky Remains the Same* but in this chapter I will focus on the way in which Athey’s actions which include; removing a blonde wig which had been pinned to his head and caused his head to bleed. Athey also lay between panes of glass, which he shifted over his body led to Athey’s blood being dripped onto the performance area and the way in
which Athey’s flowing blood can be viewed as creating an aftermath of the performance.

In his 2011 performance *Mucus Factory* O’Brien performed actions such and beating his chest and jumping up and down, which cause him to cough up mucus. He then collected the mucus in small pots, reminiscent of those used to collect medical samples, before mixing the mucus with glitter and inserting it into his anus using a nebulizer. The aftermath of *Mucus Factory* is the mucus and glitter stored in the containers and in this chapter this aftermath is analysed for the insight it can offer into the performance event that had taken place.

In *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* Phelan argues that, ‘defined by its ephemeral nature, performance art cannot be documented’ (1996: 31). Phelan’s argument points to the fact that the traditional archival materials I have described above fail to capture the live nature of performance art. This is also highlighted by Philip Auslander in his 2008 text, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, in which he states that ‘the common assumption is that the live event is “real” and that mediatized events are secondary and somehow artificial reproductions of the real’ (2008: 3). I contend that whilst the live is clearly differentiated from the mediatized and that any attempt to capture live performance through media misses something of what makes the live performance, the element of presence, it does not mean that a live performance cannot be replicated through re-performance. However, as Auslander explains when he describes the ‘reductive binary opposition of the live and the mediatized’ (2008: 3), simply
placing the live and the mediatized in a binary opposition fails to take into account any possibility for the mediatized to be considered actual and equally for the live to be seen as artificial. I contend that by taking into account the prospect of a bodily archive we open up important possibilities for considering that the live may also be a reproduction. Just because something is live does not guarantee originality any more than being mediatized guarantees artificiality. However, my main contention, like Auslander’s is that the live and the mediatized are different in significant ways. By positioning Auslander’s statements alongside Schneider, Phelan and Taylor’s discussions of re-performance and performance’s ephemerality, I assert that it is the concept of presence that makes re-performance a more purposeful way of recording or documenting previous live performances than any form of media. A live, bodily presence is required in order to create a performance and without a body performance will disappear, it will die.

In her 2005 text *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater*, Jill Dolan asks ‘How can we capture, in our discourse, not just the outlines of a performance’s structure and form, its content and the contours of its narrative, but the ineffable emotion it provokes in its moment of presence?’ (2005: 9). It is my assertion, throughout this chapter, that we cannot capture the emotion Dolan describes, though lexical discourse, but that it can be contained in a bodily archive of re-performance. Developing the points outlined in the previous chapter, I will explore Taylor and Phelan’s writing, as well as Rebecca Schneider’s text, *Performing Remains*, in order to argue that re-performance is
a form of what I will call a bodily archive. Re-performance provides a means of preserving an art form that, I assert, needs to be performed in order to prevent it from disappearing. This section of the chapter argues that performance cannot be contained or housed in a traditional archive and requires a physical body in order to preserve it because any other form of documentation would fail to capture the live aspect, which is so vital to performance. As Phelan has claimed, when performance is documented ‘it turns into that document… and ceases to be performance art’ (1997: 31). Re-performance enables performance to be documented whilst still being performance art.

Auslander asserts that ‘the performance is always at one level raw material for documentation, the final product through which it will be circulated and with which it will inevitably become identified’ (2001: 38). In describing live performance as raw material for documentation, Auslander acknowledges the transformative process that performance undergoes when it is documented, and that during this transformation the live nature of the performance is lost. This idea is developed from Taylor’s concept of the repertoire and Schneider’s argument that what she terms re-enactment (which as I explained in the introduction, differs slightly from what I call re-performance) provides an insight into the initial performance. This is an insight which could not be gained from viewing video and photographic documentation of the performances because, as Schneider asserts, ‘the experience of re-enactment is an intense, embodied inquiry into temporal repetition, temporal recurrence’ (2011: 1-2). She continues, by arguing that, re-performance is ‘a way of accessing what they [people who engage in re-enactment] feel the documentary evidence upon
which they rely misses – that is, live experience’ (2011: 10). Schneider’s argument suggests that re-performance provides a way of accessing performance after it has ended without losing the live aspect, something which is often missing from photographic or video documentation. This is supported by Taylor’s argument that ‘the repertoire requires presence’ (2007: 20). A video or photograph cannot take the place of a performance because it does not involve a live, physical, embodied action or interaction between performer and spectator. In contrast, a re-performance, which as I have already argued, can be perceived as a bodily archive, does require the physical presence of a performer and an interaction between performer and spectator.

This provides re-performance with the opportunity to enable a new generation of audiences to experience performance events, despite not being able to witness the initial performance. Therefore, re-performance also acts as a way of preserving performance, preventing it from completely disappearing once the performance has finished. I contend that it is this which allows re-performance to strengthen performance’s ability to ‘respond to the psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially for death’ (Phelan 1997: 3). The partial preservation of performance through re-performance strengthens this ability because it teaches us that the dead ‘do not leave us all at once’ but ebb away slowly, piece by piece and memory by memory (Phelan 1997: 41). Re-performance allows performances, like people, to leave behind a variety of echoes and traces, bodily remnants, objects and relics of the performance, as well as the memories of those involved in the event. All of these things fit into Schechner’s notion of aftermath, which he describes as ‘the continuing life of
the performance ... This phase of the performance process may extend for years or even centuries – in fact, the duration of the aftermath is indefinite’ (Schechner 2013: 246). It is this aftermath which, I assert, provides possibilities for the afterlife of performance. These echoes and traces of performance can be fruitfully used in order to create new performances, which appear to be haunted by the initial or earlier versions of the performance. This is what I term re-performance, whose aim, as I have previously mentioned, is not to create a performance, which is identical to the initial performance. Such a pursuit is one which would necessarily be doomed to fail because every re-creation or re-enactment is always marked as such and hence is marked as different from the initial performance. Rather, the aim is to create something new from the remnants of the initial piece. In re-performance, artists create something which is distinctly different from the initial performance, but which bears similarities to it. The result is a performance, which is simultaneously similar to and different from the initial piece. The re-performance then, whilst marked as different, is haunted by the initial performance because the echoes and traces of the initial performance are made visible by the re-performance. By making these echoes and traces visible re-performance provides an insight into the initial performance by reminding spectators of the initial performance and keeping it alive in their memories. In much the same way, a photograph of a lost loved one reminds us of them and keeps them alive through our recollections of shared experiences.

Throughout this chapter, in addition to the aforementioned case studies of Athey and O’Brien, I will explore the work of artists Shereen Rose with Bob
Flanagan as well as Dani Ploeger analysing the aftermath of their performance works and investigating their usefulness as documentation of this work.

Schechner states that ‘the aftermath persists in physical evidence, critical responses, archives and memories’ (2013: 247). It is the physical evidence and memories, which I am interested in examining and assert that they can form part of a collective remembering amongst spectators, which enables the aftermath of a performance to continue (2013 :247). I will argue that these bodily echoes and traces are useful for those seeking to re-perform the work of others. This is because, rather than photographic or video material, which may lend itself well to re-creations of the performance, the bodily fragments allow artists to make their own meaning from the performance, thus enabling them to re-perform the piece in interesting and different ways. These are ways which reference the earlier performance whilst simultaneously seeking to create something new and different from the remnants.

What is created from the remnants is dependent upon both the artist and audience involved in the re-performance. This idea is highlighted by Helen Freshwater in her book *Theatre and Audience*, in which she states that ‘watching the best theatre and performance we are together and alone’ (2009: 6). It is this sense of audience members as a collective that I contend creates a collective remembering amongst those who witness a performance event. Each audience member has an individual experience when witnessing a performance or re-performance and this impacts upon their reading of the piece. However, key to this is the fact that they are aware of their position of part of a ‘temporary
community’ (Freshwater 2009: 7). It is the knowledge of this position which creates a collective experience and remembering amongst spectators.

Through my analysis of Athey and O’Brien’s work this chapter aims to explore the notion that the physical, bodily remnants (in this case blood, mucus and other bodily fluids) left behind provide an embodied archive of their work, which is more in keeping with the nature of their performances, in which the body is foregrounded.

**Things Left Behind**

In Schechner’s notion of Aftermath he notes that the aftermath ‘consists of the response by the agents of official culture – reviewers and critics – plus the ever-increasing amount of photographic, video, and digital records. There are also the memories of those participating in and attending the event’ (2013: 247). At times, photographic and video documentation have been privileged over other types of documentation. As I discussed earlier in the chapter in relation to Auslander, there is a sense that photographs and video footage record the “truth” of the event, and that this form of documentation is more durable than memories or bodily remnants, which inevitably fade. This idea is highlighted by Taylor’s statements that ‘individual instances of performances disappear from the repertoire. This happens to a lesser degree in the archive’ and the archive and the repertoire ‘too readily falls into a binary, with the written constituting hegemonic power and the repertoire providing the anti-hegemonic challenge’ (2009: 20, 22). Taylor’s statements suggest that the archive has been privileged over the repertoire and perhaps that this is, at least in part, owing to the fact
that the archive has been viewed as more resilient than the repertoire. Whilst photographs and videos serve as documentation, allowing those who were not present at the performance itself to experience it second hand through a digitised medium, bodily remnants provide a different kind of proof, much like evidence in a crime scene or the process of an autopsy in which the body is examined in order to gather information about past events. The kind of proof that bodily remnants provides is one which fits in with Taylor’s concept of the repertoire. Taylor argues that the repertoire ‘requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by “being there,” being a part of the transmission’ (2003: 20). The scars on the artist's body and the blood on the floor of the performance area, serve as a reminder of the performance. This enables them to ‘participate in the transmission of social knowledge, memory, and identity’, creating a sense of collective experience and remembering in spectators (Taylor 2007: 16). They also hint at the possibility of re-performance, as Schneider asserts that ‘reenactment art poses a certain challenge to our longstanding thrall, fueled by art-historical analyses to the notion that live performance disappears by insisting that, to the contrary, the live is a vehicle for recurrence’ (2011: 29). Schneider goes on to argue that ‘reenactment troubles linear temporality by offering at least the suggestion of recurrence, or return’ (2011: 30). Liveness is often associated with disappearance, an argument highlighted by Phelan’s claim that ‘performance’s only life is in the present’ (1993:146). Yet, I contend that through the repertoire and the many possibilities for re-performance or re-enactment that it provides
performance may not disappear entirely, rather it can recur numerous times in myriad performances.

As I suggested earlier, the physical, bodily remnants of a performance can offer fruitful ways for thinking about re-performance. Re-performance, which I have already described as differing from re-enactment, is a way of making new meaning and new performances from the leftovers of earlier work. Considered in this way, re-performance can be compared with De Oliviera’s description of installation art, in which she states that, ‘the audience is encouraged to choose its own interpretation’ and ‘experience works in an open-ended manner and [spectators] become authors and generators of their own meanings’ (2003: 16,17). The main difference is of course that, in re-performance, it is the new generation of artists, or artists returning to older works, the re-performers, who seek to create their own work from the remnants of earlier performances. These artists become the ‘authors and generators of their own meanings’ rather than the spectators or audience members. The work of Martin O’Brien serves as a useful example of this process7. As stated in chapter two, O’Brien’s work has often been discussed in conjunction with Bob Flanagan’s. When asked about this, O’Brien has said ‘I reject the idea that I'm Bob Flanagan Junior, but also it is important to reference him or at least acknowledge him and my position as a

7 The work of French artist Orlan also explores the notion of relics. In 1993 Orlan created what she describes as ‘a reliquey with my own flesh’ (Orlan 2014). Discussing her work at the Science Gallery in Dublin Orlan explains how she created a series entitled My Flesh, The Text and The Languages, in which flesh from her previous plastic surgery operations was ‘presented always in the same way and always with the same text’. The flesh was presented in cases, surrounded by different translations of the same text. As she explains, ‘the ideas was to use the same text but always in a different transaltion’. Thus, Orlan created relics from her body in much the same way as Athey and O’Brien.
young artist with CF post-Bob Flanagan’ (2011: 2). This can be seen when comparing Bob Flanagan and Sheree Rose’s 1994 performance Autopsy with O’Brien’s 2015 piece Anatomy of a Bite.

In Autopsy ‘Flanagan lies on a table... a metal table, which looks specific to a non-domestic, professional, medical setting, and which could be an authentic autopsy table’ (Kuppers 2007: 82). Flanagan remains mute and still throughout the performance in which Rose ‘describes the history of their relationship and acts out parts of her narrative on Flanagan’ (Kuppers 2007: 83). Rose uses BDSM acts in order to act out her narrative. Flanagan’s appearance can easily be compared to that of a corpse, until, as Kuppers explains ‘the interventions on Flanagan’s body become more extreme, and the corpse wakes up: we hear him moan and arch with pain’ (2007: 83). Kupper’s description of the piece shares striking similarities with my experience of witnessing/ participating in O’Brien’s 2015 performance Anatomy of a Bite. In this performance participants were asked to collect O’Brien’s mucus, which was then stored in petri-dish style containers. They also bit O’Brien and a photograph was taken of the wound that they created. These two objects were then displayed in a gallery. I contend that these remnants served as documentation of the performance because they prove that it took place and because they offer an insight into and understanding of the performance, in much the same way that I assert re-performance serves as documentation.

What they provide us with is a visceral point of access into the performance and enable us to understand the very physical and bodily nature of the piece, which after all was all about human interaction between two bodies:
that of the performer, who lay passively as if he were a corpse, and the audience member, who engaged with the corpse in such a way as to bring it to life, and present it as a living corpse. O’Brien did not speak, he did not move except when responding to the audience member’s touch, thus creating the image of the corpse. However, this image was disrupted by his physical reactions to the audience member’s interventions on his body. Corpses cannot choke, they cannot cough up mucus and they cannot flinch. Yet, O’Brien did all of these things and the mucus filled petri-dishes and images of the bite marks are evidence of this. The aftermath of O’Brien’s performance provided evidence of his life, his body, his illness and the way in which those things respond to their interactions with others. The messy, blurry nature of the aftermath of O’Brien’s performance highlights the messy, blurry nature of human interaction and the ways in which bodies can become interlinked through these interactions and, therefore, they provide us with an insight, not necessarily into the precise actions that constituted the performance, but into the relationships that were forged between performer and audience member.

In Anatomy of a bite participants were invited one by one into a small performance area, reminiscent of an old fashioned lecture hall. O’Brien was hidden behind a hospital style curtain and participants were greeted by his sister, who introduced herself and explained that during the performance we would be making “prints” from O’Brien’s body. Participants were asked to don an apron and latex gloves before the curtain was moved aside to reveal a metal bed, reminiscent of a hospital trolley, on which there was a figure (O’Brien) covered completely with a white sheet. O’Brien was perfectly still beneath the
sheet and the combination of his stillness, the fact that he was covered head to toe in a white sheet, and the hospital style bed, curtain and aprons immediately made me think of a corpse. This can be linked to Drew Leder’s discussion of medical touches in which he states that ‘the patient largely assumes a corpse-like pose beneath the physician’s probing eyes, ears, and fingers’ (322: 2007). Leder’s writing is focused on the relationship between a doctor and a patient but that doesn’t mean that it cannot be pertinently applied to my discussion of the interaction between artist and witness in Anatomy of a Bite. In this performance O’Brien both exemplifies and disrupts Leder’s description of the corpse like patient. He exemplifies it because O’Brien is positioned as the patient or corpse and the participants as the doctor, but the fact that O’Brien has chosen to position himself in this way provides him with a sense of agency which, I assert, is missing from Leder’s description. Thus, this enables O’Brien to destabilise the notion of the corpse-like patient in much the same way that Flanagan did in Autopsy through his responses to Rose’s actions. Flanagan and O’Brien’s disruption of their presentation of themselves as a corpse serves as a fitting reminder that sick or ill bodies are not the same as dead ones and that dying is not the same as death.

Throughout the performance, led by O’Brien’s sister, I cut various holes in the white sheet, revealing different parts of O’Brien’s body and used those body parts to make “prints”. First, I placed a metal clamp in O’Brien’s mouth, forcing it open. Then I force fed O’Brien milk, which caused him to cough, before removing the metal clamp and allowing O’Brien to close his mouth. Following this I beat O’Brien’s chest, causing him to cough up mucus, which I
collected in a plastic container. Finally, I bit O’Brien on the arm, causing him to moan in pain. The actions which I performed on O’Brien’s body, like those Rose performed on Flanagan in *Autopsy*, woke the corpse, as his body responded to my interventions on it, proving that O’Brien was not a corpse but very much alive. Leder explains that the corpse ‘when opened and probed, reveal such hidden secrets, becomes medicine’s epistemic touchstone, the “ideal patient” so to speak’ (322: 2007). O’Brien’s living body is not the “ideal patient” that Leder describes, as I have already noted, he coughed, moved, twitched etc, reacting to my touch involuntarily. Yet, apart from his involuntary responses to my actions, O’Brien remained still and silent throughout the piece, much like Flanagan did in *Autopsy*. The use of medical equipment, such as petri-dishes, scissors and aprons, in both pieces together with Flanagan and O’Brien’s lack of movement create striking similarities between the two performances and allow O’Brien’s work to be read as a re-performance of Flanagan and Rose’s.

I contend that re-performances, such as those created by O’Brien, can be viewed as documentation of the initial performance, thus allowing the bodily remnants of performances to be seen as part of its documentation. I assert that they are part of the documentation of the performance because they provide useful material for creating other performance works, which differ from but reference the initial performance. I will now go on to explore the similarities and differences between what can be seen as the more traditional documentation of performances and physical, bodily remnants. Here I will draw upon Taylor’s notion of repertoire and my own use of the term bodily archive to contend that
despite their differences both serve as an important reminder of what has passed and both assist in the process of re-performance.

**Bodily Remnants and Excess**

Spectators of O'Brien’s re-performance can gain a sense of the issues and themes of the initial performance as well as the communication between performers and spectators. This is important when considering performance’s relationship with death. As Phelan asserts ‘the dead … do not leave us all at once’ (1997: 41), and I argue that the remnants of the performance work in much the same way as photographs and keepsakes of a lost loved one, preventing them from leaving us ‘all at once’. The polaroid’s and petri-dishes of mucus in particular operate in this way because although they are a record of the performance event, they themselves are ephemeral and as such can be described as an ephemeral record of an ephemeral act. Just as memories of loved ones will fade, the mucus and photographs will not last forever.

O’Brien’s decision to display the photographs of his bite marks and the pots of his mucus in a gallery space supports the notion of them as documentation. This is also supported by his own discussion of the work, in which he describes the way in which the performance became focused on the production of these ‘relics’ and creating something ‘which looked right’ (O’Brien 2015). This emphasis was the result of the fact that O’Brien was aware that the products of the performance would be displayed in the main gallery space at Midlands Arts Centre after the performance. O’Brien explained how as the performance went on O’Brien and his sister began to think of it as being like ‘a
factory or production line’ with participants coming in ‘to produce a photograph and a pot of mucus and take it away’ (O’Brien 2015). This created a different focus for the performance and invoked notions of O’Brien’s body as a machine or factory, producing mucus, which would then be displayed in a gallery.

Galleries, much like libraries, are seen as traditional and privileged spaces in which to house archival documentation, and O’Brien’s act of displaying the remnants of his performance troubles the notion of the archive as a privileged space. This is due to the fact that the messy, leaky bodily remnants of O’Brien’s work differ from the more traditional archival objects such as photographic, video and written documentation. It is also a subversive use of the gallery space, because it presents O’Brien’s mucus and bite marks as works of art. The fact that Midlands Arts Centre is a family-centered performance venue makes O’Brien’s display of mucus and bite marks in this venue more subversive than it might be in another gallery space. In fact, in discussion with O’Brien he stated that when the venue saw examples of his work, they became worried about the performance and the decision was taken to move O’Brien’s performance from the central space to a smaller theatre space within the venue (O’Brien 2015). This is suggestive of the dissident nature of O’Brien’s work and the fact that the venue felt it was not in keeping with their family friendly ethos. The echoes and traces of O’Brien’s work were to be hidden, tidied away and kept put of view because the messy, leaky, bodily acts that the performance consisted of were seen as transgressive. This subversive use of gallery space is common in Performance Art performances, as artists often seek to experiment with boundaries and trouble culturally conditioned binaries. For
example, this was evident in Marina Abramović and Ulay’s use of a gallery space in their 1977 performance *Imponderabilia*. In the piece Abramović and Ulay stood facing one another naked in a gallery doorway and visitors to the gallery had to pass between them. The small amount of space in the doorway meant that during the performance visitors to the gallery were forced to touch their naked bodies in order to enter or exit the gallery space. Abramović and Ulay’s use of the gallery space can be considered subversive because it forced visitors to touch and interact with the “art work”, something which is sometimes frowned upon in traditional art galleries. In her description of the piece, Erika Fischer-Litche says that Abramović and Ulay ‘provoked physical contact to highlight the established dichotomies of public vs private and seeing vs touching’ (2008: 65). O’Brien’s actions can be read in a similar way as he highlights the dichotomies of inside versus outside and life versus art through his creation of art work out of his mucus, a bodily substance which is usually stored inside the body. Thus, O’Brien makes the inside of his body visible to participants and visitors to the gallery. This is even more destabilising when considered in conjunction with the knowledge that O’Brien suffers from Cystic Fibrosis where the mucus that is the sign and symptom of his illness.

Additionally, by presenting his body as the subject of his art work O’Brien explores the ways in which life can be turned into or produce works of art.

Following this, although photographs can arguably be viewed as “traditional” archival material, the small, often blurry, Polaroid photographs that were taken of the performance event are not what one might expect to find in an archive. Taylor asserts that ‘what makes an object archival is the process
whereby it is selected, classified and presented for analysis’ (2007: 19).

O’Brien’s Polaroid’s were neither selected nor classified; they were simply displayed with none of the labels or signposting that one may expect to find in an archive and as such subvert the notion of the archive. When I viewed the photographs, several months after participating in the performance, I was not only unable to identify the bite mark I had inflicted upon O’Brien’s body but at times I was unable to clearly identify O’Brien’s body parts at all. The close up, blurry photographs, taken by O’Brien’s sister during the performance event, show various limbs out of context, out of focus, in such a way that was almost impossible to identify them as belonging to the same body let alone consider them as traditional works of art fit to occupy the privileged space of an art gallery. The inclusion of the pots of mucus further destabilises the idea of them as archival objects because mucus is a bodily fluid, one of which Cystic Fibrosis sufferers like O’Brien produce in excess. As mentioned in chapter two, the act of beating a Cystic Fibrosis sufferer on the chest until they cough up excess mucus is a medical treatment to temporarily alleviate the symptoms. As O’Brien explains, ‘in cystic fibrosis it is not a foreign force or growth that causes death but, instead, the body drowns itself by overproducing mucus’ (2014: 58).

Implicit in O’Brien’s statement is the notion that the act of removing and collecting mucus is helping to stave off death. Therefore, it is one you would be more likely to find in a hospital than as part of a performance or an archive. This concept fits in with my earlier argument that O’Brien’s presentation of his body suggests a corpse or medical body displayed on the hospital style bed during the performance.
Healing and Harm

The objects displayed in the gallery following O’Brien’s performance are, I contend, more of an archive of horror and bodily excess than any form of work of art. The blurry nature of the photographs, in which we only see various parts of the body wounded, scarred, bitten and the pots of mucus speak of violence, in terms of the wounds inflicted by the biting of O’Brien’s body. They also represent sexuality because there is a sexual element to the bite marks and the connection between two bodies that occurs through the act of biting. Indeed, in discussion with O’Brien he revealed that one participant chose to give him a love bite rather than actually bite him. There is also an element of excess, as seen in the excess mucus housed in the pots. What O’Brien created in *Anatomy of a Bite* is an exhibition of the body, one which highlights violence, sexuality and illness and which captures the leaky, permeable nature of bodily boundaries. By creating a performance in which bodily fluids such as mucus, which are usually contained within the body, are forced out of the body and in which the skin (the body’s boundary) is broken by those who participate in the performance, O’Brien’s *Anatomy of a Bite* presents the body as something which is not fully contained but which can be opened and penetrated.

Other performance artists, such as Marina Abramović, Ron Athey and Franko B, have also used bodily fluids in their performances but in their cases it has been predominantly blood, which is suggestive of pain, wounding and, as I discussed in chapter two, the corpse and abjection. In contrast to this, O’Brien’s use of the mucus explores the possibility of the production and collection of a bodily fluid as healing rather than harming. Yet, I assert that the act of beating
him on the chest blurs the boundaries between healing and harming as the act of beating has both negative and painful connotations. O'Brien’s use of the act of beating his chest and the subsequent production of mucus in his performance blurs the boundaries between medical treatments, performance art and archival documentation. O'Brien’s mucus is a bodily remnant, a physical trace of his performance. Therefore, I contend that it is both a piece of performance art and a form of documentation.

The content of the performance examined the boundaries between health/illness, life/death. When discussing the performance with O'Brien he talked about exploring the ‘tension between treatment and torture’, stating that within the performance ‘everything was verging on the edge between being helpful and harmful’ with participants not really knowing which side of the divide their actions were on (O'Brien 2015). Additionally, the products or leftovers of the piece explored the boundary between performance and documentation. O'Brien described the photographs and pots of mucus as ‘relics’, but also asserted, as I do, that ‘by putting them in there [the gallery] they also become objects in their own right’ (O'Brien 2015).

As discussed in the second chapter, O'Brien’s body’s over production of mucus is also something that O'Brien explored in his 2011 performance Mucus Factory. In this piece O'Brien beat his chest in order to produce mucus, which was then placed in jars, before being combined with glitter and used as a lubricant as he inserted the end of a Nebulizer machine into his rectum. The playful and sexual overtones of this performance fit in with a narrative of bodily excess. As the mucus flowed from O'Brien’s body it became an object of
pleasure, exploring the pleasure/pain dichotomy and suggesting that the experience of pain can become one of pleasure. The mucus and glitter strewn around the performance area are indicative of excesses, both of the body and of pleasure.

The excess mucus produced in *Mucus Factory* differs from that produced in *Anatomy of a Bite*, because in *Mucus Factory* O’Brien never collected or displayed the mucus; it was produced as part of the performance and only used within it. In contrast, in *Anatomy of a Bite* O’Brien always had the intention of collecting and displaying the mucus which, as explained above, began to impact upon the nature of the performance itself. The notions of bodily remains and documentation explored in O’Brien’s work, and specifically in *Mucus Factory* can also be seen in the work of Ron Athey. Athey’s use of blood in his performances, which often leads to the performance area being awash with blood following a performance, as well as the physical wounds and scars that Athey inflicts upon himself, evoke similar notions of a bodily archive which speaks of the sexual, leaky and sometimes violent nature of the human body.

I assert that this is still the case despite the fact that Athey’s use of blood being different from O’Brien’s collection of mucus, because O’Brien’s collection is suggestive of medicine and science because in *Anatomy of a Bite* by the petri-dish-style pots used to collect the mucus. Contrasting, in Athey’s case the blood flows freely. It is un-contained, unrestricted and, therefore, could arguably not be used for any scientific or medical purposes.
The contrast between the excess of mucus in O'Brien's work and the excess of blood in Athey's is illustrated in the two figures above. In figure one we see blood dripping from Athey's head, flowing down his face. This invokes images of a leaky, porous body which refuses to be contained. In contrast in figure two O'Brien's mucus is carefully stored in small pots, in neat rows.
underneath the metal bed upon which he is lying. In contrast to Athey’s oozing blood these pots of mucus speak to control and containment. Whilst later in *Mucus Factory*, O’Brien goes on to subvert this medicated/scientific image by pouring the mucus out of the pots and mixing it with glitter, the initial impression is one of containment. The mucus seen here, as with that collected in *Anatomy of a Bite*, could easily be labelled and stored in ways in which Athey’s blood could not. Again, this links to my earlier suggestion that the generation of excess fluids from wounds inflicted upon the body creates a narrative of pain and danger, whilst O’Brien’s coughing up and collecting of the mucus is more easily read in conjunction with notions of medicine and healing. This raises questions as to whether the healing effect of beating O’Brien’s chest legitimises the pain caused by action, preventing it from being seen as transgressive in the way that Athey’s bloodletting is. In spite of the fact that healing can, at times, be considered subversive. Such as, the act of beating O’Brien’s chest in *Anatomy of a Bite*. It is the notion of healing which is present in O’Brien’s work that differentiates it from Athey’s. It also raises questions about whether O’Brien’s actions can also be seen as transgressive because he is appropriating medical techniques for the purpose of his performance. These concepts are clearly explored in *Anatomy of a Bite* in which O’Brien explains that participants often searched for legitimacy, asking questions about their actions and the benefits they would have for O’Brien’s body. This is something which O’Brien was interested in exploring when creating the piece, as he states:

‘there’s the legitimate nature of some of it [the beating of the chest], in the eyes of the medical profession but then what happens if you’re asking for another kind of interaction... what I wanted to get was this sort of tension between treatment and torture, everything was verging on the edge of being
helpful and harmful and you don’t really know whether you are treating me or
torturing me or both at the same time’ (O’Brien 2015).

It is interesting to consider the ways in which using medical techniques,
even ones which cause physical pain, can be seen as socially acceptable
because of the authority generally given to medical practitioners, whereas acts,
such as biting, which seemingly have no positive outcome are considered
dangerous and subversive. O’Brien noted that ‘three or four people didn’t want
to bite me’ which may be owing to the risk involved in biting someone (O’Brien
2015). I find it fascinating that force feeding O’Brien milk and beating his chest
were seen as more acceptable than biting him because they were acts that
could be considered helpful as well as harmful. For me, this is fascinating
because in my experience of participating in the performance I found the biting
the least disturbing of the acts I performed on O’Brien’s body. I think that this is
because, whilst it can be dangerous, there can also be a playful nature to the
act of biting someone. In contrast, force feeding someone using a metal clamp
to keep their mouth open, causing them to cough uncontrollably and spit out
most of the milk that you are feeding them, for me subverts the caring, healing
nature of feeding, causing it to become an aggressive, violent act. However,
the act of biting O’Brien crossed the boundary between O’Brien’s body and the
bodies of participants, because of the somewhat intimate nature of biting
someone and the breaking of the physical boundary of the skin that the biting
often entailed. It is likely that it was the breaking or transgressing of these
boundaries that led to participants feeling less comfortable with the act of biting
O’Brien and ultimately led to some participants not completing the action.
The image of Athey defies the notion of his body as a medical one; his bloodletting is not being used as a form of treatment and as far as I am aware brings no benefit to his health. I assert that this presents Athey’s bloodletting as more subversive and transgressive than O’Brien’s production of mucus owing to the fact that the subversive nature of O’Brien’s actions can arguably be offset by their healing potential, which is not the case with Athey’s. Pain has long been associated with medicine and healing. Many medical procedures are both painful and dangerous, but they are procedures to which many people are willing to submit because they believe that the long term effects will be worth the pain and danger that they are inflicting upon themselves. When witnessing Athey’s work there doesn’t appear to be a narrative of treatment or healing, just one of pain, wounding and violence. Athey’s body is presented as open, bloody and injured, but not through a medical procedure, through a series of self–inflicted injuries, which speak of illegitimacy and transgression. This subversive nature of Athey’s work is further enhanced by the aftermath of his performances.

Echoes, Traces and Repetition
Following one of Athey’s performances, what is left behind is often a blood spattered area, a marked contrast to the pots of mucus displayed after O’Brien’s *Anatomy of a Bite*. The excess or leftovers of Athey’s performance refuse to be contained or classified and are, therefore, arguably not terribly useful to anyone wishing to document his work in a traditional archive. I suggest, however, that this is not the case for someone wishing to create a bodily archive or re-
performance (in the manner that I described earlier in the chapter) of the piece. Much like a detective at a crime scene, piecing together the evidence in order to try and establish what went before, the aftermath of Athey’s performance provides fertile ground for gaining insight into and understanding of the work which took place and which has now disappeared. As I argued in chapter two, in my analysis of *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic*, no-one would be able to re-create Athey’s specific performance, not even Athey himself. As Phelan has asserted ‘performance’s only life is in the present’ (1993: 146). Athey’s performance could never be repeated exactly but it could be re-interpreted or re-imagined using its aftermath in order to give it a new life in the future.

The reason that I contend that it is not possible for anyone, Athey included, to re-create his performance exactly is because I believe that each performance of the work would mark itself as different from the initial performance, as discussed earlier in the chapter in relation to Schneider. This can be explored through the example of Marina Abramović’s *Seven Easy Pieces* in which she ‘reenacts seminal performance works by her peers dating from the 1960s and ’70s’ over a period of seven days at the Guggenheim museum in New York (2005: 2). As part of *Seven Easy Pieces* Abramović re-performed her work *Lips of Thomas*, a piece that she first performed in Innsbruck in 1975. Despite both versions of the performance being performed by the same artist they are markedly different. This is evident from the fact that the initial *Lips of Thomas* was performed on its own, whilst the re-performance was part of the larger project, *Seven Easy Pieces*, to the fact that the initial performance took place in Innsbruck in the 1970’s and the re-performance took
place in New York in 2005. There are also other significant factors which
differentiate between the two performances. During the initial performance
Abramović ate honey and drank red wine before cutting the shape of a star into
her stomach using a razor blade, causing a star shaped wound to appear on
her stomach. Abramović then whipped herself repeatedly before lying on blocks
of ice which had been laid out like a cross. The wound on Abramović’s stomach
was then heated using a heater on the ceiling which also caused the wound to
bleed. When she re-performed the piece in 2005 Abramović was effectively
opening the old wound, cutting over the scars from the initial performance.

Figure 6: Marina Abramović Lips of Thomas (1975)

This is also what Athey would be doing if he were to re-perform any of his
pieces and indeed, as I mentioned in chapter two, what he did when he re-
performed *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* with Julie Tolentino. The fact that the
body of the artist, be it Abramović or Athey, is scarred by the wounds inflicted
upon themselves during the performance means that no two performances can
ever be the same. This holds true for re-performances such as that of
Abramović and *Lips of Thomas*, in which despite the fact that the performative
actions are the same, the act of inflicting a new wound, creating a new scar is different to that of re-opening an old wound, even if, as with Abramović and *Lips of Thomas*, that wound is 30 years old.

Despite this, I argue that the fact that these performances cannot be re-created exactly from the echoes and traces that they leave behind does not prevent these echoes and traces from being useful to anyone wishing to explore the themes and issues in the initial performance. As outlined above, O’Brien’s mucus and Athey’s blood may resist and even subvert traditional notions of an archive because the aftermath, blood, mucus and bodily excess, which are left behind following these performances may not be able to be classified or contained. Despite this, because they are bodily substances, bodily remnants I contend that they can become part of a bodily archive. I assert that the fact that they are bodily remnants rather than photographic or video documentation and, therefore, speak more to the visceral, physical and bodily nature of the performances than a photograph or video footage might is the reason that they are so useful as a form of documentation.

This is also, the case for the wounds and scars that artists such as Athey and O’Brien inflict upon themselves during their performances. As I discussed in relation to Marina Abramović and her performances *Lips of Thomas* and *Seven Easy Pieces*, the scar remains. Scars are durable and resilient. Unlike the ephemeral nature of performance, scars do not disappear, they only fade. Therefore, the many wounds, marks and scars on an artist’s body create a physical map of their performance history, enabling them to produce a very untraditional archive of their past work. Analysing this concept in relation to
Athey’s performance work I use my term bodily archive to argue that, whilst it may not fit with what many see as archival documentation, Athey’s body houses a valuable record of the performances that he has created. The enduring scars create a marked contrast to the ephemeral performance and serve as useful echoes and traces of the more fleeting and transient performance. As Fisher-Litche asserted in her 2008 text *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, ‘whatever the performers do unto their bodies leaves perceptible traces on those bodies, indicating a process of transformation’ (2008: 90). Owing to the fact that Athey’s actions serve as more than a surface marking of the skin, the act of breaking of the skin’s boundaries and the depth of the cuts create a permanent reminder of his action, a scar, an in depth marking of his performance history. Wounds, such as those which can be seen in the image below, will undoubtedly make their mark on the body in the form of scars. As the wounds heal, the scars remain, a permanent reminder of what happened.

![Figure 7: Ron Athey Self Obliteraion #1(2009)](image-url)
These scars serve as more than a reminder of the performance, they also serve as a kind of vanishing point, a place where past, present and future meet. The scar itself belongs in the present, it is on the body in the here and now, but the wound that caused it belongs to the past. I contend that Athey’s physical marks, wounds and scars map his performance history, his individual experiences of pain and illness and his body’s ability to endure, both his performance and his illness. The scar is also the point at which inside and outside converge, the scar covers the wound. It is the visible manifestation of the wound, which is on the skin, the boundary of the body. Nevertheless, the scar can be opened in the manner of a dissection. The artist dissects themselves, reclaiming the scar. It is penetrable, and in penetrating or re-opening the scar there is the possibility for the wound, which had initially been confined to the past, to be visible once again in both the present and the future. It is these possibilities for the future that I assert make physical marks and scars so interesting when considered in relation to the notion of a bodily archive and a narrative of re-performance.

Haunting and Specters
I will now move on to explore the ways in which the archival documentation together with Athey’s wounds and scars, can be used in order to create re-performances. This is something that I have already briefly considered within the chapter, but here I will conduct an in depth analysis of Athey’s performance *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* and its subsequent re-performance with Tolentino as part of her performance project, *The Sky Remains the Same*. Using Jacques
Derrida’s concept of the specter, as outlined in his (1994) book, *Specters of Marx*, I will compare Athey’s initial performance of *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* with the re-performance that he collaborated on with Tolentino, arguing that whilst the two performances are clearly different, the re-performance can be seen to be haunted by the initial performance. It is my contention that this is the case for all re-performances, and it is this haunting which allows re-performance to be viewed as a means of documenting performance in a bodily archive.

Taylor asserts that ‘the repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning’ (2007: 20) and I assert that the bodily archive serves the same purpose. As the video footage of the 2011 performance shows the piece begins with Athey re-performing *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic*. He completes the actions involved in the performance twice, the first time solo and the second time alongside Tolentino. Tolentino’s presence, together with the fact that the actions are repeated, clearly differentiates their work from the initial 2009 performance, but there are also more complex and, I argue, important differences. In the 2011 piece we can see Athey and Tolentino facing one another as they perform; they create a kind of mirror image. The image however is distorted as their actions are not synchronised. Tolentino and Athey are visibly different from one another, and the fact that Athey had already performed the actions once meant that his body was already covered in blood. Whilst Tolentino’s body was being covered in blood for the first time, Athey’s body was being re-covered, adding another layer of blood to that which was already there. This has the effect of presenting Tolentino’s performance as a copy or repetition and positioning Athey as a specter whose presence Tolentino
is trying to invoke by repeating the actions that she witnessed. In the video there are moments when the mirror image becomes less distorted, when their actions are in time with one another, and with both faces obscured by the blonde wigs, both bodies obscured by their actions, it is difficult to positively say which is Athey and which is Tolentino.

Figure 8: Ron Athey and Julie Tolentino Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic (2011)

Figure 9: Julie Tolentino Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic Figure 10: Ron Athey Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic
However, (as can be seen in figures 8,9 and 10) on the whole the physical distinctions between the two artists clearly mark the re-performance as different to the initial version. I contend that despite these differences, the re-performance remains haunted by the specter of the initial work. We can clearly witness Athey performing the same set of acts two years later, re-opening the old wounds, cutting open his scars. At the same time Tolentino is creating new wounds and scars, perhaps in places where there previously weren’t any. This is a crucial point when considering the ways in which the 2009 and 2011 versions of this piece are simultaneously the same and different.

As I have already argued, Athey is re-opening old wounds, going over old ground so to speak, but for Tolentino these actions are new. How do these two things work in collaboration with one another? The repetition of Athey’s actions (repeated for the second and third time) and the newness of Tolentino’s actions work in collaboration with one another? For me, there is a clear sense of Athey repeating his actions for Tolentino, with the express purpose of showing them to her, so that she can inscribe them upon her body. This creates the idea of him “passing on” his performance to Tolentino, and this concept is heightened by the fact, as mentioned in chapter two, that Athey performs the actions not once but twice during the piece. After witnessing Athey complete the actions of vigorously brushing, then pulling off his wig before lying between the planes of glass, we see him repeat them, this time alongside Tolentino.

I assert that re-performances are always haunted by the specter of the initial performance, and it is this haunting, which allows them to become an embodied form of documentation of the initial performance. In re-performing,
and being haunted by the initial performance, re-performance both retains and transforms the initial performance. As such, they enable new audiences to gain insight into and knowledge of the initial performance, without reproducing it in its entirety. This, I assert, is what videos, photographs and other archival documentation also do and it is, therefore, this process of haunting which enables re-performance to serve as a bodily archive.

Interacting with the Archive

Dani Ploeger’s 2011 performance *Electrode* is an example of interaction between the bodily archive and more traditional archival forms. The performance can also, I contend, be considered a re-performance. In the piece, as described by Ploeger

an Anuform® anal electrode connected to a modified Peritone EMG sensor registers the activity of my sphincter muscle... I fake the orgasm of an anonymous subject who took part in an experiment into the nature of the male orgasm in 1980. I attempt to replicate the subject’s sphincter muscle contraction pattern ... I repeatedly perform the same pattern. (2011: 1)

Ploeger re-performs the orgasm previously performed by the anonymous subject with the graph from the experiment displayed on the wall of the performance space and the graph being created by Ploeger displayed underneath. Therefore, despite the fact that the initial performance wasn’t a performance as such but an experiment, Ploeger’s piece can still be considered a re-performance. This is owing to the fact that in the piece Ploeger attempts to re-create the sphincter contraction pattern that had previously been created by the anonymous subject. In her analysis of the performance, Alissa Clarke
described the piece as ‘a process of faking through reenactment’ (2013: 160). Drawing, as I do, upon Schneider’s writing on the subject, Clarke states that ‘No matter how rigorously and precisely Ploeger works... the two line graphs projected on the wall never exactly match’ (2013: 160). The fact that Ploeger attempts to create something which had previously been created and that these attempts were always doomed to fail, marks the piece as a re-performance. After all, as Schneider claims, it is the nature of re-performance that ‘the first time was true. The second time is false, etiolated, hollow, or infelicitous. The second time, the third time, the nth times are not actual’ (2011: 180). Schneider’s comment suggests that re-performances will always differ from the initial performances which they cite. However, I assert that the fact they are marked as different does not prevent them from serving as references to the initial performance.

Taylor states ‘embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge’ (2003: 21). This transmission of knowledge is not in opposition to traditional archives but, drawing upon Auslander’s argument that ‘the relationship of liveness and mediatization must be seen as a relation of dependence and imbrication rather than opposition’ (2002: 53), I place this alongside Taylor’s claim that ‘the repertoire ... expands the traditional archive’ (2003: 26). Ploeger’s body is interacting with the archive, he takes an archival object (the results of the experiment) and breathes life into it by creating a bodily action, a performance. I build upon my earlier suggestion that the archive and the repertoire are not in binary opposition to one another by arguing that because both house elements of the past, which enable memories,
performances and legacies to be passed on from one generation to another, they can co-exist in such a way as to allow the past to never be fully past. That co-existence provides opportunities for the past to become the present, or at least for linear notions of time to be disrupted in crucial ways. I contend that this is important because it allows us to see that death is not the end. It may be the end of a life, just as each performance has an end, but that the life, like the performance, does not simply disappear. Rather something of it remains and those remains can form part of a legacy, possible futures haunted by the specters of the past.

I assert that the notions of legacies, something I discuss in more detail in chapter six, and archives are traditionally linked, they share a concern with remains. An archive, Derrida suggests, ‘has the force of law, of a law which is the law of the house, of the house as place, domicile, family lineage, or institution’ (1996: 7). In linking the archive to law Derrida’s implies that the archive has authority. However, he also suggests that the archive is a way of remaining, retaining and passing on and it is my contestation that re-performance creates a bodily archive of performances for the same purpose, to enable them to remain. This can be seen in Electrode, in which, Ploeger marries the initial and re-performances, the repetition and the original and, in doing so, also brings together both the live and the mediatized and the traditional archive and the bodily archive. In the performance, which I described at the beginning of this chapter, we see ‘the data from Ploeger’s real-time replications ... projected onto the wall as a second line graph situated directly beneath the graph of the earlier, anonymous subject’ (Clarke 2012: 160).
mediated images of the two orgasms plotted on top of one another interacts with Ploeger’s live body in the space as he creates his copy in front of the watching audience. In so doing Ploeger is both interacting with the mediated image of the initial performance and creating a re-performance.

Further to my earlier argument, the re-performance is not the initial performance, and no matter how hard Ploeger tries to achieve this, it never will be. I assert that what Ploeger creates in Electrode is not a copy but rather a dialogue, a legacy, an interaction between his body and the body of the anonymous subject, who produced the initial orgasm and the initial line graph. Ploeger’s re-performance of the orgasm experiment is haunted by the initial performance, not in the visceral, bodily, spectral way that in chapter two I argued that Flanagan haunted Regimes of Hardship, but in a less tangible, more ephemeral way. This haunting is created by the fact that Ploeger is operating in dialogue with the archive, as the documentation of the experiment shares the performance space with him during the performance, just like Athey and Tolentino shared the performance space during their re-performance of Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic, which I discussed in chapter two. By displaying the line graph, which represents the initial orgasm recorded by the experiment, Ploeger is taking the experiment out of the archive and creating a physical, bodily performance from it. He is thus creating his own bodily archive. Here, I once again draw upon Taylor’s discussion of the repertoire and Auslander’s exploration of the live and the mediatized to analyse the ways in which both traditional archive and bodily archive and live and mediatized converge within Ploeger’s performance of Electrode. In her discussion of the repertoire, Taylor
positions the archive and the repertoire in relation to one another. She contends that ‘the relationship between the archive and the repertoire, as I see it, is certainly not sequential… nor is it a binary’ (2003: 22). In *Electrode* Ploeger places the live and the mediated, the archive and the repertoire and the initial performance and re-performance not in opposition to one another but in conjunction with one another to enhance our understanding of them both. However, despite the fact that Ploeger’s re-performance of *Electrode* is a bodily interaction with the archive, this interaction is different to those between two live performances. However, this does not prevent Ploeger from creating a re-performance which suggests that when boundaries are broken the results can be both provocative and useful.

When we watch Ploeger attempting to re-create the orgasm of the anonymous subject in *Electrode* we are reminded of the simultaneous presence and absence of the subject. The anonymous subject is not in the performance space, there orgasm is not live but the line graph which recorded it is there and through Ploeger’s live actions we can gain an insight into and understanding of the orgasm experiment which took place. Ploeger’s actions bring the orgasm experiment out of the archive and into the embodied realm of live re-performance.

**Re-performance as Documentation**

The final section of this chapter builds upon the earlier argument that re-performance can be seen as a form of documenting performance. In *Performance Studies An Introduction* Schechner asserts that ‘performances are
made from bits of restored behavior, but every performance is different from every other. First, fixed bits of behavior can be recombined in endless variations. Second, no event can exactly copy another event’ (2006: 23). I contend that Schechner’s statement is especially true for re-performance in which elements of earlier performances are restored and recombined to create new performances with different meanings and intentions. I contend that it is not just fixed bits of behaviour which can be recombined in re-performance, but also the echoes and traces of the initial performance. This can be seen very clearly in the work that Martin O’Brien and Sheree Rose have created together which I analysed in chapter two. In Regimes of Hardship Rose spanked and beat O’Brien, enacting upon his body some of the actions that she had previously enacted upon her partner Bob Flanagan. Thus, this reminded spectators who had seen or knew of her work with Flanagan of this work, by replacing Flanagan’s body with O’Brien’s. Moreover, when Rose donated her archives, to the One Archives at the University of Southern California, O’Brien was flown over to Los Angeles for a six week residency in which he and Rose went through her archives, which housed records of both her life and work with Flanagan, and together they used the archive in order to create a performance. This resulted in a performance in which O’Brien was placed in a metal cage, a cage in which Flanagan had previously been placed during some of his performances with Rose. In this case Rose and O’Brien took a physical remnant of her work with Flanagan and used it in order to create a new performance, thus evoking memories of Rose and Flanagan’s practice and allowing for new considerations of their work.
Whatever understandings spectators of Rose and Flanagan’s work had, witnessing Rose’s later work with O’Brien would raise pertinent questions and significant points for re-consideration of Rose and Flanagan’s work without detracting from the fact that Rose and O’Brien’s works are performances in and of themselves. For me, this is the crux of the matter when considering re-performance as a means of documenting performance. As Phelan has famously said documentation of a performance is never the performance itself. A photograph, a memory, video footage, are not performance, any more than a re-performance is the initial performance, but all of these forms enable audiences to gain insight into and understanding of the performance. As Dekker, Giannachi and Van Saaze assert in their article ‘Expanding Documentation’ ‘artists creating what could be described as ephemeral, conceptual, performative, processual, networked and “mixed reality” artworks have expanded our understanding of what a document could be, and so challenged our evaluation of its relationship to an artwork’ (2017: 77). I would add to this that that artists engaging in re-performance have also expanded our understanding of what documentation could be. This, in turn, has also allowed re-performance to expand our understanding of the relationship between performance and death. However, the crucial difference for re-performance is the fact that it does this without losing the liveness and ephemerality of performance. When we attempt to preserve or document performance we inevitably turn to more apparently solid, durable forms of documentation. Although seen as more durable and reliable, all forms of documentation are finite, and nothing lasts forever. We turn to writing, photographs and video
documentation, but these kinds of documentation of performance will never be performance. Whilst a re-performance will never be the initial performance it is a way of preserving the physical, embodied, transient and ephemeral nature of performance. Re-performances, photographs, letters, videos, memories, are all echoes and traces. They will never be the initial performance or the lost other, but they can serve as proof that they existed and that because of these echoes and traces they will never fully disappear.
Through an analysis of the work of artists including, Jo Spence, Hannah Wilke, Shereee Rose and Martin O’Brien, this chapter argues that re-performance strengthens Phelan’s argument, which I have cited earlier in the thesis, that ‘theatre and performance respond to the psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially for death’ (1997: 3). It reminds us that, whilst performances disappear and can never be repeated exactly. This disappearance, like the loss of a loved one, does not happen all at once and this allows the process of re-performance to reflect the process of mourning. In order to develop this argument, this chapter explores the fruitful possibilities of a dialogue between Barthes’ writing on photography, specifically Camera Lucida, and Schneider’s writing on re-performance in Performing Remains. The performative works that I have chosen as case studies for this chapter are examined for what they can teach us about the relationship between performance, loss and mourning.

Barthes claims that ‘what the photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only once: the Photograph mechanically repeats what can never be repeated existentially’ (Barthes 2000: 4). By applying this claim, firstly to performative photography, such as that created by Wilke and Spence, then to performances, such as those by Dani Ploeger, Martin O’Brien and Shereee Rose, this chapter intends to highlight the similarities and differences in the relationship between photography and death and the relationship between performance, re-performance and death. I argue that through re-performance something of a performance can be preserved, in much the same way that a
photograph preserves or captures a specific moment and that this preservation can be linked to our understanding of and ways of dealing with loss. I will now introduce the three performances which are used as case studies in this chapter, explaining how they illustrate the key arguments that this chapter makes.

Performing Loss
Jo Spence’s *The Final Project* (1991-92) is a collection of photographs that she created whilst battling Leukaemia. Spence’s work drew on iconic images of death, using double exposure to impose these images onto her body, thus representing her body as if dead and foreshadowing her own demise. *The Final Project* includes images of Spence with her face covered by a death mask, Spence’s head and shoulders on a grassy surface with weeds and plants growing over it and Spence standing over a freshly dug grave. *The Final Project* is similar in many ways to Hannah Wilke’s *Intra-Venus Tapes*. *Intra-Venus Tapes* is an exhibition of photographs and video footage taken during the last two and a half years of Wilke’s life, whilst she battled Lymphoma. They document her life, her illness and her subsequent death. The images include ones of Wilke lying in bed, posing with a blue towel wrapped around her head and with what was left of her hair wet and limp, covering part of her face as well as images of her posing in a white plastic shower cap.

As the chapter makes links between photography and re-performance it will move from photographic works such as Spence and Wilke’s to performance works, specifically those by Martin O’Brien and Sheree Rose. As I discussed in
previous chapters, O’Brien and Rose have created several collaborative performances, some of which, as O’Brien explains, used him as a ‘substitute for Flanagan’ (O’Brien interview 2015). It is my contention that the work that O’Brien and Rose created serves to document Rose’s earlier work with Flanagan, thus enabling the work to continue. I argue that this is particularly the case in the trilogy of works that Rose and Flanagan conceived shortly before Flanagan’s death. The work, as described by Scarborough,

was a Memento Mori trilogy involving three different casket installations. The first part, Video Coffin, displayed in the New York exhibition of Visiting Hours, consisted of an elaborate Catholic funerary casket containing a video monitor with Flanagan’s face, which, when triggered by the approaching viewer, would change to reflect the viewer’s face. The other two parts of the trilogy, unrealized because of Flanagan’s death, included Dust to Dust, a Jewish pine coffin overflowing with thousands of small photographs of Flanagan; and The Viewing, an entombment featuring a camera placed in Flanagan’s coffin after his death. (Scarborough 2010: 1)

As Scarborough has noted, the second and third parts of the trilogy were unrealised because of Flanagan’s death. However, in an interview, O’Brien explained that he and Rose decided to continue the trilogy, with O’Brien replacing Flanagan. Rose and O’Brien created Dust to Dust and have discussed creating The Viewing. This raises several interesting questions: what impact would the fact that O’Brien is alive have on the way that The Viewing is received? How was the performance of Dust to Dust different when performed by Rose and O’Brien as opposed to Rose and Flanagan? In the performance of Dust to Dust, O’Brien lay in a coffin, covered in photographs of Flanagan, which was pulled through the streets of Los Angeles. It was O’Brien’s body that was
physically present, not Flanagan’s. However, the photographs that overflowed from the coffin were of Flanagan and not O’Brien. Thus, highlighting the use of him as a stand in for Flanagan.

**Melancholia and Substitution**

By examining *Dust to Dust*, this section argues that re-performance can be seen as a melancholic act. It can be viewed as an attempt to try and hold onto something which we have lost and, therefore, can be read in relation to the melancholic failure to detach the self from the lost other. I argue that even though Flanagan was not physically present in the performance, something of his presence, and his earlier work with Rose, remained. Hence, I read Rose and O’Brien’s actions as ones which demonstrate a refusal or inability to let go of Flanagan.

Freud’s notion of Melancholia, which I discussed in chapter two, was taken up by Julia Kristeva in her 1989 book, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, in which she describes melancholia as ‘an abyss of sorrow, a noncommunicable grief’, suggesting that it cannot be explained through the symbolic system of language (1989: 3). This raises questions about how melancholia can be explained or presented if not through a symbolic structure of language, and Kristeva hints at the fact that the key to communicating melancholia may be through the body when she describes the melancholic subject as ‘already elsewhere, absent, a living corpse’ (1989: 74). To me, this is suggestive of the desire to take on the role of the lost other in an effort to make them remain. By becoming a living a corpse, we become like the lost other,
embodying them and inscribing them upon ourselves in order not to lose them. Kristeva, however describes the living corpse as absent, I assert that the absence Kristeva is describing here is the absence of the self, rather than that of the lost other. The self becomes consumed by the other and thus effectively become a corpse themselves because they are merely the vessel through which the lost other remains. In order for the other to become present the self must be made to disappear. Therefore, the kind of re-performances enacted by artists such as O’Brien and Rose could be considered melancholic acts. As I discussed in chapter two, with Rose’s assistance O’Brien repeats the actions of the other (Flanagan), inscribing them upon his own body, in order to allow Flanagan to continue living in and through his body. Thus, O’Brien becomes an absent body, like the ‘living corpse’ that Kristeva describes (1989: 74).

Therefore I argue that Rose and O’Brien seek to keep Flanagan alive through their performance of Dust to Dust and that their performance is a melancholic refusal to separate the self from the lost other, something Freud insists is vital to the process of mourning when he describes the demand that ‘all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object’ (1917: 244).

I assert, that what is represented in performances such as Dust to Dust, and indeed in re-performance in general, is a fear of death as the end, a fear of or refusal to let go. Rose and O’Brien’s performance presents an image of them as unwilling to let go of Flanagan and thus seeking to make his spectral presence visible in their work.
Loss and Presence

Drawing upon Roland Barthes’ text, *Camera Lucida*, and placing it in dialogue with Taylor and Schneider’s writings, I argue that re-performance functions in a similar way to Barthes’ search for *The Winter Garden Photograph*, a picture in which he felt that he had found the essence of his recently deceased Mother. What Barthes was searching for was something which, for him, captured ‘a quality (a soul)’ (2000:75; emphasis in original), the essence of his Mother. Something which Barthes found in a picture that he called *The Winter Garden Photograph*. Drawing upon Schechner’s notion of me, not me and not not me, as outlined in *Performance Studies an Introduction*, I argue that *The Winter Garden Photograph* is of the woman who would become Barthes’ Mother, but, at the time the photograph was taken, she was a five year old girl; a girl who would grow up to become his Mother, but was not yet his Mother. When describing me, not me and not not me, Schechner states that ‘while performing actors are not themselves, nor are they the characters’ (2017: 72). Barthes found it in a photograph that was not of his Mother, but was also not not of his Mother. I assert that this is why Barthes found something in the photograph which, for him, captured the essence of his Mother because the five year old girl in the photograph was not his mother, but was also not not his Mother. I contend that this is also the case with re-performance. The re-performances examined in this chapter are not direct re-enactments or re-creations, but they contain some recognisable reference to the initial performance, enough for them to be identifiable as re-performances. Thus, they function in a similar way to Barthes’ *Winter Garden Photograph*, because they are not the initial
performance, but they are also not the initial performance, because they are haunted by it.

For example, as I explained earlier in the chapter, Rose and Flanagan never performed *Dust to Dust*. They planned it as part of the trilogy, but Flanagan died before the piece could be realised. This fact complicates my positioning of the piece as a re-performance. However, I assert that *Dust to Dust* can still be considered a re-performance because it is haunted by specters, both the specter of the performance that Rose and Flanagan were never able to create and the specter of Flanagan’s presence. This sense of haunting is produced by the nature of the performance; which, as noted earlier in the chapter, featured a body in a coffin, covered with thousands of tiny photographs, being pulled through the streets of Los Angeles. The body in the coffin was O’Brien’s, whilst the tiny photographs that covered it were of Flanagan. The result of this, I argue, was that O’Brien was physically present, but that Flanagan also retained a presence.

The photographs of Flanagan surrounded and covered O’Brien’s body, almost shrouding him in Flanagan’s spectral presence, in much the same way that, as I have argued earlier on in this thesis, re-performances are haunted by earlier or initial versions of the performance. O’Brien’s position as a substitute for Flanagan fits with Kristeva’s description of melancholia (as outlined above), presenting him as a living corpse and Rose’s act of pulling the living corpse through the streets represents her inability to let go. O’Brien is not Flanagan and the performance is undoubtedly different to the one Rose and Flanagan would have created but by replacing Flanagan Rose is able to keep hold of him
in some way. In his role as stand in O'Brien is not Flanagan but he is also not not Flanagan. This notion is developed from Schneider’s discussion of the American Civil War reenactors in *Performing Remains* who ‘find reenactment to be if not the thing itself (the past), somehow also not not the thing (the past)’ (Schneider 2011:8 emphasis in original). O’Brien is not Flanagan, his and Rose’s performance of *Dust to Dust* is not the performance detailed in the plans in the archive, their performance is not the initial performances, but it is also not not the initial performance.

**Performance and Loss**

As noted in the previous section, some performance studies scholars, such as Phelan and Schneider, have argued that what differentiates performance from other art forms is its ephemerality. Phelan states that ‘performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations’ (1993: 146). This sentiment is echoed by Schneider’s comment that performance ‘takes place in a “now” understood as singular, immediate, and vanishing’ (2011: 87). In this chapter I interrogate Phelan’s claim and explore the ways in which performance can help to prepare us for loss by analysing the relationship between performance and death. Drawing upon Jo Spence’s *The Final Project*, Hannah Wilke’s *Intra-Venus Tapes*, as well as Martin O’Brien and Sheree Rose’s performance of *Dust to Dust*, which I have previously discussed, this section of the chapter argues that whilst performance prepares us for loss it does so not because performance disappears but precisely because performance remains. Performance may not
be able to be recorded or held in an archive, but I contend that it is never fully lost because it can be re-performed. Through re-performance performance can no longer be considered ephemeral, because it can be re-created, re-performed or re-enacted, and that it is this possibility of re-performance that actually enables performance to fulfil Phelan’s claim.

Photography and Death: Presence and Time

Building upon my analysis of Barthes’ *Camera Lucida*, this section of the chapter focuses on the performative photography of Hannah Wilke and Jo Spence, specifically their respective works documenting their illnesses and subsequent deaths, namely *Intra-Venus Tapes* and *The Final Project*. It also considers Martin O’Brien and Sheree Rose’s collaborative performance *Dust to Dust*. These works are analysed in light of my assertion that, whilst photography ‘stops the body, arresting its movement through time’ (1997: 156), performance maintains a different relationship with death. I argue that performances, such as those mentioned above, help to prepare us for loss precisely because, unlike photographs they do not arrest the body, forcing it into stillness. As Phelan has highlighted, the dead do not ‘hold still’ (1997: 41), rather the corpse decomposes, it shifts, moves and changes. It is this movement within death that enables me to relate it to both performance and re-performance, and to suggest that through movement, both the movement of the dead and the movement in performance, re-performance can prepare us for loss.

This can be seen in the works of Spence and Wilke through the ways in which we see them move through illness but never in a linear way, rather they
move in a pendular manner ‘both following footsteps and leaving footsteps to follow in directions not always, or only, forward’ (Schneider, 2011: 11; emphasis in original). Hannah Wilke died of Lymphoma in 1993 and Intra-Venus Series, a ‘group of monumental photographs documenting her final illness and treatment was exhibited posthumously at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts in 1994’ (Scharlatt: 2015). The video installation Intra-Venus Tapes, documenting the last years of Wilke’s life, was subsequently exhibited in 2007. Thus, in Wilke’s Intra-Venus Tapes, we witness her final demise and death from lymphoma, fourteen years after the event. The fact that this work was exhibited posthumously is suggestive of an act of haunting. Many actors, singers, directors, writers and artists have had their work published, printed or exhibited posthumously and the word itself evokes interesting notions of time; post, past, but present. The work exists in the here and now, but after the life of its creator and this disrupts linear notions of time. It also disrupts the notion that once someone dies, they cease to exist, causing re-performance to align live performance with more traditional concepts of art and literature, in which, they can be seen as leaving a legacy for future generations. The very notion of posthumous fights against the finality of death and suggests that even after an artist’s physical death they can still be present and can perhaps even still have agency. This agency is evident in our ability to watch Wilke die in film and photographs years after her actual death. This ability allows Intra-Venus Tapes to serve as a form of re-performance, because it can be viewed as a means of bringing her back to life in the present, because we witness her presence around us in the videos and photographs that make up the exhibition.
The tapes themselves were created by Wilke during the last two and a half years of her life and have been edited down to the version we see in the exhibition.

Figure 11: Hannah Wilke *Intra-Venus Tapes* (1990-93)

As can be seen in figure 1 the exhibition is composed of sixteen video monitors in which ‘each channel has its own sound track, but rather than always being audible simultaneously, sound often seems to move from one monitor to another’ (Burton 2007: 354). This means that in *Intra-Venus Tapes* we are able to both see and hear Wilke. Her presence, whilst not physical, is very much there. In their 2011 text *Performing Presence: Between the Live and the Simulated* Giannachi and Kaye state that ‘presence is thus processual: a dynamic structure of intention, feeling, and perception emergent in the contextual performance and reception of the sign, rather than a quality inherent to the body, individual, or action or established in the real or illusory stabilities of a specific time and space’ (2011: 91). Thus, suggesting that presence does not have to be physical or bodily in order to exist. In *Intra-Venus Tapes* Wilke is almost overwhelmingly present in the assortment of photographic and video
images, which document her illness. She has a voice, a face, a body and a 
presence, one which disrupts all notions of the linearity of time. How is it 
possible for Wilke to be present fourteen years after her death? However, this 
presence is more the presencing of an absence. In her introduction to Tim 
Etchells' certain fragments Phelan states that ‘witnessing allows the dead, the 
disappeared, the lost, to continue to live’ (1999: 13). Wilke is not physically 
present and through our witnessing of this somewhat disjointed version of her 
deterioration and eventual death, we are pertinently reminded that she will 
never be physically present again.

In spite of this, the fact that Wilke has any presence so long after her 
death disrupts linear notions of time and this disruption is further disrupted by 
the videos themselves. The videos, from a range of different dates and times 
during the last few years of Wilke’s life, play alongside one another. This means 
that visitors to the exhibition witness a variety of images and sounds, which 
do not obey the linear order of time. On one screen we see Wilke moving, 
walking, in the next we see her lying in bed appearing fragile, then her voice 
comes loud, clear, strong from yet another video. In short, time in Intra-Venus 
Tapes, as Hamlet once said, ‘is out of joint’ (1601: 8). As the videos, which are 
played simultaneously, spectators move back and forth throughout the last 
years of Wilke’s life, depending on which of the many screens they choose to 
look at. The result of this is a blurring of the boundaries of time. Rather than 
simply moving forward in a linear way from the past to the present and then 
towards the future, the videos allow us to move back and forth between past 
and present. Which monitor we look at determines which snippet of the two and
a half years of Wilke’s life which she chronicled that we see. Thus, we see Wilke not simply dying, getting increasingly sick, but moving towards and away from her death. The boundaries of time are further blurred by the fact that the footage that we are watching was created over such a long period of time. We never get to see the whole two and a half years of Wilke’s life, instead we see moments, snippets and flashes of it. The fact that we only see limited moments of a much longer period of time makes it difficult for us to grasp the idea that the footage was collected over such a long period of time. It also makes it difficult to understand dying as a linear process because Wilke appears to move towards and away from death at various points, challenging the assumption that ‘the body lives before it dies. In terms of terminal illness, death happens when the illness within the body surmounts the health within the body’ (Phelan 1997: 159). As humans we understand death to be something which occurs when illness takes over the body, consumes it. This, especially in cases of chronic illness, is seen as a progression, a person’s health deteriorates until the point at which they die O’Brien asserts that ‘I endure the regulation of my body in order to survive, in order to continue being-towards-death, rather than arriving at biological death itself’ (2014: 58). O’Brien’s description of being-towards-death describes the position of someone suffering from a chronic illness, someone whose illness will progress until their inevitable death. The way in which Wilke appears to move simultaneously towards and away from death disrupts the above understandings of illness and death because it enacts what Deleuze suggests in Cinema 2: The Time Image when he states that ‘the past does not follow the present that it is no longer, it co-exists with the present it was’ (1989:}
Implicit in Deleuze’s comment is the idea that time, in cinema, and, in this case, in performative video, is non-linear. The past co-exists with the present, thus the past does not necessarily come before the present. Wilke does not simply become more and more ill until her death, rather the present at times appears to come before the past with Wilke sometimes appearing to be recovering from her illness. Of course the linearity, or non-linearity, of time in *Intra-Venus Tapes* is dependent upon which of the monitors we watch at any given time and, therefore, our understanding of the installation and particularly of notions of time within the installation are singular, individual and private. We do not experience Wilke’s death in the same way as one another, it is specific to our personal experience of witnessing.

The effect of time appearing non-linear in *Intra-Venus Tapes* also serves to destabilise notions of illness and death. Her husband, Donald Goddard, who worked on preparing the installation, said that ‘it has been difficult for me, seeing Hannah so alive’ (2015: 135). This, summarises the destabilising effect the *Intra-Venus Tapes* have on spectators. Those who know Wilke’s personal history know that she is dead, that what they are witnessing is something that has already happened, something that is in the past. The act of witnessing it in the here and now of the present disrupts this notion. The event is past, but the witnessing is present, thus we see Wilke alive in the present, despite being aware of the fact that her death is already a past event. This reminds us that death cannot be confined to the past. The loss of a loved one is not something that we mourn and then move on from, it remains with us always, and perhaps mourning is less about learning to let go of the lost object, as Freud argued, and
more about learning to live with the loss and the spectral hauntings of the lost
other that this brings with it, as they continue to be present in our memories. I
assert that Wilke’s spectral presence in Intra-Venus Tapes makes the exhibition
something more than a traditional archive or record because in the tapes Wilke
is able to simultaneously be both present absent and this, I contend is what
Goddard finds so painful about the tapes, the fact that Wilke is almost tangibly
present but remains absent.

Film and Movement: Bodies in Process
Wilke’s body is not arrested in Intra-Venus Tapes, rather it is free, it moves, it
speaks and it refuses the confinement which one may expect death to impose
upon it. Amelia Jones has argued that ‘the photographic portrait ... is a death
mask, a coffin, a lifeless screen stifling all breath and sensation and movement’
(2002: 4). Whilst this may be true when considering photographic images, it is
certainly not the case for Intra-Venus Tapes. The fact that Intra-Venus Tapes is
a video installation causes it to differ from both the earlier Intra-Venus Series
photographs and other photographic installations, and I contend that the most
significant difference is film’s inability to arrest the body in the same way that
photography does. This sense of movement is evident in Burton’s analysis of
Intra-Venus Tapes, in which she describes ‘Wilke moving closer and closer to
death’ (2007: 354). In Intra-Venus Tapes Wilke’s body is a moving one, it fits in
with Phelan’s claim that ‘film suggests that time stops without a living, moving
body, but that the body itself does not stop moving;’ (1997: 156).
Film, like photography, captures moments in time and records past events, but it usually does so without capturing the body in stillness. In film the body continues to move, to walk, to talk, thus it continues to live, as a filmic body. As Phelan has stated ‘the movie camera can manipulate time: it slows time down, speeds it up, and perhaps most spectacularly, reverses the sequential, forward direction of time’ (1997: 159). It is this disruption of the linearity of both time and life, the fact that Wilke appears alive so long after death, thus suggesting that death is not the end, which makes Intra-Venus Tapes both fascinating and difficult to witness. The act of witnessing Wilke’s last years of life in the knowledge that her death occurred several years before serves to make her absence more keenly felt. It is like listening to a voicemail left by a lost loved one, hearing their voice serves to remind us that this is not a voice we will ever hear again, causing us to think about how we miss this voice and creating a longing to hear it. It disrupts our understanding of loss because the voice, like Wilke’s filmed image, belongs firmly in the realm of the past and of those we lost, yet in Intra-Venus Tapes it speaks to us very much alive and present. In her discussion of photography Jones suggests that ‘if the image is a kind of memory screen, the photographic self-portrait is thus a site of reciprocal exchange where the “past” subject (the artist) comes alive through the “present” memories of the viewer’ (2002: 8). Despite the many differences between photographs and film, some of which I have discussed above, I agree with Jones and suggest that this is what Intra-Venus Tapes does. It brings both Wilke and the past back to life in the present.
As mentioned earlier in the chapter, this thesis contends that in *Intra-Venus Tapes* the past is brought to life in the present, enabling us to witness it as if it were happening in the here and now, but in the knowledge that the actual event occurred in the past. In the videos Wilke is alive, but in reality she is dead. Thus, Wilke appears as not dead but also not not dead. She emerges as a spectral presence. Derrida has described the specter as ‘a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit’ (1993: 5). This description is evocative of a ghostly presence, a haunting, created by Wilke being present in the work so long after her death. However, it also suggests a bodily materiality. Derrida’s notion of the ‘becoming-body’ seems both tangible and visceral (1993: 5). This fits with the fact that Wilke appears so alive in the videos. We see her face, watch her move, hear her voice. It is the fact that she appears alive in the exhibition, when we know she is not, that creates a sense of haunting and enables Wilke to have a spectral presence. This notion is supported by Phelan’s statement that ‘witnessing allows the dead, the disappeared, to continue to live as we rediscover their force in our ongoing present’ (1999: 12-13). What Phelan’s comment suggests is that it is the act of witnessing which enables the dead to live, that Wilke’s spectral presence only occurs because someone is witnessing the exhibition. The specter needs a body to bear witness to their disappearance, whether that be the body of a spectator or in the case of re-performance the body of the re-performer. In either case, it is the act of witnessing which allows the past (be it a past life or a past performance) to exist in the present and which causes the
disruption of linear notions of time that we experience in works like *Intra-Venus Tapes*.

In her analysis of the film *Silverlake Life: The View from here* (a documentary film recording the journey of filmmaker Tom Joslin from his diagnosis to his death from AIDS which I analyse in more detail in a later chapter), Phelan asserts that ‘the film suggest that time stops without a living, moving body, but that the body itself does not stop moving; cinema is one place where the still-moving body leaves a trace’, and I argue that this is also the case for *Intra-Venus Tapes* (1997: 156). What the Tapes present is not Wilke alive, she has not come back from the dead (or at least not fully), but her filmic body is present and this filmic body is a trace of Wilke’s physical body, of her life, a reminder of her existence and a spectral presence which haunts both the exhibition and those who witness it.

Phelan also states that *Silverlake Life* ‘broaches questions about the body’s time that upset the causal logic according to which “living” and “dying” are rendered separate states of being’ (1997: 159), and once again I suggest that this is also the case in *Intra-Venus Tapes*. We see Wilke’s body multiplied on the many screens which make up the exhibition, and in each image we are reminded that Wilke is simultaneously living and dying. In the footage Wilke is alive, she is not yet dead, but she is in the process of dying. We witness her deterioration, which is evident in her hair loss, the mounting number of wounds, cuts, scars and bandages and her increasing weakness, which results in her struggling to stand. We see that she is dying, but crucially she is not yet dead. Therefore, what we see is the gradual process of Wilke’s demise, her
deterioration until the point at which ‘the illness within the body surmounts the health within the body’ (Phelan 1997: 159).

Although Phelan is talking about terminal illness in more general terms her description of the process of dying is especially pertinent when considered in relation to cancer patients such as Wilke. Cancer is a disease in which illness spreads. As Narvey explains, ‘death from cancer is an intrusive death, and although the aetiology might be from without, the result creates internal mutiny. The disobedient malignant cells now travel unchecked to locations in other tissues, spreading and rapidly proliferating, slowly mutating what was secure "self" into pathological "non-self" (2002:4). This fits with Phelan’s description of death as something which occurs when the body is overcome with illness. In the case of cancer death occurs when the percentage of cancerous cells is greater than that of non-cancerous ones. What we witness in Intra-Venus Tapes is this process, Wilke’s deterioration as the cancer cells over take her body. Even if, as I argued earlier in the chapter, we do not witness this deterioration in a linear way. Wilke’s decline may appear rapid as one screen shows Wilke with a full head of hair, mobile and standing, whilst the next screen shows her weak, bald, struggling to hold herself up, but no matter how fast this process may be it is not instantaneous. Life and death are not a boundary which one can break through in a single moment (although medically there may be a specific moment in which one is declared dead) rather it is a boundary which is broken down slowly, bit by bit during the process of dying.
Presence and Absence: Photography and Dying

This is also the case in Jo Spence’s *The Final Project*, created between 1991 and 1992. In *The Final Project* Spence used a technique called double exposure in order to create a montage effect. Thus, combining images of herself with images related to death, such as skeletons and newly dug graves. In their analysis of the project, Jacob and Tobin state that ‘the images perform an archival clash of temporal moments and themselves depict the dying body as a visual archive’ (2013:33). I position *The Final Project* as a re-performance because it is part of the larger body of work in which Spence documented her deteriorating health. These works include the exhibitions *The Picture of Health* 1982 and *Narratives of Dis-ease* 1990, in which Spence explored her experience of breast cancer. In Brian Lobel’s 2010 article ‘Playing More Than the Cancer Card’ he describes the images which make up *The Picture of Health* as exploring ‘the infantilizing of patients and representations of the ill female body’ (2010:31). In her article ‘The Challenge of the Unruly Body’ in which she analyses *Narratives of Dis-ease* Ruth-Eloise Lewis explains that in these images Spence ‘was specifically concerned with the breast as an object of desire and subsequently as a possession placed in the hands of the medical institution’ (2012:1). Lewis goes on to assert that Spence was ‘repossessing and claiming back her own body for herself’ (2012:1). What these comments emphasise is the fact that in both exhibitions Spence sought to find ways to represent her illness and reclaim her body and this was also the case in *The Final Project* despite the fact that the images of Spence in *The Final Project* differ from those in the previous two exhibitions. Therefore, they can be
understood as a re-performance of her earlier works because they are still images which serve to record and represent Spence’s illness.

The Final Project differs from Spence’s previous works because whilst both The Picture of Health and Narratives of Dis-ease focus on finding ways to make Spence’s illness visible The Final Project serves to represent not Spence’s cancer but the process of her dying. The images which make up The Final Project use representations of death to record Spence’s final illness (Leukaemia) and subsequent death and in doing so they speak of a legacy, a desire to leave something behind after death. Jacob and Tobin also argue that the project recognises ‘the precarious balance of presence and absence, body and representation, life and death’ (2013: 33). This ability for photography to create both presence and absence was summarised by Susan Sontag when she stated that ‘a photograph is both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence’ (1977: 16). In much the same way as Wilke in Intra-Venus Tapes, the balance between presence and absence and life and death is created because Spence is present in the photographs that make up the exhibition, but we experience this presence in the knowledge that Spence is now absent (in a physical sense) and will never be physically present again.

This presence/absence is also produced by the fact that Spence created the work knowing that she was dying of Leukaemia and so arguably created the work in order to find a way to remain, to leave something behind. Jacob and Tobin hint at this when they describe ‘the process of the final project as both a declaration of present-ness and imminent absence’ (2013: 30). This is also suggested by Sontag’s statement that ‘a photograph passes for incontrovrtible
proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort; but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what's in the picture' (1977: 5). Indeed, in the case of The Final Project the photographs serve as proof that Spence existed. The images provide her with a legacy, a way of remaining, in her absence, something remains, the image, the memory, the past are all captured in the photographs which ‘appropriate the thing photographed’ (1997: 4). In photographing her illness Spence appropriates it, captures and uses it in order to create something which will live beyond her impending death.

Of course, appropriation does not simply refer to recording or documenting but it is evocative of ownership, authorship and power. In chapter two I argued that artists who create performances which make their illnesses visible reclaim their bodies and I contend that this is also what Spence did in creating The Final Project. By photographing her illness, Spence not only documents both her illness and her body but takes ownership of them. This was also the case with her earlier works The Picture of Health and Narratives of Disease, as can be seen from Lobel's comment that in The Picture of Health Spence ‘brings into focus the exposed female body’ (2010: 31). I assert that not only do re-performances such as The Final Project and Intra-Venus Tapes provide opportunities for people to regain control of their bodies, but that they also enable the artists to leave something of themselves behind for those who will mourn their deaths. Thus, aiding their loved ones in surviving their loss.
The Process of Mourning

In his essay ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ Freud discusses ‘the work of mourning’, implying that mourning is a process, one which must be worked through, before ‘the ego becomes free and uninhibited again’ (1915: 3). I contend that the process of re-performance serves as a mirror to the process of mourning. When a performance is re-performed several times, either by the same or another artist, it ‘fall[s] away...piece by piece’ (Phelan 1997: 41), much like the loved ones we have lost. This mirroring occurs because in order to let go of that which we have lost and enable ‘the ego [to] become free and uninhibited again’ (1915: 3), we must let it go bit by bit, piece by piece. It is a gradual letting go, through stages of loss and disappearance, as the performance becomes less recognisable with each re-performance, and the lost loved ones disappear a little more each time we remove an item connected to them. This enables performance to have the ‘especially potent lessons’ that Phelan describes (1997: 3). It is through watching a performance disappear, not instantly and irretrievably in the way many performance studies scholars, such as Phelan, have argued but, through a gradual process of disappearance in which an element or feature of the performance is lost with each re-performance until eventually the re-performances become barely recognisable as the initial performances that they cite.

In Performing Remains Rebecca Schneider states that reenactors are trying ‘to bring that time – that prior moment – to the very fingertips of the present’ (2011: 2). I argue that this is also what Barthes was searching for when he found The Winter Garden Photograph and what many of us are searching
for when we look through photographs of lost loved ones. Critchley has argued that ‘the aspect of death that is hardest to endure [is] not our own death, but the deaths of those we love’ (2009: XXVII). I contend that this is why we try to bring the past to ‘the very fingertips of the present’ by looking through photographs and trinkets of those we have lost (2011: 2). We fear death, not our own deaths, but the deaths of others because we struggle to understand a present and imagine a future in which we exist without them. Critchley claims that ‘it is only in grief that we become most truly ourselves. That is, what it means to be a self does not consist in some delusory self-knowledge, but in the acknowledgement of that part of ourselves that we have irretrievably lost’ (2009: XXVII). What Critchley’s comments suggests is that in finding ways to survive the loss of those that we love we gain a better understanding of ourselves because when faced with such a loss we are forced to re-asses our relation to the lost object, just as Barthes re-assessed his relation to his Mother with the aid of the winter garden photograph. Thus, when we are faced with such a task we turn to the past for help. By bringing the past into the present we find ways for those that we have lost to remain, and this helps us to comprehend a future without them, to understand who we are in light of the loss we have suffered. Perhaps this is why Barthes found what he was looking for in a photograph that was not not of his Mother. In seeing her, a woman who was not his Mother, but whom he could recognise as his Mother, Barthes was maybe able to understand how she had existed without him, before his birth, and therefore able to imagine ways in which he could exist without her, ways in which he could survive her death. I assert that the same theory can be applied to re-performance. By recognising
something of a performance in a re-performance we begin to comprehend the many lives of performances. As I argued in the previous chapter, performances are neither singular or vanishing, they do not exist only in the present, but will leave echoes, traces and impressions in the future. This is what allows re-performance to strengthen rather than hinder performance’s relationship with death. Re-performance enables performance to remain, not the actual performance itself but the echoes and traces of it, just as the echoes and traces of the dead remain with those who knew and loved them.

**Past, Not Past and Not Not Past**

In *Performing Remains* Schneider argues that re-performance provides a way for performance to not only be past but also to exist in the present. She suggests that performances do not always have to disappear. Schneider asserts that ‘the past is the stuff of the future,’ (2011: 24). In making this suggestion Schneider is drawing upon non-linear notions of time, such as Deleuze’s in *Cinema* (1989), which I mentioned earlier in the chapter in relation to Wilke’s *Intra-Venus Tapes*. Deleuze argues that in film the present is split ‘in two heterogeneous directions, one of which is launched towards to future while the other falls into the past’ (81: 1989). Deleuze’s argument is suggestive of the fact that the present is also the past and future, that neither present, nor past, nor future are singular or separate but that all three co-exist. Schneider develops Deleuze’s notion of time when she claims that ‘the past can disrupt the present’, that ‘neither are entirely “over” nor discrete, but partially and porously persist’ (2011: 24,15). What Schneider and Deleuze’s arguments
share is a belief that time is not always detached or linear and that the past does not always disappear. What Schneider is suggesting is that through re-performance time stops being linear. Instead time becomes porous and leaky, like bodies, allowing the border between past and present to be crossed, multiple times. Like Schneider, I argue that re-performance disrupts linear notions of time, enabling re-performers to touch the past through their repetition and in doing so bring the past back to life in the present. This strengthens performance’s relationship with death because the dead, like performances, are not confined to the past but haunt the present and point towards possible futures and ways of remaining. Drawing upon the notion of presence that I discussed earlier in relation to Wilke being dead, not dead and not not dead in the exhibition of *Intra-Venus Tapes*, I argue that neither the dead nor performance are past. I contend that just as Barthes’ was able to recover the essence of his mother in a photograph of her from a time when she was not his mother, re-performance can allow us to recover an earlier performance in such a way that it is not past, or at least not singularly past. This enables re-performance to strengthen performance’s relationship with death because it helps us to understand the ways in which the dead leave behind echoes and traces and, therefore, assists us in our understanding of our relationship to death and loss, specifically the deaths of loved ones, which we must find ways to survive.

Drawing, once again, upon Deleuzeian notions of time I suggest that re-performance transcends boundaries, both the boundaries of time and the boundaries of the body. If we were to open a coffin months or years after its
burial what we would find inside would bear little more than a passing resemblance to the body that was initially placed inside it. Death does not stop the body. There is movement in the corpse as it decomposes. It is this decomposition that causes the corpse to be considered such an object of abjection and as it decomposes the corpse becomes a leftover, a remnant. The bones and fragments come to stand in for that which is no longer there, the body we can no longer touch, the loved one we can no longer hold. The corpse, through its presence, speaks of absence, and this is also what re-performance does. When Rose pulled a coffin containing O'Brien's body, covered in tiny photographs of Flanagan, through the streets of Los Angeles her actions served as a means of mourning Flanagan's absence. It functioned in a similar way to photographs, such as those in Wilke's *Intra-Venus* and Spence's *The Final Project*, highlighting how re-performance makes visible the ghostly presence of the artists and performances which are no longer there, thus enabling us to witness them disappearing as they dead do, slowly through the process of mourning that we must endure in order to survive their loss.

As I argued earlier in the chapter, O'Brien and Rose's actions bring Flanagan's specter out of the archive and if the archive is a place to store ghosts, then the bodily archive, which re-performance creates, is a place to set them free, to allow them to interact with the living bodies of the re-performers. It is the place to remind us that whilst the body and initial performance may be dead, the specter and the re-performance is and that through these remnants the past can be made present, allowing us to confront and possibly even come to terms with that past. Barthes' Mother is present in *The Winter Garden*
Photograph, Spence is present in the photographs that make up The Final Project, Wilke is present in Intra-Venus tapes and Flanagan is present in the work Rose and O’Brien create. Through photography and re-performance, that which is no longer there can find some way to remain. I argue that re-performance helps to prepare us for loss and death because it teaches us that performances, like the dead, never completely disappear. Performance, like the loved ones we have lost, remain with us in our acts of loss and mourning.
Legacy and Passing on

The central focus of this chapter is performance’s legacy and the possibility of re-performance providing a means of creating a legacy for performance and preventing its total annihilation and disappearance. Critchley argues that it is ‘the fear of death that enslaves us and leads us towards either temporary oblivion or the longing for immortality’ (2009: 3). Critchley goes on to state that we seek ‘to escape death’ (2009: 3). In biological terms, there is no escape from death, no possibility of immortality. However, the creation of a legacy can help to quell the fear of death because through a legacy something of us remains. In this chapter I position Critchley’s 2009 text, *The Book of Dead Philosophers*, alongside Taylor’s *The Archive and The Repertoire* I also draw upon other recent writings on re-performance and re-enactment. I also return to my earlier discussion of Derrida’s *Specters of Marx* and specifically his discussion of the specter in relation to the future. In doing so, I argue that this process of archiving a performance onto a body can enable performance, long considered a transient and ephemeral art form, to create a legacy that remains or persists. It creates a future, which can endure past the end of the initial performance because it is passed on or willed to another person or body. In this chapter, I contend that re-performances enable performances to have a legacy by preventing them from disappearing completely and enabling them to re-appear in a later time and place, when they are brought to life through another body. Thus, re-
performance creates a living legacy and enables performance to be not only the stuff of the past, but also of the present and the future. Throughout this chapter I will focus on Marina Abramović’s 2005 performance, *Seven Easy Pieces*, her 2010 performance, *The Artist is Present*, Martin Nachbar’s 2000 performance project, *Affects/Rework*, and Jill Hocking’s *Cabbage Leaf Blanket* (2002). However, a range of other performances, which are analysed in detail elsewhere in the thesis, will also be drawn upon.

The notion of a performance’s legacy is, I argue, a crucial component of *Seven Easy Pieces*. The piece was a week-long performance event at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in which Abramović re-performed a series of what she considered to be seminal works from the 1960’s and 1970’s. The works which Abramović re-performed included: Valie Export’s *Action Pants: Genital Panic* (a performance which I discuss in detail in chapter six) (1968), Vito Acconci’s *Seedbed* (1972) and Abramović’s own performance *Lips of Thomas* (1975). Although *Seven Easy Pieces* has been written about extensively, including in Spector et al’s 2007 text, *Seven Easy Pieces*, I offer a new approach by focusing on the way in which the retrospective creates a legacy of performances from the 1960s and 1970s. *Seven Easy Pieces* and Abramović’s re-performance of *Lips of Thomas*, raises issues of how to document performance, which is by nature ephemeral. Both the retrospective and individual re-performance suggest that the act of re-performance, in the case of works like *Seven Easy Pieces*, is about more than simply documenting performance, it is also a means of passing it on and keeping it alive as a legacy. *Seven Easy Pieces*
interrogates Phelan’s notion, highlighted earlier in the thesis, that performance disappears, and serves as an indication that, as I have previously discussed, performance’s only life may not be in the present. Abramović’s initial performance of *Lips of Thomas* (which took place in Innsbruck in 1975) was transient, fleeting and ephemeral but her 2005 re-performance as part of *Seven Easy Pieces* provides the piece with a possible future. If Abramović was able to re-perform the piece thirty years later and present it to a new generation of audience members then the performance did not cease to exist at the end of the 1975 performance and, therefore, there is no reason to think it ceased to exist at the end of the 2005 performance either. What Abramović demonstrates in *Seven Easy Pieces* is the ability for performances not simply to be preserved for posterity but to continue to exist for future generations of both artists and spectators.

The 2005 performance of *Lips of Thomas* was not the 1975 performance, just as I explained in chapter two that Ron Athey’s 2011 re-performance of *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* was not the same as his initial performance of the piece in 2009. The gallery in which the actions of *Lips of Thomas* were performed was different, the context (the 2005 performance being part of the larger performance event, *Seven Easy Pieces*) of the performance was different, and even the body of the artist performing the actions was different. Yes, both pieces were performed by Abramović, but her body had changed and aged during the thirty years that elapsed between the performances. Abramović’s ageing body highlights her mortality and is indicative of the need to create a legacy.
As bodies age we can become more aware of their fragility and mortality and this may fuel the desire to leave a legacy. This chapter aims to explore the role that acts of re-performance can play in the creation of a legacy.

Time and Multiplicity: Past, Present and Future

Despite all of these changes, the 2005 performance in New York was haunted by the 1975 Innsbruck performance. As figures 12 and 13 above indicate, anyone witnessing both performances couldn’t fail to notice the echoes of the initial performance within the re-performance. Thus, this suggests that, although the initial performance ended, it never fully disappeared and could be glimpsed once again thirty years later. The long gap between the initial and re-performance of Lips of Thomas is an example of the way in which re-performance offers a legacy which endures and provides performance with a sense of longevity.

In chapter two I used Jacques Derrida’s concepts of hauntology and
specters to analyse the ways in which re-performances are haunted by the specters of the initial, or earlier, versions of the performance. Here I once again draw upon these Derridian notions to argue that re-performance can be used as a way of creating a legacy of performance. In *Specters of Marx* Derrida suggests that it is possible to communicate with the specter when he says that ‘in order to inhabit even there where one is not, haunt all places, at the same time, to be atopic (mad and non-localizable), not only is it necessary to see from behind the visor, … it is also necessary to speak. And to hear voices’ (1994: 135; emphasis in original). Thus, Derrida is suggesting that communication with the specter is possible, that the specter can both speak and be spoken to. By linking this to the ability to ‘haunt all places at the same time,’ Derrida proposes that in communicating with the specter it is also possible to speak to both the past and the future from a position in the present. Derrida goes on to state that the specter ‘resonates, it invades everything’ and can ‘cross all borders’ (1994: 135). Thus, Derrida implies that the specter is unrestrained and cannot be confined to the past but that it actually enables communication between the past, present and future and it is for this reason that I have chosen to link it with the notion of legacy. A legacy is something which remains, and, in the case of performance it requires a body in order to ensure its future. Therefore, I contend that bodily transmission is integral to the legacy of performance. Whether in the case of Bob Flanagan, Sheree Rose and Martin O’Brien where the transmission occurs between bodies, or in Abramović’s case between different versions of the same body, the fact remains that
performance needs a body to survive. Hence, this forms the relationship between re-performance, the specter and legacy.

Another link between these three concepts that I wish to explore is their relation to time. In his discussion of the play, Hamlet, Derrida states that ‘Hamlet already began with the expected return of the dead King. After the end of history, the spirit comes by coming back’ (1994: 10; emphasis in original). Hamlet’s King belongs to the past. He lived and died in the past. However, in his use of the term ‘coming back’, Derrida suggests that the specter of the King is here in the present. Building upon my discussion of time in chapter four, I argue that the past, through the specter, can exist in the present. The specter also seems to hold the possibility of its return, as Hamlet’s father does not just visit him once. Derrida describes the ghost of Hamlet’s father as ‘a ghost whose expected return repeats itself again and again’ (1994: 10). Thus, the specter returns many times, hinting at the notion that the specter, like re-performance, is capable of existing not only in the past and the present, but also in the future. It is the elements of haunting and repetition that, I assert, links the Derridian specter to the legacy created by re-performance.

If the past and the initial performance, can exist in the present, haunted by its specter, surely it can just as easily return again in the future? In re-performance, just as in Derrida’s concepts of haunting and specters, the past, present and future are not clearly demarcated zones separated by impenetrable boundaries. Rather, they are lines which can easily be blurred and crossed. In 2005 Abramović re-performed actions that she had initially
performed in 1975. In doing so she not only opened a dialogue between the past and present but also brought to the fore the possibility that these actions can be repeated again at some time in the future. Like Derrida’s specter, the legacy that re-performance creates can haunt all places and cross the borders of past, present and future.

The notion of repetition, which I discussed earlier, creates a correlation between Derrida’s discussion of Specters and Abramović’s actions when she re-performed *Lips of Thomas*. As part of the performance Abramović cut the shape of a star onto her stomach. During the initial performance she cut this for the first time, whilst in the 2005 re-performance Abramović was re-opening the old wound, re-cutting over the scar tissue that remained from the initial performance. This, combined with the factors that I mentioned earlier in the chapter, marks the re-performance as different. However, the act of re-opening an old wound is also suggestive of haunting. The initial 1975 performance never fully disappeared, its echoes and traces remained in the scar on Abramović’s stomach, and in re-opening that wound Abramović shows how performance can have multiple lives. Both the 1975 Innsbruck performance and the 2005 re-performance exist in the past. However, in both cases each audience to each performance experienced it as the present. Yet, the fact that Abramović was able to re-open the wound from the 1975 performance 30 years after she created it suggests that the performance, the wound, and the scar have potential futures. The wound can be re-opened, the map of the scar re-traced and the piece re-performed. The use of the word *re* indicates multiplicity, if something can be repeated
once it can be repeated many times, thus the wound, the scar and the performance belong not just in the past but simultaneously and multiply in the past, present and future.

The relationship between the scar and multiplicity is highlighted by Kuppers in her 2007 book *The Scar of Visibility: Medical Performances and Contemporary Art* in which she claims that ‘the scar knits multiplicity in time and space into living flesh’ (209). The suggestion here is that the scar, like the re-performance disrupts linear notions of time. Through scars and flesh we are able to simultaneously glimpse both the past and the future in the present. Audience members witnessing Abramović’s 2005 performance of *Lips of Thomas* experience the piece in the here and now of the present but were also able to glimpse the scar from the initial performance, which haunts the present version. The fact that Abramović was able to bring the past into the present is also suggestive of the possibility of re-creating these pieces again in the future. In this instance, Abramović’s body, the scar, the wound on her stomach, serves as the relic of the initial performance and this relic was then used in the creation of the re-performance in 2005.

In the case of *Lips of Thomas* the scar operates in a similar way to Athey’s re-performance of *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic*, which I analysed earlier in the thesis, and which was part of Tolentino’s project, *The Sky Remains the Same*. Here I am developing what I described in chapter two in order to examine the act of re-cutting a scar in relation to the concept of legacy and the notion of the future of the performance. In *The Sky Remains the Same*, Tolentino re-performed Athey’s piece *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic*
alongside Athey and, much like Abramović’s re-opening of her scar, Athey repeating his performative actions suggests multiple lives and possible futures of performance. If Athey can repeat his actions for Tolentino to copy then they are no longer confined to the past or present. The actions may be being performed in the present, but the fact that they are repeated actions which have already existed in the past suggests that performance has a past and, therefore, a possible future. This is particularly evident in Athey and Tolentino’s work because, as I argued in chapter two, the performance of Self Obliteration # 1Ecstatic as part of The Sky Remains the Same, serves as an act of passing on. Athey passes his performance onto Tolentino and she archives the performance onto her body. This suggests that the performance can survive multiple deaths. It can survive the death of the initial performance, the death of the re-performance and, finally, and perhaps most importantly when considering the notion of a performative legacy, the death of the initial performer. By passing on the work to another body (that of Tolentino), Athey ensures its survival after his own death and, therefore, creates a lasting legacy and prevents the annihilation of the work.

Whilst this may appear to threaten performance’s status as a transient, ephemeral art form, which is a central focus of this thesis, re-performances, such as those by Abramović, Athey and Tolentino, do not threaten this status because each performance and re-performance is, in itself, both transient and ephemeral. However, this does not mean that they exist in isolation. Rather, as I discussed earlier in the thesis in relation to intratextuality, they can be considered in relation to the body of work created
by the artist and in the wider context of live/performance art and, in this wider context, the performances can have multiple lives. This argument is supported by Schneider's assertion that 'the past is the stuff of the future' (2011: 24). The past, like the initial performance, is never entirely over. The initial performance may disappear, but it does not do so entirely, and acts of re-performance enable performance to be passed on and provide a possible legacy of performance.

The Drive to Archive - Bodily Transmission

As discussed in the first section of this chapter and in previous chapters, I contend that re-performance can be used as a means of passing on a performance from one artist to another, and here I build upon the notions of bodily transmission on and bodily archives by exploring possible reasons for artists’ creating re-performance works. Using Abramović’s 2005 performance series Seven Easy Pieces, which I have already discussed in this chapter, as well as her 2012 retrospective piece The Artist is Present. Together with the works of Wilke and Spence, which were discussed in chapter four, as examples I argue that the desire to re-perform, to create a bodily archive is driven by a desire to leave something behind.

Abramović’s 2012 retrospective The Artist is Present consisted of a group of artists re-performing works that had previously been performed by Abramović whilst she sat outside the gallery. Thus, Abramović was simultaneously present and absent; present outside the gallery but absent from the re-performances of her work. The Artist is Present functions in a
similar way to Tolentino’s *The Sky Remains the Same*, as a means of passing on a performance from the body of one artist to another and thus enabling the survival and legacy of the performance. Death is inevitable, as in most cases, it is the end of a performance but when we die we leave a legacy by which we are remembered and that these legacies are comparable to the re-performances discussed above. Tolentino’s performance of *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* and the performances of Abramović’s pieces in *The Artist is Present* were created from the legacies of earlier performances and, therefore, function as a means for performance to survive. Survival is enabled by passing on the performances from the body of one artist to another, from Athey’s body to Tolentino’s and from Abramović’s body to the bodies of the other artists involved in the project.

The desire to re-perform, to create a bodily archive, is the same as the desire some people have to be remembered after their deaths. This desire is highlighted by Harold Bloom in his text *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* in which he frames the relationship between generations of poets as a ‘battle between strong equals, father and son as mighty opposites, Laius and Oedipus at the crossroads’ (1997: 11). Despite the fact that Bloom’s theory has a patriarchal and heteronormative focus in which women don't figure it can still be usefully applied to the non-normative and fluid slant of the re-performances, such as *The Artist is Present*, that this thesis examines. Bloom’s positioning suggests that each poet, or in this case each performer, wishes to be considered and remembered in their own right. Here I develop Freud’s assertion that death is ‘an initial state from which the living
entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return’ (1955: 38), by reading it in relation to Bloom and adding that during our journey through life we wish to leave footprints in the sand, proof that we were once here and suggesting a longing to return. Whilst Freud suggests that the life and death drives are in opposition to one another itself I argue that actually this life and death drives serve to counter-balance one another and that it is the life drive which fuels our desire to make an impression, to leave an imprint and create a legacy.

Figure 14: Marina Abramović The Artist is Present (2012)

In Abramović’s The Artist is Present, the re-performances of her previous works such as Imponderabilia (1977) were performed by other artists. As I have already explained Abramović herself did not participate in any of the re-performances. However, she remained present in every aspect of every work performed during the six week performance exhibition. Throughout the exhibition Abramović presented a new, solo, durational performance (shown in figure 14) ‘starting before the Museum open[ed] each day and continuing until after it close[d],’ thus, she was physically present at the gallery
throughout the exhibition (MOMA 2010: 1). As can be seen in figure 14 Abramović is seated at a wooden table facing visitors to the gallery, who sit opposite her. The positioning of Abramović in relation to spectators as well as the use of wooden table enable the performance to be haunted by Abramović’s 1981-87 performance series Nightsea Crossing, which she performed alongside her then partner Ulay. In Nightsea Crossing ‘Ulay and Abramovic sat at either end of the table, with their faces turned towards each other and the audience looking at their profiles’ (Lima 2019:1). The description of Nightsea Crossing immediately recalls the image of The Artist is Present in figure14 and as such I argue that the haunting created by Abramović’s presence is multiple. Abramović appears as a ghostly presence haunting the exhibition but is also herself haunted by the ghost of her previous work with Ulay. Enacting Derrida’s notion that we can both haunt and be haunted. In Specters of Marx Derrida describes Marx as a ghost hunter, asking ‘why this hunt for ghosts?’ but also as someone ‘haunted’ by the ghosts he seems to hunt (1994:139/140). In this sense Derrida presents us with a world in which everyone seems to be haunted, where no-one can escape the specter and it is this sense of haunting that I contend Abramović presents in The Artist is present.

In addition to her physical presence ‘the exhibition [was] accompanied by an illustrated catalogue that include[d] an audio recording of the artist’s voice guiding the reader through the publication’ (MOMA 2010: 1). Therefore, Abramović was present in the exhibition through her pre-recorded voice guiding visitors around the space. I assert that this gives Abramović a
spectral presence; a disembodied voice, guiding visitors through her past, her performance history. This also gave Abramović a presence in each of the re-performance works, even though she did not physically participate in any of them. Her voice spoke about the past even as the re-performances were enacted in the present, thus, demonstrating Abramović’s control and asserting her power over the work. Abramović’s presence also complicated linear notions of time, the exhibition presented Abramović’s past in the present. The exhibition is described on the MOMA website as a ‘performance retrospective [which] traces the prolific career of Marina Abramović’ (MOMA 2010: 1). It is clear from this statement that the works are Abramović’s. The exhibition was about her, not the artists who participated in the re-performances. Thus, Abramović was present in each of the re-performances. She haunted them like a specter. Her voice, her physical presence outside the gallery, the knowledge that every visitor to the gallery had that these were Abramović’s works all contributed to the exhibition being haunted by her. The re-performances were simultaneously Abramović and not Abramović, hers was not the physical body performing the work but she retained both presence and authorship in them because of the context of the gallery and the exhibition as a retrospective celebrating Abramović’s career.

From this point of view, The Artist is Present is interesting when considering notions of legacy and the desire to leave things behind. At the time of the exhibition Abramović was 64 years old. She had been creating and presenting live and performance art works in a career ‘spanning over
four decades’ (MOMA 2010: 1). It can therefore easily be argued that Abramović was reflecting on her career and considering her legacy, both as an artist and a person. *The Artist is Present*, serves as Abramović’s means of leaving something behind, ensuring the legacy of her work and when this is considered in relation to Bloom’s theory in *The Anxiety of Influence* this can be seen as Abramović seeking to position herself as the Mother figure in the performances and those who re-perform her work as what Bloom describes as ‘weaker talents’ who ‘idealize’ her work (Bloom 1997: 5).

In comparison, Athey and Tolentino’s collaborative work on *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* can be read as more of a handing over of the work from one artist to another. Where in *The Artist is Present* Abramović seems to be more concerned with her legacy, rather than that of the work, hence my earlier positioning of her in relation to Bloom’s theory and my assertion that *The Artist is Present* seeks to confirm Abramović’s status as the author of the work and what Barthes terms the ‘Author-God’ (1968: 4). In *The Artist is Present*, Abramović and the work appear inseparable, the work is Abramović and she is the work. Athey and Tolentino’s re-performance is about ensuring the legacy of the performance rather than Athey’s legacy and the focus is on the work rather than the artist. *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* is part of Tolentino’s ongoing project, *The Sky Remains the Same*. Tolentino describes the project as one in which ‘artists endow a signature work onto/into my body’ (Tolentino 2008: 1) This statement is suggestive of the fact that the project is about archiving the work, attempting to ensure its survival by passing it on. The fact that the performance archived onto
Tolentino’s body is a signature work suggests that the performance epitomises the artist’s work, that it is representative of the body of their work. This in turn suggests that the artist is a star, someone with a recognisable style of performance which is captured in their signature work. Thus, the act of archiving it onto the body of another artist is not simply about the performance being archived but is also symbolic of the artist’s entire performance history. In the act of archiving the performance the artist is symbolically passing all of their work onto the body of another artist and this can be viewed as a way of ensuring their legacy. This also raises questions of authorship, when a performance is passed on in this way is authorship of the work passed on too or does the initial performer retain authorship? Alternatively, do the two performers become co-authors of the work? After all, both Athey and Tolentino performed in the 2011 re-performance of *Self-obliteration #1*. So, does their positioning of themselves as co-performers equate to that of co-authors? These notions of authorship will be addressed in more detail in the next section of the chapter but for now it is important to consider the differences in the nature of the two re-performances being discussed and the impact that this has on the discussion of what drives the desire to re-perform.

In *The Book of Dead Philosophers* Critchley states that ‘what defines human life in our corner of the planet at the present time is not just a fear of death, but an overwhelming terror of annihilation’ (2011: 1). Critchley uses the term annihilation to suggest something more than death, describing it as ‘a terror both of the inevitability of our demise with its prospect of pain and
possibly meaningless suffering, and the horror of what lies in the grave other than our body nailed into a box and lowered into the earth to become wormfood' (2011: 1). This statement implies that the terror of annihilation is a terror of pain, illness, dying and death but also of what happens to us after death. Critchley’s use of the terms ‘possibly meaningless suffering’ and ‘lowered into the earth to become wormfood’ are suggestive of the fact that annihilation is total destruction and disappearance (2011: 1). This is also evident when Critchley states that ‘the terror of annihilation leads us blindly into belief in the magical forms of salvation and promises of immortality offered by certain varieties of traditional religion and many New Age sophistries’ (2011: 1). If religion and belief in the afterlife offer comfort to our terror of annihilation, then it is not the actual event of death that we fear but the belief that death is the end, that once we die, we cease to exist. Our bodies are buried or burned, and we no longer have any presence, life or agency, in this life or any other. Death, without a belief in any form of afterlife or reincarnation, is the annihilation of which Critchley speaks. This would mean our total disappearance and the knowledge that eventually our lives may be forgotten, our graves untended and our loss no longer mourned. Or even our bodies never looked for or discovered.

I contend that what artists such as Abramović, Athey and Tolentino are engaging with in their acts of re-performance is an attempt to avoid annihilation by ensuring that if something of us remains after our deaths as if this is a way in which they can stave off annihilation. Critchley claims ‘death and life are never-ceasing transformations’ (2011: 56), and when viewed in
this way death does not have to mean annihilation, that by leaving something of ourselves and/or our work behind maybe artists and performances do not have to disappear completely.

This notion of legacy can be linked to Schechner’s concept of aftermath, something discussed in chapter three. The terms legacy and aftermath are evocative of things left behind. Humans leave behind legacies, performances leave behind aftermaths. A legacy is not a person, an aftermath is not a performance, but they are both things left behind, and both can be used to cross the boundaries of time by enabling us to bring the past back to life in the present. The legacy of a lost loved one remains within us and a performance can be made to remain if we gather up the aftermath and use it to create re-performances. Through this merging of past and present we can indicate possible futures and ensure that performances and lost loved ones are never lost forever. Schechner states that ‘the continuing life of a performance is its aftermath. This phase of the performance process may extend for years or even centuries – in fact, the duration of the aftermath is indefinite’ (2006: 246). Schechner’s use of the terms ‘continuing life’ and ‘indefinite’ are suggestive of the fact that performance does not always or does not entirely disappear. Schechner also claims that ‘performance itself is categorically evanescent. Even the memory of performance fades quickly. Soon enough all but the most famous performances vanish’ (2006: 247), thus suggesting that even with the notion of aftermath all performances disappear. The word vanish makes it clear that in many cases performances are lost irretrievably. However, Schechner
also states that ‘sometimes the aftermath of a performance is open-ended, generating many new performances’ (2006: 247). This is an argument for re-performance as a means of avoiding the vanishing and disappearance of performance. Through re-performance the initial performance cannot be retrieved but a performative legacy can be created, and this legacy can enable artists to walk in the footsteps of those who have gone before and prevent that annihilation of which, according to Critchley, we are so terrified.

Performance’s Returns: The Return of the Author

The third section of this chapter explores the notion of re-performance as a return, a way of bringing initial or earlier versions of the performance back to life in the present. This is something which has already been discussed in previous chapters but here I intend to expand those ideas in relation to the notions of legacy that I outlined earlier on in the chapter. Performance can return through re-performance and that in doing so the performance can be passed on from one performer to another through bodily transmission. Thus, when the performance returns it is altered, that each return is simultaneously marked by its difference from the initial performance and haunted by the specter of that initial performance. This raises questions with regard to authorship, particularly when the re-performance is performed by another artist. Who owns/authors the work? In his essay ‘The Death of the Author’ Barthes asserts that ‘the author is a modern figure’ and is connected with the ‘prestige of the individual’ (1968: 2). The notion of individual prestige
suggests that in order for a work to be considered prestigious it must be the work of a single author and that any act of co-authorship damages the prestige of the performance in some way. This concept is linked to my earlier posing of the question; does the process of bodily transmission pass the authorship as well as the performance on to the next artist? and suggests that the question of authorship in re-performance is a crucial one. Using the examples of O’Brien’s performance works, some of which can be seen as re-performances of Flanagan’s earlier works, Abramović’s *Seven Easy Pieces* and *The Artist is Present*, I contend that re-performance brings into question the notion of authorship. If performances can be passed on from one artist to another, thus enabling them to create a legacy which endures death, how can authorship be maintained when a performance is passed on? By contrasting re-performance works such as Tolentino’s *The Sky Remains the Same* and O’Brien and Rose’s work, I examine the similarities and differences between re-performing a piece when the initial performer is alive compared to when they are dead. I question whether Tolentino’s body acts as an archive in the same way as O’Brien’s because the “authors” of the work that she is archiving remain both present and alive, whilst, in O’Brien and Rose’s re-performances Flanagan is present but not alive and therefore, does not participate in the re-performance.

Whilst Tolentino’s body archives performances in a similar way to that in which O’Brien and Rose archive Flanagan’s work the notions of authorship are different in each case. *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic* was a solo performance by Athey, as such he was the sole author of the work. The
manner of the re-performance, in which, as I described in chapter two, Athey performed the piece solo and then alongside Tolentino, suggests that Athey passed on the performance to Tolentino. In doing so Athey also passed on some of the authorship of the performance to Tolentino because the re-performance of Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic turned it into a collaborative performance, thus Athey and Tolentino became co-authors of the work.

Contrastingly in Rose and Flanagan’s performances they were always co-performers, and therefore, co-authors of the performances. This was also the case in Rose’s performances with O’Brien; she was also a co-author of the work. Rose’s status as co-author of the performances that she created with both Flanagan and O’Brien and her presence in all of the performances allows authorship to be shared between the three artists. As I asserted in chapter two Rose and O’Brien’s performances retain Flanagan’s specter, and because of his spectral presence Flanagan retains some authorship in the performances that Rose and O’Brien created and, therefore, the three artists share authorship of Rose and O’Brien’s re-performances.

Legacy and Posthumous Authorship

Further developing the notions of authorship outlined in the previous section of the chapter here I examine notions of authorship in relation to death. Following on from my questions about the nature of re-performances in which the initial artist is no longer alive, I use Wilke’s Intra-venus Tapes and Martin Nachbar’s project Aflects/Rework 2000, in which he created re-
performances of Dora Hoyer’s dance ‘cycle Affectos Humanos (1962-4)’ (Burt 2006: 196). These re-performances will be used to question the ways in which artists can retain authorship over their work even after their deaths. Nachbar’s project has previously been examined by theorists such as Ramsay Burt in his 2006 text Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces and André Lepecki in his 2016 text Singularities: Dance in the Age of performance however, my interest in the piece differs from both Burt and Lepecki’s because my primary concern is with the way in which Nachbar’s re-performances created a legacy of Hoyer’s earlier work.

As I discussed in chapter four, Intra-venus Tapes was a project conceived by Wilke and her partner Donald Goddard, who helped to shoot ‘over thirty hours of video … documenting the last two and a half years of her life’ (Burton 2007: 2). However, the project was completed by Goddard after her death and as Goddard has stated the initial idea was ‘to show all of this work, and the name of the exhibition was going to be “Cured”’. (Goddard 2008: 132). Thus, whilst they may have been working together when the idea was first conceived, Goddard saw it through to completion without Wilke’s input. This, together with the fact that the work began as a project about Wilke being cured rather than about her death suggests that Intra-Venus Tapes became a different project after her death. This raises questions as to whether Wilke, Goddard or both of them are the authors of this work and it is these questions of authorship which I examine in this chapter. The fact that Wilke conceived of, planned and created the images and footage of herself that made up Intra-Venus Series and Intra-Venus
Tapes suggests that the work remains hers, that she was the author or creator of the work. However, in deciding to complete the work following her death Goddard became a co-author, so that they had shared authorship. This is the case because of the fact that Wilke initiated the work, as highlighted by the Friedman Gallery’s description of the piece, in which they state that ‘almost from the beginning, she [Wilke] thought of these tapes, shot by herself, her husband Donald Goddard, and others, as a video installation, and she developed specific ideas about how it should be realized’ (2007: 1). This description clearly highlights Wilke’s plan for the installation and because of this Goddard cannot be the sole author of the work, in much the same way that Wilke cannot be the sole author if the work either because she had no say in the final incarnation of the project. This is because spectators of the work have no way of knowing what Wilke’s ideas for the realisation of the work were and whether or not the work was realised in the way that Wilke intended. Thus, I contend that Wilke and Goddard should be viewed as co-authors of the work. Barthes states that ‘though the Author’s empire is still very powerful…it is evident that for a long time now certain writers have attempted to topple it’ (1968: 3). This is what acts of co-authorship such as that between Wilke and Goddard are attempting to do. In works like these it is not the author that is the most important but the work itself. Goddard may have changed the work, it may have evolved following Wilke’s death, but this does not diminish the work, it enables the work to continue and to create Wilke’s legacy.
Nachbar’s re-performances of Hoyer’s work also occurred after her death but unlike *Intra-venus Tapes* it was never devised as a collaborative project. Therefore, the notions of authorship in this case are different to those between Wilke and Goddard in *Intra-Venus*. Nachbar took Hoyer’s work and re-performed it without her consent, collaboration or co-operation and I question whether this prevents Hoyer from having authorship over the work that Nachbar created. The notions of authorship in this case are further complicated by the fact that Waltraud Luley (Hoyer’s assistant and the guardian of Hoyer’s estate and work) passed these responsibilities onto Nachbar. This, I assert, shows how authorship as well as performances can be passed on so that the performances can continue to exist beyond the life of their initial authors and/or artists. Thus, privileging the continuing existence of the work over the author who, according to Barthes, ‘absents himself’ (1968: 4). In the author’s absence, the work continues and it this continuation of the work that creates its legacy. In this sense the author is never fully absent but retains a haunting, spectral presence in the future of the work.

In the case of Dora Hoyer, Waltraud Luley and Martin Nachbar the sense of legacy, is one of a seemingly untraditional lineage, through which Hoyer entrusted her work and estate to her assistant, who in turn entrusted them to Nachbar. This is comparable to the notion of legacy that I explained in the introduction to this chapter. However, the crucial difference in Hoyer’s case, which links it to my discussions of bodily archives and bodily transmission earlier in this chapter, is that the work was passed onto Nachbar for him to
perform. Performance legacies cannot be contained in books, photographs or videos, much like Derrida’s fleshy, visceral, embodied specters (which I discussed earlier) they need a body, life, breath, flesh. They need to be performed. And this is the kind of legacy that Luley and Nachbar were trying to create.

However, owing to the embodied nature of the legacy, each re-performance, each incarnation of the work is shifted, altered and transformed as Nachabar performs Hoyer’s works differently to the way in which she performed them. Therefore, performative legacies such as these pass authorship as well as the performances themselves. Nachbar’s works are not solely his, they are re-performances of Hoyer’s works. However, owing to the transformation the works undergo when performed by Nachbar they can no longer be considered solely Hoyer’s either. Thus, I claim that in order to understand the process of passing on a legacy of performance from one artist to another we should understand that they are acts of co-authorship, of works devised and created by artists who are in dialogue with one another. I contend that re-performances enable performance to find a way to survive death, to continue living in a bodily archive that allows it to outlive the initial artist, albeit in a transformed way. As outlined above, following the example of Hoyer and Nachbar’s work, re-performances, can never be exactly the same as the initial performance.

As figures 15 and 16 demonstrate, Nachbar is not Hoyer, his body is not hers, he can never perform the actions in an identical way to her. In the same way as I discussed in chapter two in relation to Athey and Tolentino’s re-performance of *Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic*. As such, Nachbar’s re-performances differ from Hoyer’s, his body transforms her actions in order to allow them to live on through him. Even in cases such as Abramović’s *Seven Easy Pieces* (which I discussed earlier in the chapter) in which the artist performing the works is the same in both the initial and re-performance the context of the performances are different and thus, the re-performance is still altered, still transformed in order to be performed again, in order to survive. Thus, rather than simply archiving a performance re-performance creates something new, transforming the initial performance as it creates its legacy.

The element of transformation evident in re-performance is one of the reasons that re-performance helps us to prepare for loss. As Butler states in
Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence ‘mourning has to do with agreeing to undergo a transformation’ (2004: 21). Butler’s statement refers to the transformative effect the loss of a loved one can have and this is something that I examine in connection with re-performance’s relationship with death. Drawing upon Critchely’s text The Book of Dead Philosophers I argue that it is not our own deaths that we fear the most, but, as Critchley states, ‘it is the deaths of those we are bound to in love that undo us, that unstitch our carefully tailored suit of the self, that unmake whatever meaning we have made’ (2011: 2). I assert that in witnessing the transformation and survival of these performances we learn how to survive those deaths which threaten to destroy us, those of the ones we love the most. Thus, the act of re-performance is not just one of legacy, of leaving something of ourselves and our performances behind, it is also one of survival, both the survival of performances and our own survival. Survival, is inextricably linked to legacy. We are not and cannot be immortal, death is one of very few inevitabilities and is something that we must all face. I assert that survival is not about cheating or avoiding death, it is about preventing death from becoming the total disappearance and annihilation that I examined in my earlier discussion of Critchley’s text. In order to do this, we must leave something of ourselves behind, our legacy. This, as I have already argued, can be done through re-performance, by passing work on from the body of one artist to another.
Death, Loss and Legacy

I also contend that it is possible for individual performance works to serve as legacies and analyse this through Jill Hocking's *Cabbage Leaf Blanket* performance 2002. Although not directly a re-performance I have positioned *Cabbage Leaf Blanket* in relation to re-performance because it shares re-performance's concern with legacy. Through my analysis I question the possibilities of performing the process of dying and creating a legacy in a single performance work. Hocking was only 24 years old when she died from Cystic Fibrosis in 2004 and her *Cabbage Leaf Blanket* performance can be read as a way for her to engage with her illness and the death that she knew would follow.

![Figure 17: Jill Hocking Cabbage Leaf Blanket (2002)](image)

As can be seen in figure 17, in *V*Hocking sewed together 'a quilt out of cabbage leaves and it was displayed on a bed complete with Jill sleeping in it' (2002: 1). According to her godmother Jeane, for Jill, 'the rotting leaves represented her lungs' (2002: 1). The image of Hocking lying under the blanket of cabbage leaves is one of slow decay, the leaves gradually rot,
mirroring the way in which her lungs gradually fail as sufferers from Cystic Fibrosis slowly loose lung function. This is in contrast to O’Brien’s performances, such as *Mucus Factory*, because the rotting cabbage leaves Hocking uses represent her lungs deteriorating the mucus that O’Brien uses is an actual symptom of his illness. However, both *Cabbage Leaf Blanket* and *Mucus Factory* performances serve as a way for Hocking and O’Brien to understand their illness, but in Hocking’s case it also serves as her legacy. The work has been written about not only on Hocking’s memorial website but also in a variety of journals and newspapers. The images of Hocking underneath the cabbage leaf blanket exist on several websites and journal articles, allowing me to witness something of Hocking’s act twelve years after her death. This may be a very different kind of legacy to the one that I discussed earlier with Hoyer and Nachbar but I argue that it is a legacy nonetheless. Something of Hocking has remained, she has not disappeared entirely, she has not been annihilated. Her actions can still be glimpsed, her life and work remembered and therefore, in some way she has survived. Hocking created an enduring legacy through her exploration of illness, dying and death within her performance. By making her illness visible and highlighting the fragility of her body Hocking caused audience members to re-consider their relationships with death.

A similar argument can be made for Henderson’s performance *Taking it to the Grave* which he performed in October 2016, shortly before his death from cancer. In the performance, which I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter, Henderson charged people to ‘literally take … [their] secrets to
the grave’ (Martin 2016: 1). In the performance Henderson, who lay on a bed under a canopy wearing white trousers and a frilly collar, asked people to tell him their secrets, he then had a symbolic representation of their secret tattooed on his body. The idea behind the performance was that ‘if Andrew tattooed other people’s secrets on his body, then by his death, he would fulfil the promises he made’ (2016: 1). Henderson is quoted in Martin’s article as saying ‘if someone dies, you have to get them to the funeral home right away. It’s this whole system of remove, remove, remove. Get the death out of the way. Let’s make it easy for you’ (2016: 1). What is striking to me is the contrast between the ‘system of remove, remove, remove’ (2016: 1) that Henderson describes and his and Hocking’s performances in which we witness the deterioration, the illness, the process of dying. Whilst neither Hocking or Henderson were visibly deteriorating during the performances, anyone who witnessed them in the knowledge of their illnesses could easily identify the parallels: the rotting cabbage leaves as a metaphor for Hocking’s failing lungs and the entire concept of Taking it to the Grave, which was premised on the fact that Henderson was dying and would take participants’ secrets to his grave with him. The identification of parallels forced a confrontation with death that we generally avoid.

Critchley would argue that we avoid this confrontation because of our fear of death and I would have to agree, particularly when the deaths in question are not our own but those of friends, or family members, those who we cannot imagine living without. As previously discussed, it is Critchley’s assertion that these are deaths which terrify us the most and perhaps this
terror is born out of confusion, our inability to understand how we can survive these deaths. How can we continue to live when someone with whom our lives have been so inextricably intertwined with has died? I conclude that works such as Hocking’s and Henderson’s enable us to face those deaths with a little more confidence by allowing us to rehearse witnessing an other dying and our own survival. As previously highlighted, Phelan has argued that ‘it may well be that theatre and performance respond to a psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially for death. Billed as rehearsal, performance and theatre have a special relation to art as memorial’ (1998: 3), and performances, such as those analysed in this section, respond to the psychic need Phelan discusses. This is not only because they enable us to rehearse the act of loss, of witnessing the other dying and us surviving that death but also because they help us to understand that death does not equal annihilation. Therefore, each of the artists that I have analysed in this chapter created a legacy, a different kind to the one discussed earlier in relation to re-performance, but a legacy nonetheless.
Monuments and Sculptures/Art and Memorial

The relationship between art and memorial has always been a close one, as highlighted in Peggy Phelan’s statement, in her 1997 text *Mourning Sex*:

> it has always struck me as odd that cultural monuments to the dead, public attempts to acknowledge grief, usually take the form of sculpture. It would seem more sensible to use temporal forms - such as film and music - to commemorate those who are no longer with us. Sculptural monuments tend to re-member the dead by turning the work of mourning into an object that stands in for the long process of working through. Temporal art forms such as music and cinema are able to perform the working through of mourning in the work itself. (1997: 170)

Phelan goes on to assert that ‘Public sculptures in their very solidity and monumentality suggest the weight and scope of mourning. However, they sometimes also suggest that grief is there like a clear knife piercing the heart, cleaving us in two. The work of mourning is never clear, never complete, never solid’ (1997: 171). In this chapter, I argue, that Phelan’s comments about the work of mourning can be pertinently applied to the work of re-performance. This chapter examines the future lives created by re-performance arguing that through re-performance a performance is never over, never finished but constantly shifting, being reworked, re-shaped, re-developed, re-thought, re-performed. This sense of working through, of mourning and grief being messy processes that require hard labour, can be seen more clearly in less traditional monuments, just as the live, physical and visceral nature of performance can be captured more easily through re-performance than it can through more traditional forms of documentation. This, of course, does not suggest in any way
that traditional monuments, just like the traditional archive, do not have their place, their importance, but that they could work together with the less traditional forms of memorialising and documenting in order to provide us with a fuller insight into the initial performance or the lost other. And that these insights may provide fruitful ways of memorialising and remembering those we have lost.

Monuments, sculptures and gravestones have all been used in order to represent and memorialise those that we have lost; solid, hardwearing objects that have a certain gravitas, grounding us in a place and a time. This can be seen in activist Cleve Jones’ comment about the AIDS Quilt. The AIDS Quilt was begun in 1985 when ‘marchers wrote the names of friends and lovers who had died of AIDS on placards and carried them in a candlelight parade. They [the placards] were stuck with tape on the San Francisco Federal Building’ (in Laqueur 2015: 428). This was the starting point for the quilt as it was the first time that the names of the AIDS dead had been placed on the federal building. However, the quilt in its current form did not begin to take shape until 1987 when ‘Cleve Jones, a San Francisco activist, spray-painted the name of his best friend, Marvin Feldman, who had died of AIDS, on a quiltlike memorial panel’ (Laqueur 2015: 428). Others followed suit and ‘by 11 October… 1,920 panels’ contained the names of those who had died of AIDS (Laqueur 2015: 429). Jones, quoted in Laqueur’s text, The Work of the Dead, states that ‘I think people need something tangible, physical to touch, to look at’ (2015: 429). I contend that we memorialise life in such solid objects because they give us a sense of permanence and with this permanence comes remembrance and the
belief that the dead are gone but not forgotten. It is a reminder that they were once there, that they lived, existed and left their mark on the world. This argument is also evident in Laqueur's discussion of the importance of the names of the dead being inscribed on monuments. Laqueur states that ‘the ubiquitous monument and its names represent many, many different memorial purposes: but in general, like the bodies of the dead, they make a claim on public space and attention’ (2015: 422). He goes on to say that ‘sometimes only by inference, sometimes in poignantly explicit ways, these names [inscribed on monuments] replace absent bodies’ (2015: 422). What Laqueur makes clear is that monuments help us to remember and to mourn the dead by simultaneously reminding us that they are dead and enabling us to interact with them.

In his analysis of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington Laqueur notes that visitors to the monument leave offerings; notes, photographs or flowers, such as the one in figure 16 above. In doing so, these visitors ‘act as if they were in the presence of the dead body or, more precisely, in the presence of the dead’ (2015: 428). This, in turn, facilitates the process of mourning because it makes visible a representation of the echoes and traces of those that we have lost. We ‘need something tangible’ to hold onto as a record, a remnant of a life so that
we have somewhere to remember and to grieve (Laqueur 2015: 429). Building upon Laqueur’s argument, I assert, that the desire to memorialise is the same as the desire that drives us towards archival documentation. I claim that we value the archive, with its photographs and video footage, because we view it as a marker of existence; just as the person named on the tombstone must have lived once, the performance documented in the video footage must have taken place.

Throughout this chapter I will analyse the concept of performance, connected with re-performance, as memorial and position this in the context of the relationship between performance and documentation. The examination of performance documentation is based on examples of documentation which destabilise the notion of documentation as evidence of an event that actually happened or a life that was actually lived. To support this argument I analyse instances of fake or false documentation such as Anne Bean’s 2012 The Dubinski Project, Lynne Hershman Leeson’s 1974 performance of Roberta Breitmore, Aliza Shvartz’ 2008 untitled project and Valie Export’s 1969 photographs Action Pants: Genital Panic. These examples also allow for the exploration of notions of multiplicity, in both life and performance, which I link back to this chapter’s focus on memorial. By drawing parallels between the interrelation of performance and documentation and that between traditional and performative monuments, this chapter aims to present the argument for an understanding of these relations not as dichotomous opposites, but as interrelated concepts. In order to support this argument I examine a range of memorials including: Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982), The AIDS
Quilt (1987), Chris Burden’s The Other Vietnam Memorial (1991), and contrast them with memorial performances such as Hannah Wilke’s Intra-Venus Tapes (2007), Andrew Henderson’s Taking it to the Grave (2016), Briar Bates’ Ankle Deep: A Water Ballet (2017) and Carolee Schneeman’s Mortal Coils (1994-5).

Memorial, Multiplicity and Rebirth

As I mentioned above, not all archival footage records the life of an actual person or a performance that actually took place and it is useful to examine these types of performance in relation to memorial because a memorial can be viewed as documentation. It records the facts of someone’s life and their death but the artists whose work I am going to examine in this chapter create documentation of lives that were never actually lived. Thus, I contend that they disrupt the notion of archival evidence through their creation of a second life in order to embody a persona and create a person who never really existed. Using examples of the work of artists Aliza Shvarts, Anne Bean, and Lynne Hershman Leeson, I will examine the ways in which fake or false documentation can be created and the impact that this has upon our relationship with and understanding of the concept of archival documentation. Although Shvarts’ work is different from Bean and Hershman Leeson’s I have chosen to place it alongside them, in this section of the chapter because, like Bean and Hershman Leeson, Shvartz engages with ideas of death, re-birth and multiplicity.

In 2008, then a student at Yale University, Shvarts:

repeatedly, over the course of the previous year, Shvarts inseminated herself, using a needleless syringe containing donor sperm...At the end of each of her 28-day cycles, she dosed herself with an abortifacient, thus inducing miscarriages (if she
had in fact conceived) or menstruation (if she had not). She kept a video blog of these monthly procedures, and she collected specimens of the resulting products - blood, tissue and zygotes, if any - for frozen storage of and later use. (Roach 2011: 277)

I position Shvarts' work in relation to re-performance, not just because of Shvartz' repeated acts of self-insemination and induced abortion, but also because the performance engages with issues of life, death, legacy and multiplicity which are central concerns of re-performance. Shavrtz' performance sparked outrage from some who described her as “a serial killer,” and “… a Monster” because of the fact that she may have been inducing miscarriages (Roach 2011: 276). Of course, Shvarts may never have actually conceived and all of the specimens collected during the project may have been menstrual blood. The ambiguity, according to Shvarts, is ‘the most poignant aspect… Because the miscarriages coincide with the expected date of menstruation… it remains ambiguous whether there was ever a fertilized ovum or not’ (in Roach 2011: 281). What the ambiguity and outrage caused by Shvarts' proposed installation highlights are the ethics surrounding life and death, specifically the ability of the woman to give life and the potential for her take away that life. This is most clearly examined in the case of Shvarts but is also evidenced in the other case studies examined in this section of the chapter. There are many ethical and religious arguments surrounding the issue of abortion which Shvartz' work explores because she deliberately inseminates herself and then induces abortion. This argument, however, is complicated by the fact that it is unclear as to whether Shvartz ever actually conceived and therefore, whether she was actually inducing abortion or not.
Shvarts’ work, according to Roach, ‘posed a question about where the limits were located’ (2011: 282). One can consider multiple limits in relation to Shvarts’ work: the limits of her body, as she opens it up to the other by potentially allowing another body to begin to grow inside her own; the limits of freedom, the freedom for women to choose whether or not to become mothers, the right of women to an abortion; the freedom of an artist to explore and challenge these limits, especially within the context of the university. Shvarts’ performance tested these limits and as a result was never completed. The installation never took place as ‘the Deans pulled the plug on her show’ (Roach 2011: 282). The limits that this research is most interested in are the limits of Shvarts’ body; her ability to take control of her own body and its reproductive capabilities, by artificially inseminating herself with donor sperm and the inducing abortion. In doing this Shvarts positions the female body as capable of autonomously creating and controlling reproduction. She inseminated herself, thus taking control of the time, place and method of conception and then dosed herself with an abortifacient, therefore taking control of the time, place and method by which, any pregnancy would be terminated. It is this element of control over reproduction and the concept of giving life that links Shvarts’ work with that of Bean and Hershman Leeson. Although Bean and Hershman Leeson “created life” in a very different and non-biological sense, their work can still be viewed as a form of both reproduction and re-performance, as both Bean and Hershman Leeson reproduced themselves through their performances. Their reproduction, like Shvartz’, took place without a male entity, and as such they
also explore the notion of the female ability to reproduce and re-perform themselves autonomously.

In 2012 Artist Anne Bean ‘took on a different name, Chana Dubinski... [and] settled in a town [Castlegate, Newark] where nobody knew me’ (2015: 57). Dubinski became her own person with her own history. As Bean has stated ‘I simply told acquaintances I was making a fresh start and that I had previously taught art,’ (2015: 7). Dubinski was not legally a person; she was an art work created by Bean and their lives were intertwined. This, in many ways, is similar to the creation of Roberta Breitmore by Lynn Hershman Leeson in 1974. Hershman Leeson lived as Breitmore, renting an apartment, opening a bank account and seeing a therapist as Breitmore, amongst other things. I assert that these performances differ from an actor playing a character because the people that Dubinski and Breitmore interacted with believed them to be actual people and were unaware that they were participating in Bean or Hershman Leeson’s performance. Additionally, the ways in which Bean and Dubinski’s and Hershman Leeson and Breitmore’s lives were connected meant that Dubinski and Breitmore were more than just characters, they were part of Bean and Hershman Leeson respectively. Focusing on Dubinski first and then Breitmore, I will analyse the ways in which these performances were a doubling, multiplying or re-birthing of the artist, who had autonomous control over her reproduction. Thus, in each case what was created was an example of Schechner’s notion of Me, Not Me and Not Not Me (a concept that I discussed in chapter four).

In an interview, with Dominic Johnson, about the Chana Dubinski project Bean commented that ‘I introduced myself as Chana Dubinski, a name that
relates to my childhood, in terms of having known it then as the likely Hebrew-Russian origin for the very plain name Anne Bean’ (2015: 57). The fact that Bean chose a name which was a translation of her own name is suggestive of the complex ways in which Dubinski and Bean were intertwined. In a sense Bean was re-performing herself as Dubinsni. She used elements of her life, from the origins of her name to the vague reference to her background in Fine Art, in order to create a second self, Chana Dubinski. Dubinski, is an imagining of who Bean could have become, the life she may have lived and, as such, she can be viewed as a re-performance. Dubinski can be perceived as something, or, in Dubinski’s case someone, who is not the initial performance (or person) but who provides us with new insights into the initial person (or performance) and is made up of the echoes and traces of that life (or performance). Despite this fact, Dubinski was in many ways her own person. As Bean explains ‘I won a national writing competition [the Mabel Marbour Prize for Creative Writing 2012] as Chana Dubinski’ (2015: 57). The fact that Dubinski could win a national writing competition implied that she had agency, that she was separate from Bean. However, Bean adds that she won the competition ‘with a true story about my childhood,’ thus implying that although people knew Dubinski as a person in her own right, Dubinski’s history was also Bean’s history. They shared a history, a body, and, in many senses, a life. Therefore, in relation to Schechner’s concept of Me, Not Me and Not Not Me, Dubinski was not Bean but she was also Not Not Bean.

The same can be said of Lynne Hershman Leeson’s creation of Roberta Breitmore, a project which shares many similarities with Bean’s creation of
Chana Dubinski. Like Dubinski, Breitmore lived a separate life from Hershman Leeson, but Hershman Leeson arguably went further than Bean, as Breitmore ‘undertook real-life activities such as opening a bank account, obtaining credit cards,’ (Maloney 2011: 1). These acts suggest that Breitmore was more independent than Dubinski but even so Hershman Lesson has stated that ‘although I denied it at the time and insisted that she was ‘her own woman’ with defined needs, ambitions and instincts, in retrospect we were linked. ROBERTA represented part of me as surely as we all have within us an underside… To me, she was my own flipped effigy; my physical reverse, my psychological fears’ (Maloney 2011: 1). Thus, Breitmore was as intrinsically linked to Hershman Leeson as Dubinski was to Bean.

Therefore, when, in 1978, Hershman Lesson had Breitmore exorcised, she not only ended or killed off the re-performance, she lost part of herself as well. This can be compared with Shvartz work, which I discussed earlier in this section, because Shvartz also lost part of herself each time she took an abortifacient. Any pregnancies that she terminated were a part of her, just as any menstrual blood was. This can also be viewed in relation to Martin O’Brien’s production of mucus in his performances, which I discussed in chapter two. The mucus was part of O’Brien, the blood was part of Shvartz and Breitmore was part of Hershman Leeson. As Roberta Mock has stated, Breitmore ‘was eventually ritually killed by Hershman in order to close and transform a manufactured life which was perceived to be parasitically infecting that of the artist’ (2012: 2). What Mock’s statement makes clear is that Breitmore and Hershman Lesson did not exist separately, Breitmore needed Hershman
Leeson in order to exist and Hershman Lesson needed to kill Breitmore in order to free herself and live independently of Breitmore. This can be viewed in relation to my discussion of abjection in chapter two because, I argue that what Breitmore represented was the loss of Hershman Leeson’s ‘own and clean self’ (1980: 62), as Breitmore encroached upon Hershman Lesson’s life and body. This notion of Breitmore and Hershman Lesson as being part of one another is also highlighted by Mock when she asserts that ‘by exorcising her dark, shadowy “flipped effigy,” Hershman hoped at the time to encourage her ‘own individuation’ (2012: 2). Implicit in this statement is the notion of multiplicity, the existence of Breitmore multiplied Hershman Leeson’s own existence, Breitmore was more than a ‘fictitious character’ she was another version of Hershman Leeson and in order for Hershman Leeson to free herself from the multiplicities involved in living two lives, as different incarnations of herself, Hershman Leeson had to get rid of Breitmore (2012: 1). The fact that she chose to complete this process in a crypt and describe the activity as an exorcism further highlights the multiplicitous nature of the relationship between Hershman Leeson and Breitmore. Ending the re-performance and deciding to no longer live any part of her life as Breitmore was like exorcising a demon or a ghost, a part of herself from which she wished to be free. In this sense, Hershman Leeson can arguably be described as being haunted by Breitmore but in a way that is the reverse of the haunting that took place with Sheree Rose and Bob Flanagan, which I discussed in chapter two, because Hershman Leeson wishes to be free of the specter that she is haunted by. In contrast, Rose actively pursues Flanagan’s specter, seeking to make it visible in the work she creates
with Martin O’Brien. This fits with Mock’s narrative of Breitmore as a parasite and emphasises the concept of Breitmore as part of Hershman Leeson by suggesting that separation from Hershman Lesson would result in death for Breitmore but life for Hershman Leeson. In *Specters of Marx* Derrida suggests that we live in a world full of specters, and as I have explained elsewhere in the thesis, in choosing the word specter over ghost or spirit, Derrida underscores the physical nature of the specter, which he describes as ‘a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit’ (1994: 6). Taking Derrida’s concept of the specter and applying it to Hershman Leeson’s performance of Breitmore I contend that Breitmore is a specter, that she needs a body in order to survive and that the exorcism acted as a separation between Breitmore and Hershman Leeson which forced Breitmore out of a physical, carnal existence and back into the realm of the formless ghost or spirit. This remained the case even when Hershman Lesson resurrected Breitmore via the online platform of Second Life. This is something that I will discuss in more detail later on in the chapter but here it is important to note that even in her resurrection Breitmore remained formless, without a body, because she was confined to a virtual world.

Prior to the exorcism ‘three other women known as ‘Roberta Multiples’ were performing (as) Roberta’ (2012: 2). This further multiplies the multiplicities created by Breitmore’s existence, as both Breitmore and Hershman Leeson, who I have already argued was multiplied by her creation of Breitmore, were multiplied in each of the ‘Roberta Multiples’.
The sense of multiplication is clear in figure 19 in which we see several Roberta Breitmore's looking at an image of Roberta Breitmore. This could be viewed as Hershman Leeson’s first attempt to rid herself of Breitmore, by passing her on to the three other women. Thus, this further reproduced both Hershman Lesson and Breitmore without the involvement of a male-identifying body. However, the fact that Hershman Leeson then went on to have Breitmore exorcised suggests that this attempt was unsuccessful. As Kristine Stiles, one of the ‘Roberta Multiples’, has asserted ‘once Hershman projected Roberta’s character onto me, she released her authority over her artwork and simultaneously reestablished it, thus began the immediate process of multiplying “Roberta Breitmores” into multiple multiples, mapping her double onto any number of willing female subjects, a multiplication that became potentially endless” (Stiles quoted in Mock 2012: 2). What Stiles’ comment emphasises is the potential for Breitmore to continue without Hershman Leeson’s physical presence. Much like my previous examples of re-performances which have been performed by another artist, Breitmore was no longer reliant on Hershman Leeson’s body for her existence. In chapter two I discussed the notion of bodily transmission, of
performances being passed on from one body or artist to another and I argue that this is what Herhsman Leeson was doing when she created the ‘Roberta Multiples’. Breitmore ceased to be embodied solely by Hershman Leeson and was entrusted to the other women who performed her. This act, which can arguably be viewed as a democratic sharing of life, enabled the possibility of many more Breitmores in the future.

The crucial difference between this example of bodily transmission and those that I have discussed earlier is that Breitmore was simultaneously passed onto more than one person and at the same time she continued to be performed by Hershman Lesson herself. In the earlier examples, such as, Ron Athey and Julie Tolentino’s re-performance of Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic the performance was passed from one performer to another. Athey performed the piece with Tolentino watching and then Tolentino re-performed it. During Tolentino’s performance Athey performed alongside her, in a similar way to that in which Hershman Lesson continued to perform as Roberta Breitmore. However, Athey passed Self-obliteration #1 Ecstatic onto Tolentino alone, thus, entrusting Tolentino and only Tolentino with archiving his work. In contrast, in Hershman Leeson’s case she simultaneously passed Breitmore on to three women, thus creating not only a bodily transmission in which the Breitmore was passed on from her body to the bodies of others but also one in which the performance (Breitmore) was multiplied.

This is a key example of how re-performance disrupts the relationship between performance and ephemerality. Breitmore did not cease to exist once Hershman Leeson stopped performing as her and she could potentially have
continued existing long after the three women that Hershman Leeson passed her onto stopped performing as her, because she could have continued to be passed onto, embodied and performed by other women. In passing Breitmore on to anyone, Hershman Leeson released the potential for her to be continually passed on and, hence, for there to be an infinite number of Breitmores who could exist long into the future. This, therefore, presents the possibility that, contrary to Phelan’s assertion, which I discussed earlier in the thesis, that performance disappears as it is being performed, Breitmore could have continued forever, being embodied by an endless stream of artists. This links to Phelan’s later argument in her book *Mourning Sex* that the dead ‘fall away from us piece by piece’ (1997: 41). With each multiplication of Breitmore a piece of her fell away. She was changed in some way by being embodied by a different person. It is this process of repetition, multiplication and change which, I argue, creates a relationship between the processes of re-performance and mourning. Central to this is the fact that no matter who Breitmore was being embodied by and how she changed throughout this process her personality, history and psychology remained the same. In this way Breitmore’s existence was still entangled with Hershman Leeson’s and the only way for Hershman Leeson to fully disengage from Breitmore was to kill her or have her exorcised. The ability for Breitmore to be passed on from artist to artist and Hershman Lesson’s attempt to free herself from Breitmore through the exorcism are also, I contend, linked to notions of memorial. Breitmore is passed on, like a valuable possession, entrusted to another, so that Breitmore may serve as a means of
remembering both Breitmore herself and Hershman-Leeson. The exorcism, which, I assert, can also be seen as both a performance of death and as a performative memorial, an issue which I will address later in the chapter.

The exorcism, therefore, functioned as a form of funeral for Breitmore and the fact that it took place in a crypt adds to this reading of the action. However, it can be argued that Breitmore could not have a funeral as she never lived. Whilst this argument depends on your interpretation of the term 'lived', here I employ the term in a social and cultural sense to argue that although Breitmore undertook many acts which can be considered to denote an engagement with lived experience and the fact that she opened a bank account and rented an apartment mean that there was official documentation of Breitmore’s life. These documents could be viewed as false because Breitmore was essentially Hershman Leeson’s creation. The terms fake and false here refer to documents which appear to record an event that never actually took place or the life of a person who never actually existed. Of course all performances and resulting documentation, such as photographs and video footage, can be viewed as the creation of the artist or the viewer’s, but in terms of their existence as documents in everyday life they can be described as fake or false because the life which they document and of which they can, therefore be seen as proof, did not actually exist. Breitmore’s life was a performance and

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8 This is much like Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard’s 1998 resurrection of David Bowie’s alter ego, Ziggy Stardust in a live art performance. Stardust was created by Bowie and then killed off by him during a concert. Forsyth and Pollard’s resurrection of him could be seen in contrast to Breitmore because Stardust, was resurrected by other performers following his performed death by Bowie.
although one may argue, as Richard Schechner has, that all life can be viewed as a performance. Schechner asserts that 'any event, action, or behaviour may be examined “as” performance’ (2013: 48). I assert that Breitmore’s existence as a multiple of Hershman Leeson prevented her from being a person in her own right\(^9\) and as such renders the documentation of her existence as an independent person, fake. This raises the question what if the lives that we memorialise and the objects contained within the archive were unreliable? What if they complicate notions of life and truth, just as each of the performances that I have addressed in this section did?

**False Documentation**

This was the case, for example, with Valie Export’s 1968 performance of *Action Pants*. Export performed this piece ‘in Munich in an art cinema where experimental film-makers were showing their work. Wearing trousers from which a triangle had been removed at the crotch, the artist walked between the rows of seated viewers, her exposed genitalia at face-level’ (Manchester, 2007: 1). The title of the piece draws attention to the way in which Export’s exposed genitalia was used to provoke shock and fear in audience members who may have viewed her actions as threatening or aggressive, particularly when confronted with them at face level and in close proximity. This can also be linked to a psychoanalytic fear of castration as audience members encountered

\(^9\) This was also the case in Nando Messias’ creation of Sissy, a persona that he performed as and killed off in ‘a theatricalised funeral’ (2018: 3). Sissy was created, embodied and then killed off by Messias in a similar way that Breitmore was by Hershman Leeson.
Export’s perceived feminine lack when faced with her exposed genitalia. This fits with Export’s own writings on her work where she describes her style of performance as ‘a kind of “feminist” Aktionism, using the body… as a code or a sign’ (1991: 189). Therefore, in Action Pants Export’s exposed female genitalia can be seen as a sign of her perceived feminine lack and the threat of castration. This threat of castration can also be seen in a less physical sense in the works of Shvartz, Bean and Hershman Lesson. In Shvartz, Bean and Hershman Lesson’s cases the threat of castration is created by the female ability to reproduce, to multiply, to create life without the input of a male-identifying body whereas Export confronted her viewers with a physical symbol of castration.

Export later produced a series of posters to commemorate the piece entitled Action Pants: Genital Panic. However, the posters ‘show EXPORT sitting on a bench against a wall out of doors wearing crotchless trousers and a leather shirt and holding a machine-gun. Her feet are bare and vulnerable, as are her genitals, and she holds the gun at chest level, apparently in readiness to turn it on the viewer towards whom her gaze is directed’ (Manchester, 2007: 1). These images present the piece in a more aggressive light due to the addition of the gun, which adds further connotations of death and transgressive female behaviour. These ideas link Export’s work with that of Shvartz (discussed earlier in this chapter) and Rose (discussed in chapter two) because each of these artists create work which engages with the female body performing aggressive actions. However, despite the differences between the performance and the images the images can clearly be linked back to the
performance in Munich and the threat of castration which is suggested by Export’s exposed female genitalia. The posters are arguably the image most associated with the performance, but they are not actually a representation of what happened. As Windrich has noted in *Performative Monuments*, ‘these images [of Export] have acquired historical significance, even if they cannot be regarded as documentary proof of the performance’ (2015: 28). As such, they don’t fit with traditional notions of the archive but they do memorialise the performance. As such, they also serve as a form of re-performance because re-performance is a means of memorialising performance and the photographs memorialise Export's performance.

The photographs might not document the actual event, they cannot claim to show the exact events that took place in the Munich cinema, but this does not prevent them from being valuable. Windrich asserts that ‘even though performance photographs are not always the mechanical reproduction of a first version of a performance, they do almost always refer to it’ (2014: 28; emphasis in original). Thus, I assert that the photographs of Export denote the actual event that took place in the Munich cinema and provide anyone who looks at them with an insight into the event, in much the same way that a re-performance does not re-create the initial performance but still provides us with an insight into it. It is worth considering however that in Export’s case there is a tension between the performance and photographs and this tension is enhanced by the fact that in many cases the photographs are treated as documenting the actual performance event in Munich. This may not have been Export’s intention when creating the photographs but this does appear to be
how they have been treated by many who have sought to engage with the piece. For example, when artist Marina Abramović re-performed *Action Pants: Genital Panic* as part of her 2005 performance project *Seven Easy Pieces* Abramović chose to re-perform the photographs rather than the initial performance in the cinema. In her description of Abramović’s performance Watanabe states that:

> When you enter the museum, Abramovic, wearing a leather jacket and black jeans and holding a machine gun, is sitting on the chair at the center of the stage, and stares at the spectators. The athletic Abramovic carrying a machine gun gives off a powerful impression, but a part of a crotch of the black jeans which she wears is completely removed. Her pubic hair and sexual organs were visible. The eyes of the audiences were naturally drawn to her crotch. (2005: 3)

Abramović’s decision to include the images in a project which has been described by the Guggenheim museum, that involved her re-performing ‘seminal performance works by her peers’ (2005: 1), supports my reading of the images as being able to provide an insight into the piece and the issues that Export’s initial performance explored. This is the case despite the fact that the act depicted in the image never happened and that what actually took place was a different act. Yet, in this sense, they can be viewed as fake or false, in much the same way as the literary prize awarded to Dubinski or the statements from Breitmore’s bank account. Export never entered a Munich cinema with a gun, just as Dubinski and Breitmore were never actual people, but the documentation cited above suggests that they did and that they were.

I wonder what would happen if we began to create false documents and fake memorials. If, as I argued earlier, we are drawn towards these objects because they provide solid, hardwearing, undeniable proof that the person or
the performance existed, what happens when the archive and the memorial become unreliable? What if the memorial was as transient and ephemeral as the life it memorialised? Phelan states that ‘the work of mourning is never clear, never complete, never solid’ (1997: 170). If this is the case perhaps, we should create memorials which are equally, unclear, incomplete and fragile. How might this force us into re-thinking the dichotomy of life and death, the notion that once someone dies, they cease to exist, they stop having a presence, an agency? And how it might provoke us to rethink the dichotomy between performance and documentation? Fake documentation and transient memorials suggest that documentation and death can be as messy and unstable as performance and life and therefore, I argue that they provide opportunities for us to develop our understanding of loss and death. The idea that performance and documentation are not dichotomous opposites is highlighted by Windrich in her discussion of what she terms ‘the tension between acts and performance documents’, as she argues for us to not consider them as dichotomous and instead ‘to locate the interest of performance art precisely in its ability to bridge bodily presence and its representation?’ (2014: 25,26). This idea is more extensively examined by Windrich, as she asserts that ‘An act of commemoration does not relive the past but is itself a present fact of public conduct. The insistence on real presence and experience is thus radically ambiguous, pointing to the past while carrying its political and aesthetic effects

10 This idea has also been examined by others including Diana Taylor in her 2003 text The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas and Philip Auslander in his 2008 book Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture.
into the future’ (2014: 10). What Windrich foregrounds through his emphasis on past and future is the way in which acts of commemoration allow us to remember the past and use it to help us shape the future. Also evident in this statement is the notion that what Windrich calls ‘performative monuments’ work in a similar way to what I term the bodily archive (2014: 10). They commemorate an event in a way that highlights the transient and ephemeral nature of said event, the performance or the life that they commemorate.

The Interrelation between The Archive and The Bodily Archive: Substituting and Doubling

A trend can be viewed in Performance Art for creating objects which simultaneously memorialise a performance and challenge traditional notions of the archive. For example, in his 2015 performance, *Anatomy of a Bite*, artist, Martin O’Brien, collected petri-dishes full of mucus and polaroid images of bite marks, which were then displayed in a gallery following the performance. Like Export’s posters of *Action Pants: Genital Panic*, O’Brien’s collection of mucus-filled petri-dishes and blurry polaroid images memorialise the performance but do not reproduce it. They could be considered to operate in opposition to the archive because of the messy, leaky, unreliable nature through which they document the performances, but I assert that in reality they work together with the archive to enable a different kind of witnessing. As I have already referred, in my discussion of Diana Taylor’s *The Archive and The Repertoire* in chapter three of the thesis, the archive and the repertoire, or bodily archive, are not dichotomous opposites, and can work together to create engaging ways of
viewing and understanding performances. In these cases, the archival material would be the reviews and any photographs of the piece that were not close ups of O’Brien’s bites. These objects work together with the petri-dishes of mucus and polaroid images of the bite marks to provide anyone viewing the aftermath of the performance with an insight into the performance event that took place. These traces and leftovers serve a different, but, I contend, equally important purpose in terms of documenting the performance.

Parallels can be drawn between viewing the leftovers of O’Brien’s performance and looking at the photographs of Export. We may not be able to understand exactly what happened in an Art House Cinema in Munich in 1968 from the photographs, just as when looking at the photographs of O’Brien’s bite marks, we cannot make out which part of his body was bitten or by whom. What we can do however, is understand that Export was interested in challenging ‘the perceived cliché of women’s historical representation in the cinema as passive objects denied agency’ (Manchester 2007: 1) and that O’Brien was examining the intimate and aggressive nature of the bite as well as the blurring of the boundaries between the self and the other that occur in the act of biting someone. This is, I contend, the very essence of memorial. The memorial is not the lost other, just as the posters are not the performance, but they do provide us with a more permanent reminder of the life and existence of the thing which they memorialise. They are a stand in, a substitute for that which we have lost. In this sense they can be understood as an uncanny doubling of the lost other. In his writing on the uncanny Freud asserts that the themes he explores in relation to the uncanny ‘are all concerned with the idea of “double”’ (1919: 9).
Freud goes on to describe the uncanny as something that happens ‘by doubling, dividing and interchanging the self’ (1919: 9). From this point of view, the works discussed in this chapter can be perceived as uncanny because they produce a doubling of the self, the body or the performance. This is particularly the case in the works of Bean and Hershman Leeson in which they multiply themselves and in doing so create a “fake” life. Dubinski and Breitmore appeared, to the people that they interacted with, as real people. However, they were not, because, as I suggested earlier, they could not exist without Bean and Hershman-Leeson. The idea of them appearing real can be linked to Kara Reilly’s discussion of the automaton in her text, *Automata and Mimesis on The Stage of Theatre History*. Reilly describes the automaton as something which ‘are often perceived as if they’re alive’ (2011: 1). Reilly links the automata to the uncanny through a discussion of ‘anxiety about their proper place in the social order’ (2011: 112). Stating that women ‘ grow increasingly unfamiliar and uncanny in the late nineteenth-century when they begin to enter the public sphere’ (2011: 112). Although Reilly’s discussion is routed in the late nineteenth-century it can still be usefully applied to the work of Bean and Hershman Leeson, the difference here is that their uncanniness is not the result of women entering the public sphere but of women re-performing and doubling themselves through the creation of alter-egos, which can be viewed as acting like automata’s.

The notions of doubling and substitution can also be understood in psychoanalytic terms in relation to mourning. As previously outlined, Freud asserts that in order to complete the process of mourning one must let go of the
lost other and the substitution of the other with someone or something else can be perceived as part of that process (1917: 244). The substitute is not the lost other but it is something which remains, something which we can hold onto in order to ease the pain caused by letting go of the lost other. It is, I contend, a step towards adjusting to life without them, accepting their loss. The concept of the substitute is also present in Martin O’Brien’s work with artist Sheree Rose, in which he could be considered to be operating as a substitute for Rose’s partner Bob Flanagan. By creating performances with O’Brien, Rose is arguably memorialising her earlier work and relationship with Flanagan. Whilst the substituted performances are no more permanent than the earlier work with Flanagan, they are potentially more pertinent because they represent the nature of Rose and Flanagan’s performances, just as the petri-dishes of mucus represent O’Brien’s Cystic Fibrosis and the performances that he creates in relation to it. In these cases, the traces of the performance and the visceral, ephemeral nature of the re-performances created from them are more able to represent a fuller sense of the performer and the performance. Perhaps posters that do not really record the performance, messy, blurry photographs, petri-dishes of mucus and ephemeral performances are a more appropriate way of memorialising those whom we have lost, than stone statues and enormous monuments.

Performative Monuments: Alternative modes of remembering and memorialising

As I discussed earlier in the chapter, in traditional monuments the names of the dead are inscribed and Laqueur discusses the importance of this act of
inscription in his statement that ‘names of the dead, like exhumed bodies, can remake history for the present’ (2015: 424). The gravitas and permanence of a monument seems to suggest a false longevity. They imply that the lost other will never be entirely or completely lost, but they also provide us with little more than names and dates by which to remember them. Thus, they only serve to remind us that those that they memorialise lived and died, without providing us with any insight into their life. Despite this fact, the act of inscribing names upon monuments is hugely important in our relationship with death, loss and grief. As Laqueur has argued ‘many acts of naming the dead, like putting their bodies in the ground, are explicitly political: these and not other names - or bodies - can legitimately claim space, and attention, and a part in a publicly important narrative’ (2015: 424). Not only does the naming of the dead highlight their legitimacy and importance but it also creates a narrative. For example, on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial the names are ‘in chronological order of death’, enabling the monument to tell the story of the war and of the veterans’ deaths (2015: 426). However, I assert, that the story of their deaths is not the same as the story of their lives. The act of inscribing the names of the dead on memorials may well allow people to remember and to mourn the dead, as I have already argued, but it does not provide an insight into who they were and how they lived.

Artist Carolee Schneeman, talking about the loss of seventeen of her friends, which she endured between 1992 and 1995, has argued that ‘our forms of grief seemed inadequate: mourning rituals are inadequate if they don’t involve our bodies, if we are not held, clutchted, touched, contacted - as a
correlative to powerful emotions of loss. We want to be dispassionate, frightened as we are of morality, of grief’s isolating absorptions’ (2002: 279). Schneeman’s statement suggests an alternative mode of mourning and remembering, one which foregrounds both the body and the relation to the lost other. In 1995 Schneeman created Mortal Coils, a multi-media installation which included ‘images of faces, bodies, public death notices, projections, mirrors, and ropes coiling slowly in sand’ (1995: 1). Mortal Coils attempted to create what Schneeman has described as a ‘physicalized form or mourning’ by addressing ‘symbolic and figurative representations of death and the incapacity of our culture to attend to personal loss and grief’ (2002: 279). Mortal Coils was Schneeman’s response to the personal losses that she had suffered and although it was not a performance art piece her installation highlighted the faces and bodies of those that she had lost through its images of them. Thus, this enabled a more visceral relationship with the dead than that afforded by more traditional monuments, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. This is why I have positioned the work in relation to re-performance, because it shares re-performances concerns with mourning and memorial.

Living Memorials

The notion of a more personal and physical style of memorial is also evident in the memorial style performances planned by artists, Briar Bates and Andrew Henderson. There is a difference between their work and Schneeman’s, not only in the form of the performances but also because Schneeman was memorialising friends who had died whilst Bates and Henderson were creating
memorials for their own impending deaths. These performances, whilst transient, reflect the artists’ lives and personalities. Henderson’s 2016 performance, *Taking it to the Grave*, (which I described in the previous chapter) was planned as a living funeral, allowing Henderson to design his “funeral the way I would want it as a queer person who wants it to be fabulous and wonderful” (Henderson quoted by Beaudette 2016: 1). Henderson was diagnosed with lymphoblastic lymphoma in 2014. In 2015 his diagnosis became terminal and it was this which triggered the idea for *Taking it to the Grave*. As Martin has explained ‘He [Henderson] lived with the terminal diagnosis for more than a year. He developed his big performance. He brainstormed ideas for a fabulous funeral and joked about his death. He surrounded himself with friends and, in a way, that was his gift to them’ (Martin 2016: 2). The performance, I contend, was Henderson’s way of coming to terms with his illness and imminent death. It was also his way of leaving something of himself behind, and so having control over the way in which he would be remembered. The performance took place the weekend before his death and therefore it served as Henderson’s legacy because during the performance, ‘Andrew was a star. *Taking It To The Grave* was a sensation. Television news reporters flocked to interview him. So did the *Toronto Star*. He posed for photos and talked about his hopes of changing the conversation around death and dying’ (2016: 2).

The performance enabled Henderson to plan and execute his own memorial, allowing him to take control of how he would be remembered. Live performance as memorial may not be as durable as gravestones or monuments, but like the echoes and traces of Export and O’Brien’s
performances, which were discussed earlier, it provides an insight into Henderson’s life.

Figure 20: Andrew Henderson *Taking it to the Grave* (2016)

Henderson’s friend, Erica Nicols, who worked on the project with him, described the piece by stating that “Mourning can happen in a queer, bright, beautiful way. It doesn't have to happen with everybody hanging their heads and wearing drab black” (Nicols quoted by Beaudette 2016: 2). Nicols’ statement, which refers to elements of the piece, such as the use of bright colours and glitter (as seen in figure 20) is suggestive of the fact that there is no correct way to mourn and that perhaps the way in which we mourn loss can be as unique as the loss that we are mourning. Henderson’s funeral performance also queers the somber normativity of the funeral ritual, turning it into a queer event and a celebration of Henderson’s life.

Of course, a crucial factor in Henderson’s case was the fact that it was a living funeral, taking place before he died. Much like Hershman Leeson’s exorcism of Roberta Breitmore, which I discussed earlier in this chapter, Henderson’s performative funeral contained an element of haunting. The
specter of his death haunts the funeral performance and his creation of a living funeral also turns him into a specter, ‘some “thing” that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other’ (Derrida 1994: 6), not dead but dying. He was present at his own funeral like a physical representation of the spirit that he will become following his death.

Henderson’s decision to create a living funeral also meant that he was not only able to plan but also to participate in his memorial, thus epitomising Windrich’s notion of performative memorial, which is designed to be both ephemeral and participatory. This was also the case for artist Briar Bates who chose to be memorialised through a water ballet. Following her death Bates’ ‘friends … [performed] a joyful and awkward water ballet titled “Ankle Deep” in the kiddie wading pool at Volunteer Park’ in Seattle (Kiley 2017:1). Dressed in green swimsuits and caps Bates’ friends danced to a soundtrack in front of passersby. Although Bates, who died from cancer in 2017, was not able to be present at her own memorial in the way that Henderson was in his, her memorial was still participatory as she, ‘wanted her friends … to perform a joyful and awkward water ballet titled “Ankle Deep”’ (Kiley 2017: 1). Bates conceived and planned the idea, but, unlike Henderson, did not intend to participate in its execution. Bates was involved in choreographing and directing the ballet: “she’d watch video of the proceedings and give detailed director’s notes” (Kiley 2017: 1). Despite her involvement in the planning and rehearsal stages the piece itself wasn’t performed until after Bates’ death. As Kiley has stated, “people don’t normally memorialize death by doing cartwheels in a wading pool” (Kiley 2017: 1).
As figures 21 and 22 and show Ankle Deep appears bright and fun, contrasting it with more traditional forms of memorial, and the unusual way in which Bates chose to be memorialised links it with Henderson’s living funeral. Both artists explored their power and agency, their ability to control the ways in which they would be remembered. This is in contrast to Hannah Wilke, who I discussed in chapter three of the thesis. Wilke’s piece, *Intra-venus Series*, was a project that Wilke began but which was continued by her husband Donald Goddard and not realised until after her death. As such, Wilke’s involvement and agency in the realisation of the piece, unlike Bates’, was limited. As one of Bates’ friends who participated in Ankle Deep said “let’s face it — she [Bates] still has creative control as a dead lady” (Kiley 2017: 1).

But Bates and Henderson’s work also share another crucial element, the fact that they are as temporal as the life they memorialise. Each performance will end but it will leave behind it echoes and traces which allow for the possibility of re-performances, thus indicating the ways in which Henderson and Bates will be leave behind echoes and traces in the memories of those who knew them. In this sense at least, I contend that live performance as memorial is more fitting than concrete, bronze or marble used in statues and gravestones.
Live performance, as memorial, reminds us of the fleeting and fragile nature of life and the very real fact that nothing lasts forever, because of the transient nature of live performance. Like the cinema which Phelan discusses in relation to the film Silverlake Life: The View from Here, which I will examine later in the chapter ‘such art forms might lead us to believe that like the dead who have reached the end of life we will reach an end to grief’ (1997: 171). Of course, not even the more traditional memorials will last forever; the statues and gravestones will eventually erode, disappearing slowly until what remains barely resembles the monument that was originally created. This is highlighted in Percy Shelley’s poem Ozymandias, in which he describes the remains of a monument as ‘two vast and trunkless legs of stone’ and ‘a shattered visage’ (1818: 1). Shelley’s poem foregrounds the permeability of the monument but also the rather romantic notion of nature and its ability to destroy everything, even stone monuments which are generally considered solid and impermeable.

Moreover, just because a monument is made of a solid material does not mean that it cannot be performative, nor does it prevent spectators from being able to interact with it. The interaction between spectator and monument is, for Windrich, a key feature of a performative monument, which he describes as ‘an object or site that contractually binds its audience in self-aware acts of commemoration’ (2014: 35). Windrich examines the relationship between more traditional forms of memorial and the potential for monuments to be performative when she asks:

‘Could a monument consisting of two 75 meter-long granite walls function as a performative monument?’ (2014: 10). She answers ‘it does. Visitors to
Maya Lin’s *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington trace the names engraved into the stone on pieces of paper to take home. Indeed, the volunteers, organised by The National Park Service, hand out pencils and tracing paper, cementing what was at first a spontaneous and personal (if foreseeable) mode of interaction’ (2014: 10).

The issue here is the way in which documentation and re-performance and more traditional monuments and performative monuments are viewed in opposition to one another. As the example of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* makes clear, the two things are not mutually exclusive and one is not necessarily more appropriate as a memorial or as performance documentation than the other. It is the ways in which the two ideas interact with and work alongside one another that make them so interesting. Hershman Leeson’s documentation of Breitmore is yet another interesting example of the relationship between re-performance and documentation. As Mock explains ‘starting in 2006, Hershman also began to restage and remediate Roberta Breitmore’s work in the online virtual community of Second Life. Here, wearing the same dress, and looking rather more glamorous, she is called Roberta Ware.’ (2012: 4). Through this remediation Hershman Leeson effectively reincarnated Breitmore almost 30 years after her death/exorcism in an Italian Crypt, multiplying Breitmore once again in Ware. Within Second Life ‘a Roberta Breitmore gallery was created… in which visitors can view images of Roberta Breitmore and the ‘ephemeral’ documentation of her life,’ (2012: 4). Ware is Breitmore in avatar form but crucially she exists ‘trapped in her own virtual archival gallery, surrounded by images of her past lives’ (2012: 15). Ware
simultaneously documents and multiplies Breitmore. Her existence, together with the virtual gallery, both re-perform and document Hershman Leeson’s performance of Breitmore. Hershman Leeson’s decision to document Breitmore in this way links to the multiplicity evident within her creation of Breitmore, making it a fitting form of documentation for the performance. Breitmore was a multiplication of Hershman Leeson, the ‘Roberta Multiples’ were multiplications of Breitmore and in turn further multiplications of Hershman Lesson and Ware is a further multiplication of all the previous incarnations of Roberta Breitmore. The crucial difference here is that Ware is less vulnerable than all the previous versions of Breitmore. As Mock notes ‘I find her glossy surface difficult to rend apart; her blonde hair is no longer a wig liable to slippage; her body is never at risk’ (2012: 15). Ware, like traditional memorials and forms of archival documentation, is presented as durable and as such she not only documents, re-performs and further multiplies Breitmore, she also memorialises her. As I suggested earlier, perhaps there is no correct way in which to document a performance or memorialise a loved one, and the way we choose to do this could be determined not by tradition but by the way in which we can come to terms with the loss, or, in some cases the way in which they have asked to be remembered.

A further example of an unconventional memorial can be found in the creation of the film Silverlake Life: The View from Here. The film, which is analysed by Phelan in Mourning Sex, can be viewed as a way of memorialising the lives of Tom Joslin who ‘died of AIDS on July 1, 1991’ and his lover Mark Massi who died ‘eleven months later’ (1997: 154). Silverlake Life and Phelan’s
analysis of it should be considered in relation to the AIDS epidemic as this is the context in which Joslin was living, dying and creating the film and, as I have already mentioned, in which Phelan wrote *Mourning Sex*. Phelan states that the film was ‘intended in part as a love letter to Massi, and in part as a political statement about the impact of AIDS on the material, familial, and cultural body, the film is also a thanatography, a study in dying’ (1997: 154). What Phelan’s comment makes clear is that whilst *Silverlake Life* can be seen as a study in dying in a broader sense it remains clearly rooted in the social and political context in which it was created. It is not only a study in dying but a study of the impact death, and specifically deaths from AIDS in America in the 1980’s and early 1990’s, has on the body. Here I use the term body to refer to the ‘material, familial and cultural’ bodies cited by Phelan (1997: 154). *Silverlake Life* examines the effects AIDS has on Joslin’s physical body, but also on the bodies of his friends and family members as well as on the cultural bodies of which he is a part. In a similar way to that in which Schneeman’s installation *Mortal Coils* (1994-5), which I discussed earlier in the chapter, examined the effects the deaths of her friends had on her.

In her description of the film Phelan explains how ‘shortly after his diagnosis, Joslin began a video diary and plotted a film that would document his life and death’ and how for Joslin ‘the making of the film, rather than the taking of his pills, is the way to enhance, if not prolong, his life’ (1997: 154 and156). According to Phelan Joslin’s desire to create the film can be linked with a desire to enhance or prolong his life because, although it will not prevent or postpone his biological death, the film will provide Joslin with a way to continue, to be
remembered and memorialised. This is similar to the ways in which artists Jo Spence and Hannah Wilke, memorialised their lives through photography and film, which I analysed in chapter four, and can be understood in relation to Barthes’ theory of photography as a way to capture the dead. Phelan points to this link when she states that ‘Theories of photography, and especially those proposed by Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes, have emphasized the link between death and the still image captured by photographic camera...the film [Silverlake Life] suggests that...cinema is one place where the still moving body leaves a trace’ (1997: 156). As Phelan observes ‘transferring his life to film, Joslin renders his body a body of film. This film can be edited, replotted, revised’ (1997: 155) Life on film can be replotted, revised and re-lived but, depending on whether or not you believe in re-incarnation, actual life can’t, you only get one life and one death. By making the film Joslin provides himself with a way to continue existing beyond the end of his biological life, his body can become a filmic one, one that in theory at least, is less vulnerable than his physical body and that will survive his death. In actuality of course nothing lasts forever and eventually the discs or tapes containing the film will become damaged and decayed but they will live longer than Joslin and in doing so enable him to create his own memorial.

In a similar way to Henderson and Bates Joslin takes control over the way in his life/death will be remembered. He selects the ways in which his life, and death will be captured and recorded. However, there is a crucial difference between Silverlake Life and Bates and Henderson’s work. Joslin died before the film was completed. Following his death Massi filmed Joslin and ‘after the
deaths of Joslin and Massi, their friend, Peter Friedman, a former student of Joslin’s, edited over forty hours of video into the two-hour film, *Silverlake Life: The View from Here’* (1997: 154). Joslin may have come up with the idea for the film and begun the process but it was Friedman who edited it. This can be compared with Hannah Wilke’s *Intravenus Series* which, as discussed earlier, was a project that she conceived and began during her battle with Lymphoma and which her husband Donald Goddard completed after her death. The links between Wilke and Joslin are further enhanced by the fact that as part of the *Intravenus Series* the exhibition *Intravenus Tapes* was created and these tapes, like *Silverlake Life*, explore the ways in which cinema ‘allows time itself to be edited, cut, replayed’ (1997: 160). As Phelan argues, ‘for *Silverlake Life*… much of the art of the film is its editing. Friedman edited images that Joslin and Massi created. Joslin, however, also wrote a script for the film that contained material Joslin was never able to shoot. Friedman, … turned the forty hours of footage into a two-hour film’ (1997: 160). It is obvious from Phelan’s discussion that it was Friedman and not Joslin who ultimately decided how Joslin’s death would be recorded and commemorated because it was Friedman who selected and edited the footage in order to create the film. Yet, despite Joslin’s lack of agency over the final film it is clear that for him creating *Silverlake Life* was important. In the film Joslin states that ‘all of his desperation…, is reserved for making *Silverlake Life*’ thus suggesting that finding a way to memorialise himself is his key concern (1997: 156).
The Temporalities of Illness and Death

Phelan describes *Silverlake Life* as ‘an empathetic interrogation of what it is to die, and by extension, of what it is to witness death’ (1997: 156). She also asserts that ‘Silverlake Life reminds us that we still have no idea what death “is” - what being the being of death comprises - but the film wagers that the dead body might well have some movement in it’ (1997: 156). What Phelan is suggesting here is that death is the one thing that we will never be able to understand because we cannot live through it and that even witnessing the deaths of others cannot help us to comprehend our own demise. Witnessing the death of the other through film further complicates our understanding of death because in *Silverlake Life* Joslin’s death is not the end. Whilst ‘temporality constructs a causality that is apparently precise in regard to life and death; the body lives before it dies. The living body is healthy; without health it dies’ (Phelan 1997: 159). This can also be applied to the work of Martin O’Brien, whose work I discussed earlier in the chapter. O’Brien as a Cystic Fibrosis sufferer, lives with a terminal illness, which I assert disrupts the ‘precise causality’ that Phelan discussed in relation to *Silverlake Life* (1997: 159), because O’Brien’s body is a living body but not necessarily a healthy one. Whilst he may fit into the logic that ‘death happens when the illness within the body surmounts the health within the body’ (1997: 159), he proves that the path from life to death, from healthy to dying is far from linear. In O’Brien’s performance *Anatomy of a Bite* the performance begins with him lying motionless on a metal bed covered with a white sheet and his illness is evident in one of the first actions, the beating of his chest, which causes him to cough
up mucus. Contrastingly, later actions such as biting O’Brien’s body produce exactly the response you might expect and therefore do not indicate illness or lack of health. Thus, O’Brien is presented as a corpse, then as ill and then as healthy, subverting the linear temporalities of illness and death.

Similarly, in Silverlake Life time does not follow this linear path but rather like Derrida’s notion of time in Specters of Marx ‘time is disarticulated, dislocated, dislodged ... both out of order and mad’ (1994: 18; emphasis in original). As Phelan has noted, at the start of the film ‘we see Joslin’s first tape, in which he announces with great happiness that he is about to embark on the diary, and then we see his emaciated profile as the title sequence rolls’ (1997: 162). What this non-linear notion of time enables Silverlake Life to do is ‘suggest that dying, like living, is an “is” - its being fills the present. Dying is not in the future; death is not in the past. Dying is’ (1997: 167). Within this non-linear structure of time gone mad, to which both Derrida and Phelan refer, the dead, like performance, are not confined to the past but have the potential to leave something of themselves behind which can be used in future lives and future performances. Thus, re-performance and other performance works which examine issues related to death and memorial, such as those analysed in this chapter, provides performance with a possible future.

This is as true for Silverlake Life as it is for Wilke’s Intra-Venus Tapes because just like Intra-Venus Tapes in Silverlake Life we witness Joslin’s death not in chronological order but in a non-linear order which provides Joslin the opportunity to wager ‘that the dead body might well have some movement in it’, because we are able to witness Joslin alive after his death (1997: 156). This is
evident both within the narrative of the film, in which Joslin’s illness is not presented as a linear path in which his health deteriorates until his death, but also because we watch the film in the knowledge that both Joslin and Massi’s deaths have already happened. Just like when we experience the exhibition *Intra-Venus Tapes* we do so in the knowledge of Wilke’s death. With *Silverlake Life* we also know that the film has been edited, that there are things that we do not see, events which we do not witness. Phelan asserts that ‘the “theory” of time proposed by *Silverlake Life* is one that raises a general question about the status and function of art as memorial’ (1997: 156), and I contend that far from preventing our ability to read *Silverlake Life* as a memorial, the construction of time within the film enhances this ability. Life is not linear; the dead do not exist solely in the past but also in the present as we carry them with us in our memories and potentially in the future as we pass on stories and share memories with others who may only come to know them from these stories. This system of passing on is the bodily archive that I discussed in chapter two in relation to re-performance and Diana Taylor’s notion of repertoire, as it is, I contend, something which enables us to take the echoes and traces of the lives of those we have lost and hand them over to future generations. This is much like the system of repetition and passing on that I have claimed is an integral part of the process of re-performance.

**Militant Mourning, Public Grief and Grievable Lives**

The case studies examined in this chapter all serve as pertinent reminders that death and performance have an unusually close relationship. Live performance
is predicated on the notion of bodies sharing a space and a lived experience, but just like life, the experience of a live performance cannot last forever. However, the work of the artists that have been explored in this chapter also reminds us that, just like performance, the dead live on in our shared experiences and memories and that those experiences and memories can be passed on to future generations. This notion of sharing experiences of loss and memories of the dead is explored by Phelan in her discussion of grief. Phelan states that, ‘I’ve been wondering about the relationship between private and public grief and trying to figure out if there is any political agency in public grief’ (1997: 130). Phelan goes on to discuss the relationship between mourning and militancy, drawing on Douglas Crimp’s 1989 essay ‘Mourning and Militancy’ to assert that ‘mourning can itself be a form of militancy - an expression of the ego’s defence against its own death’ (1997: 130). For Phelan, and for Crimp, militant mourning can provide not only political agency but also a way for the ego to survive the process of mourning and the loss of the other.

It is important to note here that Crimp and Phelan were writing in the late 1980’s and 1990’s respectively and that their writing is situated within the context of the AIDS epidemic, a time when many deaths from AIDS could not be publicly acknowledged. Now, over twenty years after Phelan was writing, I am writing in a different context but one which retains echoes of what Phelan and Crimp were arguing, because we still live in a world in which mourning can be militant. This is a world in which mourning can be used as a political tool and a world in which some deaths cannot be publicly mourned. This is something highlighted by Judith Butler in her 2004 book *Precarious Life: The Powers of*
Mourning and Violence. Here Butler argues that post 9/11 the American government encouraged militant mourning in response to the loss of American lives in the terror attacks and the subsequent War on Terror. Butler asserts that ‘it is important to ask what, politically, might be made of grief besides a cry for war’ (2004:XII), whereas Crimp and Phelan were suggesting that militant mourning could be used as a means for protesting against the government’s lack of action in response to the AIDS crisis. This is evident in Phelan’s statement that ‘Crimp argues that for gay men responding to the AIDS crisis, mourning has been efficiently converted into political action’ (1997: 130). However, in the context of 9/11 Butler argues that the American government used militant grief as a tool to support the war on terror, ‘President Bush announced on September 21 that we have finished grieving and that now it is time for resolute action to take the place of grief’ (2004: 29; emphasis in original). Despite the fact that President Bush called for an end to grief, I contend that what he was doing was exactly what Crimp said gay men had done in response to the AIDS crisis, using grief in order to provoke people into action. Bush and Crimp were arguing for a militant form of grief, in which those lives that had been lost were mourned actively. These are ways that would hopefully prevent further deaths in the future. However, in Bush’s call to action he did not prevent more deaths, instead he caused more deaths by entering into the war on terror. The deaths of soldiers, civilians and those suspected of terrorist activity. In this very real sense, Bush’s call for an end to grief was actually the trigger for much more grief.
Phelan links the idea of militant mourning to the concept of narcissism by stating that ‘Narcissism emerges not out of an excess of self-love, as is commonly assumed, but rather as a “militant” acknowledgement of loss. It is that loss and the ego’s aggressive response to it, that motivates cultural and psychic reproduction’ (1997: 130). What Phelan’s statement suggests is that narcissism is a necessary part of the process of mourning, a way for the self to re-build in the face of loss. Phelan goes on to explain than in a Freudian view of mourning ‘the psychic process of mourning can take one of two paths, depending upon the prevailing form of identification between the one who grieves and the lost object’ (1997: 130). Thus,

if identifications are expressions of “something in common,” the mode of recognising that commonality differs. If the person who is mourning has had a hysterical identification with the lost object, he or she retains that cathexis and develops what we might call a contiguous relationship to the lost object. ... Narcissistic identifications, on the other hand, cause the person who mourns to abandon the cathexis when the object is lost. This abandonment, however, is not accomplished simply. The object-cathexis must be aggressively killed off and discarded. This is the work of mourning. (1997: 131)

Phelan’s argument then is that a militant, narcissistic form of mourning allows the mourner to overcome their loss by separating themselves from the lost other and re-creating themselves without the person or thing which they have lost. This is much like Hershman Leeson freeing herself from Breitmore by exorcising her, which I discussed earlier in the chapter. In this sense, it can be argued that in order to survive the death of the other we must undergo our own exorcism. We must exorcise that part of ourselves, which is entangled with them, like amputating a trapped a limb in order to free the rest of the body. The limb analogy highlights the transformative power of mourning. This notion is
emphasised by Butler’s statement that ‘one mourns when one accepts that by the loss one undergoes one will be changed, possibly forever’ (2003: 21). Butler goes on to state that in mourning ‘I think I have lost “you” only to discover that “I” have gone missing as well’ (2003: 22). Butler’s statements foreground the transformative effects of mourning and loss and the fact that in order to survive the loss of the other we must also survive loosing part of ourselves. This can be linked to performances such as O’Brien’s 2015 piece Anatomy of a Bite, which I discussed earlier in the chapter, because works such as this focus on the relationship between the performer and the audience member(s). Crucial to both Butler and Phelan’s arguments is the idea that our lives are entangled with the lives of others and that it is these ties which ‘constitute what we are, … that compose us’ (Butler 2003: 23). Butler goes on to say that ‘what grief displays,… is the thrall in which our relations with others holds us, in ways that often interrupt the self-conscious account of ourselves we might try to provide, the ways that challenge the very notion of ourselves as autonomous and in control’ (2003: 23). Butler’s comment suggests that the impact of grief and mourning is caused because we cannot come to terms not only with the loss that we have endured, but also with who we have become, who we are in a world without someone to whom we were previously tied to in ways which we did not comprehend until we were forced to answer the question “Who “am” I, without you?’ (Butler 2003: 23).

According to Phelan, as I have highlighted above, in order to survive such losses, the mourner must create a substitute for their loss. She states that ‘narcissism is the name of both the wound and the cure: the ego attempts to
“become healthy” - to recover from the loss of the ego-ideal by creating out of itself a substitute object for that loss.’ (1997: 131). This, I assert, is also what happens in the process of creating a re-performance, as seen in my earlier analysis of Hershman Leeson’s performances of Roberta Breitmore. The re-performance becomes a substitute for the initial lost performance, a way of understanding the initial performance, just as the ego must create a substitute in order to survive its loss. The motivation to re-perform, I argue, is the same as the motivation that Phelan claims lies behind the motivation to imitate or create a substitute for lost other, ‘the desire to retouch, revise, re-interpret how one has lost, is lost’ (1997: 150). Crucial to Phelan’s discussion is the notion that grief and mourning are highly personal and the way in which we mourn is determined by our relationships and identifications with those we have lost. Building upon Phelan’s discussion and linking it with the examples of Bates and Henderson’s memorial performances I question whether our ways of commemorating and memorialising the dead should be as individual as the work of mourning and therefore whether it is possible to step outside social conventions surrounding memorial in order to do so. I am not suggesting here that there is a dichotomy with social convention on one side and individual ways of mourning on the other. Rather I am suggesting that the ways in which we mourn could encompass both elements and the two operate in relation to one another, much like the relationship between public and private grief that Phelan suggests and the relationship between performance and documentation, which was discussed earlier. Exploring these relationships between individual loss and social conventions of mourning and between public and private grief may
also enable us to find ways to grieve for the lives of those who are viewed as ungrievable.

As Butler has stated ‘some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operated to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human; what counts as a liveable life and a grievable death?’ (2003: XV). Here, Butler is referring to ‘the erasure from public representation of the names, images and narratives of those the US has killed’ during the War on Terror but this is not the first and only time that lives have been seen as ungrievable. The AIDS Quilt, which I discussed earlier in the chapter, also sought to memorialise ungrievable lives by placing the names of the dead ‘on the San Fransisco Federal Office Building at a time in the history of the disease when it was little understood, often seen as a stigma, and invisible to those in power’ (Lacqueur 2015: 428). The AIDS Quilt then, attempted to highlight deaths which had been ignored or disavowed by the American government and this is also what Chris Burden did in his ‘1991 sculpture, The Other Vietnam Memorial, ‘in which Burden attempted to name the Vietnamese military and civilian deaths from the war’ (Laqueur 2015: 430). What these examples show is that throughout history there have been lives which have been politically ungrievable in a conventional sense and which, as a result, have been erased from public view and works such as those discussed in this chapter may enable us to find alternative ways to grieve for these deaths.
Conclusion

In summary, this research has applied a range of Performance Studies theories focused on ephemerality, re-performance and documentation together with various philosophical notions of death, loss and mourning in order to examine the relationship between performance and death. In doing so, it has questioned the impact that the recent trend for re-performance has had on the relationship between re-performance and death. In her 1993 text, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, Peggy Phelan states that ‘performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so it becomes something other than performance’ (1993: 146; emphasis in original). This statement became the starting point for this research project in which I have examined the impact that the recent trend for re-performance has had on the ontological belief that performance is predicated on disappearance. The research has examined the relationship between re-performance and death and has questioned whether re-performance can be seen as a way of documenting performance and allowing performance to continue “living” in the present. Through demonstrating that it can be seen this way, it has then examined, the implications, stemming from the presence of re-performance, for performance’s status as a transient and ephemeral act that disappears once the performance is over.

This thesis works in dialogue with Phelan’s essay in *Unmarked* as well as her later writing in *Mourning Sex* and other performance studies texts such as Diana Taylor’s *The Archive and The Repertoire* and Rebecca Schneider’s *Performing Remains*. It builds upon Phelan’s axiom that performance cannot be
saved, recorded or documented without being transformed into something other than performance. Thus, emphasizing that the results of this transformation can be just as important and significant as the initial performance itself. Through an investigation of its case studies this research has argued that, whilst performance may become transformed through the process of documentation, it does not necessarily disappear. It also argues that this transformation is key, not only to our understanding of notions of performance and re-performance, but also to the relationship between performance and death. In *Mourning Sex* Phelan contends that ‘theatre and performance have especially potent lessons for those interested in re-assessing our relations to mourning, grief and loss’ (1997: 3). In this thesis I argue that performance does not teach us these lessons because it disappears, but because it can be transformed, just as those left behind are transformed by the losses that they suffer, the deaths of loved ones which they survive. In *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* Butler asserts that mourning is an ‘experience of transformation’ (2003: 21), and this is one of the parallels that this thesis draws between the process of mourning and the process of re-performance. With each re-performance there is a transformation, as though through each attempt to retain the initial performance a little more of it is lost. Yet, it never disappears entirely and it is these transformed versions of performances and the echoes and traces that have been leftover in archives and memories that, I claim, enables re-performance to teach us about death, loss and mourning.
Echoes and Traces

In *Mourning Sex* Phelan describes how as a child she tore a pop up anatomy of a man out of children’s science book. Phelan explains that she ‘wanted the outline of that body, its paper ghost, much more than I wanted the illustrated body’ (1997: 2). What Phelan’s story encapsulates is the way in which absence can be signified. The space, the hole where the pop up anatomy had been was an indicator of its absence, its loss but also its presence. As Féral has explained, in her article ‘How to define presence effects: The Work of Janet Cardiff’, there is a view ‘that presence is more strongly felt when there is a rupture, a straying away or a failing of presence, an absence of presence’ (2012: 32). This thesis has analysed signifiers of absence, asserting that when viewed as an ‘affective outline’ such signifiers can help us to understand and interpret loss (Phelan 1997: 3). This thesis has argued that what Richard Schechner terms the ‘aftermath’ of a performance (2002: 248), much like the echoes and traces of a life, can be used to create new performances and new meanings which can help us to examine the concepts of death, loss and mourning. Making links between Phelan’s idea of an ‘affective outline’ (1997: 2), Schechner’s notion of ‘aftermath’ (2002: 248), and Freud’s concept of mourning (1917), this research has argued that re-performance mirrors the process of mourning. This is because in the absence of the initial performance or the lost other we cling to the echoes and traces in order to try and retain something of what we have lost.

In her discussion of mourning, which is influenced by Freud’s earlier writing on the subject, Phelan states that ‘the hollow of the outline might allow
us to understand more deeply why we long to hold bodies that are gone’ (1997: 3). Throughout this thesis I have examined this longing, both in terms of bodies and death but also in terms of re-performance, demonstrating the parallels between the desire to hold onto the lost other and the desire to re-perform. Drawing upon examples of the work of artists Sheree Rose, Bob Flanagan and Martin O’Brien I have examined the use of a substitute in order to help us come to terms with loss, arguing that in O’Brien and Rose’s collaborative performances O’Brien has been used as a stand in for Flanagan. This thesis has used this example together with Ron Athey and Julie Tolentino’s 2011 performance Self-oblimeration #1 Ecstatic to contend that through the process of re-performance performances can be passed on from one body to another through a form of bodily transmission.

**Bodily Transmission: The Bodily Archive**

This thesis demonstrated that performances as well as memories can be inscribed upon and stored within the body, and that they can be passed on from one body to another in a form of bodily transmission. This builds upon Diana Taylor’s notion of repertoire as outlined in her text *The Archive and The Repertoire* and led this thesis to present the idea of a bodily archive. It argued that the re-performance works of Rose, Flanagan and O’Brien and Athey and Tolentino all seek to create a bodily archive of initial performances. The research has also argued that the notions of a bodily archive and bodily transmission are crucial to the process of re-performance and that re-performance is a means through which performance’s disappearance can be
slowed. However, like Taylor, this thesis emphasises the interaction between the archive and the repertoire. It follows Taylor's assertion that the repertoire, or here, bodily archive, is not the only way of recording a performance and that the bodily archive can work in relation with rather than in opposition to more traditional archival forms. As a consequence, this research focused on the echoes and traces of a performance, once again utilising Richard Schechner's theory of aftermath in order to explore the ways in which the leftovers of a performance can be fruitfully employed within the practice of re-performance. It also analysed the ways in which these objects, some of which may not traditionally be viewed as archival material, can interact with the more formal records of the performance to not only assist with the process of re-performance but also to allow a fuller understanding of the performance event that took place. Here the work of Martin O'Brien and Ron Athey was once again analysed but this time the thesis focused on the visceral, bodily remnants of their performance, in O'Brien's case, mucus and in Athey's, blood. Using these case studies as examples the research asserted that whilst objects such as bodily fluids are viewed as abject and do not normally fall within the realm of traditionally archivable material they are significant in terms of the aftermath of the performances which produced them. Therefore, I contend that the fluid aftermath should be considered part of the aftermath of the performance and examined alongside the more traditionally archived objects and re-performances within the bodily archive. Taylor has argued that the traditional archive and the repertoire should not be viewed in binary opposition. This thesis builds upon this by emphasising the physical nature of the repertoire through its
use of the term bodily archive and suggesting that the bodily archive and the traditional archive provide a fuller insight into past performances when they are considered in relation to one another.

Haunting and Specters

This research has also examined Jacques Derrida’s concept of the specter as discussed in *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, The Work of Mourning and The New International*. Placing this concept in dialogue with Taylor and Phelan’s ideas and applying it to the performances created by the artists used as case studies, I have argued that the bodily archive and re-performances more generally are haunted by the specters of the initial performance. In chapter two this research examined Rose, Flanagan and O’Brien’s work in relation to the specter, asserting that Flanagan is a specter who haunts Rose and O’Brien’s performances. These notions of the specter and hauntology, also conceptualised by Derrida, were linked to the concepts of mourning and non-linear time, as this thesis contended that performance, the specter and the dead do not remain in their own time. This is because ‘the present can disrupt the past … neither are entirely “over” or discrete but partially and porously persist’ (Schneider 2011: 15). Here the research made connections between Derrida’s concept of time and Rebecca’s Schneider’s exploration of it in her 2011 work, *Performing Remains*, in order to argue that in re-performance, as in mourning, the linearity of time is disrupted as through re-performance past performances can be made to “live on” in the present. This notion has also been examined in relation to death and survival in order to claim that re-performance can allow
performance to survive because it provides a way of documenting performance whilst allowing it to remain a performance. If a performance can be passed on through a process of bodily transmission, if its aftermath can be gathered up and used to generate new performances and if each of these performances can be stored in a bodily archive, then, this thesis contends that a performance can potentially live on forever. Thus, like mourning, it may never be ‘clear, never complete’ (Phelan 1997: 171). As Phelan has said, she does ‘not believe there is an end of grief’ (1997: 171), and through re-performance I do not believe there is an end of performance. Therefore, this thesis has asserted that the processes of re-performance, mourning and grief share many similarities and that it is through these similarities that re-performance allows for the strengthening of the relationship between performance and death.

The Process of Dying

Throughout this research I have argued that re-performance, mourning and grief are all processes, something which requires a working through. However, I have also argued that in performances which seek to document death dying can also be viewed as a process. This is not the same type of process as those suggested above and does not require an active working through but is, I contend, a process nonetheless. Through its analysis of the performative documentation of illness and death in Hannah Wilke’s *Intra-venus Series* and *Intra-venus Tapes* as well as Jo Spence’s *The Final Project* and Tom Joslin’s *Silverlake Life: The View from Here* this thesis has examined the ways in which
performance can enable dying to be viewed, not only as a process, but as a non-linear one.

Here, the research once again drew upon Schneider’s *Performing Remains* and her discussion of the ‘temporal leak’, which she asserts occurs in acts of re-performance (2011: 10). The thesis argued that in the works cited above dying is seen in non-linear ways. For example, in *Silverlake Life* because the film has not been edited in a linear way, we jump from seeing Joslin near the end of his life to seeing him at the start of his journey with AIDS. As Phelan explains, ‘like the disease it documents, *Silverlake Life* barrages the viewer with highs and lows, with upswings and depleting views. As the temporal discrepancies continue, the notion that death is a straight turn off the road marked “health” is undercut’ (1997: 162-163). I contend that this is the case not only because of the way in which *Silverlake Life* has been edited but also because of the fact that when watching the film, the spectator is witnessing Joslin dying in the knowledge that he is already dead.

This idea is also explored in relation to Wilke and Spence’s work, in which I argue, that the act of witnessing someone dying when you already know the outcome of that process disrupts linear notions of time. If the dead are confined to the realm of the past how can we witness their demise after the event? In the case of Wilke’s *Intra-venus Tapes* this research argues that the way in which the footage is edited compounds the non-linear temporality experienced when viewing the piece. In the exhibition the tapes are shown on a series of monitors, each of the screens shows a different excerpt of the tapes and as a result the spectator witnesses a ‘temporal tangle’ as each
multiplication of Wilke shows her at a different time (Schneider 2011: 10). Thus, in Wilke's work, just as in Spence's and Joslin's we witness someone dying in a non-linear way. Therefore, we are witnessing a past event in the present as the bodies that we are watching appear alive despite the fact that we know they are not.

This analysis of photographic and cinematic documentation of the process of dying is supported by a reading of Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* which assists with this thesis' reading of our desire to retain or capture the lost other in films, photographs and memories. In *Camera Lucida* Barthes claims that in being photographed ‘I am truly becoming a specter’ and describes the act of photography as ‘death in which his [the photographer's] gesture will embalm me’ (2000: 14). What Barthes’ comments make clear is the arresting impact of photography, its ability to capture and retain a moment. Whilst there is a crucial difference between photography and film, in the sense that ‘photography, stops the body, arresting its movement through time’ whilst film retains the body’s movement (Phelan, 1997: 156), I assert that it still captures a moment or period of time, a glimpse of a life or a performance which can be retained for future viewing. Thus, this thesis argued that both photography and cinema present dying as a non-linear narrative which disrupts an understanding of time and of life as being things which only ever move forward. The film and photographic performances analysed in this thesis deliberately play with the non-linearity of both time and life. Therefore, enabling us to return to the past, to review and remember lives in much the same way that re-performances allow
us to return to, review and remember initial performances. Thus, this prevents them from being confined to the past and suggesting possible futures.

**Afterlives, Survival and Re-performance**

The idea of the future has been examined alongside notions of re-performance, mourning, survival and annihilation through this thesis’ analysis of Simon Critchley’s 2011 text, *The Book of Dead Philosophers* and Judith Butler’s 2004 book *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. In *The Book of Dead Philosophers* Critchley asserts that ‘it is, finally, the fear of death that enslaves us and leads us towards either temporary oblivion or the longing for immortality’ (2011: 3). Biologically speaking immortality is impossible but Critchley contends that it is out ‘longing for immortality’ that drives us to create a legacy, something which we can leave behind when we die (2011: 3). It is a way for us to prevent our complete annihilation and ensure that we will be remembered. This desire is analysed through works such as those created by Andrew Henderson and Briar Bates who devised, and, in Henderson’s case, performed in, their own memorials.

This research has argued that performances like those of Henderson and Bates exercise a desire to have authorship and authority over the way that we will be remembered and to be memorialised in more personal, less traditional ways. Drawing upon Mechtild Widrich’s 2014 text, *Performative Monuments*, Thomas Laqueur’s *The Work of the Dead* and Phelan’s *Mourning Sex* this research has argued that performative monuments are predicated on interaction and provide ways for those left behind to mourn and remember
those that they have lost. By analysing less traditional memorials such as those by Bates and Henderson, as well as Wilke’s *Intra-Venus Tapes* and Joslin’s *Silverlake Life* alongside more traditional memorials such as *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, this thesis has proposed that both types of memorial are as significant as one another in terms of helping us to understand loss and mourning.

I have also asserted that this is particularly pertinent in the current global climate of war and terror and in light of what Critchley describes as ‘an overwhelming terror of annihilation’ (2011: 1). This is also something which is addressed in Butler’s text, written in the context of America post September 11th 2001, events which Butler asserts ‘were, and are, cause for fear and for mourning;’ (2004: XI). In this current climate it is important to ask how we can survive, particularly how we can survive the loss of the other, and this research has argued that performance, and more specifically re-performance can help us to understand how to survive these loses. This is not because they allow for exact repetitions of initial performances, not because the dead can be brought back to life or because they can in some way help us to prevent our own deaths but because the process of re-performance mirrors the process of mourning. Mourning is not something which is done singularly, it is a process of letting go which must be undertaken bit by bit, just as through re-performance the initial performance is transformed bit by bit. It is also important to note that through re-performance new performances and meanings are created, just as we must learn to re-make ourselves in light of our loss.
Final Conclusion

Through an analysis of a diverse collection of case studies of performances by different artists which range from purposeful attempts to re-perform an initial performance to re-performances which reference the initial performance in some way and performances which seek to memorialise the life of the artist; this thesis has argued that rather than destabilising performance’s ability to prepare us for loss re-performances strengthens this. It has asserted that this is the case because the way in which re-performances transform initial performances mirrors the way in which people are transformed by loss.

The research has also examined the desire to re-perform, claiming that this can be compared with the desire to hold onto the echoes and traces of a loved one, and is therefore reflective of the process of mourning in which in order to survive the loss of the other we must learn to let go of them, but that this cannot be done all at once. Much like re-performance, this is a process and one through which our understanding of death can be enhanced by experiencing re-performances in which something new and meaningful can be made from the leftovers or aftermath of a performance.

This thesis has developed upon existing dialogues in Performance Studies by placing them in conversation with one another and with the philosophical discourses in a unique way. This, and by relating notions of re-performance and death, which are pertinent in the current political climate, has enabled it to add its own voice to the existing dialogues. This thesis has argued that the world we inhabit is one in which we have increasing ‘exposure to violence … with our vulnerability to loss and the task of mourning that follows’
(Butler 2004: 19). In light of this, having an understanding that the works discussed in this thesis afford us of what it means to suffer loss, to mourn, to be transformed by the process of mourning and to survive that process, is crucial.

If this thesis were to be developed further it would examine the concept of Anticipatory Grief. Anticipatory Grief was defined by the American Comparative Literature Association, as the notion of ‘mourning something before it has been lost’ (Vennemann and Bury 2019:1). This concept could be applied to this thesis’ examination of the performance work of artists Briar Bates and Andrew Henderson who planned, and in Henderson’s case, participated in their own memorial performances. The concept of anticipatory grief could be usefully applied to develop our understanding of the relationship between performance, re-performance and death by allowing us to consider the possibility that under some circumstances we begin grieving in anticipation of a loss. This focus on different concepts of grief could also be analysed in relation to Achille Mbembe’s theorisation of Necropolitics which is something which this thesis touches upon but which could be examined further within a discussion of different cultural and political circumstances and the impact that these circumstances have upon the way in which we grieve.

In relation to Mbembe’s notion of Necropolitics and sovereignty the thesis would also be interested in examining case study performances and re-performances from other cultures, cultures with a different relationship with death in order to further expand our understanding of the relationship between acts of re-performance, mourning, loss and death. A relationship which this thesis has asserted is crucial to our understanding of both mourning and death.
as it enables us to explore the ways in which we are each haunted by our own specters. Highlighting the fact that mourning, like performance, is never over. It remains in the echoes and traces, the things left behind which haunt us like specters.
Bibliography


