

The Black Body as Souvenir in American Lynching

Harvey Young

People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them.

—James Baldwin, *Stranger in the Village*

Flesh can house no memory of bone. Only bone speaks memory of flesh.

—Rebecca Schneider, "Archives: Performance Remains"

On 2 April 1899, approximately two thousand white men, women, and children participated, as both witnesses and active agents, in the murder of Sam Hose in Newman, Georgia. Sam Hose was burned alive. In the final moments of his life, the assembled crowd descended upon his body and collected various parts of it as souvenirs. The *Springfield* (Massachusetts) *Republican* recounted the scene of Hose's dismemberment in the following manner:

Before the torch was applied to the pyre, the negro was deprived of his ears, fingers and genital parts of his body. He pleaded pitifully for his life while the mutilation was going on, but stood the ordeal of fire with surprising fortitude. Before the body was cool, it was cut to pieces, the bones were crushed into small bits, and even the tree upon which the wretch met his fate was torn up and disposed of as "souvenirs." The negro's heart was cut into several pieces, as was also his liver. Those unable to obtain ghastly relics direct paid their more fortunate possessors extravagant sums for them. Small pieces of bones went for 25 cents, and a bit of liver crisply cooked sold for 10 cents.¹

Seven months later in December 1899, the *New York World*, in an article entitled "Roasted Alive," reported on the similar fate of Richard Coleman in Maysville, Kentucky, before a crowd of "thousands of men and hundreds of women and children." The article noted that "Long after most of the mob went away little children from six to ten years of age carried dried grass and kindling wood and kept the fire burning all during the afternoon."² It also revealed that "Relic-hunters visited the

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I presented early drafts of this article in November 2004 at the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) conference and in December 2004 at Kansas University's Hall Center for the Humanities. Sandra Richards and Harry Elam read this manuscript in various forms and provided useful and important insights. My conversations with Christina McMahon and Charles Leonard, two doctoral students at Northwestern University, assisted my reading of the body part as fetish object.

¹ Quoted in Ralph Ginzburg, *100 Years of Lynching* (Baltimore: Black Classics Press, 1988), 12.

² *Ibid.*, 24.

scene and carried away pieces of flesh and the negro's teeth. Others got pieces of fingers and toes and proudly exhibit the ghastly souvenirs to-night."³ In a 27 February 1901 *Chicago Record* article on the hanging and burning of George Ward before a crowd of four thousand people in Terre Haute, Indiana, the newspaper gave the following account of the scene of Ward's murder:

When the crowd near the fire tired of renewing it after two hours, it was seen that the victim's feet were not burned. Someone called an offer of a dollar for one of the toes and a boy quickly took out his knife and cut off a toe. The offer was followed by others, and the horrible traffic was continued, youths holding up toes and asking for bids.⁴

Sam Hose, Richard Coleman, and George Ward are three of the more than three thousand black men, women, and children who were lynched across the United States between 1880 and 1930. My investment in the lynching tragedy does not center itself on the horrifying numbers of black men, women, and children who were forcibly taken from their homes (or from jail cells), paraded throughout town, and executed before a mass mob.⁵ Nor does my interest rest in the allegations and charges used to justify these assaults—from stories of sexual assaults on white women to violations of minor laws and ordinances (such as vagrancy or trespassing). Nor am I interested in reading lynching in terms of a pre-scripted performance or ritualistic practice. These areas have been addressed, in books and articles, to the point of near-exhaustion in the areas of African American studies, English, history, sociology, and performance studies. What captures my attention is something that appears within the majority of these disciplines but has received scant attention in each: the dismemberment of the black body for souvenirs following the lynching event. I am interested in this feature, in large part, because I am haunted by the image of white hands, variably male or female, adult or child, holding aloft a slice of Sam Hose's crisped liver, Richard Coleman's burnt flesh, or George Ward's toe. As a means of working through my own complicated relationship with this image while simultaneously spotlighting an often-neglected area of lynching scholarship, I here focus upon the lynched black body in the aftermath of the lynching event and variously read it in terms of the souvenir, the fetish, and the performance remain. I contend that the lynching keepsake not only can be defined by, but also can exceed, each of these three terms. Containing within itself the various features of the souvenir, the fetish, and the remain, the body part recalls and remembers the performance of which it is a part. It not only gestures toward the beliefs that motivated its theft, but also renders visible the body from which it was taken.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁵ Walter Brundage, using Georgia and Virginia as case studies, estimates that approximately one third of all lynchings involved mass mobs (crowds of sixty or more). If his estimate is correct, then more than 1,100 black individuals died before mass mobs. This number is relevant because Brundage observes: "Mass mobs, more than any other type of mob, were likely to torture or burn victims. The size and fervor of mass mobs and the anonymity offered by the vast crowds incited lynchers to acts of almost unlimited sadism. In Georgia, news accounts suggest that mass mobs tortured and mutilated nearly a quarter of their victims in grisly ceremonies" (42). See Walter Brundage, *Lynching in the New South* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

The Body as Souvenir

The lynching souvenir is a spectacular performance remain or, more accurately, a remain of a performance spectacle. Although not typical of all lynchings, nearly a third of them were orchestrated affairs in which allegations of criminal wrongdoing by the accused were circulated in such a totalizing manner that the community rendered the accused guilty in advance of, and without, a trial. With the populace “so powerfully insistent on guilt, so uninterested in any other scenario,” advertisements were placed in local newspapers in which the date, time, location, and even the schedule of activities (the program) were announced.⁶ On the scheduled day and at the appointed hour, scores of spectators would assemble to witness the public staging of vengeance acted upon the accused by the victim or the victim’s family, the prolonged torture of the accused by the lynching organizers, the lynching (by burning, hanging, or shooting) of the accused, and the dismemberment of the accused’s body into souvenirs. As public performances, lynchings far surpassed all other forms of entertainment in terms of their ability to attract an audience and the complexity of their narratives. A lynching was an event—something not to be missed. In this section, I seek to understand the purpose and the function of the souvenirs collected by participant-observers at the scene of the lynching event.

The word “souvenir” has its origins in the Latin word *subvenire*, which means “to come into the mind” (*OED*). Both a noun and a verb, souvenir can refer to the actions taken to ensure that something or someone is remembered, or can serve as a trigger toward that remembrance. Its memorial function, whether as a transitive verb or an actionable noun, anchors itself in its ability to bring the sensation of the other—an other person or an other place—into one’s own body or conception of self. The souvenir, according to Susan Stewart, author of the only book-length study of the concept, “is by definition incomplete. And this incompleteness is always metonymic to the scene of its original appropriation in the sense that it is a sample.”⁷ It exists after the fact—after the passage of the event or the experience of which it was once a part, as part of the whole—in order to gesture back to the event or the experience that was. Stewart observes:

But whether the souvenir is a material sample or not, it will exist as a sample of the now-distanced experience, an experience which the object can only evoke and resonate to, and can never entirely recoup. In fact, if it *could* recoup the experience, it would erase its own partiality, that partiality which is the very source of its power.⁸

The souvenir refers back to a larger experience, of which it is a fragment. If the souvenir could be the entire experience rather than just a part, then it would cease to be a souvenir. Jean Baudrillard made a similar claim in his article “The System of Collecting” when he observed that the collectible is “divested of its [originary]

⁶ Toni Morrison, in her essay on the 1995 O. J. Simpson trial, uses these words to describe the apparent attitude of the contemporary media relative to the media environment during the peak of white-on-black lynchings. See Toni Morrison, “The Official Story: Dead Man Golfing,” in *Birth of a Nationhood*, ed. Toni Morrison and Claudia Brodsky Lacour (New York: Pantheon, 1997), xiii.

⁷ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, and the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 136.

⁸ *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

function and made relative to a subject."⁹ Incomplete in itself, the souvenir requires an accompanying narrative furnished by its possessor in order to fill in that which is missing and to allow the fragment to reflect the event or experience of which it is a part. For example, a seashell, removed from a beach, can represent a beach vacation. Although the shell may not carry any real meaning in and of itself, it assumes a symbolic value when a narrative is attached to it.

An aura or a sense of mystique shrouds the souvenir because, in addition to being incomplete, it is also illicit. It "always displays the romance of the contraband, for its scandal is its removal from its 'natural' location."¹⁰ Certainly, the appeal of a souvenir, to the person who takes the object and the audience to whom it is displayed, anchors itself in the souvenir's stolen quality. Taken away from its environment, which is unlike the one in which it is displayed, the souvenir's presence reveals its own theft. In the case of the shell, its presence in the apartment of a landlocked city dweller underscores the fact of its removal from its natural environment. Despite its incomplete and stolen nature, the souvenir threatens the stability of the present through its portrayal of the past as fixed and controllable. According to Stewart, it functions to "authenticate a past or otherwise remote experience and, at the same time, to discredit the present."¹¹ Jane Desmond, in *Staging Tourism*, situates this aspect of the souvenir within a "salvage paradigm" which she defines in the following manner:

This belief assumes that that which is natural is vanishing and is in need of saving . . . Ultimately, this is a liberal attitude with potentially conservative outcomes. While seeming to celebrate cultural difference or the natural world, this paradigm dehistoricizes certain people, practices, geographic regions, and their animal inhabitants, setting them up as avatars of unchanging innocence and authenticity, as origin and ideal.¹²

The souvenir saves the past and represents it in the present. It records the *that which was* into a material object that can be referenced and revisited over time. In contrast, the present, the *that which is now*, existing just beyond ourselves, resists both objectification and commodification because its ongoing status disallows the creation of an entrapping retrospective narrative. This retrospective narrative, when attached to the souvenir, fixes the past and thus renders it unchanging. It also creates the possibility of historical revision in that the narrative itself determines the meaning of the keepsake. For example, in the case of the shell, my accompanying narrative supplements its incompleteness and enables it to represent my beach vacation while simultaneously displacing the historical origins of the shell itself.

The lynching keepsake satisfies each of these descriptors of the souvenir. First and foremost, it is incomplete and finds a sense of wholeness through an embrace of an accompanying narrative. In the cases of the crisped liver of Sam Hose or the burnt flesh of Richard Coleman, it seems unlikely that anyone encountering either without the aid of a story to flesh out the details of the lynching event would know what she

⁹ Jean Baudrillard, "The System of Collecting," in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Carlton: University of Melbourne Press, 1994), 7.

¹⁰ Stewart, *On Longing*, 135.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹² Jane Desmond, *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 254.

was seeing.¹³ George Ward's toe, even if recognized as being a toe, would still remain incomplete without the aid of a narrative to identify the original possessor of the body part and to relay the process of its collection. It is only when the details of the burning of each individual are revealed that the objects become meaningful as souvenirs.

Unfortunately, the narratives attached to these body parts are difficult to locate. As Kirk Fuoss realized in his 2002 article on the performance structure of lynchings, "one of the most significant aspects regarding the subjects of lynching is precisely the way in which the true and complete story evades the truth-telling capacity of even the most ablest investigator employing the most insightful and uncompromising methods."¹⁴ What makes the stories so evasive is not necessarily the lies and falsehoods told to the investigators, but the general unwillingness of members of localized communities to share their tales with strangers or outsiders. Arthur Raper, the sociologist who first offered a comprehensive study of lynching in 1933, referred to this tendency toward silence when he observed, "A lynching makes a lot of otherwise good people go blind or lose their memories."¹⁵ An example appears in the court transcripts of a 1930 case involving the lynching of two teenagers in Marion, Indiana. In the following exchange, Earl Stroup, an "outside" prosecutor, questions Bert White, the town's longtime "local" sheriff.

- Q. You have no doubt talked to a number of people who were spectators there and saw a lot of this.
 A. Yes sir.
 Q. Who?
 A. I couldn't say.
 Q. Acquaintances of yours were there?
 A. Well, people—business people that were there in the crowds that night and was there on the street: I expect the whole town was down there.
 Q. Can you name any particular person?
 A. No sir I couldn't name any particular person.¹⁶

White's stonewalling of Stroup reveals the difficulty of obtaining the narratives of the people who participated, even as witnesses, in the various lynching campaigns. His selective amnesia explains how, as Raper noted, "[o]f the tens of thousands of lynchers and onlookers, the latter not guiltless, only forty-nine were indicted and only four have been sentenced."¹⁷

When the first-person stories of lynching events were revealed to outsiders of the community in which the lynchings had occurred, they either were broadcast by overzealous children or were spoken conspiratorially in hushed tones to avoid detection. Walter White in *Rope and Faggot*, his 1929 study of lynchings in the Southern

¹³ A common, everyday example of this is "show and tell," the classroom activity popular in elementary and middle schools. To simply stand before an assembled audience and show something is not sufficient. A narrative is required. In fact, the act of showing piques interest and creates a desire for the telling.

¹⁴ Kirk Fuoss, "Lynching Performances, Theatres of Violence," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 19.1 (1999): 4.

¹⁵ Arthur Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 40.

¹⁶ Quoted in Arthur Madison, *A Lynching in the Heartland* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 83.

¹⁷ Raper, *Tragedy*, 2.

regions of the United States, gives an example of the first type of leak by opening his book with the following personal anecdote:

In Florida some years ago, several lynchings and the burning of the Negro section of the town followed the attempt of a Negro pharmacist to vote in a national election. One morning shortly afterwards I walked along the road which led from the beautiful little town to the spot where five Negroes had been burned. Three shining-eyed, healthy, clean children, headed for school, approached me. As I neared them, the eldest, a ruddy-cheeked girl of nine or ten, asked if I was going to the place where "the niggers" had been killed. I told her I might stop and see the spot. Animatedly, almost as joyously as though the memory were of Christmas morning or the circus, she told me, her slightly younger companions interjecting a word here and there or nodding vigorous assent, of "the fun we had burning the niggers."¹⁸

The children, in their sheer enthusiasm, share their narratives with White. Interestingly, the author elects to spare his reader the details given him and offers merely a summary of what was said. White's anecdote intrigues me because it underscores the vividness of the memory of the children who attended the lynching event. Compared to the memories of "Christmas morning or the circus," the children's reflections likely arrived in a torrent filled with so many details that the listener must have been taken aback by them. This alluded memory of the children and their (later) willingness to show White the site of the burning—that is, if they had the time to do so—underscores the fact that these narratives did not immediately disappear.

Sociologist Orlando Patterson, in *Rituals of Blood*, writes, "It takes little imagination to understand now, how the powerful—and for the children who were forced to watch, no doubt traumatic—experience of watching the torture, mutilation, and the burning alive of the African-American victim would have become encoded forever, through the overwhelming odor of his roasting body, on the memories of all who participated."¹⁹ Evidence in support of Patterson's claim appears in the 1997 documentary *Third Man Alive*, in which several senior citizens recall witnessing the performance of two lynchings in 1930.²⁰ Despite the passage of years and the onslaught of age, their memories remain so fresh and complete that at least one of them, like White's informants, becomes animated in the retelling. If we consider White's sources, along with those depicted in the video documentary, to be representative of the participant-observers at the scene of the lynching spectacle, then it follows that lynching memories and the narratives through which they were expressed remained alive within localized communities but rarely may have been shared with outsiders. Whereas the youth and carelessness of children explain one way in which these narratives escaped the protective silence of the communities, it would be a mistake to assume that the only leaks were from children. James Allen, the collector of a series of postcards which later became the much-discussed *Without Sanctuary* exhibit, gained his first lynching images by attending antique fairs and flea markets and, within those spaces, by being approached by individuals who, in a whisper, would offer to show and sell him

¹⁸ Walter White, *Rope & Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 3.

¹⁹ Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood* (Washington, D.C.: Civitas/Counterpoint, 1998), 201.

²⁰ See *Third Man Alive*, videocassette, directed by Michael McKiver (Milwaukee: America's Black Holocaust Museum, 2001).

various images of lynched figures.²¹ Allen remembers, “. . . a trader pulled me aside and in conspiratorial tones offered to sell me a real photo postcard.”²²

While it is remarkable that Allen was able to obtain the various images that fill his collection, what fascinates me, within the context of the accessibility of lynching narratives, are not the pictures on the postcards but the few lines of text that appear on the back of them. Although these words were written in a relatively public forum (postcard), they signal the types of conversations and exchanges people would have held within a private space. On one card, a son, referring to the image of the burnt body of William Stanley, who was murdered in August 1915, writes to his mother, “This is the Barbecue we had last night, My picture is to the left with a cross over it, Your son.”²³ On another, an unidentified author, on a postcard depicting the March 1910 murder of Allen Brooks, notes:

Well John—This is a token of a great day we had in Dallas, March 3, a negro was hung for an assault on a three year old girl. I saw this on my noon hour. I was very much in the bunch. You can see the negro on a telephone pole.²⁴

What these few lines reveal is that the lynching campaigns—and, more importantly, the crowd’s participation as witnesses, in the execution of those campaigns—were significant events in the participants’ lives. They motivated discussion and prompted audiences to share their experiences with one another. According to Jane Desmond, such narratives tended to “authenticate the acts of travel, and of witnessing and then in turn position the recipient as witness to the sender’s experience. In this way, a public act (seeing a sight) is transformed into a private history (what I saw) with social meaning (look at what I saw).”²⁵ Beyond merely projecting a sense of wholeness upon an incomplete souvenir, these accompanying narratives appealed to a community of listeners. This displaying and sharing—a form of showing and telling—rendered the object and the event from which it was taken meaningful within a given community.

As powerful as the accompanying narratives are, they do not replace the need for the souvenir itself. The magic of the souvenir anchors itself in its status as contraband, an object improperly removed from a given place or an event. This is why the body

²¹ It is important to make an observation about the privilege possessed by White and Allen that enabled them to gain access to these stories. Both are men who appear identifiably white. I mention this because we can presume that White and Allen were approached in their respective cases because of their visible whiteness. The children volunteered their stories to White. The trader offered to sell his postcards to Allen. Their cases are not unique. Over the years, I have heard similar stories from friends of mine who appear white. In their touristic travels throughout the historical (and memorial) sites of the (US) American South, often Southern plantations, their (white) tour guides, in a whisper, have repeatedly asked them if they would be interested in seeing where the slaves lived, an area not part of the official paid tour. In these and the cases of White and Allen, the visibility of whiteness grants access to a history of white privilege upon which the subjugation of black bodies was founded. I mention this because as a recognizably black cultural historian, I am aware that my appearance lessens the likelihood of such occurrences happening to me and I realize that my access to such narratives is filtered through the skin privilege of others.

²² James Allen, “Afterword,” in *Without Sanctuary*, ed. Hilton Als (New York: Twin Palms Publishing, 2001), 204.

²³ Quoted in Hilton Als, *Without Sanctuary*, 174.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁵ Desmond, *Staging Tourism*, 43.

part as a keepsake trumps postcards or pictures of the same lynched body. The former contains, in a Benjaminian sense, an aura lacking in the latter. The desire for the actual body parts was so pronounced that spectators literally stripped the scene of the lynching campaign for souvenirs that bore even the slightest relation to the event that had transpired there. Dennis Downey and Raymond Hyser, in their book *No Crooked Death*, underscore the frenzy for authentic items in their account of the behavior of the crowd following the murder by burning of Zachariah Walker in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, on 12 August 1911. They write:

Approximately one hundred and fifty individuals maintained an all-night vigil near the fire, waiting to collect souvenirs. Some of the more aggressive among them used fence railings to dredge Walker's bones from the glowing embers. The manacles and footboard were also pulled from the pyre and then doused in water and broken up as souvenirs. The next day, several enterprising boys even sold some of Walker's remains to anxious customers in Coatesville. A curious reporter who visited the lynching site several months later found many changes, including the absence of grass where the burning took place and the almost complete demolition of the split-rail fence. "Visitors have carried away anything that looked like a souvenir," he wrote.²⁶

The absence of remains at the site of the lynching campaign reveals the actions of collectors who, in the aftermath of the event, took everything having to do with the lynching site—even the blades of grass that the ashes of the body had touched. To possess a souvenir of Zachariah Walker's body or of the scene of his murder was to have material evidence of your presence at, and proximity to, the event. Recalling that the site was stripped bare, the souvenir likely reminded its viewer of the looting that occurred in the aftermath of Walker's murder. Its presence as a souvenir underscored its absence from the scene of the lynching campaign.²⁷

In addition to referencing their status as contraband, lynching souvenirs embody the past in the present. They not only fix the black body within a historical moment, but also transform it into a captive object to be owned, displayed, and, quite possibly, traded. What makes them so interesting is that they, much like the contemporary mass-produced, stereotypical commercial images of the black body, sought to commodify the body at a time when it was gaining new liberties in the present. The majority of scholars who have published studies on the lynchings of black men, women, and children agree that the motivating factor for such campaigns was a postemancipation backlash in which white, working-class residents of primarily agricultural communities sought to stave off the perceived threats of increased social rights and property ownership by African Americans. Robyn Wiegman, in *American Anatomies*, views lynching campaigns as an organized effort by the dominating elements

²⁶ Dennis B. Downey and Raymond M. Hyser, *No Crooked Death: Coatesville, Pennsylvania and the Lynching of Zachariah Walker* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 38–39.

²⁷ Laura Wexler, in *Fire in Canebrake*, writes that lynching organizers, in an effort to delay the process of the dismemberment of the lynching victim, would tack notes on the black body imploring participants to leave it intact for awhile. Referring to the 1911 lynching of Tom Allen in Walton County, Georgia, Wexler notes that members of the mob "discouraged such souvenir-collecting by pinning notes to his body that instructed people to leave it hanging as long as possible. The mob members reasoned that the longer Tom Allen's body hung, the longer it could serve as a warning to black men [. . .]. Those who wanted souvenirs made do with photographs of Tom Allen's body" (73). See Laura Wexler, *Fire in Canebrake* (New York: Scribner, 2003).

within society to prevent the “transformation from chattel to citizenry” of the black body.²⁸ Lynching objectified the body. Lynching souvenirs commodified it. Walter White asserted that “lynching is much more an expression of Southern fear of Negro progress than Negro crime.”²⁹ Michael J. Pfeiffer, in *Rough Justice*, observed that lynchers “sought to ‘preserve order,’ that is to uphold the hierarchical prerogatives of the dominant residents of the locality.”³⁰ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, in *Lynching in the New South*, writes that lynch mobs “enacted a ritual that affirmed their racial beliefs but also embodied their commitment to such values as white male dominance, personal honor, and the etiquette of chivalry.”³¹

The lynched body, as a keepsake, conforms with the various attributes of the souvenir as outlined by Stewart, Baudrillard, and Desmond. It is therefore surprising that Stewart considers such “souvenirs of death” to be “the most potent antisouvenirs.” She writes:

They mark the horrible transformation of meaning into materiality more than they mark, as other souvenirs do, the transformation of materiality into meaning. If the function of the souvenir proper is to create a continuous and personal narrative of the past, the function of such souvenirs of death is to disrupt that continuity. Souvenirs of the mortal body are not so much a nostalgic celebration of the past as they are an erasure of the significance of history.³²

In the case of the body, Stewart contends that it is always already more than material; the effort to transform the meaning which it has into material (i.e., to turn the body into a screen upon which another meaning can be projected) exists as a form of historical erasure. Her argument suggests, in the case of lynching souvenirs, that George Ward’s toe would represent the lynching campaign and, perhaps, the desire of the lynch mob to fix the body in the past—but not the lynched person, George Ward. To view Ward’s toe as a souvenir would be to erase George Ward from history.

I understand and respect Stewart’s objection. It is discomfiting to think of a program from a theatrical production and a body part in the same manner—as being souvenirs of a witnessed performance event. To read the body part as a souvenir is to sacrifice its status as a subject, reified with a distinct personality, and to transform it into an object. At the same time, I believe that we cannot impose a personal, moral limit to the souvenir. Despite our own misgivings, we have to realize that the body, within lynching scenarios, did serve as a souvenir or keepsake for those who attended the lynchings; we must accept the fact that the souvenir, by definition, includes the body. The body part gains its status as souvenir at (spatially) and in (temporally) the moment of its removal. Its theft signals a break in which the keepsake assumes a projected meaning that may or may not correspond with its prior, pre-removed status. Although it is unfortunate that we could lose sight of the person in our analyses, the

²⁸ Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 82.

²⁹ White, *Rope*, 11.

³⁰ Michael J. Pfeiffer, *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874–1947* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 4.

³¹ Brundage, *Lynching*, 17.

³² Stewart, *On Longing*, 140.

reality is that the souvenir exists at the moment of its removal. It is at this point that the body part literally disassociates itself from the body. I suggest, therefore, that we reject any assertion that the body part cannot be a souvenir. In the preceding pages, I demonstrated how it satisfies the most significant attributes of the souvenir: it is incomplete and requires an accompanying narrative; its allure is its status as contraband, continually gesturing toward its own theft; it brings the past into the present by giving it a tangible, material form. Although the body part as keepsake threatens to erase the deceased body from history, I contend that the possibility of such historical revision is itself an aspect of the souvenir. In the pages that follow, I continue my investigation of these lynching souvenirs within the frame of fetishism and performance remains. I maintain that the referent (George Ward) of the souvenir (toe) never entirely disappears.

The Body as Fetish

Whereas the body part, when viewed as a souvenir, underscores its own materiality and consequently absents its originary wholeness, when read as a fetish it regains its prior prefragmented status. Additionally, it projects—or, perhaps more accurately, has projected upon itself—powers which exceed its tangible properties. Beyond being the stolen catalyst that aids in the creation of a retrospective narrative concerning a witnessed event, George Ward's toe, for example, as a fetish object could be viewed as possessing magical abilities capable of bringing luck or restoring health. In this section, I examine the body parts as fetish objects with the aim of understanding why spectators collected them and how the meaning they bore directly referenced the lynching victims themselves.

In *Crowds and Power*, Elias Canetti contends that the desires within a group to kill and to collect pieces of the recently killed as souvenirs increase in proportion to the size of the swelling crowd. Detailing the scene of a public execution, he writes, "[t]he real executioner is the crowd . . . It approves the spectacle and, with passionate excitement, gathers from far and near to watch it from beginning to end. It wants it to happen and hates being cheated of its victim."³³ According to Canetti, the act of witnessing the death of another transforms and ultimately leads to the disbanding of the group, because in these moments the assembled spectators "recognize the [executed] as one of themselves . . . for they all see themselves in him." Haunted by the reflection of their own mortality, they disperse "in a kind of flight from him."³⁴ Why do the actions of Canetti's racially unmarked audience at a public execution differ from those of the white spectators who attended the lynching of a black individual? Unlike Canetti's "baiting crowd," whose newfound self-awareness compelled them to flee the murder scene, the lynching audience lingered. In the murders of both Ward and Coleman, spectators remained at the site for hours after both men had been killed. Furthermore, they dismembered each body and collected its pieces as souvenirs of the lynching event that they had witnessed. If the spectators had recognized themselves in the figures of either man, it seems unlikely that they would have behaved in the manner in which they did. Instead, the crowd acted more like game hunters in the moments following a successful hunt. They sought souvenirs that could represent not

³³ Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. Carol Stewart (New York: The Noonday Press, 1998), 51.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

only the experience of the hunt, but also testify to their presence at and, presumably, their participation in the death of their game. Canetti contends that such behavior is typical of the "hunting pack," "the most primitive dynamic unit known among men," when he asserts that in the aftermath of the kill "[e]ach man now wants something for himself, and wants as much as possible."³⁵ George Ward's toe and Richard Coleman's tooth became analogous to a bear's claw and a shark's tooth. They were trophies. Unlike the animal pieces, however, the parts belonging to the human body were deemed special. They had value, meaning, and, by some accounts, unique powers. These body parts as trophies were not just souvenirs. They were fetish objects.

Meaning "charm" or "sorcery" and deriving from the Portuguese word *feitico*, the word "fetish" was employed by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Portuguese merchants to describe the sculptures, figurines, trinkets, and other religious possessions of their West African trading partners. Offering a useful definition of the term in his two-part investigative study, William Pietz asserts that the fetish object has four traits: it is materially based; it synthesizes multiple elements into a single body; it has social value; it has the power to affect the physical body. "The first characteristic to be identified as essential to the notion of the fetish," Pietz writes, "is that of the fetish object's irreducible materiality." He continues, "The truth of the fetish resides in its status as a material embodiment; its truth is not that of the idol, for the idol's truth lies in its relation of iconic resemblance to some immaterial model or entity."³⁶ Whereas the idol does not have any power in itself, the fetish's magic emerges from its ability to resemble or reference something else.³⁷ For example, a crucifix does not have any real power other than its ability to reference the suffering of Jesus Christ. To pray to the cross is not to pray to the material object of the cross, but to Christ; the underlying premise is that the crucifix connects the praying body to Him. In contrast, the fetish, as Joseph Roach observes in *Cities of the Dead*, possesses "original motive powers."³⁸ Its power is both contained within, and emerges from, its materiality.

Furthermore, the fetish object "has an ordering power derived from its status as the fixation or inscription of a unique originating event that has brought together previously heterogeneous elements into a novel identity."³⁹ The lynching souvenir as fetish object satisfies this requirement in its ability to condense multiple meanings into a single body. George Ward's toe can represent George Ward, the lynching campaign, Ward's dismemberment, white chivalry, and dozens of other meanings which rally together at the site of the body (part). The toe, as fetish, structures and orders these meanings but exists as the sum total of them all. The third attribute of the fetish object is that it has social value. The fetish object carries meaning to those individuals who desire to possess or who already own it. It is important to note that this value does not have to be widely accepted or universally understood; the Portuguese merchants did

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

³⁶ William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish," *Res* 9 (1985): 7.

³⁷ The fact that the word "fetish" was used to describe the religious objects of the West Africans rather than "idol" points to the ethnocentrism and, perhaps, racism of the Portuguese traders who refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of African spirituality. Their bias/prejudice prompted the creation of a new, separate word. I find it interesting that the black body was always already a fetish—the word was created with blackness in mind.

³⁸ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 124.

³⁹ Pietz, "Problem," 7.

not hold the same religious beliefs as their trading partners. Finally, the fetish object must cause an effect in the physical body of the possessor or, as Pietz noted, it requires "the subjection of the human body (as the material locus of action and desire) to the influence of certain significant material objects that, although cut off from the body, function as its controlling organs at certain moments."⁴⁰ In the most dramatic reading of this attribute, the fetish exerts a real, tangible effect upon the physical body; its embrace or presence heals a sick person or helps an infertile person conceive a child. If we think of the somewhat caricatured image of the voodoo priestess manipulating a doll and the resulting effect on the human body, then we have gained a glimpse of the fetish object in its most extreme form.

Of the few published accounts that mention lynching souvenirs, Andrew Buckser's 1992 article, "Lynching as Ritual in the American South," most closely reads these collected body parts in terms of fetishism. Despite not employing the word, he repeatedly states that the mass mobs who participated in the lynching campaigns and subsequently dismembered the body believed that the remains were magical, or at least had the capacity to bring about physical changes in the body of the possessor. He observes that the collectors of body parts "attributed to these souvenirs the power to bring luck or to promote health."⁴¹ Elsewhere in his article, Buckser makes repeated references to such keepsakes as "good luck charms"; George Ward's toe might have been the equivalent of a rabbit's foot. If we take the author's account at face value, then the lynching souvenirs were fetish objects. They were thought by those who collected them to be material objects that were meaningful, valuable, and capable of exciting a physical effect upon the body. Unfortunately, Buckser's claims are unsubstantiated; he neither cites nor references a single source in support of his statements that people viewed souvenirs as being either magical or lucky.

Despite the fact that she does not view the body part as being particularly lucky, Trudier Harris, in *Exorcising Blackness*, her 1984 study of white-on-black lynchings as reflected in both history and literature, suggests that it did bestow symbolic power on its possessor. The author maintains that the majority of lynchings were used to check the threat of black male sexuality. Through the murder and castration of the black male body, the men within the crowd sought to reaffirm their privilege and status in society. According to Harris, sociopolitical power and sexual potency are indistinguishable. She writes:

For white males involved in the lynchings and burnings of black males, there is a symbolic transfer of power at the point of executions. The black man is stripped of his prowess, but the very act of stripping brings symbolic power to the white man. His actions suggest, that, subconsciously he craves the very thing he is forced to destroy. Yet he destroys it as an indication of the political (sexual) power he has and takes it unto himself in the form of souvenirs as an indication of the kind of power he would like.⁴²

Harris reads the actions of the white lynchers as forms of phallus and penis envy. The crowd checks its perceptions of the excesses of the black male's sexuality through a dismemberment of his body. The body parts themselves as souvenirs and fetish objects

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴¹ Andrew Buckser, "Lynching as Ritual in the American South," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* (1992): 18.

⁴² Trudier Harris, *Exorcising Blackness* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 22.

signal the removal of the sexual threat and the crowd's desire for the power contained within such threats. Harris's critique reads the black body through a lens of psychoanalytic fetishism, consequently fixating the various stereotypes of the black body, potentially overlooking the social factors that contributed toward these lynchings and ignoring the presence of women within such performance spaces. Still, her underlying thesis foregrounds the power contained within the various trophies of the lynching spectacle.

Unlike Harris and, to an extent, Buckser, Orlando Patterson does not view the lynching souvenir as being socially significant as a collectible before the enactment of the lynching performance. It is the lynching event itself that transforms the souvenir into a fetish object, giving it value, meaning, and motive powers. According to Patterson, a sociologist, the lynching spectacle can be read as a religious rite whose allure appears in its seeming ability to transform the everyday object into something rife with spiritual meaning. The body part, like the eucharistic wafer, changes within the framework of the performance event. Often incited by the rhetoric of priests or ministers, frequently occurring on Sundays, and usually conducted in public communal areas, lynchings, Patterson contends, bore striking similarities to religious services. Likening the spectacle to a sacrificial rite, he asserts:

Because the sacrifices did not take place in already consecrated places such as churches, the use of fire as a consecrating agent became necessary, in this way serving the multiple functions of consecration, torture, and the divine devouring of the soul. The stakes to which the victims were tied were obviously consecrated in the process also, since they became relics to be treasured.⁴³

The lynching event was a racial holocaust. It transformed the lynching victims into martyrs, not only sanctifying their bones but also the various properties of the murder scene. Much as people seek splinters from the True Cross on which Christ was nailed, and similar to Catholic churches being blessed by their possession of the bones of deceased saints, the witnesses *cum* collectors sought a religious experience in their pursuit of lynching souvenirs. The souvenir-as-relic became a way for participant-observers to enhance their spirituality. Furthermore, the relic as a fetish object, with its perceived original motive powers, could be thought to bestow certain effects upon the physical body of its possessor. If the chalice that Christ's lips touched could bring eternal youth and the bones of St. Peter could consecrate the grounds of a basilica, then what, if any, power rested in George Ward's toe?

George Ward's toe, in reality, could not bring luck, resolve sexual anxieties, or engender a religious experience. While I do concede the possibility that some individuals may have held such beliefs, my discomfort with such an overarching reading of the meaning contained within the body parts rests in the fact that each reading absents the body of George Ward. The lynching souvenir becomes a number of possibilities, but none of them is as a representation of the lynching victim himself. Is it possible to hold Ward's toe without thinking of Ward himself or, at least, being aware of the body that was once Ward? I do not think so. In fact, I would assert that the value, the meaning, and even the desire for the lynching souvenir rested in the popular awareness that the possessed keepsake not only lived but also existed as a

⁴³ Patterson, *Rituals*, 196.

subject. This thing here was alive. It was him. The souvenir as a fetish object had the power to remember the dead.

The crowd's desire for the living remain, the fetishized lynching souvenir and its meaning and value, are all irrevocably tied to the lynching victim. Elias Canetti, at various points in *Crowds and Power*, remarks that the act of witnessing death, which entails being in its presence, leads not only to the recognition that the witness too could have died but also, and perhaps more importantly, that the witness has survived. She is lucky—because she continues to live. The lynching souvenir becomes, for her, a treasured keepsake remembering her encounter with death as well as a charm that protects her from death. The witness is lucky because she was not George Ward. Similarly, the souvenir's symbolic power emerges at the moment the spectator realizes that the lynching victim has died. Canetti writes, "Simply because he is still there, the survivor feels that he is *better* than [the dead]." ⁴⁴ In his reading of lynchings as a sacrificial rite, Orlando Patterson makes an important observation that bears on this discussion of the crowd's awareness of the life contained within the souvenir: "An essential part of the sacrificial rite is that some profound change occurs in the sacrificed object, and there is awe in actually witnessing the state of life to a state of death." ⁴⁵ Indeed, according to Patterson, the silence-inducing transformation proves so striking, with its religious overtones, that the crowd feels compelled to strip the scene for mementos. Despite my doubts that the audience viewed the lynching body part as a consecrated object, I believe that the particular allure of the body part rested in its status as both a part and a remain of the transformation process. The possession, once viable, no longer lives.

In their reconstitution and remembrance of the lynching victim, the crowd had neither the opportunity nor the occasion to know the actual person being lynched. Considering the racial politics of the period and the fact that lynchings were intended to stem the social advancement of African Americans, it seems likely that the body part as souvenir prompted thoughts of an imagined and perhaps mythical construct of the black body. It was not George Ward's toe. It was a black toe. Some nigger's toe. This disavowal, through the creation of a generalized substitute, of the particular (the referent) threatened to absent the actual body from the lynching scene without jeopardizing its symbolic value as both souvenir and fetish. Perhaps the best way of understanding how Ward could disappear within the recollected spectacle that dismembered him is to consider two very different scenarios involving his remains. In the first, the crowd descends upon his body and collects pieces as souvenirs of the event they have witnessed. In the second, Ward's family, after the crowd has departed, searches the lynching site for pieces of the lynching victim to bury. Within each scenario, the body part triggers a different conception of Ward. Surely, the crowd and the family members did not think of the same person, in the same manner, in their respective interactions with his bodily remains. ⁴⁶ Although I suspect that those who

⁴⁴ Canetti, *Crowds*, 228; emphasis in original.

⁴⁵ Patterson, *Rituals*, 194.

⁴⁶ This article is about the lynching participants who collected body parts as souvenirs. An equally compelling project would be to study how the members of the black community reacted/responded to the body in the aftermath of the lynching event. What, if any meaning, did the body part have to them? It is my belief that they saw themselves in the lynching victim or, more accurately, realized that they

collected body parts were not seeking to commune with the recently departed (but still present), I believe it is important to consider the possibility of such an action occurring. Is there a way in which a person can know George Ward through the possession of his parts? Is it possible to see him when we look at his souvenired and fetishized toe? I believe it is.

To touch the body, even as a collected part, is to gain access to its embodied experience, memory, and history. It is to encounter the skin and bloodstream memories about which contemporary artist-scholars Brenda Dixon-Gottschild and August Wilson have written.⁴⁷ These past experiences survive in the present, across new and present bodies, because the body itself remembers the violence that was directed against it. This violence lands upon and marks the body. It shapes its movements and governs its actions. It is this experience of violence, a body-marked violence, that gets passed from generation to generation through the socialization of children. For example, a child's "whuppin" echoes prior acts of corporeal punishment, such as the whippings of captives on plantations. From this perspective, future bodies carry the markings, the scars, of a passed/past violence. Violence passes. To touch the body part, as a souvenir of a lynching event, is to reopen or reawaken the embodied experience of prior bodies.

In a 2003 article, "Touching History," I developed this contention through a close analysis of Suzan-Lori Parks's play *Venus* and Robbie McCauley's performance piece *Sally's Rape*.⁴⁸ I asserted that Parks and McCauley could access the embodied experiences of Saartjie Baartman, Sally Hemmings, and McCauley's great-great-grandmother, among others, because their embodied experiences reside within the black body. This occurs because African Americans share a common history and, more importantly, the legacy of that history structures similar experiences of the body. Whereas the differences in bodies and lifestyles among other "obvious axes of division," as Paul Gilroy terms them, impacts the imagined experience and threatens to encourage the creation of a construct as substitute for the original body, the possibility exists that the imagined reconstruction could resemble the actual experience of that same body.⁴⁹

too could have been the person lynched. The body part was a person and a life, not just a souvenir. Evidence in support of this contention appears in Shaila Dewan's July 2005 *New York Times* article in which she reported on a recent re-enactment of a 1946 lynching in Monroe, Georgia. The players were all amateur actors from the black community who assumed the roles of the four lynching victims and the lynchers (who they played by wearing white masks). The performance raised awareness of the fact that no-one had ever been found guilty of committing the murders and "brought memories back for many who turned up to watch." Dewan, initially quoting 79 year-old Flosse Hill, who recalls the lynching of a seven-months-pregnant woman, Mae Murray Dorsey, writes, "'Mae was about my age. She was a pretty lady, she was pregnant then. They say her baby's still living somewhere,' she said, referring to the persistent rumor that the baby was cut from Ms. Dorsey's stomach." I am intrigued by the quote because it suggests that the body part as souvenir (the baby) still lives. See Shaila Dewan, "Group Lynching Is Re-created in a 'Call for Justice,'" *New York Times* 26 July 2005, A12.

⁴⁷ See Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (New York: Praeger Paperback, 1998); and August Wilson, "The Ground on Which I Stand," *Callaloo* 20.3 (1997): 493–503.

⁴⁸ See Harvey Young, "Touching History: Suzan-Lori Parks, Robbie McCauley, and the Black Body," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 23.2 (2003): 133–52.

⁴⁹ Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 24.

Patrick Johnson, in *Appropriating Blackness*, gives an example of such a reality when he documents his reaction to witnessing the performance of a white Australian gospel choir. Johnson writes, "Had I closed my eyes on that occasion, I almost might have thought I was back home in North Carolina. Not only did the choir approximate a 'black' sound, they created the ethos of a black devotional service . . . I was impressed."⁵⁰ Is it feasible to say that a person can know entirely the experiences of another through the touch? No. To make such a claim would be to fall into the trap of racial essentialism. What I am asserting is that the presence and proximity of another person, even as a collection of parts, requires you to take that person into account. You must deal with her. You must engage with her. You must interact with her. The compulsory nature of this engagement promotes an awareness of a person who is literally other to one's self. Admittedly, this interaction does not have to espouse understanding, compassion, or empathy, but it does mandate recognition. It forces us to see George Ward, not just a toe.

The Body as Remain

In the preceding two sections, I have discussed the lynched body as a souvenir and as a fetish object. I have argued that the lynching keepsake satisfies the core requirements of the souvenir and have challenged the contention that such death remains are antisouvenirs. Concerning the collected body part as a fetish object, I have introduced an anthropological understanding of the concept and explained how the body part, in the aftermath of the lynching campaign, could be perceived as possessing unique powers. In this final section, I look at the body in terms of the remain. I contend that its presence allows us to re-member the performance event.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable move within the discipline of performance studies to redefine the concept of performance from the ephemeral to the remaining. Whereas scholars from Herbert Blau to Peggy Phelan have helped to build the popular understanding of performance as that which is "always at the vanishing point" or that which "cannot be saved, recorded, or documented," more contemporary voices, like those belonging to Philip Auslander and Rebecca Schneider, have offered compelling cases to the contrary.⁵¹ Auslander, who insists that recordable and savable performance already exists in the form of theatrical productions which utilize media technologies, critiques the traditional understanding of performance when he writes, "All too often, such analyses take on the air of melodrama in which virtuous live performance is threatened, encroached upon, dominated, and contaminated by the insidious Other, with which it is locked in a life-and-death struggle."⁵² Phelan, in a 2004 article, responds to such a critique and updates her original argument by acknowledging that "the technology capable of broadcasting live art has grown enormously" in the twelve years since she first wrote about the role that disappearance plays in performance. Although she concedes that media can "record and circulate live events," she refuses to give them "live performance" status. She notes,

⁵⁰ Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 162–63.

⁵¹ See Herbert Blau, *Take Up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982). Also see Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

⁵² Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 40–41.

"[t]hese technologies can give us something that closely resembles the live event, but they remain something other than live performance." According to the author, the value of live performance, in which the bodies of actors encounter those of the spectators, is the "possibility of [each group] being transformed during the event's unfolding."⁵³ Although the spectator might be affected by the screened image, the presence of the spectator cannot effect a transformation in the prerecorded image. Schneider, in a more nuanced approach, similarly critiques this thrall toward disappearance by suggesting that performance can both disappear and remain. In her aptly titled article "Performance Remains," the "performing theorist" observes, "For upon any second look, disappearance is not antithetical to remains. Indeed, it is one of the primary insights of poststructuralism that disappearance is that which marks all documents, records, material remains. Indeed, remains become themselves through disappearance as well."⁵⁴ Although Auslander and Schneider agree that performance is savable, the latter's approach proves more diplomatic in that it seeks to create a space for the performance remain within the extant theories of others. Schneider encourages her reader "to think performance as a medium in which disappearance negotiates, perhaps becomes, materiality."⁵⁵

The lynching spectacle exists as an example par excellence of the type of performance for which Schneider advocates. It stages the transformation of the living body into a set of lifeless parts to be collected; the spectacle becomes materiality. In the case of George Ward, his lynching enacts his disappearance. The person and, indeed, the body (as a whole) recognized as Ward vanishes in the moments surrounding his death. However, these same moments also mark the rebirth of a dismembered Ward as performance remains. His death creates souvenirs of his life. Their presence, as a consequence of his absence, bestows meaning, value, and the perception of power upon them. More interestingly, these material remains testify to the lynching victim's former living status. They continually evoke the victim's body through a repeated underscoring of its absence. Ironically, Ward's newfound visibility anchors itself in the fact of his invisibility. This is the magic of the performance remain. It remembers its own disappearance and, as a result, renders the performance event whole again.

The word "remain" acts both as a noun and a verb. As a noun, it refers to "[t]hat which remains or is left (unused, undestroyed, etc.) of some thing or quantity of things." As a verb, it means "[to] continue to exist; to have permanence; to be still existing or extant" (*OED*). Coupled together, the two meanings suggest a temporally ambiguous object that existed in the past (and was saved), exists in the present, and will continue to exist in the future. The remain remains; it not only lingers, but also, in some instances, lives. Within the context of theatre and performance studies, the remain can be thought to be the opposite of the stage property (or prop). Unlike the prop, which, as Andrew Sofer has observed in *The Stage Life of Props*, is "visibly manipulated by an actor in the course of performance," the performance remain gains its social value and meaning through an accompanying narrative provided by its possessor, a person who bore witness to the original performance event.⁵⁶ Despite

⁵³ Peggy Phelan, "Marina Abramovic: Witnessing Shadows," *Theatre Journal* 56 (2004): 575.

⁵⁴ Rebecca Schneider, "Archives: Performance Remains," *Performance Research* 6.2 (2000): 104.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁵⁶ Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 11.

these differences, the remain does share one significant attribute with the prop: both evoke a sensation of "pleasure in seeing the relic revived, the dead metaphor made to speak again."⁵⁷

This sense of pleasure in the revival of the body part as remain appears in Samuel Pepys's recollection of his encounter with Queen Katherine of Valois on 23 February 1669.⁵⁸ According to the famed diarist, the skeletal remains of the monarch, who died in 1437, were on display at Westminster Abbey on the day that Pepys encountered them. Remembering both the queen and the day, he recalls that he held "her upper part of her body in my hands. And I did kiss her mouth, reflecting upon it that I did kiss a Queen, and that this was my birthday, 36 years old, that I did first kiss a Queen."⁵⁹ Despite the fact that Pepys interacts with an assortment of two-hundred-year-old bones, he believes that he has had an encounter with the queen through his interaction with her remains. Prodded by his imagination, he revives the body in the present in order to enable the touch of flesh on flesh to occur. It is important to observe that Pepys writes that he did not kiss bones, or even the remains of the queen, but rather that he did kiss a queen. She lives through his remembrance. The diarist's account and actions reveal that it is possible to create a personal, physically intimate, and temporally present experience with human remains. Collectively, his experience suggests that we can re-member the body of another through an embrace of his or her remains.

In the cases of Sam Hose, Richard Coleman, and George Ward, each individual had to be dismembered in order to be remembered. The remains of their bodies remind the viewer of their ordeal. When we are confronted with a dismembered finger, we are compelled to imagine the hand and, by extension, the body from which it was taken. We similarly are invited to restage (in our minds) the process of its removal. The same applies when we are confronted with the various other corporeal souvenirs of lynching campaigns—teeth, toes, slices of liver, and clumps of hair, among other body parts. The souvenir as fetish object as performance remain exists as both a metonym, referencing the lynching campaign, and as a synecdoche, reminding the viewer of the formerly whole body of which it is a part. Indeed, the power of the black body as souvenir emerges from its seeming ability to exceed each of the previous terms. It is and is not a souvenir. It is and is not a fetish. It is and is not a performance remain.

Reflecting upon the frequency with which participant-observers descended upon the body of the lynching victim with the aim of collecting souvenirs, and recalling that the lynching event was one of, if not *the* most spectacular performance events of the past two centuries, it is difficult to understand how, or even why, theatre and

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁸ I first encountered this passage from Pepys in Joseph Roach's short essay, "History, Memory, and Necrophilia." Roach uses Pepys's encounter to develop his earlier contentions, as outlined in *Cities of the Dead*, of surrogated performances by drawing special attention to the effigy and the desire of both performers and audiences to "re-flesh" the dead. According to Roach, the effigy "fills by means of surrogation a vacancy created by the absence of an original." This definition only partly applies to the lynching souvenir. The souvenir, as representative of the performance (lynching) event, also creates the absence which it itself seeks to fill. See Joseph Roach, "History, Memory, Necrophilia," in *The Ends of Performance*, ed. Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 23–30.

⁵⁹ Duncan Grey, "Samuel Pepys Diary," July 2002, <http://www.pepys.info/1669/1669feb.html>. Accessed 15 November 2004.

performance studies scholars would deny the existence of such performance remains. While I acknowledge that the assertion that performance disappears or vanishes both imparts a sense of urgency with regard to the documentation of the live event and bestows a greater cultural value (because of its seeming rarity) upon the art form, I am convinced that such an approach prevents contemporary scholars from fully exploring all of the dimensions of the performance event, including the important role that the performance remain plays within remembered performance. It has been my contention that the remain as fetish object and souvenir not only encapsulates but also provides access to the entirety of the performance event. It brings the past into the present and, in so doing, allows its possessor to touch history. Through its accompanying narratives, it appeals to a community of listeners and gains social meaning in the process. It also creates the possibility of an imagined, personal interaction with the original body, even as a construct, that exists within the present as a series of parts. In short, the value of the performance remain is in its seeming ability to reactivate the expired performance event.

Certainly, the lynching souvenir held different meaning for the white participant-observers who attended the lynching event and collected souvenirs from what it has for me, a critic and black scholar who is more than three generations removed from the lynchings discussed in this article. Whereas the spectator might have used the souvenir to remember her experience at the scene of the event or to represent her determination to prevent the social ascendancy of African Americans, I employ it to gain access not only to a particular historical moment, but also to the embodied experience of a specific person within that moment. In the case of George Ward, the performance remain grants me, along with other contemporary audiences, the opportunity to remember the body of Ward. It renders the body whole again and, in so doing, offers a perspective into the lynching event that ended his life and created the remain. Although it is unlikely that anyone would know exactly what Ward was thinking in his final living moments, the remain has the potential to activate the various embodied experiences that lie dormant within the body and, in so doing, offers the possibility of approximating Ward's experience. Whether the possessor of Ward's part proves successful in the endeavor to know Ward, his history, or the scene of his murder, her possession of his remains allows her to remember the nature of his disappearance. His toe may be a souvenir, but it also is the lynching spectacle.