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**Mourning Identities:
Hillsborough, Diana and the
Production of Meaning**

by Michael J. Brennan

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

University of Warwick
Department of Sociology
September 2003

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Acknowledgements

My particular thanks are due to Canon Noel Vincent of the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool for providing me with access to the public books of condolence signed following the Hillsborough disaster and to David Horton-Fawkes at the Althorp visitor centre for providing access to a sample of condolence books signed following the death of Princess Diana. I am also grateful to the Economic and Social Research Council for funding this project. Special thanks are due to my academic supervisor, Dr Deborah Lynn Steinberg, for her academic support and advice throughout this project. Finally, and last but not least, I am indebted to Lilach Katz-Brennan for her encouragement and support in helping me see this project through to completion.

Declaration

I declare that the contents of this thesis are my own work and that no material contained in this thesis has been submitted for a degree at another university.

Whilst no material contained in this thesis has been previously submitted for another degree, one of the publications listed below (Brennan, 2001a) — to which I refer in chapter 3 of this thesis — is a revised version of a dissertation submitted for the MA in Social and Political Thought at the University of Warwick (1998).

The papers listed below have been published or presented during the period of study for this Ph.D:

(2001a) ‘Some Sociological Contemplations on Daniel J Goldhagen’s “Hitler’s Willing Executioners”’, Theory, Culture & Society, 18 (4): 83–109.

(2001b) ‘Towards a Sociology of (Public) Mourning?’, Sociology, 35 (1): 205–212.

(2000a) ‘Explaining Diana’, book review for Cultural Studies, 14(3/4): 607–609.

‘Books of Condolence: Some Cultural Reflections on Condoling in the Popular Postmodern’, at the conference ‘Cultural Returns: Assessing the Place of Culture in Social Thought’, organised by the Pavis Centre at the Open University and held at St. Hugh’s College Oxford, UK, 18–20 September 2002.

Abstract

'Mourning Identities: Hillsborough, Diana and the Production of Meaning' explores the meaning-making processes which contributed to the widespread public mourning that followed the Hillsborough stadium disaster of 1989 and the death of Princess Diana in 1997. It does so by the textual analysis of a sample of the public condolence books signed following these events and by drawing upon autobiographical stories related to each of them produced using the method known as 'memory work'. Drawing upon a variety of theoretical frameworks, including psychoanalytic, post-structuralist and Bakhtinian influenced dialogics, it suggests that a range of social identities were 'hailed' and discursively mobilised in the public mourning events that followed the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana. It further suggests that identification is an indispensable and precursory aspect of public mourning, which is summoned and given shape by epistolary and narrative practices of the self. Public mourning of the sort considered here is theorised along two principal lines: the iconic and the totemic. The former, it is argued, can be seen to relate to the largely feminine *global structures of feeling* through which the public mourning for Princess Diana were articulated, whilst the latter can be seen to relate to the largely masculine *local structures of feeling* through which the public mourning following the Hillsborough disaster were configured. In turn, it suggests that aspects of resistance to the public mourning following each of the events considered as case studies here can in themselves be considered as aspects of mourning, albeit for something other than the obvious referents of loss during these events. It further points to the situated social identity of the researcher as both instrumental not only to the motivation for, but to the outcomes of social research.

INTRODUCTION

Shifting Focus, Shifting Orientation

It is a routine supervision meeting with my Ph.D supervisor Dr. Deborah Steinberg. It is early on in the history of my Ph.D research project and we discuss what the parameters of my research into the public mourning for the death of Princess Diana and following the death of Queen Victoria should be. As I sit in her office and listen to her talk discussion shifts to the similarities between the public mourning scenes that followed the death of Princess Diana and other contemporary events of an ostensibly similar type. She talks about the commemorative and mainly local responses that followed the Dunblane gun massacre in 1996 in which a class of primary school children were tragically killed by a lone gunman. She talks about the 'expressivist' public mourning that followed the Hillsborough stadium disaster of 1989 and the mainly local outpouring of grief which transformed the pitch at Liverpool's Anfield stadium into a sea of flowers.

At this point I become animated and engaged. In an instant I am lost in my own thoughts, captivated by the possibilities and questions which a consideration of the mourning after Hillsborough might invoke. I am reminded of the way in which I was, as a teenager, 'hailed' by the Hillsborough disaster: my own mortification on hearing the news; my compulsion to tie my beloved Sheffield Wednesday scarf to the 'shrine' that had quickly sprung up at the Leppings Lane entrance to my 'home' ground; my own morbid fascination with news footage and with collecting newspapers and articles about the disaster.

It was here that my project underwent a fundamental shift; that my project 'came to life', for in this moment I knew with renewed conviction, vigour and clarity of thought what my project should be about. It was at this point that the project became my project; involving an event that 'spoke' personally to me, involved a part of me, and in which I was 'involved'. It provided a sharp contrast to my own feelings of estrangement during the public mourning for Princess Diana, providing an interesting juxtaposition from which to trace out my own mourning and 'not-mourning' (Johnson, 1999) of the Hillsborough and Diana events. This shift in orientation, substituting a consideration of the public mourning for Queen Victoria in 1901 for the events that surrounded the Hillsborough disaster in 1989 inspired in me a sense of passion and enthusiasm for a project which had perhaps hitherto been lacking, setting in train an entirely new and exciting set of possibilities which it now appeared to embody.

Biography of the Project

I begin with this short autobiographical vignette telling of a particular occasion within the biography of the project for a number of reasons. Not least because it was a defining moment in the history of the project; a watershed or ‘epiphany moment’ (Denzin, 1988) in which my thesis underwent a fundamental shift in orientation, but also because autobiography is a key research tool used in this project. In the way in which it is used in this project, autobiography is an important means by which my own social identity is disclosed and held in tension as a resource from which to explore my own authorial dis/investments and the ways in which these are central to the research process and the production of knowledge. Suffice it to say for the moment that this vignette brings into focus a number of issues central to this thesis which I will subsequently attempt to draw out.

This shift in orientation, however, amounted to more than simply substituting one research topic for another but initiated a wider series of epistemological, and commensurately, methodological transformations. For in choosing to focus upon the public mourning surrounding the Hillsborough disaster my project had shifted away from a benign presumption that the topics previously selected for analysis could be explored by adopting a position of critical detachment and value-neutrality and towards a view in which the subjectivities of the researcher should themselves be harnessed and critically explored. This shift in orientation therefore involved drawing upon my own experiences and memories and provided a critical resource from which to explore the ways in which selfhood is drafted. For a central proposition of this thesis, following psychoanalytic theory, is that identification — and identity, as formed under the sign of loss (Elliott, 1999) — is an

essential pre-condition of mourning. In this way, as psychoanalytic theorist Stephen Frosh (1991) has suggested:

For tragedy to be possible. . . and loss appreciated, there has to be something that can be identified with, something that can love as well as lose, hope as well as be betrayed.

(Frosh, 1991: 19–20)

Such a transformation in this project further involved broadening the scope of the project through a re-conconceptualisation of mourning: not as social artefact but as indexical to identity, as culturally mediated, historically contingent; a complex *process*, rather than a ‘thing’, multi-dimensional in composition, discursively summoned and narratively mobilised, yet not reducible to any one of these components alone. In turn, this necessitated an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of mourning and the ways it was manifested following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana. Principally, this involved drawing on perspectives from outside of sociology; from cultural studies and psychoanalysis, disciplines which have traditionally been considered by some as predatory, threatening to challenge sociology’s claims to knowledge. At the same time, such a conceptualisation of mourning, as a subjectively experienced psycho-social feeling-state, operating according to unconscious dynamics, often ‘behind the back’ of the person experiencing it, in turn necessitated a commensurate ‘subjectivist’ methodological approach, wherein I explore my own subjective responses to the two public mourning events selected as case-studies.¹ In this way, Friedrich Nietzsche

¹ Following the work of Stake (1995), I deploy the concept of the case-study less as a distinct methodological genre than as a basic principle of organisation. For each of the two events which constitute my two case-studies in public mourning, the Hillsborough stadium disaster and the death of Princess Diana, whilst not easily spatially contained — as say in the single unit analysis of the school (e.g. Ball, 1981; Willis, 1977) or the workplace (Goldthorpe et al, 1969; Gouldner, 1954) — were nevertheless constituted by a degree of temporal ‘boundedness’ characteristic of the ‘time-limited’ mourning discerned in the work of Gorer (1965: 64). The selection of both events as case-studies, nevertheless, provide a basis for

provides an unlikely source of knowledge from which to critique objectives approaches to the study of social phenomena when he writes:

[History] requires above all a great artistic faculty, a creative vision from a height, the loving study of the data of experience, the free elaborating of a given type. . . Objectivity is so often merely a phrase. Instead of the quiet gaze of the artist that is lit by an inward flame, we have an affection of tranquillity. . . Everything is favoured that does not arouse emotion, and the driest phrase is the correct one. [Historians] go so far as to accept a man who is *not affected at all* by some particular moment in the past as the right man to describe it.

(Nietzsche, 1957: 39, quoted in Natter *et al*, 1995: 4)

The shift in the orientation in this project further involved the relinquishment of a subject-position founded on a version of social and political thought that emphasised the primacy of social explanation over other competing claims to knowledge, whilst both implicitly and explicitly rejecting engagements with aspects of popular culture and with reflexive ethnographies of the self of the kind which this project employs. To this extent my project involved not only a shifting of focus and orientation but a shifting of allegiances; reflexively probing my own assumptions, whilst challenging and undermining the premises of forms of knowledge in which I had previously been invested and out of which I had fashioned my own social identity.

What began therefore as a project conceived within the relatively narrow bounds of a sociology of public mourning, concerned to trace out the historical shifts in the way public figures are mourned, became one in which a much wider series of issues invoked by the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana were explored. These issues: from discourses surrounding the media reporting of the Hillsborough disaster, through the

empirical observation, proffering detailed and specific information on each event whilst yielding both comparative and illustrative data.

‘narrative architecture’ (Redman, 1999: 46) in which personal memories and a sense of self is summoned and shaped, to Diana’s feminist iconicity and the variety of identifications mobilised and forged with it, became central to the project’s exploration of meaning-making; to the ways in which culture and society are instrumental to various kinds of meaning which became accrued in the two public mourning events considered herein. In sum, this shift in orientation involved conceding short and long-term investments made in a sociological project in which aspects of selfhood and subjectivity have traditionally been occluded.

It further involved a degree of risk and reflexive self-exposure hitherto unprecedented in my previous academic work. For it involved a passionate engagement, or rather disclosure and acknowledgement, of dis/investments which had hitherto been glossed over or concealed. It is these passionate engagements which, as Judith Williamson (1988) has suggested, are routinely disparaged and disavowed within much academic thinking. Against this background, and the absence of autobiographical reflections upon the self; of areas and emotions concealed and obfuscated within academic thinking, I found Peter Redman’s doctoral thesis *Boys in Love: Narrative, Identity and the Production of Masculinity* and Richard Johnson’s (1999) essay *Exemplary Differences: Mourning (and not mourning) a princess*, particularly instructive but especially refreshing. For each reflect upon aspects of the sociological private (Bailey, 2000), drawing upon aspects of the self as a critical research tool for exploring, in Redman’s case, the production of subjectivity, and in Johnson’s the unconscious dynamics and *transferences* that are a routine feature of mourning and loss. These provided a positive affirmation of the possibilities contained

within academic writing for explorations of the self, providing the impetus from which to examine my own subjectivity and residual dis/investments in particular subject-positions.

Specifically, this shift in orientation provided the possibilities for exploring culturally mediated processes of meaning-making and the ways in which these became congealed in the public mourning (and not-mourning) following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana. For where Marx in Volume 1 of *Capital* routinely speaks of ‘congealed labour’ as the frozen form of past activity, this thesis seeks to explore prior investments — in people, places and ‘things’ — that were unleashed and became bound-up with the iconic and totemic forms of mourning in the events which I shall attempt to theorise.

The Hillsborough Disaster and the Death of Princess Diana

The two public mourning events which are the focus of this project, as case-studies of contemporary public mourning, are, as I have suggested from my own sharply contrasting responses to each of them, events which generated equally strong and contrasting reactions amongst the UK public at large. The public mourning following the Hillsborough disaster on 15 April 1989 was precipitated by the deaths of ninety-five (this later became ninety-six)² Liverpool football supporters at an F.A Cup Semi-Final match played between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at the ‘neutral’ venue of Sheffield Wednesday’s Hillsborough stadium. Play was halted after only six minutes into the game when, after what at first sight appeared to be a pitch-invasion, fans behind the goal at the Leppings Lane end of the Hillsborough stadium began to clamber over the twelve foot high perimeter

² This followed a landmark legal decision in 1993 when the House of Lords ruled that doctors need no longer artificially preserve the life of Tony Bland who had remained in a coma since the disaster in 1989.

fence erected as a measure of crowd control following routine incidents of football 'hooliganism', that had plagued English football since the 1960s.

It quickly became apparent, however, that this did not involve fighting between rival sets of fans but was the result of overcrowding in the central 'pen' directly behind the goal end which fans of Liverpool had been allocated by the Football Association (FA) for this match. Many of the those killed or injured³ were young and/or female fans, crushed to death or asphyxiated by other fans and 'crash barriers' erected to withstand tons of pressure but not the unexpected surge of fans which the opening of a perimeter fence to fans outside the stadium allowed. These fans headed directly for the central pen behind the goal which was already full to brimming and it is here that most of the fans killed in the Hillsborough disaster met their deaths.

Initial reports by South Yorkshire Police, the body responsible for crowd safety and control at the F.A Cup Semi-Final match that afternoon, that ticket-less Liverpool fans had forced open the perimeter fence outside the stadium leading to the sudden surge of fans resulting in ninety-five deaths were subsequently found to be untrue. Yet these claims were widely reported and greatly exaggerated in tabloid newspaper reports which claimed that Liverpool fans had pilfered from dying fans and that drunken Liverpool fans had verbally abused and urinated on emergency workers as they tried to revive those injured and dying (Scruton, 2000).

³ In total 766 people were injured in the Hillsborough disaster (Taylor, *the Rt Hon Lord Justice Taylor, Interim Report*, 1989).

The public mourning which followed became infused with an attempt to restore the dignity of the supporters who died at Hillsborough and later dove-tailed into attempts by the campaign of the Hillsborough Family Support Group (HFSG) to bring criminal charges for manslaughter against the senior South Yorkshire Police officers who had given the order to open the perimeter fence to fans outside the stadium. Nevertheless, the mainly local mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster can be seen as chiefly comprising: two minutes silence in the city centre's of Sheffield, Nottingham and Liverpool and at sports' stadiums around the country at six minutes past three, the time at which play was stopped, on the Saturday following the tragedy; by the overnight transformation of Anfield, the home of Liverpool F.C, and to a lesser extent the Leppings Lane entrance to the Hillsborough stadium, into make-shift 'shrines' through the leaving of floral tributes and personal mementoes; and by a wider series of 'moments' during the week of public mourning, including the opening and signing of public books of condolence, ecumenical memorial services in Liverpool and Sheffield, and a 'scarf-link' between Liverpool's Anfield stadium and Everton's Goodison Park. Indeed, the sea of flowers at Anfield provided, in retrospect, a visual precursor to the enormous and unprecedented volume of flowers in the public mourning following the death of Princess Diana.

The death of Princess Diana, meanwhile, as the car in which she was travelling ploughed into the wall of a Paris underpass in the early hours of the 31 August 1997, and the public mourning which subsequently followed, produced an overwhelming outpouring of public grief, both in Britain and globally. In the week of public mourning which followed (that I refer to hereafter as simply the 'Diana events'), the daily routines of everyday life as we ordinarily know it, for many people, ground to a sudden halt. In Britain, television and

radio schedules were ‘virtually suspended’ (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 1), with most networks switching to a mode reflective of a national emergency, whilst workplace and everyday conversation was dominated by the unfolding social drama surrounding Diana’s death. This principally focused on the inevitable attempts to attribute blame for Diana’s death in what initially appeared to result from a high-speed car chase in which Diana’s chauffeur-driven Mercedes Benz attempted to give the slip to a voracious photo-hungry *paparazzi*. Public anger and the focus of media attention centred, as the week progressed and it became clear that the *paparazzi* had not directly contributed to the high-speed collision in which Diana, Dodi Al-Fayed and the chauffeur Henri Paul were all killed, on the behaviour of other members of the royal family.

In particular, the royal family’s seeming lack of an appropriate or sufficiently emotional response was singled out as incongruent with the public mood of the nation at large. As the week wore on pressure increased upon the royal family to return to London and cut short their summer vacation at their Scottish country estate of Balmoral. Demands were made for the royal standard to be flown at half-mast over Buckingham Palace and for the Queen to address the nation in a televised address. Above all else, the Diana events were marked by an extraordinary show of public grief in which a multi-cultural assembly (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a) comprising people of all ages, classes, sexual orientation and ethnic background came together to occupy public space, principally the gardens and gates surrounding royal residences in central London. They brought flowers (between 10,000 to 15,000 tons of them according to some reports (Greenhalgh, 1999)), queued for upwards of seven hours to sign books of condolence (Francis et al, 1999), and as inventive cultural bricoleurs (Fiske, 1990), fashioned hand-made cards, gifts and personal mementoes which

were placed at key sites across London and which rapidly became ‘shrines’ to Princess Diana.

The Inter-disciplinary and Multi-Method Approach of the Project

This thesis, as I have earlier suggested, has undergone a variety of transformations yet came about in its present form as a result of an attempt to explore the wider meaning-making processes, including those of my own, by and through which these two episodes of public mourning were given special significance and, to paraphrase Adrian Kear (1999), seemed to matter much more than the obvious referents of mourning in each of these events ever could. For as it became clear from the scale, magnitude and excess of these two events, as well as their very public and ‘mediated’ nature, the meaning with which they were invested outstripped the obvious referents of loss by ‘hailing’ a range of social identities from outside and beyond the parameters of the communities most immediately affected. In particular, I shall attempt to explore the identificatory processes involved in public mourning (and not-mourning) and the ways in which a range of symbolic investments were asked to stand-in for things other and besides the obvious referents of mourning.

As suggested, this thesis is inter-disciplinary to the extent that it draws upon a variety of theoretical and empirical resources in order to help elaborate a range of issues raised within it. As I will go on to suggest in chapter 2, an inter-disciplinary approach was adopted in the belief that complex social phenomena such those invoked during the public mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana cannot readily be explained and contained by a single disciplinary approach but are best apprehended from a

variety of disciplinary perspectives. This thesis welcomes the acceleration of ‘exchanges’ between academic disciplines which since the modern tendency towards academic specialisation (Heilbron, 1995) has served to restrict the consideration of particular areas of human life to specialist academic disciplines, each of which routinely have little engagement with other disciplinary approaches which might also have something to contribute to our understanding of particular social phenomena (Craib, 1995).

In particular, the overlapping and diverse fields of academic interest drawn upon to explain the public mourning events at the fulcrum of this thesis can be seen in a variety of ways. It can be seen from my use of various aspects of psychoanalytic theory: from classical Freudian and Kleinian accounts of mourning, through the work of a ‘second generation’ of psychoanalysts and their development of ‘stage-related’ aspects of grief, to the (post-) Lacanian blending of psychoanalysis and semiotics that Julia Kristeva has called ‘semanalyse’. Early Freudian accounts of totemicity are further applied to discursive elaborations and identificatory investments in a particular local sense of ‘placeness’. Specifically, the totemic identifications unleashed and discursively mobilised in the condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster.

Elsewhere, the inter-disciplinary blending of perspectives drawn from a variety of different sources can be seen from my combination of Bakhtinian and post-structuralist accounts of language. Specifically, the application of feminist dialogics (e.g. Pearce, 1994) and Butlerian (1990, 1993) notions of performativity to elaborate the messages contained with condolence books signed for Princess Diana; as a positive space for the articulation of a range of non-masculine social identities. The wider social and historical context in which

reactions to the two death-events that precipitated the public mourning considered herein is, meanwhile, elaborated through a range of more conventionally sociological theories, from the historical sociology of Norbert Elias (1978, 1982, 1985), through the social philosophy of Zygmunt Bauman (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991), to the social anthropology (e.g. Turner, 1977) and social historical accounts (e.g. Ariès, 1974) that comprise contemporary death studies.

Further indications of the inter-disciplinarity that this thesis invokes can be seen from the ways in which it draws upon diverse accounts from the sociology of sport to elaborate the (re)production of hegemonic masculinities as well as to provide background to the Hillsborough disaster itself. Analysis of the subjective identifications, and processes of meaning-making more generally, forged during and prior to the two mourning events subsequently considered, are further explored using work drawn from a materially situated cultural studies. These subjective identifications, be it with the ‘Diana figure’ or meanings invoked by the Hillsborough disaster, are thereby situated within a variety of cultural forms and practices through which they are ‘realised’ and ‘made available’ (Johnson, 1986).

At the same time, and as well as pursuing my two case studies from a variety of theoretical and empirical vantage points, this research seeks to explore the meaning-making through which mourning was generated in these two events by interrogating two ‘sets’ of data drawn from different sources: the condolence books signed following each of these events and my own autobiographical stories relating to, and bordering, them produced using the method known as ‘memory work’ (Haug et al, 1987). These two different sources of data, as I explain in chapter 4 of the thesis, provide access to different ‘moments’ within the

wider circuit of meaning through which these events became or were made meaningful, as well as providing a variety of vantage points from which to explore my own mourning/not-mourning.

These methods, of memory work and the narrative analysis of condolence messages, are both textual to the extent that they seek to explore social identity as it is embedded within linguistic and signifying practices; as exploring the means by which identity and the creative imagination is narratively summoned and given shape by epistolary practices of the self following loss. Condolence books in particular were chosen as an interesting and rich source of textual meaning not least because of the absence of research in this area. Memory work, meanwhile, with its provenance in feminist epistemology, provides an alternative, yet complementary focus for exploring my own subjective dis/investments in these events, providing insight into the authorial dis/investments and their impact upon the research process and production of knowledge more generally. This returns us to the earlier point with which I began this introduction by suggesting that passion is a vital, yet often unacknowledged and displaced ingredient in the motivation for academic research.

Following the focal orientation of the thesis as hitherto outlined, in which public mourning is conceived as culturally mediated, yet as a no less ‘real’ psycho-social feeling-state routinely involving the reawakening of previously unmourned losses at the inter-personal level, the questions which this thesis asks are several fold and can be formulated in a variety of ways. Some of these can be chiefly summarised in a series of questions first mooted by Anthony Elliott (1999) when he asks:

For whom, exactly, is the mourner mourning? Are we mourning some aspects of ourselves? How might mourning of the self relate to cultural mourning? How does contemporary culture mourn?

(Elliott, 1999: 11)

A further series of questions that I ask relate to exploring the interface between mourning and identity, especially the ways in which identity can be seen to be narratively mobilised and summoned in epistolary practices of the self. Other questions invoked by this thesis relate to the historical specificity of the forms of contemporary public mourning as comprised by my two case studies, whilst a further set of questions relate to the available theoretical approaches capable of comprehending the sorts of issues embodied in my two case studies. These questions can be more systematically formulated thus:

- How is identity configured and concealed in episodes of public mourning? How are forms of identity ‘spoken’ in narrative practices of the self? How might forms of writing which are ostensibly ‘objectivist’ in orientation or which seek to disavow investments in particular subject-positions themselves be seen as elegiacally encrypted? How might the analysis of textual forms of data in which meaning is metonymically encrypted yield-up the subjective dis/investments of its author?
- What are the similarities and differences between the two events selected as case studies in contemporary public mourning? What, if anything, distinguishes these events from other less ‘public’ forms of mourning? How are notions of ‘public’ and ‘private’ themselves invoked and obliterated by these events?
- What theoretical and empirical resources are available for the interrogation of the type of public mourning that this thesis considers? How do those that are available take us

closer or further away from finding answers to the questions which I ask regarding the specificity of contemporary public mourning?

Indeed, it should be said that the distinctions that I make, of public and private, masculine and feminine, local and global, as central to the arguments advanced throughout this thesis, should best be viewed not as rigid categories in which there is no overlap or exchange, but as a form of ‘strategic essentialism’ (Spivak, 1996) enabling meaningful analysis to proceed unhindered. In this way, my use of strategic essentialism with which to explore the nature of the ‘public’ mourning events considered here is somewhat akin to role-playing, inhabiting each of these categories as ordering principles in order to understand what makes them tick. For as we shall see, the distinctions I make, especially in chapter 5 between masculine and feminine (but also at various point throughout the thesis), should be viewed, following the work of Judith Butler (1990), as an ‘open assemblage that permits of multiple convergences and divergences, without obedience to a normative telos of definitional closure’ (Butler, 1990: 16).

Outline of the Chapters

This thesis can, broadly speaking, be divided into those chapters which interrogate the questions outlined above by drawing upon ‘secondary’ theoretical and empirical resources (chapters 1, 2 and 3), and those which present the analysis of ‘primary’ data from empirical research into the two public mourning events which are its principal foci (chapters 5, 6 and 7). The material discussed in the first three chapters can, at the same time, be seen to help elaborate the discussion of data as it is presented in the second half of the thesis.

Chapter 1 provides a background to the two public mourning events considered herein by critically exploring social and historical approaches to death and dying. It does so by outlining and describing the putatively reported trend in Western societies since the Middle Ages towards death denial and the ways in which death has been thoroughly expedited and comprehensively pushed behind the scenes of public life (Elias, 1985). In so doing, it reflects upon the parallel tendency within the academy itself, wherein, until relatively recently, both theoretical and empirical considerations of death have been conspicuously absent. It outlines and explores a variety of approaches, both theoretical and empirical which have recently begun to engage with the topic, but suggests that any theoretical insights have remained rather abstract and have failed to penetrate the sub-disciplinary field of academic interest which has sprung up to study death and its aftermath. In particular, the chapter suggests that socially oriented approaches to the study of death, whilst usefully illustrating historical and cultural differences in our relationship towards it, have remained focused on the social and public aspects surrounding death (principally, of bereavement and funerary practice), to the exclusion of the emotional and psychic dynamics which routinely accompany it. Where, this chapter argues, these approaches have considered mourning as the ‘inevitable response in human beings to the death of someone whom they have loved’ (Gorer, 1965: 110) they have tended, by and large, to consider it as social artefact.

Chapter 2 takes up these themes by considering the emotional and psychic dynamics of death and its aftermath by exploring a variety approaches offered by psychoanalysis. As well as exploring the unconscious dynamics by which the subject behaves as if s/he were immortal (Freud, 1918), this chapter draws upon approaches from within psychoanalysis

which have theorised the human reaction both to death in particular and loss in general. These accounts provide useful insight into the relationship between identification and loss, specifically, of mourning not just as social artefact but as the (un)conscious attempt to withdraw libidinal investments hitherto made in the lost loved-object, lest the ego become impoverished. These approaches, the chapter suggests, begin to provide the possibility for the emotional investment, and subsequent attempts to withdraw it following loss, not only in people but in a variety of ‘abstractions’ (Freud, 1917: 243), pointing to the ways in which aspects of culture are routinely asked to stand-in for, and become bound-up with, investments made at the inter-personal level.

Chapter 3 continues by exploring a variety of perspectives that begin to throw light on questions which I earlier cited, that this thesis asks: namely, how does contemporary culture mourn? And how might mourning of the self relate to cultural mourning? It does so by exploring a variety of cultural and linguistic practices, including forms of academic writing themselves, through which mourning and loss are encrypted and sublimated. In particular, this chapter turns to explore the social and cultural practices which surrounded my two case-studies in public mourning by considering literatures which have attempted to theorise and explain these events. It considers various aspects of resistance to these two mourning events and suggests that these too can be considered as aspects of mourning, albeit for something other than the principal referents of loss in these two events. At the same time, this chapter seeks to locate these two events both within the specificity of contemporary postmodern mourning practices which this chapter attempts to sketch out. It suggests that the specificity of these two events lies not only in their emotional expressivity and ‘irreverent’ ludicity, but in their highly mediated nature and in the forms of fandom and

identificatory investments and practices upon which it depends. It is these, this chapter suggests, which serve to blur ‘in-principle’ distinctions between ‘mediated’ and ‘face-to-face’ mourning (Johnson, 1999: 18).

Chapter 4 outlines both the practical methods and strategic decision-making employed in this project as well as the wider methodological approaches to the data which this research generated. It provides the strategic rationale for my choice of methods, and what these offered over other possible alternatives, whilst attempting to trace out their wider provenance.

This is followed by a short chapter which seeks to illustrate the theoretical premises which underpin my analysis of the data drawn from condolence books (chapters 5 and 6). This serves, amongst other things, to draw attention to the functionality of messages as performative utterances, to highlight the intrinsically social nature of language itself, and to point to the variety of modes of expression contained within condolence books.

Chapters 5 and 6 weave together data drawn from the condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana with analysis which suggests that each are reflective of local and global structures of feeling. Chapter 5 points to the condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster as reflective of totemic forms of identity in Liverpool as they are discursively represented and routinely inhabited, whilst chapter 6 argues that the condolence books signed following the death of Princess Diana can be seen as reflective of the global feminine structures of feeling which were discursively mobilised in the public mourning which followed. In particular, chapter 6 suggests that the condolence books opened following the death of Princess Diana provided

a space for the elaboration of a feminine form of emotional expressivity elsewhere denied in hegemonic forms of masculine discourse.

Chapter 7 explores my own mourning and ‘not-mourning’ of the Diana and Hillsborough events through the use of memory work, pointing to the ways in which each of these equally emotional responses were generated by dis/investments in particular forms of masculine social identity. Presenting stories and excerpts of stories produced using memory work, this chapter seeks to unravel the role of identity in episodes of public mourning and the ways in which it is metonymically represented and encrypted in the signifiatory and narrative practices of the self.

This thesis makes a contribution to knowledge by attempting to theorise the complex imbrication of culture and society within the wider identificatory processes of meaning-making which provide the basis for, and were unleashed by, the public mourning of the sort seen following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana. That it does so marks a significant departure from existing approaches to the study of mourning as are contained within conventional sociological approaches to death and dying. In so doing, it raises serious doubts about the ability of traditional sociological approaches — whose primary focus is the public realm as it ‘cognitively’ experienced — to provide credible answers to the questions invoked by episodes of contemporary public mourning of the sort considered here. This, I suggest, raises further questions about the future orientation of sociology as confidence in the public sphere diminishes. It suggests the need to re-examine the epistemological premises and methodological tools required for exploring issues considered here as areas of the sociological private (Bailey, 2000); of self, subjectivity and

the unconscious, as traditionally obviated by the discipline's conventional *modus operandi*. This shift, from public to private, is mirrored in my own intellectual journey whilst undertaking this doctoral research and raises a series of issues, chief among them, the re-visioning of sociology as traditionally conceived whilst attempting to retain a sociological imagination capable of comprehending issues that have hitherto remained 'vanishing points' within the discipline.

CHAPTER 1

APPROACHES TO DEATH, DYING AND BEREAVEMENT

Until quite recently the issue of death and its various correlates were strangely absent from consideration by academic disciplines across the social sciences and humanities, whose remit it has been to explore social and cultural phenomena. The deep fissures left by the absence of theorising in this area were subsequently filled by reflections on the topic, often in encrypted form, from the world of the arts and literature. Think, for example, of the visual minimalist statements of Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko, whose work has approached the subject of death indirectly and which, according to Robert Wyatt (2001: 36), ‘allude to the ultimate absence’.¹ Where sociology during this period did approach the topic of death, it too tended to be indirect and not as a topic of meaning in its own right. Such existential considerations have invariably been taken up not by sociology but by philosophy.²

That academic disciplines which are principally ‘cognitive’³ and social scientific in orientation have been slow to engage with that most intractable and insoluble of issues, man’s [*sic*] own physical finitude, is indeed perhaps a reflection of wider social and

¹ Commentators and art historians have noted the widespread prevalence of representations of death and dying in the cultural artefacts and visual art of early antiquity (e.g. Vermeule, 1979) and medieval Europe (e.g. Ariès, Clark, 1950; 1985, Llewellyn, 1991). In contrast, modernist art movements of the twentieth century have — in part as a reflection of wider social taboos surrounding death, and in contrast to the sentimental portrayal of death in popular Victorian narrative art — tended to avoid explicit representations of death, representing it obliquely through the use of visual metaphor. For an informative and succinct overview of representations of death in the visual arts, see Wyatt (2001: 33–6). For a discussion of representations of death in modern literature, see Walter (1990).

² For a comprehensive discussion of the philosophical treatment of death in Western philosophical thought see Chorán (1963). For discussion of the philosophical meditations on finitude and being, see Dastur (1996), Rose (1997).

³ That is to say, academic disciplines which, following Descartes, conceive the human subject as *a priori* governed by mental faculties founded on reason and rationality. Sociology, following Auguste Comte’s positivistic and grandiloquent vision of the discipline as one day becoming the integrative ‘queen of the sciences’, has long operated for the most part — if only implicitly — on the basis of philosophical premises which, to invert and paraphrase Freud (1962), conceive the human subject as master in his [*sic*] own home.

cultural attitudes and prohibitions towards the subject during modernity itself. For social research is not conducted in a vacuum but in light of experiences and knowledge daily encountered (e.g. Giddens, 1993; Mellor, 1993). This absence of interest in death as a topic of sociological interest is all the more surprising given the universality of death as a social experience. Nevertheless, sociology's relationship to the topic of death, much like the wider population at large during a period spanning roughly a century between the mid-nineteenth and twentieth century, can be summed up using the maxim of the seventeenth century French writer François de La Rochefoucauld (1613–80); that death, like the sun, cannot be looked at directly (La Rochefoucauld, 1967). Yet despite the putative claims of those who have earlier ploughed a furrow in this academic field (e.g. Ariès, 1974; Becker, 1973; Elias, 1975; Gorer, 1965), death can no longer be said to be a taboo subject (e.g. Mellor and Shilling, 1993; Walter, 1991a), either within sociology, given the recent explosion of interest in the subject, or within contemporary society at large, especially, it would seem, following the global outpouring of grief which accompanied the death of Princess Diana in 1997.

It is this rapidly expanding corpus of work, comprising 'cognitively' oriented disciplines — chiefly, anthropology, history and sociology — which has engaged somewhat belatedly with the topic of death, that provides a starting point for my discussions in this thesis. That these literatures should provide a logical, if not obvious starting point for my discussions can be seen from the two death-events; the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana, which precipitated the public mourning that is the focus of this thesis. It is these events which foregrounded and provided the impetus for the 'unprecedented' and widespread scenes of public mourning which followed, extended well beyond the spatial parameters in which they occurred, and which led some

commentators (e.g. Berridge, 2001) to suggest that death, after a 'long and protracted conspiracy of silence' (Bauman, 1991: 1), was back, un-deconstructed (Bauman, 1992).

It is the public mourning following these events, and others ostensibly like them (for example, the local public mourning which followed the Dublane gun massacre of 1996, the mainly local but nationally amplified grief following the murder of Cambridgeshire school-girls Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in the Summer of 2002, and the global show of public grief following the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001) which have provided the opportunity for contemporary scholars working within this field of study to trace out historical shifts in predominantly Western attitudes towards death and dying. For it is against the backdrop of the putative trend towards a 'privatisation' of death, dying and bereavement (e.g. Ariès, 1974; Elias, 1985; Gorer, 1965), that the 'public' mourning following my two case-studies are made to appear all the more remarkable (e.g. Walter, 1991, 1999, 1999a). It is in this chapter, therefore, that I attempt to critically locate existing literatures on death and dying, especially those that concentrate upon the socially and cognitively manifested aspects of mourning behaviour. In so doing, I explore a variety of theoretical and empirical approaches to death, assessing their relative strengths and weakness in relation to the sorts of questions which I outlined in the introduction to this thesis. Namely, the possibility that other things besides the obvious referents of mourning were being mourned in these events; and the ways in which public mourning of the sort considered in this thesis might relate to a mourning of the self, of former selves, of people and places gone before.

The literatures which I explore in this chapter provide some key starting points from which to begin my discussions. Not least, they serve usefully to remind us of the

socially and historically contingent attitudes and practices surrounding death and dying, which in turn provide a background to attitudes surrounding the two public mourning events which are the primary foci of this thesis. My chapter begins therefore by exploring the putative claims that Western societies are death-denying societies (e.g. Ariès, 1974; Becker, 1973; Stannard, 1975), alongside claims of a recent revival of ‘interest’ and engagement with death by the publics within these societies (e.g. Berridge, 2001; Walter, 1999). It continues by exploring a variety of literatures from within sociology and social theory itself, which, against the relative silence on the subject from within these academic fields, have endeavoured to engage directly with the topic of death. Following this, I discuss a range of empirical literatures which, taken together, constitute the burgeoning sub-disciplinary field of ‘death studies’. This sub-disciplinary field of academic special interest, whilst multi-disciplinary in nature, has, I will argue, remained largely cognitive in orientation, and as academic specialisation has intensified, has struggled to integrate its endeavours back into the major disciplines from which it emerged and continues to draw epistemologically. At the same time, I suggest that the insights of contemporary sociology and social theory; and of shifts in orientation taking place within these academic fields, have failed to penetrate the corpus of work comprising death studies. Such shifts in orientation towards topics once considered off-limits, of, say, intimacy, emotions and the self, in short, of areas deemed the ‘sociological private’ (Bailey, 2000), are themselves reflective of changes occurring elsewhere within society at large.

The Denial and Revival of Death

The idea of Western societies as ‘death denying societies’ has, according to Andrews (2001: 361), become something of a ‘conventional wisdom’ or truism, not only within

scholarly circles but amongst the 'knowledge class' *per se* since publication in 1955 of Geoffrey Gorer's essay *The Pornography of Death*. Gorer's comparison of the social taboos surrounding sex in the Victorian period with those surrounding death in the middle part of the twentieth century gained particular currency throughout the 1960s and 1970s and was augmented by publication in 1973 of Ernest Becker's *The Denial of Death*, in 1974 by Philippe Ariès' *The Hour of Our Death*, and in 1975 by David E. Stannard's *Death in America*. Gorer (1955) has claimed that where the interdictions on sexuality during the Victorian era served to create a 'pornography of sex', so the verbal taboos surrounding death in the mid-twentieth century had served to create a 'pornography of death' within contemporary 'Anglo-Saxon' societies. Becker (1973) agreed, whilst Ariès (1975) claimed that North American society in particular had become a 'death denying society'. Ariès (1976: 25) has thus famously suggested that 'death arouses fear in us to the point that we no longer dare to call it by its name'. Freud (1918: 41) had earlier made a similar point by suggesting that 'we have shown an unmistakable tendency' to eliminate all thought of death from everyday life.

Gorer augmented his earlier essay on death as a pornography with an anthropological study ten years later (Gorer, 1965) tracing the attenuation of public rituals and social practices surrounding death in post-war Britain, as a society that was becoming both increasingly secular and individualised. In the relative absence of rituals derived from organised religion and following the attenuation of more communal forms of human existence, Gorer claimed that the task of coming to terms with grief and mourning increasingly fell back upon the individual experiencing bereavement. This led Gorer to claim that most Britons were 'without adequate guidance as to how to treat death and bereavement'; that they were without the 'social help in living through and coming to

terms with grief and mourning which are the inevitable responses in human beings to the death of someone whom they have loved' (Gorer, 1965: 110).

The historical sociologist Norbert Elias (1985: 27) has made a similar point by suggesting that in circumstances where the presence of dead and dying people has become a source of embarrassment for the living, the task of finding the right word and right gesture has increasingly fallen upon the shoulders of the individual. Here Elias writes that

Closely bound up, in our day, with the greatest possible exclusion of death and dying from social life, and with the screening-off of dying people from others, from children in particular, is a peculiar embarrassment felt by the living in the presence of dying people. They often do not know what to say. The range of words available for use in this situation is relatively narrow. Feelings of embarrassment hold words back. . . . the task of finding the right word and the right gesture therefore falls back on the individual.
(Elias, 1985: 23, 27)

Never before, Elias claims, have the dying been removed 'so hygienically behind the scenes of social life; never before have human corpses been expedited so odourlessly and with such technical perfection from deathbed to the grave' (Elias, 1985: 23). Others too have documented the gradual removal of death from public space and its sequestration within the hospital (e.g. Illich, 1976; Huntington and Metcalf, 1979); spatially within cemetery (e.g. Baudrillard, 1976; Ivins, 1945; Ragon, 1983); and by technical experts specialising in clinical medicine (e.g. Glaser and Strauss, 1968; Giddens, 1991). Jean Baudrillard (1976) has thus written of cemeteries as the first ghettos; as marking a distinction between the living and the dead; between metropolis and necropolis. Anthony Giddens (1991: 161), meanwhile, has suggested that death has become a technical issue; its assessment 'a matter of deciding at what point a person

should be treated as having died'. It is for Giddens 'the great extrinsic factor of human existence'; that which cannot, as such, 'be brought within internally referential systems of modernity'. All other events leading up to and involved with the process of dying can be so incorporated. Yet it is death which becomes a 'point zero':

nothing more or less than the moment at which human control over human existence finds an outer limit. . . . The process of dying . . . cannot be seen as anything other than the incipient loss of control: death is unintelligible exactly because it is the point zero at which control lapses.

(Giddens, 1991: 161–162, 203)

That death in modernity should be seen as unintelligible can be seen especially from the sense of incredulity that accompanies the typically 'bad death'. In Western 'death denying' societies, where death has been sequestered and where violent and unexpected death has become relatively rare, the 'bad death' is typically that which occurs in the prime of a persons life in tragic or violent circumstances. The 'bad death', as Rando (1993) points out, can be seen to complicate the work of mourning by shattering the expectations and assumptions of the bereaved, as well as heightening the sense of insecurity and disrupting the orderliness for society at large (Haney and Davis, 1999). Accordingly, the sort of spontaneous memorialisation seen in the aftermath of Princess Diana's death, can be seen as 'a public response to the unanticipated, violent deaths of people who do not fit into the categories of those we expect to die, who may be engaging in activities in which there is a reasonable expectation of safety, and with whom the participants in the ritual share some common identification' (Haney and Davies, 1997: 236). Both the unexpected and violent death of Princess Diana in the prime of life (she was thirty-six) and of ninety-six football supporters, many of them

young, during the Hillsborough disaster, can therefore be seen as characteristically ‘bad deaths’.

Nevertheless, the picture presented here, of death denial and sequestration was not always thus and stands in sharp contrast to earlier periods of history, where, according to Ariès (1976: 25), death was ‘familiar, close and softened’. Elias suggests that death was more pervasive (for young and old alike), less concealed, more familiar and experienced less in isolation of others than it is today. It was also, Elias (1985) suggests, spoken of more openly and frequently. Popular literature of the time, Elias claims (1985), testifies to this. It was only as the Middle Ages receded from view that contemplation upon the existential possibilities arising from death quickly became the *ne plus ultra* in socially proscribed speech, eclipsed only, as Michel Foucault (1984a) has reminded us, by verbal and bodily taboos surrounding sexuality. Ariès’ (1974) magisterial study of historical shifts in Western attitudes towards death from the Middle Ages to the present provides ample evidence of the linguistic interdictions imposed upon discourses of death and dying. Yet the picture I have presented hitherto remains a complicated one, for whilst in the Victorian period the dead were routinely excluded from the world of the living for fear of contagion (Bauman, 1992; Leaman, 2001), death was more common as public spectacle (Berridge, 2001; Foucault, 1977). This period was the high-point in proscriptive formal practices surrounding funerary ritual (Curl, 1972), as well as in the degree of respect shown towards the dead, but it was also a period infamous for bodysnatchers in search of fresh corpses to be sold and used for medical research.

Where, then, death was once ubiquitous within the public domain, it has long since been confined to spaces which are essentially 'private' in nature. While there are seemingly echoes of Ariès' work in Elias's (1985) later writing on the subject, Elias takes as his point of departure what he sees as Ariès' romanticised view of the past in which people died calmly and serenely. Elias contends Ariès' view of the 'ancient attitude' towards death by challenging the explanatory value of his work. This broad brush approach, Elias suggests, whilst providing a picture of long-term historical change offers little to explain how death has today come to be viewed with such trepidation. Ariès, Elias suggests, understands history as only description (Elias, 1985). Elias further contends Ariès' assertion that death in the Middle Ages was 'tame', preferring a Hobbesian view of the past in which death more often than not, was violent and life was routinely experienced as 'poore, nasty, brutish, and short' (Hobbes, 1985: 186). Elias (1985) has suggested that those dying in earlier periods of history did not meet death in a serene and dignified manner but were routinely mocked and taunted by their survivors. Nevertheless, it is humans, according to Elias (1985), who above all other species of animal are uniquely conscious of the inevitability of their own finitude. That public mention of death, and the existential anxieties which this causes — as arguably the most absolute and universally anticipated of all human experiences — should become taboo in this way, has been variously explained by social theorists in recent years. It is these issues, as principally manifested in the work of Norbert Elias and Zygmunt Bauman that I shall return to take up shortly.

Despite the putative claims of death as a taboo subject, academic disciplines across the social sciences have seen a growth in literatures seeking to engage with the topic of death. Here Tony Walter (1994), cites Michael Simpson's critical bibliography of death,

dying and grief (Simpson, 1979, 1987), which, by the time of publication of its updated second edition, recorded some 2,350 books in print on the subject. There have been many more books published on the subject since, which, as Ian Craib (1998) suggests, appear to increase monthly. Simpson suggests therefore that death is a badly kept secret, so unmentionable a topic that there are now a plethora of books asserting that we are ignoring the topic.⁴ So too, Giddens (1991) suggests that while actual contact with death and serious illness may now be rare in highly developed societies, mediated experience of it through ‘documentary presentations’ and aspects of ‘fictional realism’ make it more pervasive than ever. Giddens suggests that our existential sensibilities may in fact be enriched by new fields of experience which are opened up by cultural mediation. Nevertheless, this trend in the revival of academic interest in an area hitherto considered off-limits by social scientists is perhaps indicative of the wider historical shifts in attitudes within Western societies towards death during the twentieth century, from one of candid involvement during the Middle Ages to that of discursive occlusion. Paradoxically, while sociology has initially been slow to engage with the topic, some of its key contemporary theorists (e.g. Bauman, 1992; Elias, 1985; Giddens, 1991) have been foremost in attempting to theorise the under-theorisation of death and the indexical relationship between attitudes towards death and the social, economic, cultural and political conditions which ostensibly give rise to them. This pattern, of death’s contemporary *presence and absence* (Mellor, 1993), is reflected within society at large, where death is at once very much present in contemporary Western societies (in aspects of fictional realism, for instance), yet confined to spaces routinely hidden from public view.

Nevertheless, the revival of academic interest in death has coincided with a renaissance of interest in death among the lay population at large. Researchers and commentators (e.g. Berridge, 2001; Walter, 1991a; 1994; 1999) have thus pointed to the recent revival of ‘public mourning’ rituals, that is to say, to public commemorative practices following the deaths of public figures and/or disasters, which, since the Victorian period had become attenuated within most Western societies. Berridge (2001) has suggested that the public mourning for Princess Diana in 1997 marks a revival in public mourning, which, since the unbearably tragic sense of loss following the end of the First World War, had fallen out of use within British society. This renewed popularity in death can also perhaps been seen from the revival of interest in things previously considered repugnant or macabre. From the formaldehyde-embalmed dead animals in the ‘Brit art’ of Damien Hirst to the ‘lurid’ attempts at human preservation in Gunther Von Hagen’s recent (2002) exhibition *Körperwelten* (Body Worlds), death it seems, following Bauman’s claims (1992), is back, unadulterated and in the flesh, un-deconstructed and unreconstructed. Nevertheless, the plethora of self-help manuals which aim to give instruction on the social etiquette surrounding death: on *how* to condole (e.g. Zunin and Zunin, 1992; Isaacs, 2000), and which serve to help people come to terms the emotional distress caused by bereavement (e.g. Childs–Gowell, 1995; Collick and Rayner, 1998; Dunn, 2000; Noel, 2002), continue to grow unabated. This in part would appear to confirm Gorer’s (1965) earlier observations that we have ‘forgotten’ how to grieve and are having to re-learn the practice of public mourning and condolence.

Death and Contemporary Social Theory

⁴ For further discussion of this seeming paradox, see Walter (1991a, 1993, 1994); Craib (1998); Mellor (1993).

If, as I have suggested, the topic of death was engaged in only indirectly and implicitly in earlier versions of sociology, more recently some of the discipline's most prolific theorists have begun to engage with the topic in a more direct and explicit manner. Foremost amongst these theorists have been Norbert Elias (1985) and Zygmunt Bauman (1992). Whilst their recent engagements with the topic of death is largely consistent with arguments which have discerned a putative trend towards the 'privatisation' of death, it is also significant principally because of the ways in which it intersects with each's own wider body of work and their divergence from more 'mechanistic' explanations of social behaviour. Thus, for example, where Émile Durkheim (1897, 1912a) earlier engaged with death, he tended to do so not as a source of meaning in its own right but as a consequence of either under- or over-socialisation (his study of suicide) or, in passing, by a consideration of the social mourning rituals and elementary forms of religious life within 'primitive' societies (Durkheim, 1976). Nevertheless, and in light of the prevailing conditions surrounding the topic of death in the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, it is perhaps not surprising that sociology should be concerned with life rather than death (Mellor, 1993). In this light, Bauman (1992: 130) has suggested that in modernity, the language of survival — with its 'vocabulary geared, above all, to the collective and public denial or concealment of that limit to our potency' — is the only one in which we are conversant.

Both Elias and Bauman have attempted to move beyond descriptions of prevailing attitudes towards death and dying, and have instead sought to provide more substantive explanation of how death has come to be so comprehensively pushed behind the scenes of everyday life. Elias's (1985) attempts to explain the increasing interdictions on death in modern society are thus best understood within the framework of his seminal two-

part work *The Civilising Process* (1978, 1982). So too, Bauman's recent discussions of death should be viewed within an impressive trilogy of work in which he has endeavoured to critically theorise conditions of life under modernity (1987, 1989, 1991), and an equally impressive quaternary of work on postmodernity (1992b, 1993, 1995, 1997). Specifically, Bauman's (1992) philosophical treatise on death can be seen as a bridge linking his critique of modernity⁵ to works which reflect upon the conditions of postmodernity, and which seemingly mark a 'cultural turn' in his theorising (Kellner, 1998).

What is significant in my choosing to discuss the work of these two authors is the fact that Bauman and Elias should decide to engage directly with the topic of death when in the autumn of their own lives (Elias was in his eighties when he wrote *The Loneliness of the Dying*, Bauman in his late sixties when he wrote *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies*). Bauman's philosophical meditation upon the existential ambivalence of (non-) being, in *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies* is itself suggestive of Montaigne's maxim that 'to philosophise is to learn how to die'. It is perhaps also worthwhile reflecting, as others have done (e.g. Brown, 1987; Bunting, 2003; Smith, 2001), that Elias's and Bauman's own distinctive biographical trajectories (both were Jewish emigre's, from Nazi Germany and Nazi occupied Poland respectively) have profoundly influenced the topics upon which they have written.⁶ Elias's mother was

⁵ Bauman has theorised modernity less as a precise historical period than, like Jean-François Lyotard (1988), as a *mode* of sensibility. Where others (e.g. Toulmin, 1990) have endeavoured to date the point at which modernity begins and ends, Bauman (1991: 5) has perceived this 'project of dating' as but one of many *foci imaginarii* that, 'like butterflies, do not survive the moment' at which 'a pin is pushed through their body to fix them in place'. Instead, Bauman proposes a view in which the cultural conditions of the modern and postmodern may co-exist simultaneously; that 'postmodernity does not necessarily mean the end' or 'the discreditation of the rejection of modernity' (1991: 272).

⁶ For an interesting comparison of the lives and works of Elias and Bauman, see Smith (2001). For a discussion of Elias's biographical experiences upon his thinking and the academic influence of Elias upon the colleagues with whom he taught during his time at the University of Leicester (1954–1962), including Anthony Giddens, see Brown (1987); Kilminster (1987); Mennell (1992). For a discussion of Bauman's biographical experiences upon his

killed in Auschwitz (Dunning, 1989), whilst Bauman escaped Poland in 1939 on the eve of German invasion. Both, for instance, have engaged — albeit implicitly and from sharply contrasting perspectives — upon violence and death (e.g. Elias, 1978, 1982, Bauman, 1989) in their wider work. Elias has done so more directly in *The Civilizing Process* (1978, 1982), a work widely regarded as his magnum opus, which is clearly a substantive attempt to theorise the human proclivity for inter-violence and the poor protection which the thin veneer of ‘civilisation’ offers against it. There are strong overtones of Freud in Elias’s work, especially the thematics of violence and civilisation, to which Elias adds a sociological twist.

It is here, in *The Civilizing Process* (1978, 1982) that Elias comprehensively charts increases in the modern sensibility towards our most basic or animal functions. Elias documents what he perceives as an increase in the ‘threshold of embarrassment, shame and repugnance’ (Elias, 1939I: 101) displayed *inter alia* towards various organic or bodily functions, including sexual intercourse, defecation, forms of eating behaviour, and attitudes towards death and its aftermath. Functions like these, Elias suggests, which were once experienced openly and without moral inhibition, have since become confined to times and places deemed socially appropriate. Over time these changes come to be deeply internalised, subject to reflexive self-regulation, and are practised ‘instinctively’ within the *durée* of everyday human activity (regardless of whether they are experienced alone in the company of others). Elias’s theorising of the ways in which moral sensibilities become subject to *unconscious* self-regulation can be seen as a forerunner of Foucault’s work on the body (1977).

thinking, see Kilminster and Varcoe (1998). For a discussion of Bauman’s position as a ‘successful outsider’ within British academia, see Smith (1998).

Indeed, Elias maintains that this ‘moulding of affects’ in personality at the ‘micro’ level can be linked to wider changes in state-formation at the ‘macro’ level of society. Elias locates the sociogenesis of modern sensibilities in respect of bodily functions (including repugnance at the sight of death) to changes taking place within the ‘habitus’⁷ of European court societies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (especially the court of Louis XIV of France). These centripetal shifts in the concentration of power away from local chieftains and towards an ascendant secular nobility in particular, and the corresponding centrifugal shift in power from the Roman Catholic church towards the newly emerging absolutist monarchs of Europe, are, for Elias, the hinge linking aspects of change at the ‘macro’ level of society with those at the ‘micro’. Elias suggests that as the newly emerging secular dynasties of European societies were able increasingly to monopolise both the means of violence and the means of taxation; so the populations under their jurisdiction were expropriated of the right to bear arms, therein leading gradually to the internal pacification of these societies and a change in the habitus of the people living within them.⁸

Here, two points, each of them related, are worthy of consideration. The first is Elias’s concept of ‘habitus’ which, as Dunning and Mennell (1996: ix) point out, can be seen as ‘embodied social learning’. In contrast and addition to the more ‘mechanical’ forms of social learning envisioned by Durkheim, in which individuals as social beings are

⁷ Etymologically, the concept of habitus can be seen to derive from a combination of the word ‘habit’ (as the routinised performing of an action) and ‘habitation’ (the social environment in which the habit is, overtime, given shape). It was, according to Mennell and Dunning (1996), first used by Elias in the preface to the 1939 edition of *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* (later published in English in two volumes as *The Civilizing Process* (1978, 1982). The term was also apparently in widespread use in German sociology during the inter-war years long before its entry in the wider European sociological vocabulary. For a fuller discussion of Elias’s use of the term and the ways in which this differs from Bourdieu’s later use, see the preface in Elias (1996). See also Mennell (1992).

⁸ Elias’s ideas on the monopoly mechanism can be seen to derive both from Marx’s theorising of monopoly capitalism and Karl Mannheim’s (1929) work on competition as a general process. For further discussion of the influence of these ideas upon Elias’s thinking, see Mennell (1992: especially ch. 1).

subject to externally binding rules and normative pressures, Elias adds a psychological dimension. From this perspective, of long-term historical development, certain behaviours become sedimented within the bodily practices and collective psyche, so as to become almost ‘second nature’ amongst people living within certain social conditions. This concept of habitus, which as Dunning and Mennell (1996) point out, predates the popularised use of the term within sociology by Pierre Bourdieu (1979), is significant — and this is my second point — because it helps to explain the modern mind-set and its aversive relationship with organic and bodily processes such as death. Elias’s concept of the European civilising process is complex and deeply contested⁹ and here is not the place to engage in such discussions. It should suffice to say, however, that as centralising or centripetal shifts in the balance of power occurred within European societies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and as people were forced to live in peace with each other, that, according to Elias (1994: 278) ‘the moulding of affects and the standard of the drive-economy [*Triebhaushalt*] are very gradually changed as well’. In other words, civilising pressures become so great that the minimum of conscious effort is required to behave ‘correctly’ within public life. Thus, according to Elias (1982: 233), beside the ‘individual’s conscious self-control, an automatic blindly functioning apparatus of self-control is firmly established’

⁹ Commentators have been puzzled by the mixed reception with which Elias’s work has been received: as attracting both ‘the highest praise and deprecation verging on scorn’ (Featherstone, 1987: 199). Elias has been criticised for proposing a unilinear, evolutionist, ‘progress’ theory of human history (e.g. Bauman, 1989; Coser, 1978; Giddens, 1984); of privileging historicist, ‘top-down’ accounts of the past over ‘bottom-up’ accounts of history and class relations as the dialectic of social change (e.g. Stedman Jones (1977); of European ethnocentrism (Goody, 2002); of undertheorising gender relations (e.g. Hargreaves, 1992) and of proposing a form of ‘sophisticated empiricism’ (Layder, 1986). Defenders of Elias’s work (e.g. Dunning, 1987; Mennell, 1992; Goudsblom, 1977; Kilminster, 1987) have responded to the most common of these critiques, the charge that Elias’s work proposes a unilinear, evolutionist ‘progress’ theory of human history, by seeking to clarify what they see as misconceptions of Elias’s notion of ‘civilisation’. In this respect they suggest that Elias’s use of the term ‘civilisation’ is not intended in a celebratory, taken-for-granted, everyday sense to connote man’s [*sic*] triumphalist emergence from pre-social barbarity, but rather in a sense which invokes the fragility of Western self-approbatory conceptions of ‘Civilisation’. Dunning and Mennell (1996) have suggested that Elias’s notion of ‘civilisation’ should more accurately been seen as anticipating

Where in the past the most basic of bodily functions were performed openly, in public, and with little accompanying personal embarrassment or shame, as the accumulation of power by an ever decreasing number of European elites gathered pace, so these bodily functions became subject to a range of moral prohibitions. Coterminous with, and correlative to, the rise of modern individualism, these functions, where possible, were banished to areas considered ‘private’.¹⁰ It is this long-term process of ‘civilisation’, during which bodily functions (and the most ‘primitive’ aspects of animal and human life in general) come to be experienced with a level of repugnance erstwhile unprecedented at any time in the history of human development, and whose impact, even today, continues to shape public attitudes and behaviours.

Bauman’s (1989) sociological engagement with the Holocaust is, as well as being a sustained polemic both against the social production of morality as theorised in Durkheimian forms of ‘sociologism’, and Elias’s theory of the civilising process — as lending ‘learned and sophisticated support’ to an ‘etiological myth’ of ‘humanity emerging from pre-social barbarity’ (Bauman, 1989: 12) — an attempt to theorise the ways in which death during modernity was designated a technical ‘problem’ worthy of solution. Bauman traces our relationship to death across shifting cultural conditions, from the pre-modern, where the tendency was to attempt to cheat death by making private bids for immortality, through the modern period, where the tendency has been to attempt the outright elimination of death, to the postmodern, where immortality has lost its allure and where modern attempts to eliminate death have made its presence reappear more ubiquitously than ever before.

Edward W. Said’s (1978) critique of Western Occidentalism. For alternative analyses of multifarious civilising processes, see Mann’s (1986) historical and comparative account, or Giddens’s (1985) synthetic and theoretical explanation.

In the disenchanted world of modernity where death does not hold out the promise of another ‘phase of being’ but has ‘been reduced to an *exit* pure and simple’ (Bauman, 1992: 130), death has lost its meaning. It is in cultural conditions of modernity, where death has no meaning and becomes incomprehensible, that the existential anxieties of the living towards their own non-being become writ-large. In this way, as Bauman suggests, death is the absolute *other* of modernity:

an unimaginable other, hovering beyond the reach of communication. . . . Death is an absolute nothing and ‘absolute nothing’ makes no sense — we know that ‘there is nothing’ only when *we can perceive* the absence of perception. . . But death is the cessation of the very ‘acting subject’, and with it, *the end* of all perception.

(Bauman, 1985: 2, 3)

Incapable of reconciling itself existentially with the idea of death (as nothingness), the modern mind-set, in Bauman’s view, has sought strenuously to extinguish the threatening sense of ambivalence which it embodies. The very idea of death as non-being confounds the philosophical precepts underpinning modernity; confounding the Cartesian *cogito* as the basis of being. For the one thing which thought cannot grasp is its own non-existence, its own inability to think (Bauman, 1992). Unable to tolerate the existential anxiety and ambivalence at the thought of one’s own non-being — itself a contradiction in terms, given what I have just said — the modern mind-set has, according to Bauman, deployed a number of life-strategies aimed at resolving the stubborn ‘problem’ which death presents to the living. Insofar as death has provided stubborn resistance to the application of reason and science which, elsewhere, have yielded dramatic gains for Civilisation, the management of death — as the most insoluble of modernity’s problems — has been translated into a series of ‘displacement

¹⁰ For a comprehensive account of the rise of modern individualism within European societies, see Lukes (1973).

activities' aimed at staving-off the anxiety generated by the thought of non-being. Spatial segregation, as we have earlier seen, has been but one strategy for keeping death at bay, where out of sight — whether it be in the hospital or the cemetery — is out of mind. Modern instrumentality has in this view succeeded in deconstructing and dissolving mortality, as *the most* insoluble and intractable of problems of which we can do *nothing* about, into a series of problems we can at least do *something* about. Modern life strategies; of health regimens and the injunction to 'keep fit' are, in Bauman's view, practised as a set of exorcistic rites aimed only at delaying the inevitable process of physical decline which eventually culminate in death and our own non-being.

Bauman, as I have suggested, takes Elias's theory of the civilising process as a point of contention, arguing, for instance, that the Holocaust was the outcome not of the failure of civilisation but as too much civilisation (Bauman, 1989). Following the earlier work of Frankfurt School theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (1944), Bauman has suggested that the emancipatory gains promised by an post-Enlightenment belief in reason and science have been subverted and turned back upon themselves.¹¹ Thus in practice the audacious modern dream of extinguishing or 'killing death' 'turns into the practice of killing people' (Bauman, 1992: 160). Whilst the Holocaust has demonstrated modernity's ability to accelerate death on a grand scale; as an audacious exercise in social engineering (Bauman, 1989), modernity has also, paradoxically, singularly failed in attempts to extinguish death. Where in other spheres of life, Civilisation has triumphed over the forces of Nature it has been bamboozled in its

¹¹ Bauman acknowledges his debt of intellectual thinking to the 'Frankfurt School' of Critical theory. In *Modernity and Ambivalence* Bauman (1991: 17) makes clear his intention to 'wrap historical and sociological flesh around "Dialectics of Enlightenment"'.

attempts to eradicate death. Death, therefore, is the scandal and ultimate humiliation of reason:

It saps the trust in reason and the security that reason promises. It loudly declares reason's lie. It inspires fear that undermines and ultimately defeats reason's offer of confidence. Reason cannot exculpate itself of this ignominy. . . . Of all adversities of earthly existence, death. . . emerged as the most persistent and indifferent to human effort. It was. . . the *major* scandal. The hard, irreducible core of human impotence in a world increasingly subject to human will and acumen. The last, yet seemingly irremovable, relic of fate in a world increasingly designed and controlled by reason.

(Bauman, 1992: 15, 133–134)

Giddens (1991: 203) has made a similar point by suggesting that modernity's 'failure' to eliminate the return of 'external criteria' like death may have profound existential and ontological implications. The ontological security through which our trust in the 'expert systems' and scientific discourses of modernity is brokered and secured, is thus shaken to its core by their inability to eradicate death. Death, according to Giddens, because it concedes the limitations of modernity to maintain effective control, and in the absence of meaning derived from traditional religious discourses, becomes more unintelligible than ever. Nevertheless, incapable of the outright elimination of death, modernity, specifically, modern racial science in the form of eugenics, turned its guns on what it perceived were its surrogates: the 'carriers' of 'defective' genes which if left unattended, would infect and overrun the wider population, therein leading to the eventual death of humanity itself. Medical discourses have of course become inextricably linked with political discourses during the twentieth century. The 'problem' of the disposal of human corpses in Auschwitz has, as Bauman (1989) reminds us, been articulated as a 'medical problem' (see also, for example, Proctor, 1988). More recent manifestations of this modernist drive to purge society of 'deviant' subpopulations suspected of

‘spreading’ disease (and eventually death) to the moral mainstream can be seen in Peter Redman’s (1997a) discussion of popular discourses around health, which during the 1980s, identified gay men as the principal venereological ‘carriers’ of the AIDS virus.

Where, as Bauman has suggested, early and pre-modern attempts to cheat death were made chiefly in private bids for immortality by those within whose means it was to achieve lasting notoriety through their words or deeds, so in postmodernity, where, celebrity has been democratised, where any of us, regardless of social standing, can stake our claim for the fifteen minutes of fame promised by Andy Warhol, the bid for immortality has lost its allure. In postmodernity, where the future is dissolved into the present, the modern demand that we colonise it has become redundant. Incapable of conceiving a future beyond our own non-being, the future is abolished and time dissolved into a Benjaminian ‘now time’ (*Jetztzeit*), a non-flowing time of continuous presence. In postmodernity, as a self-reflexive psychoanalytic modernity (Bauman, 1991), Bauman suggests that the struggle to dissolve mortality into a series of manageable problems has given way to efforts to deconstruct, not mortality, but *immortality*.

Bauman (1992) thus begins to move beyond a concentration upon death as such, albeit without saying so in these terms, towards a focus upon loss in general, whilst appearing to maintain an emphasis upon death as the most injurious of all possible losses. Nevertheless, it is, according to Bauman, the transient and fleeting nature of postmodern culture, where loss is experienced on a daily basis, which serves to help inoculate us against the death of a significant Other. So, for example, Bauman writes that where modern society once insisted upon the permanence of marriage bonds embodied by the

linguistic injunction of ‘till death us do part’, in the postmodern the ‘departure’ of a life-partner is often rehearsed many times, through separation or divorce, before actual death occurs. Daily life, he suggests, therefore becomes a perpetual dress rehearsal of death. Having rehearsed more than once the ‘departure of the putatively “life-long” partner through’ separation or divorce, we cannot, when biological death occurs, see in ‘what way, if any, the rehearsals differ from the “real” performance’ (Bauman, 1992: 189). Where Foucault (1984a) has elsewhere suggested with sexuality, that linguistic interdictions placed upon it made its presence loom larger than ever, so Bauman has suggested that modernity’s project to silence death has, in the postmodern, made its presence reappear more ubiquitously than ever:

If modernity deconstructed death into a bagful of unpleasant, but tameable illnesses. . . in the society that emerged at the far end of the modern era it is the majestic yet distant bliss that is being deconstructed into a sackful of bigger or smaller, but always within-reach, satisfactions. . . . Instead of trying (in vain) to colonize the future, it dissolves the future into the present. . . [it slices] time. . . into short-lived, evanescent episodes. It deprives mortality of its vile terror by taking it out of hiding, and tossing it into the realm of the familiar and the ordinary — to be practised there day in, day out.

(Bauman, 1992: 164, 187)

In this way, the application of digital technologies within popular cultural forms help subvert the apparent irrefutability which death once appeared to embody. Whilst notoriety has, in the popular postmodern been thoroughly democratised, so that anyone regardless of social standing or achievements accomplished can become famous (one need not have achieved anything at all to become famous nowadays, for one can become famous by virtue simply of appearing on reality television); celebrities who do die

physically can now be returned to us through the use of digital technologies.¹² In the popular postmodern, where in 1995, using previously unreleased songs that the Beatles had recorded in the 1970s, a virtual John Lennon could be reunited for one last jam¹³ with the remaining Beatles.¹⁴ Death in the postmodern therefore need not, as Baudrillard (1990) reminds us, be irrevocable, for what has disappeared has every chance of reappearing:

[W]hat dies is annihilated in linear time, but what disappears passes into the state of constellation. It becomes an event in a cycle which may bring it back many times.

(Baudrillard, 1990: 92)

Nevertheless, and in spite of the virtual technologies and digital simulacra (Baudrillard, 1990) which, as Elliott (1999) usefully reminds us, make some form of virtual reunion possible, those people who die physically cannot return in embodied form (least not in our present state of human and technological development). Importantly, however, what these technologies do is to radically destabilise the binary assumptions ordinarily implied by ‘dead’ and ‘alive’. In this way, the simulacra of postmodern culture — where images usurp reality, merging copy with ‘original’ to fashion something which outstrips both — produces something which is *hypereal*.

Such postmodern simulacra can be said to mirror Jacques Derrida’s (1976) philosophical discussions of ‘undecidability’ and the contrastive function of language as

¹² For discussion of the digital possibilities which made a virtual reunion of the Beatles possible, some fourteen years after the actual death of Lennon in 1981, see Elliott (1999: ch. 6).

¹³ That is to say, the extemporisation or improvised playing by a group of musicians.

¹⁴ Throughout the 1990s, newly available electronic and digital media helped spawn a new vogue in television and cinema commercials, in which digitally re-mastered old film footage of celebrities and Hollywood film actors was used to market new products. That stars were long since dead was a fail-safe strategy for companies whose products they advertised, for it minimised the risk which accompanies the use of living celebrities: that they in some way be scandalised and tarnished the brand they advertise. Commercials selling Holsten Pils beer thus used Marilyn Monroe and Humphrey Bogart to sell their product, whilst sports manufacturer Reebok digitally re-mastered film footage of yesteryear to make an all-time first XI combining Manchester United stars of past and present. Similarly, the car

embodied in the wider corpus of post-structuralist theory. Here we can illustrate Derrida's concept by reference to the popular cinematic depiction, especially in the horror genre, of the 'Zombie'.¹⁵ Zombies are thus re-activated corpses which evade Western rationalist binary distinctions of 'life' and 'death'. The zombie, using Derrida's thinking, is an 'undecidable' by virtue of the space it occupies in societies which, as we have seen, separate (both spatially and psychically) the dead from the living. Zombies, like other 'undecidables' (hermaphrodites, bi-sexuals, racial hybrids, and in the science-fiction genre of popular culture, the android — which straddles the divide between human and machine) are perceived as threatening because they escape the binary oppositions which govern Western rationalist thought. Assumptions of, say, masculine or feminine, gay or 'straight', 'black' or 'white', Nature or Civilisation. Here we can usefully draw upon Redman's (1997a) work again, which, tracing the media representation of the AIDS virus during the 1980s (especially as represented in the popular British tabloid), has discerned an implied association between gay men and the 'monster' of the horror-movie genre. In the same way in which the monster or the zombie in the horror genre can be seen to assume control of the innocent through the act of 'possession', so in tabloid reports of the AIDS virus during the 1980s, gay men were portrayed chiefly as venereological carriers of the disease; a sub-population ready to infect, and thereby possess, the 'innocent' mainstream population. Redman's argument can be seen to suggest that it is the very 'undecidability' of gay men's sexual identity — or rather their 'identity instability' and 'boundary invasion' — which rendered them

manufacturer Ford used re-mastered images of Steve McQueen taken from the scene of a car chase in the 1968 film *Bullitt* to sell its new sports coupe, the Puma.

¹⁵ The Zombie is a relatively recent phenomenon in Western culture (first entering popular culture most visibly through the horror-movie genre in the late 1920s). It derives, however, from the religious and spiritual beliefs of enslaved West Africans in Haiti during the 17th century. For an account exploring the historical emergence and continued purchase of the zombie within Western culture, see Warner (2002a; 2002b).

threatening to stable and normative assumptions of heterosexuality as constituted in dominant political discourses of the time. The zombie, because it is both dead *and* alive, neither dead *nor* alive, inhabits a liminal, in-between space: the *hauntological*. In ‘reality’ life precedes death but the zombie, because it is both, serves to destabilise taken-for-granted assumptions about life and death.

Death Studies: Academic Specialism or Thanatological Ghetto?

I want now in this section to turn specifically to consider literatures, mainly empirical, which comprise the area of academic special interest that I have been calling death studies. In particular, I want to trace out developments occurring within this field of interest which, over the last ten years or so, has seen a proliferation of specialist research (much of it applied, say, within the fields of gerontology and palliative care); and to locate this corpus of work within a wider disciplinary and epistemological context. In turn, I want to attempt to illustrate the ways in which literatures from within this field might help throw light upon the sorts of questions which I ask in this thesis, especially my attempts to explore the meaning-making processes involved in the two public mourning events which my thesis considers.

The sociology of death and dying has, as Bauman (1992) suggests, grown into:

a fully fledged branch of social science, armed with everything an academic discipline needs to insure its own survival — a body of literature of its own, a network of university addresses, journals and conferences.

(Bauman, 1992: 1)

Specifically, this can be evidenced from specialist symposia and conferences (in the UK, the biennial conference of the *Social Context of Death, Dying and Disposal*), specialist journals (in the UK, *Mortality*, and in the USA, *Omega* and *Death Studies*),

and specialist university courses (in the UK, at the Universities of Reading, Durham and Lampeter), all of which point to the 'expansive state' (Clark, 1993: *vii*) of death studies. Following this, recent debates within the field have focused upon future directions and possible orientation of death studies (e.g. Mellor, 1993; Walter, 1991a, 1993). Tony Walter (1993), as arguably the foremost authority on the social aspects of death and dying in the UK, has, for instance, called for the insights drawn from death studies to be integrated back into sociology itself, suggesting that 'if sociology should be aware that 51 per cent of us are female, surely it should be even more aware that 100 per cent of us die' (Walter, 1993: 289). Walter has thus cautioned against the potential perils of sub-disciplinary isolationism; of UK death studies becoming side-lined as a 'thanatological ghetto', as he claims has been the case in the USA.

Nevertheless, whilst sociology remains at the integrative core of the disciplines that comprise death studies, the work of academics from within many other disciplines, from archaeology and theology studies, to history and anthropology, have contributed to the variety of vantage points from which the topic of death has been approached within this specialist academic enterprise.¹⁶ Walter (1993, 1994) has usefully traced the recent origins of this field of academic interest to a variety of sources. These, in addition to

¹⁶ There are now a wide variety of works which have emerged from within, and of works from without (which pre-date the establishment of death studies as a sub-disciplinary area of special interest), that can be seen as comprising death studies. For an example of work which explores historical changes in attitudes towards death and dying see Ariès (1974, 1981); Gorer, (1955, 1965); Halsall (1995); Houlbrooke (1998); Morley (1971). For work which examines the social aspects of funerary ritual and practice, see, for example, Barley (1995); Davies (1998); Houlbrooke (1989); Walter (1990). For anthropological and cross-cultural variation in funerary practice, see, for example, Bloch (1971); Durkheim (1912); Hertz (1907); Huntington and Metcalf (1979, 1991); Lévi-Strauss (1969); Malinowski (1962); Hockey (1990); Rosenblatt *et al* (1976). For accounts which explore death and its connections with religion, see, for example, Hockey (1993); Houlbrooke (1998). On death and religious pilgrimage, see, for example, Davie (1993); Morinis (1992); Reader and Walter (1993). On the management of death and dying within institutionalised settings, see, for example, Glaser and Strauss (1965, 1968); Parsons (1951), and on palliative care and the hospice movement, see, for example, Clark, (1993b); Field (1989); Field and Johnson (1993); Saunders (1965, 1970; 1990). Other less prevalent fields of interest within death studies (mainly the preserve of sociologists), have concentrated on differences in death practices among various social groups: by ethnicity (e.g. Firth, 1993; Grainger, 1998; Hockey *et al*, 1997; Jonker, 1996; Ribner, 1998), by gender (e.g. Hallam, 1996; Hockey *et al*, 1997) and by class (e.g. Gorer, 1965; Young and Cullen, 1996).

those I have outlined in previous sections of this chapter (e.g. Ariès, 1974; Gorer, 1955, 1965) include contributions from within medical sociology (e.g. Townsend and Davidson, 1982; Glaser and Strauss, 1965; Field, 1989), and specifically, the field of gerontology (e.g. Seale, 1990; Littlewood, 1992); from the sociology of religion (e.g. Berger, 1969; Davie, 1993); and from community studies (e.g. Clark, 1982; Marris, 1958; Williams, 1990). Death studies have also, as Walter notes (1994) drawn considerable impetus from attempts which — against the medicalisation and rationalisation of death — have sought to re-humanise the experience of death and dying by encouraging an emotion-focused acceptance of death, especially among the bereaved, the dying and health-care professionals. Here, Walter usefully points to the work of psychiatrists, in Britain, of Colin Murry Parkes (1972/86) and Cicely Saunders (1963, 1970, 1990), and in the USA, to Elizabeth Kübler-Ross. What most of these studies have in common, with the exception of the work of the psychiatrists just cited, is a specific emphasis upon the social aspects of grief, especially as they are manifested publicly and/or in inter-personal settings.

Beyond this, the germinal work of social anthropologists (e.g. Frazer, 1890; Hertz, 1907; Tylor, 1871)¹⁷ and sociologists (e.g. Durkheim, 1895) working during the latter part of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth, provide the epistemological premises for recent literatures which have explored the social context of death and dying. Such studies have focused upon the funerary practices and customs surrounding death ritual in ‘primitive’ societies. Whilst, as I have suggested, sociology is at the integrative core of death studies (at least in the UK), it has, nevertheless, been

¹⁷ For other germinal anthropological accounts of funerary ritual and practice, see for example, Levi-Strauss (1969); Malinowski (1954, 1962); Turner (1969); Van Gennep (1909). For a comprehensive cross-cultural study of mortuary

amongst the last of the academic disciplines which comprise death studies to engage with the topic directly. In particular, Walter points to the work of French historians (e.g. Ariès, 1974; Vovelle, 1974, 1983) who were by the early 1970s already writing about death. The recent explosion of academic interest in death within the UK has, therefore, occurred relatively recently, in the 1990s.¹⁸

For the purposes of providing answers to the sorts of questions I am asking in this thesis, literatures from within death studies, specifically, those which have explored the two events which provide my two case studies: the Hillsborough disaster (e.g. Davie, 1993; Walter, 1991a) and the death of Princess Diana (e.g. Walter, 1999), provide a useful starting point by helping to locate the public mourning against a wider background of historical shifts in mourning practices.

Thus, where sociology works routinely to problematise areas of social life which appear so common place as to negate academic inquiry (an accusation often levelled at sociology by those outside it), Walter (1999) has endeavoured to resinscribe the perceived ‘strangeness’ of the Diana events; especially the public mourning for a person with whom the vast majority of mourners had never met, within the realm of the familiar. Walter in particular explains the perceived ‘strangeness’ of the public mourning for Princess Diana against the background of individuation occurring within North European and North American society since the second half of the nineteenth century. By setting the mass public mourning within the trend towards the increasing

ritual and summary of classical anthropological accounts of death ritual such as those cited here, see Metcalf and Huntington (1991).

¹⁸ As Walter (1993: 264) points out, the first collection of papers published in a monograph devoted ‘entirely to the subject of death and written by a wide range of British sociologists — not just medical sociologists’, did not appear until 1993. Meanwhile, the first edition of the British journal *Mortality* did not appear until 1996. The first symposium on death and dying was held in Leicester in 1991, whilst the first in a series of biennial conferences on the social context of death was held in Oxford in 1993.

‘privatisation’ of mourning practices, Walter usefully explains how the ‘Diana events’ were, paradoxically, extraordinary yet quite normal after all. Here Walter (1999: 35) explains that in earlier ‘periods of Western history, and in many other societies, people are expected to join the mourning for the loss of a member of the community, whatever their personal acquaintance or affection had been for the deceased’. Walter reminds us, using the work of Gitten (1984), that in early modern England, the local lord of the manor would pay the local paupers to attend the funeral for fear that no one else would. In the case of the public mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster, researchers have usefully located the mourning within the local social and religious practices of communities on Merseyside: as reflective specifically of locally inflected working-class Celtic traditions (e.g. Davie, 1993; Walter, 1991a).

Nevertheless, as useful as these studies are in helping to locate public mourning amongst wider historical shifts; and as useful as wider studies from within death studies have been in helping us to understand the social aspects of death, dying and bereavement, they have tended, for the most part, to concentrate upon grief and mourning as social artefact. That is to say, following the work of early pioneers in this field such as Émile Durkheim (1954) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1969), they have concentrated upon the individual mourner not as the site and origin of the emotion which accompanies loss but as bound by normative pressure to act in a way which is commensurate with the wider social group of which they are a part. In this view, both the customs and emotions which accompany grief are perceived as external norms which give rise ‘to internal sentiments, and these non-sentient norms determine the sentiments of individuals as well as the circumstances in which they may, or must, be

displayed' (Lévi-Strauss, 1969: 141). In this way too Durkheim has earlier written of mourning:

[n]ot as a natural movement of private feelings wounded by a cruel loss [but as] a duty imposed by the group. One weeps not simply because one is sad, but because one is forced to weep. It is a ritual attitude which he [*sic*] is forced to adopt out of respect for custom, but which is in a large measure, independent of his affective state.

(Durkheim, 1976: 397)¹⁹

Significantly, therefore, it is these theoretical and epistemological premises — of social anthropology and 'sociologistic' accounts of human behaviour — upon which, for the most part, death studies (and the sociology of death and dying) have been founded, and continue to draw. This can be illustrated by considering briefly Walter's (1999) account of the mourning for Princess Diana. Here Walter reflects that:

Those sitting down to write in the books of condolence did so with no clear idea what to write; they would scan the previous few entries, and write their own variation of that page's emerging theme. . . . At Buckingham Palace on the first Sunday, one could observe people wandering about wondering what to do. They watched other people — laying flowers, shrieking, quietly contemplating, hugging their partner — and thus learnt what was acceptable. This was behaviour that people constructed together, by watching each other, learning from each other: it was genuinely *social* behaviour.

(Walter, 1999: 23)

Whilst there is nothing remarkable in itself about these comments, they are nevertheless reflective of the epistemological premises of researchers working within the field of death studies; as focused upon mourning as the socially observable and manifested aspects of grief following bereavement. Consequently, researchers have tended to adopt

¹⁹ In the translators notes to Sigmund Freud's (1917) seminal contribution to the theorisation of mourning, *Mourning and Melancholia*, James Strachey (1957) reminds us that *Trauer*, the German word for mourning, like the English word, can be taken to mean both the affect of grief and its outward public manifestation.

a commensurate methodological approach; of value-neutrality and objective detachment from the particular topic being researched. Durkheim's early sociological project was of course, from the very beginning, concerned to carve out a conception of sociology as founded upon the rigorously objective study of observable 'social facts'. Perhaps not surprisingly therefore, following Durkheim's injunction that sociologists should discard all subjective and impressionistic accounts derived from one's own personal experiences of life (Gane, 1989), the directive given to contributors to Walter's collection of essays on the public mourning for Princess Diana (*The Mourning for Diana*) was that 'any judgements upon the events. . . must arise out of the analysis rather than from the motive for the analysis' (Walter, 1999: 44). Here, Walter makes clear that contributors were asked to 'resist the temptation' to 'dismiss mourners actions as erroneous and dangerous' or 'to co-opt them for their own intellectual or political causes' (Walter, 1999: 44). What this in fact neglects to consider, however, is the subjective dimension of mourning as affect as well as an outward manifestation of such; and the unconscious or repressed identificatory dynamics involved in mourning as affect. These are issues which I take up in greater depth in chapters which follow (especially chapters 2 and 3), nevertheless, it is suffice to say at this point that the particular epistemic, theoretical and methodological approaches reflective of literatures from within death studies have been directed less towards the sorts of questions I am asking in this thesis (of mourning, meaning-making and loss) and more towards the social aspects of grief as both manifested within particular social contexts, and as reactions generated by the influence of other people. Such approaches to the study of public mourning as it is considered here, and as I have suggested elsewhere (Brennan, 2001), do not, because of their

epistemological and theoretical orientation, engage in an analysis of meaning-making as it is constituted in the relationship between mourner and the particular referent of loss.

Towards the Sociological Private

The discussions I have outlined hitherto in this chapter, especially on the social construction of attitudes and practices surrounding death and dying, are themselves reflective of sociology's traditional focus upon the public domain. Sociology, as Michael Rustin (2000) suggests, has, almost by definition, taken as its starting point not the individual but the social 'structures' or 'networks' through and by which individual behaviour and consciousness are seen as constructed. The injunction that sociologists should restrict their analysis to the study of empirically observable 'social facts'; of people's common and collective experiences as generated *within* public space and society more generally, was of course vigorously outlined in various aspects of Durkheim's early sociological work, especially his blueprint for sociological practice, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895).²⁰

Where, then, sociology developed from a concern to study the 'social physics' (c.f. Comte) of human behaviour as manifested within the public domain of rapidly industrialising Western societies, so psychology, broadly speaking, developed in inverse proportions; from a desire to explain the interior dynamics of human behaviour as 'privately' and unconsciously experienced within the psyche. Sociologists of the time, including Durkheim (1895), were fiercely critical of what they perceived as solipsistic disciplines founded upon a belief of the individual as operating independently of social influences. Durkheim's attempt to outline the proper rules and remit of sociology can

²⁰ For useful commentaries and critical analyses of Durkheim's work, see Gane (1989); Lukes (1992).

itself be seen as an early attempt to police the borders of this fledgling academic discipline. Historically, sociology and psychology/psychoanalysis emerged and developed as disciplines which invested in opposite sides of the public-private dichotomy. Only relatively recently have a number of academics working principally within sociology (e.g. Craib, 1989, 1998; Elliott, 1994; Rustin, 1991; Vogler, 2000) sought to incorporate insights of psychoanalysis within sociology.

Sociology, by traditionally concentrating its analysis upon aspects of human behaviour seen as constituted in, and through, social and public practices, has systematically occluded various other aspects of human life, namely areas of the private, whether they be the social private or the psychically experienced private. These omissions within sociological theory and research have been made abundantly clear by feminist analyses, which, since the 1970s, began to focus upon aspects of the social private, most notably, within the domestic sphere of life within the patriarchal nuclear family (e.g. Firestone, 1974; Oakley, 1974, 1976).²¹

Since then, as recent developments within sociology have begun to suggest, considerable efforts have begun to address areas of human life which for long periods represented 'vanishing-points'. These areas: of principally, the self, the unconscious, and of intimate relationships (Bailey, 2000), have, according to Bailey (2000: 381) become 'sociological topics no less significant than the forms of social institutions and organisation that are the more conventional remit of the discipline'. These shifts, towards the 'sociological private', are, as Bailey (2000) points out, reflective of a

²¹ For other attempts by feminists to plug the gaps left by the absence of sociological research within areas of the feminine (social-) private, see, for example, Barrett (1980); Davidoff and Hall (1987); Rowebotham (1981); Tilly and Scott (1978).

lessening of confidence in the public realm both within sociology and amongst the population at large.²² This lessening in confidence, according to Bailey:

provides a context for re-examining the neglected importance of the public/private distinction in the formation of sociological thought...We now see an advocacy for the private which is a reversal of an earlier stress in all the social disciplines, not least in sociology, on the public realm as the primary locus of social value.
(Bailey, 2000: 382, 381)

Recent debates within sociology, especially those surrounding the legitimacy of the discipline to speak on issues of emotions and intimacy (e.g. Craib, 1995, Duncombe and Marsden, 1993, 1996; Williams and Bendelow, 1996)²³ demonstrate a renewed willingness and shift in orientation within parts of sociology to engage with areas once considered off-limits. Craib (1995, 1997), however, has contested this putative shift in orientation by suggesting — albeit with a degree of irony — that sociology as a discipline can be seen as presenting the symptoms of a manic psychosis because of a reluctance on the part of its practitioners to realise the disciplines limitations. This manic psychosis is manifested, according to Craib, in sociologists attempts to reduce various aspects of human emotions to social explanation whilst simultaneously threatening to ‘rule out of court’ (Craib, 1995: 151) other disciplinary approaches which

²² For a feminist discussion of meanings of ‘the private’ within sociological thought, and of the considerable body of feminist literature around ‘public’ and ‘private’, see Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards (2001).

²³ Throughout the 1990’s a series of debates were conducted in the journal *Sociology* on how the discipline should best approach the subject of emotions. Benton (1991) initiated debate by proposing the re-integration, albeit with caution, of biological approaches to emotions within sociology. Craib (1995) later provoked an angry response from certain quarters within sociology by accusing sociologists of crude forms of ‘social constructionism’, wherein emotions are reduced either to the effect of language (Jackson, 1993), or of ideology (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993). Craib also charged sociologists with academic hubris because of a seeming desire to colonise the study of emotions by assimilating all other explanatory accounts into an exclusively social one and by ‘threatening to rule out of court’ a range of knowledge on emotions from outside of sociology which also have something to contribute to their understanding. The rejoinders which followed (Duncombe and Marsden, 1996; Williams and Bendelow, 1996) contested Craib’s view by suggesting that whilst Craib’s descriptions of the discipline may have been accurate thirty years ago, they do not accurately represent contemporary developments within British sociology. The responses went further by angrily accusing Craib of grossly misrepresenting sociology as monolithic and socially reductionist. More recent articles appearing within *Sociology* (e.g. Burkitt, 1997; Craib, 1997; Williams, 1998a, 1998b) would appear in some ways to contradict Craib’s assertions by pointing to the diversity of perspectives, as drawing from resources both from within and outside of sociology.

have something to contribute to our understanding of emotions. These new directions within sociology (notwithstanding Craib's criticism of the discipline) appear therefore to suggest a reinvigorated interest in areas which have hitherto been considered sociological 'blind-spots'. Such developments within contemporary sociology which have engaged with emotions — grief itself is of course an emotional reaction to loss — as, for example, 'complexes rather than things' (Burkitt, 1997), stand in sharp contrast to approaches from within death studies, which, either do not engage with emotions at all, or where they do, as generated 'mechanically' within social relationships. These differences in perspective, I would suggest, are reflective of wider differences in theory and epistemology. Burkitt (1997), for instance, draws upon the work of Elias (1987), wherein emotions are perceived as psychological responses generated within particular social and historically situated habituses.

The important point to make here is that death studies has, by and large, remained relatively isolated from some of the developments taking place within sociology and contemporary social theory which I have earlier highlighted. Neither Bauman's social philosophy — as derived from the work of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas — nor Elias's fluid conception of human behaviour have been incorporated within the work of death studies. It continues by and large to take its lead from more conventional versions of sociology which both privilege the social/public realm and that explore grief and mourning more as social artefact than socially inflected affect. Such a perspective remains, for the most part, invested in the sorts of binary assumptions which have informed conventional sociological thinking: of public and private, individual and society, objective and subjective.

In this chapter I have, therefore, endeavoured to situate my thesis by exploring a range of literatures which have theorised historical shifts in our relationship to death and dying. In particular, I have concentrated on literatures which focus both upon the social context of death and dying and which tend, for the most part, to concentrate on bereavement in particular — rather than loss in general — as a ‘cognitively’ experienced ‘event’. I have traced out recent developments within sections of contemporary social theory, especially in the work of Zygmunt Bauman and Norbert Elias, and have attempted to situate their recent engagements on the topic of death within their wider bodies of work. Beyond this, I have drawn attention to the work which comprises the area of academic special interest known as death studies. Here I have suggested that some of the key insights from social theory have remained relatively isolated from empirical endeavours within the field of death studies. I have concluded my discussions in this chapter by pointing to the shift in emphasis within sociology in recent years away from a focus upon the public realm as the traditional remit of the discipline, towards areas of interest increasingly regarded as the sociological private. In reviewing literatures from within these ‘cognitive’ academic fields it has become apparent that they do not, in themselves, readily help to elaborate some of the questions I am asking in this thesis. To interrogate these kinds of issues we need to explore literatures whose focal orientation is the complex identificatory work involved in mourning as psychic process. It is to these issues, including the unconscious dimensions of selfhood as brokered through loss, which I turn in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

MOURNING, IDENTITY AND THE WORK OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

In the last chapter we saw the various ways in which cognitive disciplines have only lately begun to engage with aspects of death and dying, albeit in ways which privilege the public realm (as the primary locus of social value), at the expense of human interiority and the psychic dimensions of intra-personal experience invoked by loss of various kinds. In this chapter I explore approaches which take the unconscious dynamics of loss, albeit, of various kinds and not just those occasioned by death, as their principal starting point.¹ At the same time, and following the insights offered by Freudian psychoanalysis, I suggest that any consideration of the emotional responses attending loss, especially death, are incomplete without a corresponding analysis of the psychic processes of identity formation through which selfhood is brokered.

In the last chapter I began to point to psychoanalytic approaches which extend consideration of the emotional responses that typically ensue from the death of a loved-one, to the consideration of emotional responses that flow from loss in general. In so doing I wish to broaden my argument to suggest that the identificatory processes that precede loss, whether occasioned by actual death or physical disappearance, are central to an understanding of the psychic ‘negotiation’ (as well as its outward manifestation and sublimation) by which the

¹Prior (1989) provides an inversion of my argument here by suggesting that it is psychoanalysis (and psychology more generally) which has underprivileged the social aspects of death and mourning by a disproportionate concentration upon grief as seen as unfolding internally within the human psyche.

individual seeks to reconcile and resurrect these losses. It is precisely these unconscious and interior dynamics — and the subsequent attempts to withdraw the investments of meaning made in various love objects — and not just their outward manifestation (as is characteristic of the literatures reviewed in chapter 1 of the thesis), that Freud (1917) calls ‘mourning’, which I will presently engage with here.

Following Freud’s (1917) seminal contribution to the study of mourning in *Mourning and Melancholia*, it is my contention that one cannot study mourning adequately in isolation of the wider identificatory practices that are its sufficient and necessary condition. It is, moreover, my intention in this chapter, to engage critically with various psychoanalytic literatures and approaches that have long endeavoured to theorise aspects of human life as constituted within the terrain of human interiority. It is these issues, chiefly, of self, society and subjectivity (and the interconnections between them) that have, until recently, and with the exception of a growing, yet relatively marginal, corpus of literature within contemporary sociology² remained conspicuously absent from sociological consideration. It is especially these issues: the taking-in of the social and cultural world, its phantasmatic transformation in the realm of interiority, and subsequent attempts to mourn various losses encountered throughout a lifetime that have been occluded from analyses of ‘cognitively’ focused approaches to death. That is to say, amongst approaches within the field of death studies which one might readily assume would be equipped to apprehend the sorts of questions which I ask in this thesis.

² See, for example, Burkitt, 1993; Craib, 1998; Giddens, 1991, 1992; Jamieson, 1998; Levine, 1992; Rustin, 1991; Taylor, 1989.

That sociology, as traditionally constituted, has been unable to focus upon these issues — issues, as I have earlier suggested, of ways in which aspects of culture and society are internalised and invoked by episodes of public mourning of the kind considered here — in turn initiates the necessity to look beyond literatures contained within sociology (and the sociology of death, dying and bereavement as its extra-disciplinary area of special interest) as a measure of explicating a range of issues central to my thesis. This in turn forces us to concede the limitations of a singular disciplinary or unilateral approach to the study of public mourning. Whilst death studies is multi-disciplinary, the disciplines which constitute it remain steadfastly cognitive in orientation, each with relatively impermeable boundaries. Smelser (1999) usefully suggests in this regard that the acceleration of academic specialisation through the more rigid disciplinisation of particular fields of study has inevitably been paid for at the cost of greater general knowledge about society as a whole. The flip side of greater academic expertise, especially the intensification of intra-disciplinary specialisation, is that we come to know only singularised fragments of social life, and at its most extreme, remain isolated from the wider concerns of the disciplines in which our knowledge is concentrated. It is for this reason, as I outlined in the introduction to the thesis, that public mourning of the sort considered here be explored from a range of disciplinary vantage points, namely, sociological, psychoanalytic and ‘culturalist’, which, taken together, usefully help elaborate the imbrication of aspects of self, society and subjectivity.

Whilst modernity has seen the narrowing of intellectual horizons through greater academic disciplinisation (Heilbron, 1995), in postmodernity we are seeing the steady demolition of

disciplinary walls which, since the late eighteenth century, have served to limit the scope of academic thinking by confining it to a ‘received’ wisdom of established academic and disciplinary practice. Johan Heilbron (1995) has traced the trajectory towards ‘disciplinisation’ within European seats of learning from the Middle Ages to the late eighteenth century. Here, Heilbron suggests that learned societies and literary salons gave way to more formal and disciplinary organisation within reformed universities and newly created professional schools and research centres. It is these, which emerged during the late eighteenth century — and which as the word discipline suggests — became more constraining arrangements, weakening the possibility of intellectual ‘exchanges’ between academic disciplines (see also, for example, Wittrock *et al*, 1997).

If therefore the pre-modern period was a pre-disciplinary stage of academic development, and modernity saw the incarnation of academic disciplines as we know them today, then the postmodern — with its free-flow of information and ideas — offers an opportunity for greater interdisciplinarity. Here I want to suggest that we further accelerate the loosening of disciplinary boundaries which at present serve to restrict the flow of knowledge of particular areas of human life to particular disciplines so as to encourage ‘exchanges’ between disciplines, say, sociology and psychoanalysis, which, as Craib (1995: 151) points out, ‘know practically nothing of each other’. Suffice it to say, that a measure of the untenability of such rigid compartmentalisation of knowledge about human life, and the study thereof, is that human life itself, by its very nature, defies such categorisation. Human life, and the various aspects which constitute it, are, in short, plural, at times arbitrarily interrelated, and above all messy. It demands therefore, in my view, a commensurate inter-

disciplinary approach which, whilst careful not to lose sight of the specialist knowledges which are the hallmark (and, in part, strength) of academic disciplines, draws upon a wide variety of knowledges and practices (both academic and informal, local and global) which are often competing and mutually opposed. The study of aspects of human life in postmodern conditions demands therefore an approach which is multiperspectival (Kellner, 1997).

By way of a brief detour and before engaging more fully with Freud's conceptualisation of mourning as a psychological condition preceded, first, by processes through which the ego selects an object of identification for 'introjective' incorporation within the self, and second, the 'instinctive' and unconscious responses of the subject to the loss of a beloved, I begin this chapter by situating Freud's 'scandalous' project of psychoanalysis against the backdrop of prevailing Cartesian assumptions about the self. I continue by discussing Freud's iconoclastic engagement with the heavily interdicted topic of death before eventually discussing the complex dynamics linking loss, identity formation and the work of mourning: as the gradual process by which the ego seeks to disinvest or 'de-cathect' the lost object 'of the intensity of all memories, impulses and libidinal investments associated with it' (Grosz, 1990: 30). Here I critically review classical theories of mourning from Freud, through the work of Melanie Klein and a 'second generation' of psychoanalysts, to the work of Julia Kristeva. Along the way I discuss various criticisms which have been levelled at Freudian psychoanalysis, especially from feminists, but also from critics who have accused psychoanalysis of pathologising, and sequestering, aspects of everyday human life within medical discourse. I conclude this chapter — and provide the basis for the next

— by discussing the ways in which, in psychoanalytic theory, loss (of loved ones, selves and pasts) is central to ways in which the individual establishes a relation to the self and other people. In this way, and in contrast to ordinary common senses on the subject, psychoanalysis reverses the emphasis on the loss occasioned by biological death, focusing instead upon the child's first separation from mother, as the most lasting and grievous of losses. Here I begin to suggest, following the work of Julia Kristeva (1984, 1989) and Anthony Elliott (1996, 1999) that mourning and loss are central to the creative imagination and the ways in which the pathos of loss is encrypted within contemporary cultural forms.

The Scandal of Reason: Freud's Copernican Revolution

Freud was arguably among the first academics, and was certainly the first modern psychologist, to engage with human passions (of love, hate, greed, jealousy, regret) as an object worthy of scientific inquiry. Until then, save for the contributions of Greek philosophers, Buddhist sages and medieval and modern 'psychologists' up to the time of Spinoza (Fromm, 1997), this had been largely the preserve of novelists and dramatists. Where Freud differed in his engagement with issues, broadly constituted, of the soul — a subject which artists had until this point considered their own — was in his fledgling attempts to systematically ground his explorations through the use of modern techniques which aimed at subjecting the study of man's [*sic*] innermost desires and passions to thoroughgoing analytical and scientific consideration.³ Freud was the progenitor of a discipline which, for the first time, sought the *conscious* investigation of that which, for

³ Following Jessica Benjamin's comments (1990: 13–14), in which she suggests that there is no 'graceful solution' to the problem of the use of gender pronouns, I have — where I think it is unavoidable and where the use either of feminine or gender neutral pronouns risk's adding confusion to already complex psychoanalytic theories — retained the original, gender specific, use of masculine pronouns as employed by early psychoanalytic theorists throughout this chapter.

most part, remains *unconscious*. Freud's wider project to explore the basis of human subjectivity extends the classical Greek injunction to 'know thyself' but deviates markedly from later Western Cartesian conceptions of the individual — which became widespread during the Enlightenment — as stable, 'uncontested', and as governed by rational forces alone. The very basis of man's [*sic*] subjectivity, according to Freud, lay in the uncharted waters of the unconscious mind. The task of psychoanalysis has been to raise to the level of conscious analysis the sometimes painful and often unpalatable 'truths' hitherto sunk in the depths of the unconscious.

Freud's revolution in thinking, like all revolutions, political or otherwise, was met with resistance from various quarters, not least from those with an interest in maintaining Western philosophical conceptions of the individual as *Homo clausus*. That is to say, a view of the individual which became prevalent in Western societies during the early modern period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as possessing a 'mind' which is experienced as separate from his or her body and from other individuals in society (Elias, 1978: 119ff). To concede that there might be — to use prevailing colonialist discourse of the early twentieth century when Freud was writing — a previously undiscovered, dark and dangerous continent of the unconscious mind, replete with savage impulses which threatened to overwhelm the rationally acting agent, was to admit to the personal 'ownership' of destructive or ambivalent impulses, phantasies⁴ and desires that had

⁴ Rycroft (1995) notes that despite phonetic and etymological similarities between the words 'fantasy' and 'phantasy', they tend to be apprehended separately. 'Fantasy', in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, according to Rycroft (1995: 55–6), connotes 'caprice, whim, fanciful invention' whilst 'phantasy' is used principally to connote 'imagination, visionary notion'. Since the psychoanalytic use of the term has been deployed less to signify whimsical speculation than it has to represent the specular and dream-like quality of the unconscious imagination, psychoanalytic theorists (especially British, but less so American) have preferred phantasy over 'fantasy'. King and Steiner (1991) further usefully write that

seemingly been tamed by ‘civilisation’ and which Western man [*sic*] had ostensibly brought under effective control.

Whilst Freud could not perhaps have been expected to anticipate the degree of hostility with which his ideas were first met (for his ‘hereticism’ in daring to challenge Cartesian assumptions about the self), it is clear that Freud did anticipate the internal energy of resistance by which the ego would seek to repel attempts to make conscious that which would otherwise remain unconscious (Fromm, 1997). It is possible to conceive the various objections raised against Freud’s thinking as analogous to the ways in which Freud suggests the unconscious seeks to defend itself against attempts to raise it to the level of consciousness. Objections to Freud’s iconoclasm came thick and fast, from various quarters of established bastions of rational modernist thinking, including their political tributaries,⁵ but perhaps with the notable exception of artists, for whom Freud’s work had the greatest resonance and reception. Various parallels have of course long been drawn between Freud’s pioneering analysis of the unconscious, especially his blueprint for the interpretation of dreams, and the representational art of the Surrealist movement of the early twentieth century.

Freud’s ideas challenging prevailing Cartesian assumptions about the individual have continued to pose serious implications for sociology and the social sciences in general,

differences in the spelling of the word ‘phantasy’ relate to differences between conscious and unconscious varieties in the usage of the term. Unconscious phantasy, since its translation from the German word *phantasie*, is routinely spelled with ‘ph’, whereas the use of ‘fantasy’ in psychoanalytic theory is used to refer to conscious phantasy as day-dreaming or wishful thinking. For further discussion of the concept of phantasy within psychoanalytic theory and its application to works of literary fiction, see Britton (1998). Throughout this chapter, and in keeping with the strict psychoanalytic usage, I use ‘phantasy’. Elsewhere throughout the thesis I revert to ‘fantasy’.

⁵ Macey (1994) reports that in 1949 the French Communist Party issued a pamphlet (*La Nouvelle Critique, La Psychanalyse, idéologie réactionnaire*), in which they denounced psychoanalysis as a ‘reactionary ideology’.

which have traditionally been premised upon corresponding philosophical notions of the self. That sociology has traditionally, if implicitly, operated with such philosophical premises, in which identity is assigned to the individual by the external social world in which s/he finds themselves existing, can be evidenced from objections raised against its ‘over socialised’ conception of the individual (Wrong, 1967). Whilst such criticisms were levelled chiefly at normative, especially Parsonian sociology, as a paradigm of the discipline that dominated North American (and to a lesser extent British) sociology during the 1950s, I nevertheless sought to demonstrate in the last chapter the continued purchase that such normative (and socially reductionist) assumptions about the individual have continued to have within aspects of contemporary sociology in each of these national contexts. Arguably, the greatest contribution of psychoanalysis in this respect has been to challenge such assumptions; problematising taken-for-granted notions of the self. Anthony Elliott (1994: 6) neatly summarises the psychoanalytic position on selfhood by suggesting that ‘the self is shown to be a dimension of subjectivity which is made in fantastic form, constituted through the unconscious operations of desire itself’. Psychoanalysis, he writes

posits a *basic split* at the centre of psychical life between *consciousness of self* and that which is *unconscious*. Lurking behind all forms of self organization — that is, our day-to-day fashionings of self-identity — there lies a ‘hidden self’, a dimension of subjectivity which produces itself through fantasy, drives, and passions. . . this hidden self, however we may choose to act or express ourselves, constantly disrupts and outstrips us through displacing and condensing our conscious experience and knowledge. . . And it is precisely at this point, the splitting off of conscious intention and unconscious desire, that psychoanalytic theory installs itself, seeking to uncover repressed or overdetermined aspects of self-organization.

(Elliott, 1994: 6)

Psychoanalysis therefore makes a direct challenge to conceptions of consciousness with subjectivity. Deploying a Lacanian reading of Freud, Elizabeth Grosz (1990), unlike others who have elsewhere suggested that Freud was one of the last representatives of Enlightenment philosophy (e.g. Fromm, 1997) because of a genuine belief in reason as the one thing which could save man [*sic*] from his own destructive impulses, has suggested that Freud's thinking challenges the very precepts upon which rationalist claims to knowledge have been built.⁶ Nevertheless, Erich Fromm (1955, 1997) has arguably been at the forefront of attempts to rearticulate psychoanalysis in more socially inflected terms (see also, for example, Benjamin, 1990; Chodorow, 1978, 1989; Mitchell, 1974) and has done so in a way consistent with the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory (of which he was a part), whose enduring legacy has been the stress it has laid on the emancipatory potential of reason, against its subversion by the prevailing 'technical rationality' and mass culture of Western capitalist societies.

Grosz on the other hand has further suggested that Freud's thinking provides the basis for post-structuralist and postmodern assumptions (especially as later manifested in the deconstructivist work of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan) about the self: as multiple, contingent and unable to ever truly 'know' itself. Grosz goes on to suggest that Freud's work on the unconsciousness should be considered alongside other intellectual works produced during the *fin de siècle* upheavals experienced by nineteenth century European

⁶ Fromm, like other post-war 'humanistic' neo-Freudians (for example, Erik Erikson, 1963; Karen Horney, 1966) has endeavoured to distinguish Freud's thinking from the biologism of early 'instinctivists' (e.g. James, 1890; McDougall, 1913, 1932) and later ethologists and 'neo-instinctivists' (e.g. Koestler, 1978; Lorenz, 1966) by *de-emphasising* the biological aspects of Freud's work in favour of Freud's observations on the cultural influences upon human personality and behaviour.

societies.⁷ Principally she suggests that Freud, along with Nietzsche and Marx, make up a triumvirate of thinkers, each of whom challenged the “givenness” attributed to consciousness, perceiving it instead as an *effect* rather than a *cause* of: class relations (Marx), the will to power (Nietzsche), or psychical agencies (Freud). Freud in particular, she suggests, by questioning the individual’s ability to know oneself, helps to destabilise the intrinsic logocentricism upon which Western metaphysics is based. Here Grosz goes as far as to suggest that the seeds of postmodern thinking are, already at this early stage, sown in the works of Freud, Nietzsche and Marx:

If Decartes marks the threshold of the modern concept of subjectivity, then Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud can be seen to initiate a postmodern understanding. This postmodernity implies a de-naturalization and destabilization. . . of the subject who knows. To invert Decartes’ formulation, where there is thinking, there is no I, no consciousness. . . [Freud’s] understanding of the unconscious, sexuality, psychical representations, and the processes involved in the constitution of the subject challenges the Cartesian subject’s status as the foundation and source of knowledge. If the subject is necessarily incapable of knowing itself — that is, if there is an unconscious — then its claims to found knowledge of the world on the certainty of its own existence are also problematized. If the subject cannot know itself, why should we believe it can know anything else with absolute certainty?

(Grosz, 1990: 2)

Misogyny and Medical Discourse: Feminist Critiques of Freud

⁷ Grosz (1990) has situated Freud’s thinking within the dislocation provided by social conditions of early twentieth century urban modernity. Freud was not alone in this respect. Baudelaire, Benjamin, Durkheim, Marx, and Simmel were key amongst those seeking to explore the basis of man’s [*sic*] psychological anxiety in social conditions; of contingency, flux, and the radical transformation in the use (and conceptualisation) of space/time, characteristic of industrial modernity. Fredric Jameson (1991: 11) has in this respect suggested that Edward Munch’s early expressionist painting *The Scream* is a canonical visual representation of ‘the great modernist thematics of alienation, anomie, solitude, social fragmentation and isolation’.

Grosz's comments on the precursory contributions of Freud's thinking notwithstanding, there remains widespread consensus — not least within more conventional readings of Freud's work — regarding some of the more modernist (and conservative) assumptions underpinning Freud's *Weltanschauung*. These include, chiefly, the assumption that Freud's development of psychoanalysis as the 'talking cure' constituted a modernist scientific discourse premised upon biological drive theories of human instincts in which routine behaviour was pathologised; and a perceived gender bias manifested in misogynistic beliefs that women were inherently 'irrational' and presented a 'retarding and restraining' influence to civilisation (Freud, 1930: 103–4).⁸ On the first of these counts, critics have suggested that Freud's thinking provides the basis for later forms of medicalised social control as manifested in the discursive practices and disciplinary power of clinical psychiatry (e.g. Craib, 1998). As we shall later see, the use of task-oriented 'stage-theories', by which mourners are encouraged to 'work-through' various stages of grief (e.g. Bowlby, 1973; Kübler-Ross, 1970; Lindemann, 1944; Parkes, 1972/1986), have been criticised for reducing grief to a proscriptive symptomology characteristic of clinical medicine, in which various psychoanalytic theories have been transmuted into a rigid sequential process through which the bereaved subject must pass (Walter, 1999b). This is resonant of the work of commentators, who, as we saw last chapter, have theorised the sequestration of

⁸ Freud's suggestion that women were incapable of performing the 'instinctual sublimations' necessary to complete the tasks with which men were confronted in civilisation (Freud, 1930: 103) has been interpreted by some feminists (e.g. Mitchell, 1974) less as an evaluation of gender relations than as a *description* of patriarchy in Occidental civilisation. Commenting on Mitchell's (1974) repudiation of popular feminist critiques of Freud, Grosz (1990: 19) has argued that Mitchell's re-reading of Freud represents a "moment" of radical rupture' in feminist thinking about Freud. Mitchell, she suggests, has argued that Freud 'was not *prescribing* what women and femininity should be but *describing* what patriarchal culture demands of women and the family' (Grosz, 1990: 19, emphasis added). Mitchell's more sociological reading of Freud, by emphasising the cultural transmission of ideology, offers the potential for the radical transformation of gender relations in Freud's work, which otherwise remain impossible in readings which perceive Freud's thinking on gender as biologically overdetermined.

experience by modernity's expert systems as 'disabling' (e.g. Giddens, 1990, 1991; Illich, 1977, 1990) and of criticisms from within clinical psychology (e.g. Kastenbaum, 1975) whose research has suggested that psychoanalytic 'stage-theories' of grief have been proscriptively applied to those experiencing personal bereavement. These have recently been augmented by work from within sociology (e.g. Curren, 2001; Walter, 1999b) which have similarly identified a 'clinical lore' (Walter, 1999b) by which 'stage' related psychoanalytic theories of grief are projected onto the grieving subject. These researchers working mainly within the sociology of death and dying (e.g. Prior, 1989; Small, 2001) have criticised, on the one hand, classical psychoanalytic theories of mourning: for neglecting the social aspects of grief (Prior, 1989) and pathologising an otherwise routine human condition (Small, 2001); and, on the other, the rigid application of psychoanalytic 'stage-theories' of grief.

On the second of these counts, accusations of Freud's inherent misogyny, the work mainly of feminists (e.g. Firestone, 1974; Freidan, 1965; Millett, 1977) but also of feminist psychoanalysts, from Lacanian and post-Lacanian feminists (e.g. Grosz, 1990; Irigaray, 1985a; Kristeva, 1984, 1986) through to feminist theorists of Object-Relations (e.g. Benjamin, 1990; Chodorow, 1978, 1989; Mitchell, 1974) has challenged Freudian assumptions about gender. These analyses can be seen chiefly as stemming from: the primacy attributed to instinctivist drive theories of human behaviour; Freud's characterisation of the psychological condition of 'hysteria' (1895) as linked to female

sexuality⁹; and the androcentricism of Freud's thinking on women more generally (Walby, 1990) which have been widely perceived as biologically reductionist.

Whilst feminist Object-Relations theorists have reproached Freud's under-theorising of the mother-child dyad in favour of father-son oedipal relations (Benjamin, 1990), they have nevertheless, most notably Juliet Mitchell (1974), sought to rescue, and thereby rehabilitate, Freud's work from more 'popular' feminist 'misreadings' (e.g. Firestone, 1974; Millett, 1977) which as they see it, have wilfully misrepresented and 'violently rejected a Freud who is not Freud' (Mitchell, 1974: 301) by unfairly privileging the biological aspects of his work over the cultural. On these, the substantive accusations of biological determinism levelled at Freud's work, Mitchell adopts a Lacanian reading of Freud by underscoring the social and signifiatory value in Freud's work, whilst downplaying the instinctual and biological aspects.¹⁰ Lacanian feminists have on the whole preferred a reading of Freud which, by focusing upon the signifiatory and symbolic value of language, allows psychoanalysis the radical leverage with which to challenge to the 'naturalisation' of sex roles by pointing to their continued reproduction and psychic internalisation through the

⁹ Psychoanalytic notions of hysteria are derived from the ancient Greeks, who applied the term exclusively to women and whose condition was explained by virtue of a malfunctioning uterus (*hysteron*). Psychoanalysis subsequently abandoned uterine theories of causation of hysteria whilst retaining its indexical link with female sexuality (Rycroft, 1995). Psychoanalytic views on hysteria were thus consonant with wider medical opinion during the nineteenth century which held that sexual organs competed with other (especially cognitive faculties) for a finite supply of vital energy. As women's 'grand mission' in life was viewed by physicians of the time as that of reproduction, they were largely at one in suggesting that women should 'concentrate their physical energy internally, toward the womb' (Ehrenreich and English, 1978: 131).

¹⁰ Grosz, has suggested that whilst Mitchell's (1974) interpretation of Freud owes much to Lacanian readings of Freud — as the primary grid through which European 'culturalist' interpretations of Freud's work have been made (e.g. Althusser, 1974; Hall *et al.*, 1980) — she does little to formally acknowledge this debt. It is this reading of Freud, Grosz suggests, which has focused on the symbolic and signifiatory functions of language through which unconscious meaning is produced that have helped secure the lifting out of psychoanalysis from an exclusively 'private' and therapeutic setting, ensuring its continued relevance for understandings of social, cultural, political, but above all 'public' discourses. Grosz (1990: 19) argues that Lacan's influence is conspicuously under-emphasised in Mitchell's text and that the 'radical centre' of Lacan's project — his notion of signification as the semiological conception of language — is left untouched.

symbolic order of language. Nevertheless, Lacanian feminists (e.g. Irigaray, 1985a, 1985b; Kristeva, 1986) have maintained a degree of critical distance from Freud's early theorisation of gender identity, which they have argued, because of Freud's general phallocentrism (and view of women as incomplete men), considered women's experiences principally in terms of lack.¹¹ On the less substantive criticisms levelled at Freud's misogynistic use of language to refer to women, Mitchell (1974) has suggested that this is peripheral baggage (Walby, 1990) which can be rejected without losing sight of Freudian psychoanalysis as a 'crucial science' (Mitchell, 1974: 302) for understanding the ideological oppression of women.

Mortido Destrudo: Freud's Detour of Theory From Eros to Thanatos

Whilst analyses of death within sociology during the first half of the twentieth century have remained something of a blind-spot, in psychoanalysis its analysis by Freud became a central precept of his drive-theory of human behaviour. Publication in 1918 of Freud's *Reflections on War and Death* anticipates the thinking of social theorists (e.g. Bauman, 1992; Elias, 1978, 1982, 1985; Giddens, 1991), whose work I discussed in last chapter, by suggesting that 'we have shown an unmistakable tendency to put death aside' and 'to eliminate it from life' (Freud, 1918: 41). Where Freud's thinking differs most markedly from social theorists, who have stressed the confluence of social, political and economic factors through which death has been effectively silenced, is in the emphasis he puts on man's [*sic*] unconscious and 'instinctive' impulse for death denial. Here Freud (1918)

¹¹ For a succinct overview of feminist psychoanalytic accounts of gender identity, especially differences between feminist versions of object-relations theory (e.g. Chodorow, 1989; Benjamin, 1990) and Lacanian and (post-) Lacanian accounts (e.g. Kristeva, 1984; Irigaray, 1985), see Elliott (1992: ch .5; 1994).

reminds us that our unconscious does not believe in its own death but behaves as if it were immortal. It is this first serious foray into heavily interdicted terrain that marks Freud's thinking out as iconoclastic and arguably provides the impetus for other academic considerations of death and dying which have appeared in its wake.

Nevertheless, that which had principally occupied Freud's thinking, however, until the second decade of the twentieth century — and perhaps with the exception of publication in 1917 of *Mourning and Melancholia* — had been the manifestation of sexual desire within the unconscious mind (c.f. Freud, 1900; 1905). Freud explained the manifestation of various sexual desires within the unconscious mind as stemming from man's [*sic*] reflexive instinct for survival: that man's [*sic*] continuously flowing fountain of sexual energies, and the quest to discharge them, were biologically rooted in man's [*sic*] basic instinct for survival (what Freud called the 'life instinct'). The libidinous drives of specific individuals could in this model be traced to the genetically programmed, species-specific, instinctive reproductive capacities of *Homo Sapiens*. In short, man's [*sic*] sexual proclivities, and the desire to satisfy a basic principle of pleasure, stemmed from an unconscious instinct to ensure the survival of the human race.

In the aftermath of the devastation and tragic loss of life wrought by the First World War Freud was forced to rethink ideas which at best now appeared utopian and overly optimistic, and at worst seemed wildly naive.¹² Where Freud had earlier postulated the idea of a 'life instinct' he now added to this a competing and contradictory impulse with which it

¹² Freud's essays *Mourning and Melancholia* and his *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* were both written in 1915 in quick succession of each other, some six months after the out-break of the First World War. *Mourning and*

was in constant tension: the ‘death instinct’ (Freud, 1923). Here we should be careful to distinguish between what Freud saw as man’s [*sic*] natural propensity for violence towards *others* (the destructive instinct) and the inclination towards *self-harm* (the death-drive). For the time being I shall occupy myself with Freud’s theories of outward aggressivity towards others and return to issues surrounding Freud’s assertion of the seeming inward desire of humans to return themselves to an inorganic state (the thanatological or death-drive) shortly thereafter.

The carnage of the Great War had led Freud to the belief that in addition to sexual desire, man [*sic*] was unconsciously under the sway of a set of destructive and necrophilic impulses that were ordinarily repressed by civilisation (Freud, 1930). So thin was this veneer of civilisation that impulses which had hitherto been held in-check were liable to be unleashed without warning or external stimulation. By 1930 Freud’s thinking appeared to have moved much closer to a realist understanding of humanity in which man [*sic*] appeared condemned to the laws of Nature and its perpetual condition of war (Hobbes, 1985). In similar vein to Thomas Hobbes’ brutalist picture of the ‘state of nature’ in which man [*sic*] naturally found himself, and as if in anticipation of criticisms which might now be levelled at his earlier work, Freud wrote that:

Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him,

Melancholia was first published in English in 1917, followed a year later by publication of *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* under the shorter title *Reflections on War and Death*.

to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. *Homo homini lupus*. Who, in the face of his experience of life and history, will have the courage to dispute this assertion?

(Freud, 1930: 111)

Whilst at first sight, Freud's revision of an earlier emphasis on the instinct for survival might appear difficult to reconcile with his newly emerging ideas that laid stress on man's [*sic*] passion for, and enjoyment derived from, the inflicting of suffering on others, Freud's apparent *volte-face* did nothing to challenge fundamentally his drive-theory of human behaviour. Instead, where Freud had earlier posited a 'hydraulic' model of human drives (especially the libidinal drive but also other survivalist drives, including the drive to satisfy hunger), wherein pressure to satisfy these desires slowly builds until it can be discharged through their realisation via physical acts (in this case, of eating and procreation), he added to this the drive to destruction. According to Freud, the operation of these basic desires — desires which operate independently of external stimuli but which are coded within our phylogenetic make-up — is analogous to the pressure exercised by dammed up water or steam in a closed container. Such pressure continues to accumulate, resulting in an increase in tension and displeasure, until the desire is satisfied (libidinous desire through the act of copulation; aggressivity through acts of violence), wherein tension recedes until it once again begins to rise and the cycle can begin anew. Accordingly, Freud — like the ethologist Konrad Lorenz (1966) — saw the repression of these instinctual drives as 'unhealthy'. Indeed, Freud saw the repression of sexuality as containing the potential for mental illness and was later to view the necessary expression of aggressivity in a similar light (Fromm, 1997). Whilst Freud came increasingly to the conclusion that these drives could, and should

not, be eliminated outright, he did begin to suggest that they could be effectively managed (through the use of psycho-therapy) in ways which would reduce the potential for social harm that might otherwise ensue without either their necessary but socially managed discharge, or suitable therapeutic intervention.

Like Freud's reconceptualisation of aggressivity, it was the ensuing trauma of soldiers who had seen active combat in the Great War that led Freud to reconsider what he had earlier perceived as the seemingly indexical relationship between inherently pleasurable acts and the unconscious drive for survival. That survivors of the First World War were said, paradoxically, to revisit and 'act-out' the horror of trench warfare in their dreams — by that which Freud (1920) called 'repetition-compulsion' — suggested to Freud that there was another instinctual drive, equal in intensity to the instinct for life itself, that governed human behaviour beyond that of the pleasure principle. Freud recollects this 'breakthrough' in thinking thus:

. . . there still remained in me a kind of conviction, for which I was not able to find reasons, that the instincts could not all be of the same kind. My next step was taken in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), when the compulsion to repeat and the conservative character of instinctual life first attracted my attention. Starting from speculations on the beginning of life and from biological parallels I drew the conclusion that, besides the instinct to preserve living substance, there must exist another, contrary instinct seeking to dissolve those units and to bring them back to their primeval, inorganic state. That is to say, as well as Eros there was an instinct of death. The phenomena of life could be explained from the concurrent or mutually opposing action of these two instincts.

(Freud, 1930: 118–9)

Such a view was reinforced by Freud's informal observations of his one-year-old grandson, Heinz, who in the absence of his mother, he saw devise a game in which he repeatedly threw away a toy only to subsequently retrieve it. Freud interpreted this as the mimetic 'acting-out' by the child of the painful anxiety-separation resulting from the mother's temporary disappearance. Yet by repeatedly playing out this trauma mimetically the child was able to gain some control over the object. These views were, as we shall see, further developed in Melanie Klein's (1940, 1946) theoretical elaboration of the concept of 'projective identification' — specifically the child's 'manic defence' against the so-called 'depressive position' — wherein significant-others are both internalised and mediated by the imaginary and phantasmogorical possibilities which external 'objects' provide. In this 'intensely relational' version of psychoanalysis (Johnson, 1999: 17), a form of psychic projection operates, wherein unwanted feeling states triggered by loss (of anger and abandonment generated by the temporary absence of the child's mother), can be discharged and put into another person or 'thing' (the child's toy) as a means both by which the individual rids himself [*sic*] of unwanted feelings. More importantly, projection operates as a means by which the individual, in spite of the actuality of powerlessness, can phantasise control *over* the object. This realm of imagined external space is thus the site created as a primitive internal defence against the emotionally injurious impact of loss: it is the site 'of the working out, the splitting off, and at best the reconciliation, of our emotional ambivalences, our loving and hating' (Johnson, 1999: 17).

Freud's engagement with issues of death and the human passion for the destruction of self and others, as I have sought to demonstrate here, can be seen as reflective of wider world,

but especially European, events taking place in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Freud's shift in thinking, from *Eros* to *Thanatos*, arguably begins in his discussion of mourning and its pathological other, melancholia (*Mourning and Melancholia*, 1917), continues and is given greatest expression in his *Reflections on War and Death* (1918), and ends with a deeply pessimistic view of human nature in which the freedom and security enjoyed under conditions of Civilisation can only be paid for at the cost of the repression of our most basic and individual instincts and desires (*Civilisation and its Discontents*, 1930). In the period intervening, Freud was left to ponder the paradoxical human proclivity to return to events previously experienced as unpleasant (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1920), and to postulate in full the dichotomous relationship between the life and death instincts (*The Ego and the Id*, 1923).

Freud's shift in thinking was, however, not universally well received, even within psychoanalysis itself, where many — perhaps most notably with the exception of Melanie Klein and later adherents of her theoretical precepts — were unconvinced by the development of theory that promulgated the scandalous concept (Elliott, 1994: 26) of the 'death instinct'. This it seemed served no physiological end but, contrarily, sought the dissolution of the human organism itself and appeared to contradict Freud's earlier work on *Eros*. By way of a compromise, analysts and theoreticians sceptical of Freud's death instinct, were more accommodating of general theories of aggressivity which did not, they argued, unlike the death instinct, appear to compromise the wider project of psychoanalysis. Serious attempts to elaborate fully the phylogenetic basis of the death instinct, unlike more comprehensive attempts to theorise libidinal drives, never really got beyond suggesting a

name for such energies: *mortido destrudo*. Not until the eve of the Second World War and the devastation (and attendant trauma of loss) wreaked on the peoples of Europe did key figures from within the psychoanalytic movement once again begin to engage with the topic of death, which like sex, was elsewhere in society subject to strict moral and linguistic censure. Here most notably, Melanie Klein (1940), the leading figure from the largely British based school of Object-Relations theory, took up the challenge earlier presented by extending Freud's discussion of mourning by relating it to the perfectly 'natural' and 'normal' stage of the 'infantile depressive position', through which we must all pass. Klein's engagement with mourning, which I will deal with in greater depth below, followed both the outbreak, in 1939, of the second major war to afflict Europe within the space of twenty-one years, and the death in 1934 of Klein's eldest son in a mountaineering accident. Freud's thinking on the 'instinctive' human propensity to inflict pain and suffering both on oneself and others has achieved considerable currency amongst Kleinian psychoanalytic theorists. Nevertheless, others within the psychoanalytic tradition have, to varying degrees, pointed to various 'benign' or masochistic sublimations of the death drive, wherein behaviours such as cigarette smoking (Ashton and Stepney, 1982), which are known to be deleterious to one's own health are engaged in freely, regardless of risk, and may in fact be seen as a further manifestation of the unconscious wish for self-injury.

My discussion of psychoanalytic theory hitherto has dealt principally with its consideration of death. Whilst this discussion (of instinctual death-drives and the passion for human destructiveness) seemingly takes us away from consideration of the psychological experiences which ensue from loss, it is, nevertheless, death; of Princess Diana and of

ninety-six football supporters during the Hillsborough disaster as the foci of this thesis, which provides the basis to mourn a variety of other losses during the public mourning that followed.

As I will discuss presently, it is, according to psychoanalytic theory, loss in general of various kinds but especially those losses incurred in early infancy that provide the basis for our psychological reactions to all other losses experienced throughout the remainder of our lives. Across the length and breadth of psychoanalytic theory from Freud's earliest writings on oedipal relations, through Melanie Klein's more relational interpretation of his work and increased focus on the nexus of mother-child relations, to Lacan's radically de-centred and fragmentary notions of subjectivity, loss is seen as central to processes of identity formation.

Mourning, Loss and the Work of Identity

Freud's (1917) early engagement with the affect of grief is significant on a number of counts, not least because it sought to scientifically ground the psychological condition of mourning as a 'normal' reaction to loss, whilst simultaneously pathologising the condition he calls 'melancholia' as the process of mourning gone awry. Mourning is, in Freud's view, the attempt to withdraw or 'de-cathect' prior investments ('cathexes') of meaning in objects (but especially people), lest the ego of the mourner be totally impoverished by the cathectic energies that are inevitably drawn towards it 'like an open wound' (Freud, 1917: 253). Nevertheless, with a sufficient passage of time the mourner is, quite properly in Freud's view, perceived as emerging from this profound state of emotional distress, in which at first, the mourner unconsciously refuses to acknowledge the loss by clinging desperately to

all memory of the lost object. The mourner, has thus met a ‘test of reality’ in which the loved object no longer exists and labours strenuously — for people never willingly abandon a libidinal position (Freud, 1917) — to withdraw the emotional attachments previously made with the object. A measure of the successful completion of the work of mourning is the readiness of the said individual to re-invest cathectic energies in a new object of affection.

The obverse Other of mourning, melancholia, comprises the psychological inability of the mourner to transcend the painful experience of loss. The melancholic, Freud notes, exhibits the same symptomatology as the mourner but with one key exception: the extraordinary diminution and disturbance in self-regard. Where for Freud in normal mourning it is the world itself which has become ‘poor and empty; in melancholia, as complicated mourning, it is the ego itself’ which has become impoverished on a grand scale (Freud, 1957: 246). For here it is the inability to sever one’s attachment to the object which has been abolished (Freud, 1957) that distinguishes it as an individual pathology. It is this inability of the mourner to ‘get over’ and ‘move on’ from the profound dejection of loss, as a symptom of melancholia, that is perhaps most widely recognisable by its outward manifestation (though not to be conflated with it); that which Geoffrey Gorer (1965) has described as the ‘mummification’ of the dead. In this view, ‘mummification’ can be seen in the social practices of the bereaved which seek to ‘entomb’ the memory of the deceased by preserving, intact, their possessions and by turning the space which they previously occupied into a ‘shrine’. It is, in short, a refusal to accept the loss of a beloved. Gorer cites the behaviour of Queen Victoria and her prolonged mourning for Prince Albert as the most

‘notorious exemplar of mummification’ (Gorer, 1965: 79), especially as evidenced both from her general demeanour and withdrawal from public engagements, and, in keeping with the mourning customs characteristic of her reign, her continued adoption of mourning wear long after her husband’s death.¹³ Queen Victoria also famously continued the daily morning practice, long after Prince Albert’s death, of having his shaving water brought and his clothes laid out. Here I do not wish crudely to suggest that melancholia — or any other manifestations of an individual’s innermost thoughts, feelings, or state of mind — can be discerned casually from the observations of another’s somatic practices, for as Ken Plummer (1983: 34) suggests, ‘we can never *really* know another’s world’, but simply to acknowledge the various typologies of grief which have been variously identified.

Stage-Theories of Mourning and Second Wave Psychoanalysts

Gorer (1965), whose work, as we have seen in chapter 1, has been germinal within death studies, was undoubtedly influenced by the work of a ‘second wave’ of psychoanalysts (e.g. Bowlby, 1961; Engel, 1961; Lindemann, 1944), who endeavoured to ground Freud’s (and later Klein’s) theoretical observations and hypotheses on mourning through the use of detailed empirical case-studies of the recently bereaved. Gorer’s own empirical anthropological research provided a basis for his own claims to have discerned an eight-fold typology of grief. Gorer’s apparent sympathy for psychoanalytic theories of mourning, as someone from outside of psychoanalysis — and as evidenced by his discussion of

¹³ Following Prince Albert’s death in December 1861 Queen Victoria continued the practice of dressing in mourning wear until her own death in 1901. Whilst the protocol of adopting mourning wear was widely practised in Victorian society it was, nevertheless, customarily assumed to be restricted to a limited period of time — some three years. As one recovered from the grief hastened by loss the observance of mourning dress was correspondingly relaxed to the point where one could resume normal attire. Dress codes proscribing the precise length of time varied according to one’s kinship to the deceased. Nevertheless, widows were expected to observe three years of mourning. For a short, yet insightful, account of mourning practices in Victorian England, see Leaman (2001: 466–7).

psychoanalytic theories of grief (Gorer, 1965) — has not, however, as I intimated last chapter, been echoed in the wider corpus of literatures comprising death studies, which concentrate on the ‘cognitive’ and socially experienced aspects of death.

Nevertheless, it is this ‘second wave’ of psychoanalysts and their attempts to theorise a precise symptomology of grief whose work has been most widely diffused within medical practice.¹⁴ Publication in 1944 of Eric Lindemann’s short paper *Symptomology and Management of Acute Grief* can be seen to initiate a trend towards the establishment of diagnostic formulae aimed at distinguishing ‘normal’ from ‘morbid’ or pathological grief. Classifications of such were made principally on the basis of the intensity and duration of grief, which according to Lindemann, should be an active consideration in the subsequent ‘management’ of grief. Lindemann (1944) identified various typologies of grief varying from somatic distress, and a pre-occupation with the image of the deceased, to feelings of intense guilt, hostility and anger generated by loss. Similarly, Engel (1961), in a paper entitled *Is Grief a Disease?*, contributed significantly to the process by which grief in the modern era has come to be viewed less as a natural condition of the human spirit or soul and more as a pathogenic bacteria (Prior, 1989), by seeking to further extrapolate ‘normal’ grief from its ‘pathological’ forms. John Bowlby (1960, 1961), in his work with bereaved children, added to this body of research by suggesting that grief should be seen as a dialectical, and time-limited, process through which the bereaved subject must pass on the way to ‘recovery’. Bowlby (1961) later suggested three phases in this dialectic of recovery, beginning initially with a sense of disappointment and ‘separation-anxiety’ resulting from

the disappearance of a love-object; continuing through the disorganisation of personality precipitated by loss; and culminating in some form of resolution in which the subject's ego is re-organised in relation to the lost object and re-oriented with a view to (re)investing in new ones. This tradition of stage-oriented theories of grief, as I sought to demonstrate in the previous chapter (in my discussion of literatures which have had particular resonance both in the context of applied medicine and social care, and in popular attitudes and self-help approaches to death more generally), has continued both in the work of Colin Murry Parkes (1972/1986) and Elizabeth Kübler-Ross (1970). Parkes has rearticulated earlier classical Freudian psychoanalytic wisdom on mourning — supplementing this by empirical research conducted during the 1960s and 1970s into the premature loss of a spouse — by describing three (four if we include recovery) stages of grief characterised chiefly by numbness, 'pining', and a sense of internal disorganisation and despair. In this view, only after the grieving subject has reached this latter stage can the process of recovery begin. In similar vein, only this time in relation to the existential anxieties of the long-term and incurably sick who *know* they are dying, Kübler-Ross (1970) has suggested five identifiable stages through which the dying patient must pass on the way to the 'acceptance' of one's own finitude.¹⁵

Here, the practical applications of these theories of grief within clinical medicine and palliative care of the terminally ill can be seen as the target of criticisms which have charged psychoanalysis with exercising disciplinary power over the 'patients' it treats by

¹⁴ Field's (1984, 1986) research suggests that Kübler-Ross's (1970) and Parkes (1972/86) work on grief are by far the most widely used texts in UK medical and nursing schools.

¹⁵ For a succinct and critical overview of psychoanalytic 'stage' or 'task' approaches to bereavement, see Small (2001).

pathologising various aspects of human behaviour. Notably, the work of feminists (e.g. Corea, 1985; Ehrenreich and English, 1979) has challenged the ‘malestream’ orientation of clinical medicine in which women’s health needs, especially reproductive but also contraceptive, have been incrementally and exponentially sequestered by male physicians, thereby contributing to greater patriarchal control of women’s bodies.¹⁶ Whilst this is not the place to examine in any depth feminist accounts (e.g. Dreifus, 1978) of the various ways in which, throughout history, men have exercised control over women through deploying and monopolising ‘scientific’ discourses about women’s bodies, it is perhaps enough simply to draw parallels between the sequestration of women’s physical health by ‘malestream’ medical discourse and the sequestration of women’s mental health (especially in the first half of the twentieth century), by psycho-therapy and various other forms of psychiatric care, including, during the 1950’s, the use of highly controversial electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).

Identification Precedes and is Summoned by Loss

Freud’s thinking on mourning, as I have earlier argued, is premised chiefly on the assumption that before any ‘turning away’ from an object of loss can occur, that an object, be it a person or ‘abstraction’ which has been substituted thus (Freud, 1957: 243), must first have been unconsciously selected, and *identified with*, for incorporation within the self. In

¹⁶ There now exists a considerable body of feminist literature on women’s experience of health, illness and health care which has sought to demonstrate the sequestration of women’s bodily experiences by medical discourses dominated overwhelmingly by men. These range from accounts of the ways in which routine aspects of women’s lives, such as childbirth, have, through medicalisation, been wrestled from women’s control (e.g. Oakley, 1984), to work which has demonstrated the continued prevalence of views within Western medical practice which perceive ‘female anatomy as destiny’ (e.g. Foster, 1995; Martin, 1987). Annandale (1998) writes that such perceptions contribute to an overall view in which changes affecting women’s bodies, such as the menopause, come to be regarded as ‘problems’ to be dealt with medically. These accounts have been augmented by empirical research from within sociology itself (e.g. Stacey, 1988, 1992) that have endeavoured to demonstrate the institutional dominance by men of health care systems.

psychoanalytic terms, object-loss, the loss of a good external object is a preliminary and absolutely essential condition preceding introjection, and/or mourning. That loss should be seen as central to the establishment of the self can be seen from some of Freud's earliest writing, for example, *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* (Freud, 1926). Here Freud suggests that in the child's first separation from mother — an experience at once frightening and exciting — s/he is forced to recreate her in the imaginary world of phantasy as a means of compensating for her painful absence. It is also, and only, through the mother's absence that the child both comes to desire her presence and to recognise his/her sameness and difference from her. In this way, then, selfhood is drafted against the backdrop of loss. In other words, without this preliminary stage of identification there can be no mourning, for there has been no investment from which the ego can withdraw. Here, Stephen Frosh (1991) writes:

For tragedy to be possible. . . and loss appreciated, there has to be something that can be identified with, something that can love as well as lose, hope as well as be betrayed.

(Frosh, 1991: 19–20)

In the editorial preface to Freud's (1917) essay on mourning and melancholia, James Strachey (1957) usefully suggests that a central — and little considered — theme of the paper is a call for the examination of the 'whole question of the nature of identification' (Strachey, 1957: 241). Strachey suggests that in some of Freud's earliest work, such as *Totem and Taboo* (1913), identification is thought of as an aspect of the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development. Thus in Freud's writing on the father-son relations of the primal horde, the act of *identification with* the father is only accomplished

by his devouration.¹⁷ By the time of publication in 1917 of *Mourning and Melancholia* Freud, however, had begun to speak of identification as a process which precedes object-investment and is a preliminary stage of object-choice — the means by which the ego selects an object for incorporation¹⁸ within the self. Freud thus wrote:

[I]dentification is a preliminary stage of object-choice, that it is the first way—and one that is expressed in an ambivalent fashion—in which the ego picks out an object. The ego wants to incorporate this object into itself, and, in accordance with the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development in which it is, it wants to do so by devouring it.

(Freud, 1957: 249)

By the time of publication in 1921 of *Group Psychology* Freud had further begun to revise and to clarify his thinking on these issues by suggesting that identification is something which precedes object-investment and yet remains distinct from it. Nevertheless, identification as it is conceived in psychoanalysis, is radically different from theories of identity which have proliferated within some aspects of classical sociology. Where I earlier suggested that classical, especially normative, sociology has operated with an oversocialised view of the individual (Wrong, 1967), in which emotions are conceived as existing both independently and externally of the individuals who experience them, so too

¹⁷ Strachey (1957) suggests that the phrase ‘introjection’, although absent in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) is first coined by Freud, albeit in a different connection, in *Papers on Metapsychology* (1915) and later used in *Group Psychology* (1921), to describe the process by which ego incorporates an object into itself. Moreover, in the development of infantile sexuality, where sexual activity has yet to become separated from the ingestion of food, both — as sources of pleasure — are perceived to be satisfied by the incorporation of the object within. The object of both activities: nutritive and sexual, as serving an instinctual need, is therefore, for Freud, the same. A residual effect of the development of infantile sexuality may be seen, according to Freud, in thumb-sucking, ‘in which the sexual activity, detached from the nutritive activity, has substituted for the extraneous object one situated in the subject’s own body’ (Freud, 1905: 198). Elsewhere, in *Papers on Metapsychology* (1915), Freud reflects upon the pleasure principle, where he suggests that ‘in so far as the objects which are presented to [the ego] are sources of pleasure, it takes them into itself, “introjects” them’ (Freud, 1915: 136).

¹⁸ For an interesting discussion on the distinction between *introjection* and *incorporation*; as in the case of the former, a distinction between the *verbal* and more or less conscious attempts to incorporate the Other with the self (say through the

in this position individuals have been viewed as the passive receptacles of social influences and the environmental milieu in which they find themselves. In some structural versions of sociology, for example, versions of Marxism (e.g. Althusser, 1971; Hindess and Hirst, 1977) identity has tended for the most part to be viewed as ancillary and derivative of the social, but especially, economic organisation of production.¹⁹ Nevertheless, alternative, less structural and deterministic versions — more Gramscian than Althusserian — have been promulgated within areas of cultural studies (e.g. Johnson, 1986); wherein culture is seen not as existing over- and-above individuals but as everyday practical activity which is *subjectively* experienced. From this alternative perspective, individuals sustain and reproduce themselves subjectively by working themselves into social structures; through cultural praxis. Nevertheless, these ‘culturalist’ views notwithstanding, identity has tended for the most part to be envisaged within sociology either as socially ascribed and/or socially ‘achieved’; the outcome of largely conscious affiliations made on the basis of ones social ‘biography’.

In contrast, psychoanalytic views on identity have, with the exception of theorists who stress its more social and relational components (e.g. Benjamin, 1990; Chodorow, 1989; Klein, 1940; Mitchell, 1974) located the formation of identity within the internally referential psychic economy of the individual. Just as Freud’s work on the ‘monadic’, paradoxical impulses and energy flows (of love and hate) sought to demonstrate that man

writing of poems), and in the case of the latter, the more or less unconscious attempt to incorporate the Other through the *actual* ingestion of objects — literally things — see Johnson (1997b; Kear, 1997).

¹⁹ For an introductory critique of structural Marxism and structural functionalism with sociology, see Craib (1984); Layder (1994). For more detailed critiques of Althusserian Marxism from within Marxist social theory itself, see, for example, Callinicos (1976); Clarke et al (1980); Dews (1994); Geras (1972); Glucksman (1972); Macey (1994); Thompson (1978).

[sic] was not master in his own home (c.f. Freud), so his work on identification has endeavoured to demonstrate the oscillating, contradictory and ambivalent fashion in which the self (and its relation to others) is experienced in the formation of identity as an on-going process of negotiation. It is here that a number of theorists working on the cusp of sociology and psychoanalysis (e.g. Craib, 1995, 1997, 1998; Elliott, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1999) have endeavoured to draw out the links between the social and the psychoanalytic. In particular, Elliott (1994) summarises Freud's innovation in thinking, principally for a sociological audience, by suggesting that identity is not a pre-given attribute of selfhood but is subject to psychic negotiation (in relation to the external world of others) and which remains elusively, and perennially, just beyond the grasp of consciousness. Thus, according to Elliott:

Our sense of selfhood. . . is not just magically assigned to us by the external world. Rather, identity has to be *made* or *created*. In this connection, Freud suggests that ego-formation occurs through the unconscious selecting or screening of objects by *identification*. Identification is a process in which the human subject 'introjects' attributes of other people and transforms them through the unconscious imagination. This identification with another is made a part of the subject by *incorporation*: the taking in of objects, either wholly or partially, to form the basis of an ego. In relation to the imaginary dyad of child and mother, for example, Freud comments that the subject has 'created an object out of the mother'. Identification and incorporation are thus twin-boundary posts in the structuring of identity.

(Elliott, 1994: 13)

Freud's earliest views on identity (or more properly in psychoanalytic terms, identification), are located in the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, wherein specifically male identity is forged through the successful resolution of oedipal ambivalence. It is during this period in which intense feelings of primal attachment to the mother are substituted by phallic

identification with the father. Masculinity is thus forged through the very repudiation of the feminine and the maternal.²⁰ As we have already seen, it is Freud's phallogentric concentration on the basis of masculine identity and his neglect of feminine identity formation (as forged principally through phallic lack) which has attracted the strongest criticisms of Freud's work both from outside and from within psychoanalysis itself, most notably from feminist psychoanalytic theorists. Here feminist theorists (e.g. Benjamin, 1990) have sought to locate the founding of identity not in the child-parent oedipal triad but more specifically in the unique, pre-oedipal and dyadic mother-child bond.

Jessica Benjamin (1990), for instance, writes of the mutual affirmation of identity as embodied in the intersubjective relationship between mother and child. Benjamin emphasises the primacy and subsequent resonance of the mother-child bond in all other inter-personal relations thereafter. Importantly for Benjamin this relationship of mutuality is a key moment in the dialectic of 'recognition'. For it is the site in which not only the selfhood of the child is first established but in which the woman's identity as mother is validated and confirmed:

Recognition is that response from the other which makes meaningful the feelings, intentions, and actions of the self. It allows the self to realize its agency and authorship in a tangible way. . . . The mother who feels recognized by her baby is not simply projecting her own feelings into her child — which she assuredly does. She is also linking the newborn's past, inside her, with his future, outside of her, as a separate person.

²⁰ For an interesting autobiographical discussion of the largely unconscious disavowal of femininity in the cultural and material production of subjectivity, see Redman, 1999 (especially chs. 3 and 7). In feminist psychoanalysis, masculine self-identity is conceived as forged through the repudiation of the feminine, specifically for Chodorow (1978), upon the negation of love and intimacy. For object-relational accounts of masculinity as bound-up with a sense of primal loss and psychic disengagement from the mother, see Benjamin (1990), Chodorow (1978). For (post-) Lacanian versions of the defensive repudiation of masculinity as an inability to speak from a feminine position in a phallogentric symbolic order, see Irigaray (1985), Kristeva (1984).

(Benjamin, 1990: 12, 13)

Benjamin's theorisation of this 'first bond' between mother and child is clearly a significant revision of Freud's earlier emphasis on oedipal relations and the human subject as comprising a 'monadic' system of energy flows, in favour of an active self which in turn requires other, social selves (Benjamin, 1990). From this intersubjective perspective, the individual is constituted through his/her relations with other subjects. It is thus through mutual 'recognition'; of being recognised as well as recognising, that psychically experienced subjectivity is forged. Benjamin's (1990) use of the concept of intersubjectivity²¹, in which the individual grows in and through the relationship to other subjectively constituted selves is seemingly a revision of earlier intrapsychic versions of psychoanalysis. Yet, as I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter, both Freud's and Melanie Klein's work contained, from the very beginning, the seeds for a more socially inflected psychoanalysis, concerned as it was with the individuals relation to others through the endless oscillation of inner and outer worlds; of the internal realm of phantasy and desire as dependent upon an outer, social world as the basis for introjection.

Kleinian Object-Relations and the Internalisation of 'Things'

It is perhaps above all, however, the work of Melanie Klein which sets in train the most significant revision of Freud's work on identity by diverting attention to, what at the time, were under-developed theories of child development (especially those involving mother and child as opposed to father-son oedipal relations), and to the relational bonds forged not only

²¹ Benjamin (1990) derives the concept of intersubjectivity from social theorist Jürgen Habermas (1970) who uses the concept not in psychoanalytic terms but as the foundation for a 'rationalist' theory of communicative action; as focused within and upon the public domain.

with others, but also with ‘objects’, which in turn serve the establishment of early constitutions of the self. We have seen already the significance of Klein’s emphasis on the mother-child nexus, most notably her influence upon a later generation of feminist Object-Relations theorists (e.g. Benjamin, 1990; Chodorow, 1989; Mitchell, 1974). Here, I want to suggest also that Klein’s work has had a most profound impact upon the ways we think about the mediating and phantasmogoric role occupied by ‘objects’ in our relations to other people. Where W. D. Winnicott postulated the primacy of other people in facilitating the construction of self, Klein emphasises *both* the role of other people and the internal realm of phantasy through which significant-others are introjected in the establishment of self. This emphasis on the phantasmogoric and psychic processes by which cultural objects come to be personified, has, I will argue in chapter 3, profoundly influenced the way in which we view the symbolic and ‘interpellatory’ functions of culture (and cultural artefacts more generally). For the time being, however, let me concentrate on the significance of Klein’s theory of the ‘depressive position’ and its impact upon psychoanalytic conceptualisations of mourning and loss.

Where Freud (1917) had earlier made considerable headway in theorising the relationship between mourning (as the ‘normal’ psychological response to the loss of a loved person) and melancholia (as the inability to transcend the psychological conditions which ensue during mourning), so Klein (1940) engages with mourning as a ‘normal’ psychological condition by relating it to the universal childhood experience she calls the ‘depressive position’. The psychological symptomology of mourning — the withdrawal of interest from the outside world and the turning away from any thoughts which are not of the lost love

object (Freud, 1917) — are thus for Klein comparable to the infant's first and most traumatic of losses: the loss, or rather disappearance (even if only temporarily), of the child's mother as primary care-giver.

It is for Klein these painful feelings of loss and abandonment as experienced by the child which are re-activated in adult experiences of mourning: that 'the child goes through states of mind comparable to the mourning of the adult' and 'that this early mourning is revived whenever grief is experienced in later life' (Klein, 1940: 147). This, as I have suggested, is a radical inversion of the concept of loss as understood within conventional wisdom, upon which 'cognitive' approaches to death, dying and bereavement are implicitly premised. Although initially experienced at first as the most grievous and traumatic of losses, this separation of mother from child is crucial to early constitutions of selfhood. It is the means by which the child comes to experience itself as whole, as relatively autonomous and as separate and distinct from the person who gave it life. Such a loss, however, is not accepted willingly but is met grudgingly with resistance by the child who clings desperately to the mother and refuses to acknowledge the possibility of separation. Enforced separation of this sort is, according to Klein, experienced by the child as a set of depressive feelings which reach their climax just before, during and after weaning. This severing of dependence, of infant upon mother, is experienced as a cruel loss; an abandonment in which the child feels it is being punished for its dependence upon the mother and her breast. It is these early childhood processes of the mind which Klein calls the 'depressive position' that she regards as a melancholia in *statu nascendi*. It is the mother's breast, 'and all that the breast and the milk have come to stand for in the infant's mind: namely, love, goodness and security'

(Klein, 1940: 148) which are being mourned in the ‘depressive position’. In this view, the child’s inner security is first established by an increase in love and trust and the incorporation of significant-others within the child’s inner world:

Along with the child’s relation, first to his [*sic*] mother and soon to his father and other people, go those processes of internalization. . . . The baby, having incorporated his parents, feels them to be live people inside his body in the concrete way in which deep unconscious phantasies are experienced — they are, in his mind, ‘internal’ or ‘inner’ objects[.] Thus an inner world is being built up in the child’s unconscious mind, corresponding to his actual experiences and the impression he gains from people and the external world, and yet altered by his own phantasies and impulses.

(Klein, 1940: 148)

That which is of key significance in Klein’s work is the idea that the child’s external or outer world, once internalised in the child’s psychic interior, is transformed through the unconscious work of phantasy. Here Klein suggests that external situations, first in childhood but also — and this is key — throughout adult life, once internalised become ‘doubles’ of real situations, wherein ‘people, things, situations and happenings’ (Klein, 1940: 149) are phantasmogorically altered beyond the ‘tangible and palpable’ perceptions available in the outer object-world. This realm of interior phantasy is the site where, in defensive reaction against the injurious losses suffered — and as if directed against the ‘pining’ for the lost love object itself — the ego, in its struggle to free itself from libidinal attachment to the primary object of loss, transforms its external objects through binarily splitting them internally into objects which are either inherently ‘good’ or intrinsically ‘bad’. These ‘manic defences’ against the ‘depressive position’, precipitated by the terrifying fear of loss, serve to establish a realm of the imaginary in which, and in sharp

contrast to actual reality in which the child has no control, the child can phantasise absolute control over the people and objects (in this case the mother and her breast) he perceives are persecuting him [*sic*] by their abandoning him.

As a further defence against the persecutory fear of abandonment, the ego, according to Klein, picks out other external objects (in the child's case, principally toys) which can be internalised as 'good' objects and over which power can be exercised. In this, the *work of mourning*, objects come to represent and stand-in for the real significant-others which the child perceives he [*sic*] has lost. In turn these too are invested with meaning and come to represent a surrogate which compensates for the loss of the real object of affection (the mother and her breast). Powerless to act to prevent the loss of the 'real' object of affection, the child can at least phantasise that it controls and exercises some influence over the 'real' object by projecting its feelings, both good and bad, onto the surrogate object.

Indeed, the child's feelings towards the objects which it has introjected are characterised by overwhelming feelings of ambivalence: of love for the mother and her breast as the source (both symbolic and real) of warmth and security and simultaneously of hate and distrust for having being cruelly abandoned. In normal circumstances — and this is the fundamental point — the child overcomes the 'depressive position' through the successful, secure and above all positive internalisation of objects and people which were, in the first instance, experienced as 'good'. That the child should be so unexpectedly abandoned in this way, for Klein following Freud's thanatological precepts and theories of aggressivity, inevitably triggers destructive and spiteful urges that are directed towards the child's primary carers. In

time the child comes to experience the expression of such vindictiveness with feelings of guilt and seeks to make reparation for his [*sic*] about-turn in feelings towards his [*sic*] carers.

The reparative acts, by which the child seeks to restore the ‘goodness’ of objects created by the child of his/her carers but destroyed by the sense of loss and abandonment and substituted for a feeling of persecution, is in Klein’s view, the process by which the ego seeks to rebuild itself from within. Successful completion of the *work of mourning* (and the means by which the child overcomes the depressive position) is, therefore, according to Klein, measured by the unity of the child’s *imagos*. That is to say, the degree to which the child has been able to integrate his [*sic*] inner and outer world’s. Just as the measure of success in the work of mourning for Freud (1917) is the individual’s completion of the ‘de-cathexes’ of energies from the love object, which the ‘test of reality’ has shown no longer exists, and subsequently, the ego’s uninhibited capacity to re-invest in a new object of love, so for Klein the individual’s capacity to withstand painful losses experienced throughout adulthood is dependent upon the successful completion and general transcendence of the ‘depressive position’ in childhood. Here Klein relates depressive illness in adult life to an inability in childhood to transcend the universally experienced ‘depressive position’ induced by the child’s separation from mother. It is worthwhile restating Klein’s position on this when she writes:

every infant experiences anxieties which are psychotic in content. . . the infantile neurosis is the normal means of dealing with and modifying these anxieties. . . In the infantile neurosis the early depressive position finds expression and is worked through and gradually overcome. . . Normally the child passes through his infantile

neurosis, and. . . arrives step by step at a good relation to people and to reality. I hold that this satisfactory relation to people depends upon his having succeeded in his struggles against the chaos inside him (the depressive position)[.]

(Klein, 1940: 150)

Failure to do so, according to Klein, results in a manic psychosis as primarily manifested in the endless, obsessive, and above all, failed repetition of attempts to restore the ‘goodness’ of objects from within, whilst seeking to disavow one’s violent and aggressive phantasies towards one’s primary carers. Seen in this light, the individuals failed attempt to overcome the ‘depressive position’ has its origins and analogue in Freud’s notion of melancholia as the pathological Other of mourning. Here, then, and in response to critics who have accused psychoanalysis of ‘pathologising’ the human reaction to loss, it is not mourning as such which has been pathologised but its neurotic Other, melancholia, or what Klein describes as the individuals inability to transcend the ‘depressive position’. For in these models of grief the ‘normal’ psychological process by which the ego attempts to ‘go free’ by withdrawing libidinal investments in the lost love-object are ‘short-circuited’, continually over-ridden and tripped by a neurosis which prevents the ego from successfully repairing itself following the trauma of loss.

Nevertheless, that which has made Klein’s theory of particular interest, first to psychoanalysts who wished to emphasise the more relational aspects of their work, and later to theorists of cultural studies who have extended psychoanalytic insights to the decoding of various semiological ‘texts’, has been the interpersonal and intersubjective dimensions of Kleinian theory. This is especially pertinent to the arguments I advance in later chapters of

the thesis, especially the idea that the loss of cultural objects and/or ideals become bound-up with others, loaded with symbolic meaning, and are liable to be unleashed — often when we least expect it — by various losses encountered over a lifetime. Klein's engagement with the ways in which external cultural objects are psychically internalised, and thereby personified in a way that outstrips their meaning simply as 'things' in themselves, precipitates much of the thinking which has subsequently developed in this regard within contemporary cultural studies, especially 'subject-of-language' (Redman, 1999; 2000) approaches to identity that theorise the subject's inauguration into discourse (e.g. Silverman, 1983). More recently, some within cultural studies (e.g. Johnson, 1997b, 1999) have returned to take up some of the themes in Freud's, but especially Klein's, work which foreground Lacanian semiotic readings of Freud. From this perspective, cultural representations and the symbolic order of language in which we as subjects are inserted, become central to interiority, itself a sign-system which, as Lacan has famously suggested, is structured like a language. Freud (1917), nevertheless, provides the basis for the subsequent widening of the concept of mourning, which my next chapter takes up, by suggesting that in addition to being a regular reaction to the loss of a loved person, may also be a response to the loss of 'some abstraction which has taken the place of the loved person' (Freud, 1957: 243). By the time Klein (1940) factored in the mediating role of external objects which, 'from the earliest days *onwards*' (Klein, 1940: 149), become internalised as 'doubles' of real situations within the phantasmogoric realm of the imaginary — and in which the external world is transformed through a continual shuttling of inner and outer worlds from which a sense of self emerges — we have in place a

theoretical model of mourning and loss which more readily lends itself to the application of culture and language. Specifically, the ways in which aspects of culture are internalised and reproduced in the symbolic and linguistic order of signification.

In the psychoanalytic accounts I have reviewed heretofore, identity is something needing to be ‘worked-through’, reflected upon, and above all ‘negotiated’ within the unconscious dynamics of the individual’s psychic economy. More crucially, in psychoanalytic theory self-identity is both precipitated by, and forged through, the experience of loss. This leads Elliott (1994) to argue — against prevailing Western metaphysical notions of the subject as *a priori* rational, stable and predominantly cognitively oriented — that the self is constituted to its core by unconscious mechanisms of fantasy, drives, and desire. For in this view

the identificatory process is engendered in and through painful feelings of loss. For it is the loss of a loved person which actually necessitates the introjection of that other into the structure of the ego itself. It is as if the hurt of losing somebody is so terrifying that the ego incorporates the lost love object as an act of self-preservation. . . . Selfhood is formed under the sign of the loss of the object, in an attempt to *become* like the lost love.

(Elliott, 1994: 13, 14)

As such, the issues I have invoked in my discussion in this chapter have returned us, albeit in a round-about way, to some of the central questions with which I began the introduction to this thesis. Specifically, following Elliott (1999), the ways in which losses encountered at the cultural level might be asked to stand-in for losses experienced in the inter-personal domain of everyday social relations; and, more significantly, the ways in which the two

become entangled. These questions, we will recall from my introduction, are neatly summarised by Elliott when he asks:

For whom, exactly, is the mourner mourning? Are we mourning some aspects of ourselves? How might mourning of the self relate to cultural mourning? How does contemporary culture mourn?

(Elliott, 1999: 11)

Kristeva and the Pathos of Loss

The work of Julia Kristeva (1984, 1989) might also be usefully mined for questions which this thesis proposes. Following Lacanian readings of Freud that privilege the cultural and linguistic aspects of his work over the biological, Kristeva extends the phantasmogoric quality of psychoanalysis by suggesting that it is loss which not only summons identity — through glimpsing the absolute terror of *non-being* embodied in the death-drive — but which provides the trigger for creative imagination. For Kristeva, as classical psychoanalysts such as Melanie Klein before her, loss is central to the inner world of the self, for it is the means by which the individual establishes his [*sic*] relations both with self and others. In contrast to the more ‘cognitively’ oriented disciplines of the social sciences which, as we saw in chapter 1 of the thesis, tend to perceive the loss attending biological death as the mould which gives shape to all others, for Kristeva, it is the psychic experience of loss of significant-others and/or objects during infancy (namely, the mother’s temporary separation from child) which *precede*, in chronological order, the physical pain occasioned by manifestations of loss itself, including the death of significant-others. This first, and arguably most grievous and shocking of losses, as Klein (1940) reminds us, foreshadow and help inoculate us against the pain accompanying this most immutable of losses.

It is, nevertheless, the loss of the mother's breast following feeding, which forces us to seek to recreate the lost love-object, say, the mother's breast, within the imaginary realm of human interiority: by, for instance (and in the actual absence of the mother's breast), hallucinating a 'good feed' (Mitchell, 1991: 16). This premise of psychoanalytic theory allows Elliott (1999), albeit in a somewhat different context, to suggest that phantasy compensates for loss. From this perspective Kristeva argues that it is this loss of our first and dearest of love's which precipitates the demand that we recreate them internally in the non-communicable realm, first, of the *semiotic*, and later that we seek to express this loss in the *symbolic* and communicable realm of language. For Kristeva, mourning is inextricably bound up in a complex set of mutually symbiotic and dialectical relations through which our struggle to mourn losses encountered at the individual level are refracted through, and sublimated within, wider cultural representation. Thus, for Kristeva (1989: 22), the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* become 'the communicable imprints of an affective reality' through which the despair hastened by loss are articulated. Kristeva further suggests that the imaginary realm of human interiority is, by virtue of its attempts to repair from within — *vis-à-vis* recuperative attempts to restore introjected objects and memories — the psychic injuries caused by the loss of our primary love-objects, intrinsically melancholy. Following her reflections upon the symbolic realm of language, Kristeva suggests that

there is no writing other than the amorous. . . no imagination that is not, overtly or secretly, melancholy.

(Kristeva, 1989: 6)

Drawing extensively upon Kristeva's work, Elliott (1999) further suggests that this continuous, life-long struggle to mourn individual losses daily encountered is thus, never

complete but forever displaced within the metonymy of language. In *Black Sun* (1989) Kristeva suggests that that which cannot be mourned becomes transposed — as an ‘*insistence without presence*’ — into something which is representable, albeit at times obliquely, but especially within the context of art, literature and philosophy that decompose and recompose signs through ‘melody, rhythm, semantic polyvalency’ and ‘the so-called poetic form’ (Kristeva, 1989: 14). Thus Kristeva writes:

The disappearance of that essential being continues to deprive me of what is most worthwhile in me; I live it as a wound or deprivation, discovering just the same that my grief is but the deferment of the hatred or desire for ascendancy that I nurture with respect to the one who betrayed or abandoned me. . . It follows that any loss entails the loss of my being — and of being itself. . . . The child. . . becomes irredeemably sad before uttering his first words; this is because he has been irrevocably, desperately separated from the mother, a loss that causes him to try to find her again, along with other objects of love, first in the imagination, then in words.

(Kristeva, 1989: 5, 6)

Kristeva (1989) skilfully integrates the insights of Western philosophers, who have suggested that creativity is born of melancholia, with Lacan’s notion of the unconscious, as ‘structured like a language’ (c.f. Lacan), in which unconscious desire is continually transformed through the primary processes of condensation and displacement (Grosz, 1990). In keeping with a philosophical tradition of meditation in which one seeks to give voice to the otherwise non-communicable realm of sentient experience, Kristeva discusses melancholia, not as a clinical abstraction or pathology but as a corollary of depressive illness; a discourse with a language to be learned, rather than strictly a pathology to be treated (Kristeva, 1989). Here, and by way of illustrating melancholia as an abyss of non-communicable sorrow, she draws upon the ‘aporetic’ condition of the philosopher. Kristeva

traces this condition, as the philosopher's ethos, from Nietzsche's negative-positive dialectic of sufferance (that what does not kill us makes us stronger), through Montaigne's suggestion that 'to philosophise is to learn how to die' and Heidegger's disclosure of our 'being-for-death', to Aristotle, for whom (following Hippocratic notions of four humours), melancholia is identified as a *heat*-giving and regulating principle of the organism.²²

Kristeva further suggests, following Aristotelian tradition, that creativity is borne as a precondition of loss: that 'loss, bereavement, and absence trigger the work of the imagination and nourish it permanently as much as they threaten' to despoil it (Kristeva, 1989: 9). Following Kristeva's comments: that 'without a bent for melancholia there is no psyche, only a transition to action or play'; that there is meaning only in despair; in melancholia as the 'somber lining of amatory passion' (Kristeva, 1989: 4, 5–6), Elliott suggests that 'without mourning there can be no self-development, understanding or change. Without mourning we are psychically ill-equipped for creative living' (Elliott, 1999: 5). It is presumably this 'valorisation' of mourning (and the crudely reductionist psychoanalytic 'stage-theories' of mourning, as some see it), which Craib (1998: 158–9) has in mind when he claims that such 'positive' views neglect the 'straightforward strength of pain' involved in bereavement.

²² Kristeva (1989) contends that philosophers, as far back as Aristotle, have maintained an intimate relationship with melancholia. The *Problemata* (30, I), attributed to Aristotle, she recounts, speaks of the black bile (*melaina kole*) which saps great men. (Pseudo-) Aristotelian philosophy, she suggests, focused on the exceptional personality (*ethos-peritton*) as the defining feature of the melancholic, come philosopher. Kristeva reminds us that 'in his doubtful moments the depressed person is a philosopher' and that the work of Heraclitus, Socrates, and more recently, Kierkegaard, provides the most thorough and disturbing meditations on the meaning (or lack thereof), in *Being*. Melancholia, as the profound sorrow of the philosopher, is for Kristeva, following Aristotle, counterbalanced by genius: it is 'coextensive with man's [*sic*] anxiety in Being' (1989: 7). This anxiety-in-being, she suggests, can be seen as the forerunner of Heideggerian anguish (the *Stimmung* of thought) and in Schelling's 'essence of human freedom' as a reflection of 'man's affinity with nature', in which the philosopher's condition of melancholia is a condition of his [*sic*] being burdened with a surfeit of humanity.

As a ‘third-generation’ psychoanalyst, albeit of the (post-) Lacanian variety, Kristeva presents a convincing case for psychoanalysis as a ‘counterdepressant’; a resource for greater self-understanding (especially of the feminine condition). This is especially pertinent given purported differences in the mental health of men and women and women’s higher recorded rates of depressive illness (see, for example, Blackburn, 1991)²³. Notwithstanding the allegations of feminine essentialism (e.g. Brown and Adams, 1979) levelled at Kristeva and the wider ‘school’ of French feminist theory (e.g. Cixous, 1981; Irigaray, 1985; Marks and de Courtivron, 1981), her work provides a positive affirmation of the distinctive nature of femininity, and of psychoanalysis, less as a tool of social control than as a discourse that elucidates the temporal rhythms of mind and body.

In summary, I have sought throughout this chapter to outline an alternative set of literatures to those which I discussed in chapter 1, namely psychoanalytic approaches not only to death itself, but to mourning and loss more generally. In so doing, I have sought to illustrate mourning not as social artefact but as social and psychic process which serves to destabilise not only Cartesian assumptions about the self as *a priori* governed by reason and rationality, but notions of public and private as ordering principles. Using the concept of human interiority, as a taking-in of the external social world and its subsequent transformation through phantasy in the realm of the imaginary, I have challenged essentialist assumptions about the self by suggesting that the self is constituted to its core by internal and external ‘dialogue’ and ‘negotiation’ with self and others. Here in particular I

²³ Figures from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (1995) indicate that women are twice as likely as men to be diagnosed as suffering from mixed anxiety and depressive disorder and are more likely to have experienced general anxiety disorder, a depressive episode or suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OPCS, 1995, *The prevalence of*

have pointed to the work of theorists who have installed themselves at the interface of psychoanalytic and social theory.

Central to my arguments in this chapter have been my contention that identification, as a process of meaning-making, is an absolutely essential (pre-) condition of mourning; for as Frosh (1991) suggests, for loss to be appreciated, there has to be something that can love as well as lose. It is also through loss, as Elliott (1994, 1999) suggests, that selfhood is first drafted; that subjectivity is forged under the sign of loss. It is these losses which, according to psychoanalytic theory, give shape to and are awakened in all subsequent losses experienced throughout a lifetime. Nevertheless, I have drawn attention to various critical analyses of Freudian psychoanalysis, chiefly, from feminists and their critiques of Freud's own thinking as misogynistic, and from those who perceive psychoanalysis as a modernist medicalising discourse which has pathologised routine aspects of human behaviour.

I have sought, moreover, to trace out psychoanalytic approaches to mourning and loss against the historical background of developments occurring within the psychoanalytic movement itself. Moving from Freudian notions of the death-drive, through 'stage-related' theories of grief and Kleinian Object-Relations, I have concluded this chapter by discussing semiological accounts of loss in the work of Julia Kristeva (1989). It is these issues and the applications of various aspects of psychoanalytic theory to culture itself which I now take up in my discussions in chapter 3.

psychiatric morbidity among adults aged 16–64, living in households, in Great Britain, HMSO: London, cited in Taylor and Field (1997: 155).

CHAPTER 3

CULTURAL PRACTICES AND PUBLIC MOURNING IN THE POPULAR POSTMODERN: DIANA, HILLSBOROUGH AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY INFLECTIONS

We saw in the previous two chapters of the thesis both the socially inscribed linguistic and bodily interdictions on Western attitudes towards death and its corollaries, and the psychically manifested object-investments and identifications which precede mourning as its necessary and sufficient condition. In this chapter I turn to explore the two events which constitute my two principal ‘case-studies’ in contemporary ‘public’ mourning: the scenes which followed the death of Princess Diana, and the Hillsborough stadium disaster. In so doing — and by reference to other contemporary inflections of public mourning — I attempt to situate the historical specificity of these two events within the wider social, cultural and funerary practices which characterise the mode of sensibility in the popular postmodern.

Whilst there is no direct equivalence between the two events which I take as my case-studies, there are nevertheless a number of similarities between the scenes of public mourning which surrounded them and which I will endeavour to draw out in this chapter. Nor, of course, could there ever be absolute degrees of similitude between these two very different events: the largely *local* mourning for what eventually became the death of 96 ‘ordinary’ football fans at an F.A Cup semi-final match in Sheffield, and the *global* mourning which accompanied the untimely death of a 36-year-old woman renowned

internationally by virtue of her status as the recently estranged wife of the heir to the British monarchy (and perhaps more significantly, as a celebrity in her own right whose iconic status at the time, and indeed since, was of unparalleled dimensions). That any two particular events should be qualitatively different from each other, and to this extent ‘unique’,¹ is something of a tautology which hardly requires iteration. Comparison of this sort, nevertheless, invariably involves ‘trade-offs’ of various kinds: the sacrificing, for instance, of depth that a singular consideration of only one of these events might have provided. That said, whilst the conjunctive treatment of these two events provides a number of challenges, not least by placing limits upon my capacity for generalisation, their combination, as I will seek to demonstrate, is of considerable didactic value.

This chapter invokes a range of issues and questions which I will presently seek to address. For instance, what do I mean by ‘public’ mourning? What distinguishes ‘public’ from ‘private’ mourning? How does my conceptualisation of ‘public’ mourning seek to avoid the binary assumptions underpinning ‘public’ and ‘private’ which I criticised in previous chapters? What role does culture play in ‘public’ mourning of the sort I consider here? What distinguishes my two case-studies from other episodes of ‘public’ mourning, say the mourning which now routinely accompany rail or airplane disasters? It is to these sorts of questions that this chapter seeks to address itself.

¹ Eckardt and Eckardt (1980) suggest that the philosophic grounding for such a claim can be seen to derive empirically from shifting conditions of spatio-temporal flux and is, accordingly, twofold: ‘succeeding events must perforce occupy physical locales that are alternative to those that earlier events have occupied; and succeeding events take place within temporal frames of reference that are alternative to those that previous events involved’ (Eckardt and Eckardt, 1980: 166–7).

In addition to extrapolating these range of issues, and to explicating the events surrounding my two case-studies — through their contextualisation by reference to wider contemporary cultural representations and practices — this chapter seeks a discussion of the various literatures which have endeavoured to explain the public mourning (and resistances to it), witnessed in the aftermath of the death of Princess Diana and the Hillsborough disaster. I consider the ways in which these texts themselves, and others like them, can be seen as works of mourning of various kinds. In turn, the insights offered in chapters 1 and 2 of the thesis are themselves brought to bear in discussions of my two case-studies. For instance, I discuss approaches which have viewed the mourning for Diana (and to a lesser extent for Hillsborough), against the backdrop, and putatively reported reversal, of twentieth century social interdictions on death and mourning: as the revival of older established folk traditions, albeit with an added (post-) or neo-modern (Walter, 1994) twist.

Similarly, I add to the psychoanalytic insights provided in chapter 2 of my thesis, ‘culturalist’ analyses of the identificatory (object-) investments which precede, and are precipitated by, loss and are an essential pre-condition of the kind of ‘public’ mourning considered here. For instance, I develop the idea that in the mourning constituted by my two case-studies, individuals were first — often unconsciously — ‘interpellated’ by, and ‘sutured’ to, particular ‘subject-positions’ made available in cultural discourse. It is through discursive practices that the individual, as the ‘subject-of-language’ (Redman *et al*, 2000), is ‘sutured’ to a ‘subject-position’ in which a range of identifications with the ‘object’ of affection are first fostered. That such ‘identifications’ could be made with the principal referents of loss seemingly being mourned in these events: Princess Diana (and the

polysemic meaning which she came to embody) and the victims of the Hillsborough disaster, besides the various other ‘objects’ lost (or perceived to have been lost), suggests an amatory and significatory passion which outstrips and overrides the referents themselves. As I have earlier argued in chapter 2 of the thesis using the work of Stephen Frosh (1991), amatory investments of meaning, as well as enmitory dis-investments of equal intensity, are a precondition of the public mourning and ‘not-mourning’ (Johnson, 1999) — itself a form ‘political’ resistance — which this thesis considers. Frosh we will recall writes that:

For tragedy to be possible. . . and loss appreciated, there has to be something that can be identified with, something that can love as well as lose, hope as well as be betrayed.

(Frosh, 1991: 19–20)

Deploying psychoanalytic concepts of mourning previously as outlined in chapter 2, I seek to explore the multifarious object-investments, which, during the mourning for Princess Diana seemed to matter much more than Diana herself ever could (Kear, 1999). Taking up the questions posed by Anthony Elliott (1999) which I cited in the introduction to this thesis, I attempt to unravel what or who was being mourned in my two case-studies, besides and in addition to Diana and the victims of the Hillsborough disaster themselves. Following the insights of Julia Kristeva and Anthony Elliott amongst others, which I have highlighted previously in chapter 2, I explore the ways in which contemporary culture itself mourns by discussing the various ways in which aspects of loss and subsequent attempts to mourn these losses are inflected within, and encrypted by, culture more generally. Aside from the more ‘obvious’ examples of public mourning which my thesis considers, it is possible also by extending the insights provided by classical psychoanalysis to provide a semiology of

mourning by applying psychoanalytic concepts to, say, academic texts or aspects of literary fiction. Using a variety of examples, from Susan Sontag's (1977) discussion of photography; through discussions by the intellectual historian, Dominick LaCapra (1992), of 'canonical' texts written about the Nazi Holocaust; to Richard Johnson's (1999) consideration of texts which 'expostulate' about the public mourning (as 'hysteria') that surrounded the death of Princess Diana — as adding to the attention which critics at the time so much deplored (Johnson, 1999: 22), I suggest that concepts of mourning (and melancholia) can usefully be applied to cultural 'texts'. From this perspective I argue that our emotions and subjectivities cannot simply be 'bracketed-off' but invariably, and often unwittingly, are sublimated and encrypted within authorial practices and subject-positions as made available within cultural discourse.

I begin this chapter, however, by seeking to provide the social and cultural backcloth against which my two case-studies took place: to locate the playful eclecticism and 'irreverence' of contemporary mourning practices within the popular postmodern mode of sensibility. Against this backdrop, I engage substantively with the '*jouissance*' (as ludically playful but irredeemably sad) of postmodern mourning practices as a defining characteristic and leitmotif of my two case-studies. I continue by exploring the Hillsborough and Diana events as aspects of the 'carnavalesque' as theorised by Mikhail Bakhtin; as media(*tised*) events, through which a range of different social identities were 'hailed' by cultural discourses surrounding the symbolic referents of mourning themselves. From here I consider the ethics of 'looking' in these two events, as well as the sense of 'grotesquerie' which, for some seemingly unmoved by these deaths, the events seemed to embody.

Following this, I attempt to disentangle some of the meanings of ‘public’ and ‘private’ in these two events, suggesting that fandom is a concept which both refuses yet draws upon these very ordering categories. Before concluding the chapter, I draw attention to the specificity of my two case-studies as characterised overwhelmingly, and premised upon, culturally mediated and deeply symbolic investments of meaning. It is this in particular, I argue, which distinguishes them (as fan based aspects of public mourning) from other less totemic or iconic, yet more dutiful or ‘civic’, types of public mourning. I conclude by pointing to examples, from novels to popular historical and academic writing, of the ways in which various aspects of mourning and identity are semiotically encrypted within culture itself.

Cultural Returns: the Postmodernising of Death Ritual

Even before the scenes which followed the death of Princess Diana in the late summer of 1997 social scientists, especially those working within the field of death studies (e.g. Walter, 1991a; 1994), but also social commentators and journalists more generally, had begun to discern, and reflect upon, changes affecting both the public commemoration of tragedy (and the ways in which the deaths of public figures were marked), and the ‘private’ ceremonial practices used more generally to mark the passing of life. In the latter, that is to say, funerary practices ordinarily restricted to the family and friends of the deceased (which I will deal with implicitly for the time being), social scientists, like Walter, have noted the increased tendency of the bereaved to want to customise funeral ceremonies — often following the explicit wishes of the deceased, in which detailed instruction is left by them on ways to carry out, and thereby personalise, proceedings. Sociologists, for instance,

working within convergent fields of interest, especially the sociology of religion, had begun to note the increased desire of the bereaved to assume greater control over funerary practices.

These attempts to assert control over funeral proceedings, especially the funeral service preceding burial or cremation of the dead, have been largely at the expense of organised religion, which as we have earlier seen in chapter 1, is an institution which has, since medieval times, sequestered many of the rites surrounding a persons exit from this earth. Whilst the adjudication and place of death have been largely appropriated by, and confined within, the institutional context of modern medicine, organised religion has continued to exert considerable influence over the ceremonial practices surrounding death. In spite of the putatively reported trend of secularisation (Wilson, 1966) in the West — a trend so widely reported that it has long since become a truism within sociology — funerary practices continue, for the most part, to be overseen by, and conducted within, the confines of established religion. One has only to try and organise a funeral outside the bounds of organised religion to appreciate the continued monopoly it has on ceremonial practices surrounding death (Walter, 1990). In similar vein, Jessica Mitford (1963) has earlier noted the American funeral industry's near-monopoly on the provision of post-mortem rituals, goods and services to the recently bereaved. Mitford was among the first to claim that this growth in the 'Fordist' provision of death services had done much to undermine the participation of the bereaved themselves in the planning and organisation of funerals. Such professionalisation — especially when combined with the appropriation, from the Middle Ages onwards, of death ritual by organised religion, and the sequestration in modernity of

the experience of dying by clinical medicine — can thus be seen to disenfranchise individuals from taking an active role both in one's own death and that of others. The increased desire of individuals to challenge the stranglehold of these organisations can be evidenced from the growth during the late 1980s, especially in the United States, but increasingly in the United Kingdom, of the natural death movement. This can be seen to have its origins in Mitford's (1963) work and seeks principally to enhance both the quality of dying (through its advocacy of dying at home) and of post-mortem ritual by actively encouraging greater choice through the personal management of proceedings (Howarth, 2001: 323).²

In the putatively reported shift in the direction of what Tony Walter (1994) describes as the 'postmodern way of death' (Walter, 1994), religious liturgies, sermons and choral hymns, have been superseded by the choice of popular music (often selected by the deceased themselves prior to death), and by personal eulogies and readings from the bereaved, which both reflect and celebrate the deceased's life. This 'post-Fordist' trend is characterised by an eclecticism which mixes more traditional and formalised funerary practices with more informal, playfully idiosyncratic and contemporary styles of remembrance. Such eclecticism extends in some instances to combining various aspects of New Age religions and practices with funerary customs which remain distinctively European in origin and orientation. It is this 'double-coding' (Jencks, 1996) or 'bricolage' (Jameson, 1991) of styles — of old with new, Eastern with Western, formal and informal — rather than the outright rejection of one

² For an overview of the origins, practices and philosophy behind the 'natural death movement', as encouraging greater individual control of funerary practice and post-mortem ritual by its advocacy of inexpensive, ecologically-friendly 'do-it-yourself' means of body disposal, see Howarth (2001: 323–324), Walter (1994: 42).

in favour of the other which best communicates this ‘postmodern turn’ in the way in which death has come increasingly to be marked.

Just as the so-called postmodern way of death sees a decrease in the aura of formality and solemnity surrounding funerary practice, so it sees a corresponding increase in informality and in the degree of individual choice individuals exercise in these matters. Walter (1994) has described this growing desire that funerals should reflect the unique life of the deceased as the ‘Sinatra Syndrome’. By this Walter presumably means to suggest that the increase of personal intervention in how one’s own death should be marked — against the sometimes rather impersonal and austere religious ceremonies surrounding death — is, following the old Frank Sinatra standard, ‘*My Way*’, an expression of the increased desire of the individual to ‘die, funeralise and memorialise their own way’ (Walter, 1994: 37). Such attempts to take a more active role in the affairs surrounding death can thus be seen as attempts, however belated, to reverse the cumulative 300-year trend towards the ever greater rationalisation and sequestration of death of which Walter writes (Walter, 1994).³

It should be noted that the pressure for greater individual choice over funeral arrangements and the trend towards the more expressivist, or as Walter (1990) puts it, ‘*life-centred funeral*’, has perhaps been given greatest impetus during the 1980s by the gay community and those dying from the AIDS epidemic. This was especially the case during the 1980s in

³ Walter (1994) identifies three historically discernible types of death: the ‘traditional’, the ‘modern’ and the ‘neo-modern’. The traditional is characterised by rule-bound practices and customs which are shared and engaged-in by an entire community, whilst the modern has seen both the ‘privatisation’ and sequestration of practices leading up to and following death by medical and commercial interests. The neo-modern on the other hand sees the continued dependence upon ‘medicalised’ knowledge of death, combined with more ‘expressivist’ attitudes towards grief following bereavement. Walter further identifies two strands within the neo-modern death: the ‘late-modern’ (as characterised by a reliance upon health professionals such as bereavement counsellors in helping the bereaved ‘work-through’ their grief)

the West coast of the United States, especially San Francisco, where the large numbers of gay men dying from the AIDS epidemic quickly became a political issue, especially because of the low political priority, and lack of economic funds, given to combating the spread and prevention of the virus by a 'radically conservative' U.S administration. Given the discrimination and ostracisation faced by gay people in general, the condemnation of 'gay lifestyles' (and of homosexuality more generally) by the established, and conservatively oriented, orthodoxy of the world's major religions (think, for example, of the recent furore surrounding the ordination of openly gay bishops in the UK and the USA), and the sense of 'otherness' invoked by the pathological and sexually predatory portrayal of gay men in the media (a feature borne out by Peter Redman's (1997a) empirical research which I highlighted in chapter 1), it is not surprising that large sections of the gay community should wish to mark death in a distinctive and unorthodox way. Coupled with the long-standing American ideal of individualism (Walter, 1994), it is in this context that the 'do-it-yourself' funeral is first given greatest expression. Following popular media commentaries, where it is routinely suggested that popular fashions and trends within mainstream heterosexual culture can be traced to sub-cultural trends originating within the gay community, the increasing demand for the 'life-centred', celebratory and expressivist funeral can be seen too to have its origins in gay culture.⁴ It was, as I will suggest, some of these practices that became amplified in the public mourning for Princess Diana (herself a gay icon among sections of gay men).

and the 'postmodern' (as characterised by cultural eclecticism in which aspects of funerary practice are mixed together at will).

This trend towards the postmodern celebration of funerary practice can be evidenced by recent research findings (*Guardian*, 19 January 2002), which report that the song most Britain's would like played at their own funeral is Robbie Williams' *Angels* (other popular choices include Celine Dion's *My Heart Will Go On*, Queen's *Who Wants to Live Forever* and John Lennon's *Imagine*). The research commissioned by the Co-Operative Funeral Service also reveals that some 80 per cent of Britain's would now prefer more 'cheerful' and 'colourful' send-offs, and that 36 per cent of those questioned would like funerals to be associated with brighter colours than the traditional black. The trend perhaps reflects the growing incredulity (Lyotard, 1984) in attitudes towards, in this case, religious meta-narratives and simultaneous growth in the popular authority of the self, as reflected not only in the individualising of practices surrounding death, but in other significant rites of passage, such as marriage, where couples routinely now write their own wedding vows.

The putatively reported shifts in funerary practice which I have highlighted hitherto, away from established custom towards practices which celebrate a new found sovereignty of the self, are also reflected in a range of cultural practices which surround contemporary mourning behaviours. These range from the increased use of personal memorabilia, including soft toys (and other objects of special meaning) to decorate graveside plots, to the more impromptu and spontaneous use of flowers to mark the sites of fatal road traffic accidents. This use of flowers, according to various researchers, especially folklorists, working within the field of death studies (e.g. Francis *et al*, 1999; Goody, 1993; Haney *et*

⁴ Think, for example, of the customised funeral of the flamboyantly gay character Gareth, played by Simon Callow, in the 1994 film *Four Wedding's and A Funeral*; or the outrageously camp and kitsch funeral ceremony in a particular episode

al, 1997; Monger, 1997; Rowbottom, 1999) has antecedents in a much longer, yet often neglected and under-theorised, folk tradition of mourning. Various academics working within this field have countered claims that contemporary practices such as these, including those surrounding my two principal case-studies in public mourning, are unique to the present.⁵ Instead, they have suggested that such practices are deep-rooted and are indicative, not of novelty, but of the revival of long forgotten folk tradition (e.g. Bowman, 1999; Chandler, 1999; Walter, 1994, 1999a). Nevertheless, such practices suggest a marked shift in recent years away from the austere and heavily proscribed mourning practices characteristic of the high Victorian period.

The shift towards the more ludic and informal celebration of a life just ended appears to be borne out by the contemporary decoration of grave-side plots. Witness, for example, the array of informal memorabilia: of birthday cards and balloons, toy windmills, and elaborate floral displays in a variety of customised shapes and sizes each reflecting the personality of the deceased and their relations with those left behind, which are an increasing feature of grave-side plots. Such a shift has at the same time been greeted with a degree of resistance from those wishing to police the borders of ‘acceptable’ funerary practice. In Berkshire, for example, in November of 2001, town councillors ruled against the headstone inscription of a widower who chose to describe his late wife, amongst other things, as a ‘great lover’,

of the risqué Channel 4 drama *Queer as Folk*, where the lyrics from the gay disco anthem ‘*D.I.S.C.O*’ were read out-loud as a fitting elegy.

⁵ Historian John Wolfe (1999: 53–64) cautions against attributing the most salient features of the mourning for Princess Diana to ‘culturally specific characteristics of the 1990s’ (Wolfe, 1999: 58). Wolfe draws comparisons between the public mourning which followed the death of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997, with the scenes which followed three other ‘prominent, unexpected, and untimely royal deaths’ which occurred in the nineteenth century: the death of Prince Albert in 1861; of Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale in 1892; and especially, of Princess Charlotte of Wales in 1817.

arguing that such an epitaph was ‘inappropriate’ and might cause offence to others (BBC news on-line, 2001), or the local vicar who recently objected to the colloquial use of the word ‘Dad’ on a gravestone, insisting that it was an ‘inappropriate’ use of informal language unbefitting of a head-stone epitaph.

The Hillsborough and Diana Events as the Carnivalisation of Death

The mourning which followed the death of Princess Diana in the late summer of 1997 and the scenes which followed the Hillsborough disaster in April 1989, characteristically mirrored many of the features which I have outlined above in my discussions of the postmodernising of funerary practice. So too, a number of recent public deaths and mourning events have been variously compared in media commentators (e.g. Marks, 1999; Orr, 1999) to the mourning for Princess Diana. Most notably, comparisons have been made between the floral tributes left following the death of popular BBC television presenter Jill Dando and following the opening of public condolence books after the death of former Beatle George Harrison. The public mourning scenes which followed the death of Princess Diana are, it seems, the defining point against which all other public mourning, from the events of 9/11, to the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster, are now considered by media news commentaries.

Nevertheless, the putative trend towards the carnivalisation of mourning practice was reflected and became writ-large in a series of ‘moments’ which characterised the public mourning following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana. Both saw an unprecedented use of soft toys, flowers, and personal memorabilia, often of deep

sentimental value, in the creation of spontaneous shrines to Diana and the victims of Hillsborough. Both witnessed a seeming re-visioning of funerary practice and protocol, in which established practices were ruthlessly undone. Think, for example, of Earl Spencer's use of his funeral elegy to launch a carefully coded attack on the Windsors, whilst providing a robust defence of his late sister; or the unusual intertwining during the mourning for Hillsborough of aspects of popular football fandom with more traditional aspects of religiosity. Here I am thinking principally of the use of a Liverpool F. C. Banner as an altar cloth during the hastily convened Requiem Mass in the city's Metropolitan Cathedral the day following the disaster (Davie, 1993).

There were of course countless other moments during both events which signalled a break with established tradition: the spontaneous and unprecedented applause which rippled through Westminster Abbey in appreciation of Earl Spencer's funerary address; the revised rendition and performance during Diana's funeral service of *Elton John's Candle in the Wind*; the 'pilgrimage' by mourners to Anfield, the home of Liverpool Football Club; the mile-long chain of scarves knotted together which spread across Stanley park in Liverpool linking Everton's Goodison Park with Liverpool's Anfield stadium. It is the peculiar mixture of seemingly irreconcilable influences in these events: the traditional and modern, formal and informal, secular and religious, local and global, which best encapsulate the 'double-coding' (Jencks, 1986) and 'bricolage' (Jameson, 1991) as characteristic features of postmodernism, to which I earlier referred.

In the case of the mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster a number of sociologists (e.g. Davie, 1993; Taylor, 1989; Walter, 1991b) have reflected upon the ‘unique’ local combination of the popular and the religious: namely, the seamless incorporation of various football memorabilia within religious practice and of religious practice within aspects of football fandom during the week-long period of public mourning within the city following the disaster⁶ (e.g. Sheppard and Warlock, 1989). Various commentators (e.g. Davie, 1993; Eyre, 1989) were indeed led to view the million or so people who visited Anfield during this week of mourning, transforming it into a shrine to the victims of Hillsborough, as an act of religious or spiritual pilgrimage. This pilgrimage, Davie (1993) suggests, transformed Anfield into the city’s de facto third cathedral, behind or on a par with the Anglican and Metropolitan cathedrals. Davie has explained this unusual admixture of influences by reference to the ‘unique’ imbrication of football and religion in the city of Liverpool; as a defining feature of social life and cultural practices, wherein football and religion continue to provide ‘shape and focus’ in the lives of individuals and communities in Liverpool (Davie, 1993: 211). Here Davie writes that:

It is . . . essential to grasp from the outset the links between Liverpool’s religious life and the daily routines of the city’s existence. They are inseparable in practice, and should remain so in any theoretical discussion.

(Davie, 1993: 201)

In this light, Davie points to the leaving not of religious but footballing icons and regalia at the foot of the altar during the requiem mass following the disaster and to the singing,

⁶ Liverpool Bishops at the time of the disaster, Derek Worlock and David Sheppard (1989), have written of the ‘Anfield pilgrimage’, wherein various pieces of religious iconography, including a plaster madonna, were placed, alongside scarves and caps, mascots and souvenirs, beneath the goalposts on the Anfield pitch.

during the official Hillsborough Memorial Service on 29 April 1989, of Liverpool F. C.'s adopted anthem, '*You'll Never Walk Alone*', by the choir of the city's Anglican cathedral.⁷ Walter (1991b) too, like Davie, has earlier written of the mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster, in which 'religious, civic and footballing rituals were intertwined' (Walter, 1991b: 608–9), as reflective of Liverpool's celebratory, Celtic and working-class culture; a culture which is thoroughly 'plugged into' ritual (like the Irish wake) and which takes to it 'like a duck to water' (Walter, 1991b: 621). Religious analogies, such as has been made between football and religion have by now become something of a truism. Nevertheless, Ian Taylor (1989, 1991), has reflected upon the impromptu decoration with various items of football memorabilia, of both Anfield and the Leppings Lane entrance to Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough stadium — as a 'mass popular religious rite' (Taylor, 1991: 4) — following the disaster.⁸ These most 'basic, personal and *apparently* trivial' offerings (Taylor, 1989: 91) reminded Taylor of the 'intensely personal' and humble offerings he saw peasants make to God on a trip to the Shrine of Guadalupe in Mexico City in 1970. Taylor also reports a television clip in which he saw an elderly Sheffield Wednesday supporter leaving what was 'presumably his only copy of the 1966 Cup Final programme' played between Wednesday and Everton, suggesting that this was perhaps the only affective link that the supporter could make with Liverpool (Everton is a district of Liverpool and the city's other major professional football club).

⁷ Davie (1993) suggests that it hard to imagine any other football song — with the exception of the hymn 'Abide with Me' — with the capacity to translate from football terrace to cathedral service. 'Abide with Me', Davie notes, is routinely sung at funerals and as prelude to the FA Cup Final. It has, therefore, moved in the opposite direction: from church service to football match.

⁸ Taylor (1991) is also reminded by floral decoration of the goalmouth at Anfield and the entrance to Hillsborough of the annual 'well dressing' rituals in Derbyshire, in which the leaves of flowers are fashioned to make shrines dedicated to particular saints, and in some instances, pagan godheads (Taylor, 1989: 91–2).

Human geographer, John Bale (1991), has similarly suggested that football has often been viewed as a surrogate religion, fulfilling the same human and social functions as organised religion, premised as it is upon weekly communal and performative ritual (Walter, 1991b: 614). The football stadium itself, Bale comments, has regularly been alluded to as sacred space, analogous to a cathedral. The ‘hallowed turf’ of the football ground has often played host to quasi-religious events, such as the scattering of the ashes of deceased fans, thereby testifying to its ‘much-loved character’ (Bale, 1991: 132). The ‘overnight’ decoration of Anfield, and to a lesser extent, Hillsborough, following the disaster, using, amongst other things, scarves, caps and rosettes, can be seen to reflect the amorous investments of meaning and affective identifications forged between football and its fans.

In the public mourning which attended the death of Princess Diana, commentators have similarly mused over the *mélange* of traditional and deeply conservative aspects of her funeral: the use of a British military gun carriage on which to carry Diana’s body and the choice of Westminster Abbey as the location for Diana’s funeral (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a); with the popular rejection of established protocol and birth of new traditions: the seemingly unprecedented applause which rippled through Westminster Abbey following Earl Spencer’s funeral oration and which greeted Diana’s coffin as it passed through central London. So too, the use of flash photography (e.g. Paxman, 1999) and throwing of flowers in front of Diana’s coffin as it made its way through central London and at the hearse⁹ carrying her body as it made its way to be buried at Diana’s ancestral home of Althorp in

⁹ Davies (1999: 12) describes how, after flowers thrown by road-side mourners landed accidentally on the hearse carrying Diana’s body to Althorp for burial, a new tradition was born when people instead began to aim their flowers to land

Northamptonshire; and in the unprecedented public demands that the Royal Standard flown over Buckingham Palace should be lowered to half mast.¹⁰ Indeed, the irony of some of these events, especially the use of a gun carriage to carry the body of a woman who famously campaigned against landmines, the imperial surroundings of Westminster Abbey — ‘the historical burial place of poets and kings’ (Kear and Steinberg, 1999: 2) — or the oxymoronic phrase, the ‘People’s Princess’,¹¹ coined to describe a woman of considerable rank and privilege, was not lost either on journalists or on academics (e.g. Kear and Steinberg, 1999; Davis, 1999; Walter, 1999) who have subsequently written about the Diana events. Kear and Steinberg (1999), for instance, have been amongst those who have suggested that a function of the deeply conservative aspects of Diana’s funeral has been to ‘reinscribe’ and ‘recuperate’ the most politically transgressive aspects which Diana, during life, but also since, came to represent.

Referents of Loss: Icon, Totem and Symbolic Investments of Meaning

Kear and Steinberg suggest that the ‘iconicity’ which Diana came to embody served to foreground and make available a range of multiple and often competing subjective identifications with her. It is in this view Diana’s position at the interstice of *icon* and *iconicity*, straddling the role of *icon* as the ‘formal construction of culture’ (say, the

directly on the car. Davis remarks how, at one point, the driver had to stop to clear the vehicle’s windscreen of flowers which by now had begun to impede his field of vision.

¹⁰ As Davies (1999: 8) reports, the Royal Standard, by tradition, flies over Buckingham Palace when the monarch is in residence. When he or she is not, no flag flies. The Royal Standard, moreover, is not taken down at the death of a monarch. Nor is it lowered to half mast, for the next monarch lives. However, due to increasing public pressure, the Union Jack, not the Royal Standard, was flown over Buckingham Palace and was lowered to half-mast on the Saturday of Diana’s funeral.

religious icon on the wall of a church), and *iconicity*, as ‘the effect of a process through which particular individuals (or groups) are rewritten as culturally resonant social figures whose iconic status resides in the ways in which they provide expansive spaces of subjective identification’ (Kear and Steinberg, 1999: 7), which made Diana the source of such polysemic meaning.

It is this combination of icon and iconicity in the ‘iconographic Diana’ which served to enable the ‘unusually multicultural assembly’ of mourners which so occupied journalists of the time and academics since. Journalists and cultural commentators, of both political left (e.g. Alibhai-Brown, 1997; Orbach, 1998) and right (e.g. Littlejohn, 1997) were the first, followed by academics (e.g. Kear and Steinberg, 1999; Re:Public, 1997; Richards *et al*, 1999; Walter, 1999a) to discern the unusually multicultural or ‘rainbow’ composition of mourners during the public events that surrounded her death.¹² Others too have noted and reflected upon the mobilisation of a ‘constituency of the rejected’ (Earl Spencer, 1997) during the mourning for Diana, from gay men (e.g. Benzie, 1997; Coles, 1998; *Gay Times*, 1997, cited in Johnson, 1999: 32; Haney and Davis, 1999: 231; Spurlin, 1999), to the homeless and lone mothers, each of whom were able to recognise and identify themselves with various aspects of Diana’s life.¹³ Mica Nava (1999: 111), in a way resonant of Kear

¹¹ The coining of the phrase ‘the People’s Princess’ has been variously attributed to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair (Kear and Steinberg, 1999: 2), to his chief Press Secretary, Alistair Campbell (Brunt, 1999: 29) and to the writer and journalist, Julie Burchill (Davis, 1999: 6).

¹² Yasmin Alibhai-Brown (1997) and Susie Orbach (1998) have noted the inclusion of ethnic groups — often invisible from participation in the democratic process and public life more generally — in the public mourning for Princess Diana. For reflections upon Diana’s appeal across a variety of different ethnic groups, see also, Lomax (1999); Nava (1997, 1999); Verma (1999).

¹³ William J. Spurlin (1999), explains Diana’s identificatory appeal amongst gay men in particular by reference to her emblematic quality of transgressive ‘boundary crossing’ and rejection of ‘heteronormative family life’. Radio broadcaster Richard Coles (1998), meanwhile, has suggested that Diana lived a ‘gay style’ and repertoire: that she was ‘a gay man’ (Coles, 1998: 176, cited in Johnson, 1999: 32). Johnson (1999) has further suggested that it was Diana’s recognition of

and Steinberg's theorisation of Diana's iconicity, has reflected upon the way in which Diana was able to call upon the support of disenfranchised social groups on the margins of society (racialised minority ethnic groups, gay men, women etc.) whilst retaining the core support of constituencies of the centre. Kear and Steinberg (1999a) usefully express, and neatly sum up, the complex ways in which Diana was able successfully to sustain a variety of alternative identifications when they write:

The iconographic 'Diana'. . . appears to be an 'open text' that can sustain a variety of identifications, including those that appear to be diametrically opposed to the residual sense of 'what she stood for'. On the one hand, 'Diana' provides an emergent space of identification enabling expansive reinvention of social identities — 'what she could stand for'. On the other, 'Diana' provides an exhortive space for mobilizing the dynamics of iconicity to produce a dominant 'closed text' signifying 'what she should stand for'.

(Kear and Steinberg, 1999: 8–9)

In the case of the Hillsborough disaster, I suggest, especially in chapters 5 and 7 (where I report the analysis of my empirical findings of condolence books and explore my own mourning of the disaster through the use of 'memory work'), that a range of other 'things' were being mourned besides the ostensible referents of mourning. That football, and football clubs, should come to be invested with an amatory passion and meaning as reflective of something all together larger, was suggested by the mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster. Here, following the work of those who have theorised the investments of meaning made in social place (e.g. Bachelard, 1969; Bale, 1991, 1994;

those 'othered or maginalized in power relations and in representational processes' (Johnson, 1999: 29) which facilitated a complex range of *transferences* between Diana and her fans: as, say, divorcee in an unhappy and patriarchal marriage, as a woman who had experienced — and perhaps more importantly made public — depressive illness and eating disorders, as single mother, charity worker and, above all, humanitarian. Silverstone (1998) also writes of the many and multifarious

Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974), I suggest that symbolic investments in a sense of localised place and ‘place(ness)’ were awakened by the death-events at Hillsborough and became manifested in the public mourning which followed.

Such investments can be conceived as forms of totemic identification as theorised by Freud (1913), along with a number structural anthropologists (e.g. Radcliffe-Brown, 1936, 1952; Lévi-Strauss, 1969) and early sociologists (e.g. Durkheim, 1912). Such notions of ‘totemicity’ speak of the popular veneration and identification with, various objects or ‘things’ as symbolic reflections of the wider community itself. In Freud’s (1913) theorisation of the totemic, as we saw in chapter 2 of the thesis, identification is intimately bound-up in the masculine oedipal relations between father and son of the primal horde. Identification, in this view, with the father by the son, was accomplished, following the act of parricide, by his devouration. In similar vein, Walter (1991b: 621) has suggested that if totemic religious identification of the sort theorised by Durkheim (1915) operates anywhere in contemporary Britain, it is in Liverpool (see also Taylor, 1989). In Liverpool, a city steeped in the traditions of football, where it is combined with religion, class and a sense of place to constitute a unique ‘local structure of feeling’ (Williams, 1984), the Hillsborough disaster, I suggest, became emblematic of a series of losses to affect the city; from economic decline and the loss of its key shipping industries, to the loss of employment and the haemorrhaging of local population. It is these things — in addition to the obvious victims of the Hillsborough disaster — as key signifiers of local identity which were being unconsciously mourned in the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster. The collective trauma

connections forged with Diana: of ‘women identifying with *the woman*, children identifying with *the child*, parents

of loss embodied in the deaths of 96 fans of a key ‘totem’ of the city, Liverpool F.C, served simultaneously — albeit temporarily — to (re)unite a city devastated by economic collapse, and to reawaken memories of people and places from the past.

The Mourning for Hillsborough and Diana as Mediatized Events

One of the most striking features, and equivalence between, the mourning events which surrounded the death of Princess Diana and that of the Hillsborough disaster was their visual effect: as both public spectacle and spectacular media event[s] (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 1). Aside from, and in addition to, the ludic sense of ‘irreverence’¹⁴ and spectacular and kaleidoscopic technicolor of each event (represented, as we have seen, in the huge amounts of flowers, soft toys and hand-made tributes), these were two thoroughly mediatized events. Had it not been for the (post-)modern media forms through which these events were represented it is conceivable that each would both have been of an altogether different scale, magnitude and nature. The very nature of these events themselves, like many other contemporary public disasters, from the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963, to the events of September 11, 2001, are almost inconceivable without the various media forms which report, in some instances can be seen as giving rise to (for the death of Diana was at first blamed upon a photo hungry *paparazzi*), but which

identifying with *the parent*, lovers with *the lovers*’ (Silverstone, 1998: 84, emphasis added).

¹⁴ The crowds which gathered to mourn following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana appeared to embody a sense of vitality and energy uncharacteristic of British mourning crowds. Taylor (1989, 1991) has suggested that the impromptu decoration of Anfield and Hillsborough lacked the formal quality of wreath laying ceremonies which accompany other contemporary public disasters, such as that which accompanied the Zeebrugge ferry disaster of 1987. Davie (1993), as we have seen, has located the mourning after Hillsborough within the ‘celebratory culture’ of Liverpool, whilst Walter (1991b) has explained its ludic and emotional expressiveness by reference to the suffusion of Celtic and ‘old working-class’ mourning traditions within the city. In the mourning which followed the death of Princess Diana, some sceptical commentators (e.g. Cohan, 1999) have questioned the authenticity of grief expressed in public, suggesting that even in the places in central London which became specifically mourning spaces, there was an ‘absence of obvious signs of mourning’ (Cohan, 1999: 173).

above all serve to constitute events themselves.¹⁵ Whilst this is something of a tautology, for we cannot turn the clock back and return to a state without the media industries which are a staple of (post-)modern mediatised societies, it nevertheless illustrates the indissoluble links between contemporary historical events and their media reporting.

Nevertheless, others in the field of media and communication studies have extended Marshall McLuhan's (1973) thesis that the medium becomes the message by suggesting that spectacular ceremonial events like royal weddings (and here we should add, funerals) are nothing more than media events (e.g. Dayan and Katz, 1985, 1992) and that Diana herself was no more than pure media image (Merrin, 1999). Whilst there is some currency in this view, given Diana's use and 'manipulation' of the media for her own ends, it is nevertheless difficult to sustain given the material substance to Diana's charitable work (these are themes to which I will return in chapter 6 of the thesis). Diana's charity activism (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a), her recognition of the abject other (Johnson, 1999), and the testimonies of those who met Diana personally suggest that her 'charitable impulse' extended well beyond the parameters of Victorian philanthropy and requisite notions of duty expected of her class (Nava, 1999). Whilst Princess Diana's image was thoroughly mediated this did not, as I will argue in chapter 6, make her any less 'real'; her impact upon the lives of the people who she most touched any less meaningful.

¹⁵ In this way too, terrorist attacks like those of September 11 2001 derive their impact and meaning not only from the violence of the event itself but from the amplified dramatisation which media reporting lends to them instilling fear in a guaranteed global audience. In this way, an event's only and defining narrative is its visual representation. Don DeLillo (1991) makes a similar point in his novel *Mao II* in a dialogic exchange between two of its key characters, one of whom argues that terrorists are the new novelists, for it is they, not novelists, who now influence mass consciousness. 'Beckett', one of DeLillo's characters claims, 'is the last writer to shape the way we think and see. After him, the major work involves midair explosions and crumbled buildings. This is the new tragic narrative' (DeLillo, 1991: 157).

Nevertheless, like McLuhan's earlier thesis, Baudrillard's (1983) theorisation of the 'miscegenation' of image with reality; as 'the dissolution of TV into life, the dissolution of life in TV' (Baudrillard, 1983: 55), is useful because in both of the death-events which precipitated the mourning for Hillsborough and Princess Diana it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish each event from their mediatised 'representation'. The media simulation of these events themselves, and the mourning which followed, have long since become synonymous with each other: the media reporting of these events *was* the events; and the only means by which we have come to *know* these events is through their mediatisation. So too, the momentous events of September 11, 2001, when passenger jets laden with fuel were flown deliberately into the Pentagon and Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. It is this in part which gave the events a surfeit of reality; as something we had seen before, albeit in the make-believe world of the Hollywood blockbuster.

A further mark of the global mediatisation of these events, especially those of September 11 and those surrounding the death of Princess Diana — as with that other seismic moment of consternation of the twentieth century, the arresting and indelible news of the death of President John F. Kennedy — was that the moment of inception of these events for many millions of people world-wide came via televisual image. The precise moment of one's own whereabouts at the time news broke, both of the death of John F. Kennedy and of Princess Diana have since been discursively mediated and indelibly inscribed in popular and collective memory. Only recently have these events been eclipsed by those of September 11, 2001. These events are noteworthy because they provide a point of orientation from

which we narrate our own lives, our own personal histories; of where we were and what we were doing ‘when Kennedy was shot’ or when we heard the news of Princess Diana’s death. Suffice it to say, then, that the death-events and the public mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana are both inconceivable and unknowable without the media forms through which they were represented. It is thus through media representation that these events are principally remembered, providing a back-drop to our own personal histories. For commentators critical of the public mourning for Princess Diana (e.g. Harris, 1999; Davies, C., 1999) it was the event’s media reporting which served to amplify and falsely exaggerate its scale and significance,¹⁶ whilst for others (e.g. Hey, 1999; Kelleher, 1999; O’Hear, 1998) the events were not determined by the media, which struggled to keep abreast of the public mourning for Princess Diana, but by the people themselves.¹⁷

Nevertheless, various other journalists, broadcasters and contributors to the letters pages of broadsheet newspapers in the days after Diana’s death suggested that the seemingly unprecedented public mourning was the result of outright media manipulation: as media generated ‘feeling fascism’ or as the ascendancy of the ‘grief police’ (Lawson, 1997).¹⁸

¹⁶ Harris (1999) has suggested that the widespread public mourning for Princess Diana was the result largely of both media manipulation (wherein respondents in *vox populi* interviews were prompted in their emotional response by media reporters) and amplification, in which the media falsely created an impression that the public mourning concentrated mainly in central London was reflective of the mood nation-wide. Harris inverts Durkheim’s (1982) notions that the crowd itself is the site and origin in which emotions are generated by suggesting that ‘media-generated effervescence created the assembly’ by encouraging ‘isolated individuals’ watching the scenes of public mourning on television to join the crowds in central London. It was thus at home, and not in the effervescence of the crowd, that individuals underwent a change in consciousness (Harris, 1999: 101).

¹⁷ Valerie Hey (1999: 65) has suggested that the media ‘did not *lead* public opinion so much as *follow* it’ whilst Anthony O’Hear (1998), writing from a very different perspective, has written that ‘the media, for all their undoubted power’ as leaders of public opinion ‘could not have forced millions of people to come to London’ for Diana’s funeral. Instead, he writes, ‘for once, those who usually lead and form public opinion could only watch and follow it’ (O’Hear, 1998: 183).

¹⁸ Nigella Lawson (*The Times*, 10 September, 1997) was among those who complained about being told how they should ‘feel’ by the ‘grief police’. Others spoke of a ‘kind of floral fascism’ (Jack, 1997: 18), whilst Elizabeth Wilson (1997:

These claims notwithstanding, the two principal public mourning events which this thesis takes as its point of focus, were postmodern media events *par excellence*, for they remind us vividly of the power of photographic imagery and of the moving power of the moving televised image.

Scophilic Pleasures: The Ethics of Looking and the Pornography of Image

The Hillsborough disaster, in particular, as it unfolded on live television, throws into sharp relief the ethics of looking: of what it means to bear witness, and of the subsequent trauma which the live broadcast of a death-event such as this induces in a ‘death denying society’ such as our own. The trauma which this induced can in part be seen from the civil claim brought by relatives and friends of those killed and/or injured at Hillsborough, who on seeing the events on live television sought damages, claiming nervous shock resulting in psychiatric illness (e.g. Alcock and Others *versus* Chief Constable of the South Yorkshire Police, 1991). The ethics of looking, and of being looked at, especially whilst in the throes of death, were similarly thrown into sharp relief by publication in the *Daily Mirror* (17 April, 1989) in the days following the disaster of ‘lurid’ full-colour images of fans seemingly being crushed to death against the perimeter fence preventing their escape. Walter (1991b) suggests that the moral censure invoked by the publication of these photographs, especially on Merseyside, is indicative of the continuity in British attitudes

136–7) reported feeling ‘deeply alienated’ by the public response and initial media coverage of Diana’s death. Mark Lawson (*Guardian*, 4 September, 1997) meanwhile, reported that the BBC had been inundated with calls for *less* coverage of Diana’s death. This was followed by comments from Nicci Gerrard (*Observer*, 7 September, 1997) who questioned the ‘mawkish sentimentality’ and vicarious grief of mourners. Wilson (1997: 136) draws attention to the disaffected mood of sections of the British population unmoved by the death of Diana by pointing to the letters page of the *Guardian* in the days following Diana’s death. These, she suggests, challenged notions of a ‘nation-in-mourning’, expressing anger at broadcasters’ seeming determination ‘to create rather than reflect the mood’ of the nation.

towards death and dying; as ‘intensely personal, to be shared — if at all — only with family and friends’ (Walter, 1991b: 602).¹⁹

At the same time, however, the demand for, and popular trade in, images of this sort following such events, suggests a scopophilic curiosity, or better still necrophilic fascination, with images of pain and suffering. Scott Wilson (1999: 41–3) for instance, has drawn our attention to the illicit trade in so-called ‘snuff’ pictures of Princess Diana as she fought for life in the mangled remains of the Mercedes Benz in which she was trapped. Indeed, the Canadian film director David Cronenberg had courted considerable controversy and moral censure only a year earlier in his film adaptation of J.G. Ballard’s (1973) novel *Crash*. Where Ballard juxtaposes the ostensible human impulse for sexual gratification with the paradoxical desire for death and self-destruction (a theme I explored in chapter 2 through my discussions of Freudian theories of the ‘death-drive’), so Cronenberg raises the spectre of the audiences own complicity in looking — as the cinematic gaze — by the transfer of these images to the cinematic screen.²⁰ The parallels between Ballard’s novel — with its signifying and over-riding theme of the amorous relationship between sex, death and the eroticism of the automobile — and the pornography of images surrounding Diana’s death are strikingly similar. Not least because, as Wilson (1999: 41) reminds us, of the simultaneous moral outrage and yet purient impulse for pictures on the part of the tabloid newspaper reading public who sustain the industry they so much claim to deplore. Wilson

¹⁹ For further discussion of the issues generated by the publication of ‘intrusive photographs’ during the Hillsborough disaster, see Docherty (1990).

²⁰ Laura Mulvey (1975) has theorised the dominant representational conventions of cinema. Combining the insights of psychoanalytic and feminist film theory, Mulvey argues that the viewing position constructed within conventional discourses of mainstream cinema is that of the predominantly male gaze. For a discussion of the illusion of omnipotence which, according to Lacanian film critics, all cinema invokes, see Metz (1982).

in fact suggests that images of the crumpled wreckage of the Mercedes in which Diana was killed served as a visual metaphor of Diana herself: that she *was* the crushed Mercedes. The ‘snuff’ images of Diana which circulated the ‘netherworld of the Internet’ managed somehow, according to Wilson, to preserve her beauty, even eroticise it. Jeffrey Richards *et al* (1999) further suggest that:

The pornography of Diana’s imaging in the media meets the point of absolute obscenity precisely at the moment when it becomes sanctified in death. The car crash in Paris was the ultimate in death-as-infotainment, in which death is hierarchised or rendered visible to the degree to which it is sensational and therefore ‘newsworthy’.

(Richards, Wilson, and Woodhead, 1999: 5)

It is not my intention here to equate the illicit trade in ‘snuff’ pictures and prurient interest with images of death and suffering in general with the widespread public interest in images and news stories about Princess Diana’s life, her charity activism (Kear and Steinberg, 1999), and the mourning events which surrounded both her death and those resulting from the Hillsborough disaster. For here, at least in part, and much else besides (including the wider signifiatory meaning of the sense of loss resulting from these events) it was the egregious use of colour — as visual spectacle — which invited the viewers gaze. These events were not ‘lurid’ or ‘grotesque’, even though they were made to appear so by dissenting journalists and commentators (e.g. Jack, 1997; O’Hear, 1998) whose ‘genteel’ sensibilities were offended by the ‘floral revolution’ (Jacques, 1997) and break with traditional British protocol which each of these episodes seemingly heralded. Quite the contrary, these events, by virtue of the colour and sense of ‘*jouissance*’ embodied by the floral tributes left during the Hillsborough and Diana mourning events — the ‘sea of

flowers’ at Kensington Palace, which Rowbottom (1999: 157) has likened to waves breaking against the bulwark of a sea wall, or the luminous ‘carpet of flowers’ which covered every blade of Anfield turf and provided the focal point for mourning the victims of Hillsborough — were anything but grotesque.

My own ‘morbid’ fascination with televised news footage of the mourning for Hillsborough, which I have written about in my own ‘memory work’ in chapter 7 of the thesis, testifies to my own investments and scopophilic curiosity generated by these events.²¹ Notwithstanding my own emotional and political disinvestments in the mourning for Princess Diana — which I acknowledge, and have written about, in the introduction and chapter 7 of the thesis — the extraordinarily large numbers of people who came to London to watch Diana’s funeral cortège make its way through the capital, or the many millions who watched events on television, testify to the visual economies of scale and interest that both events appeared to engender.

Statistics are regularly invoked by commentators as a means of underscoring the quantitative significance of events: the 600,000 web condolences and 35 million visits registered on the official Royal Web Site during the fortnight following Diana’s death (*‘Diana: the Week the World Stood Still’*, ITV, 31 December 1997); the 50 million bunches of flowers, weighing 10,000 tons said to have been laid outside royal palaces (Jack, 1997: 15); or the million or so people who visited Anfield — a figure twice the population of Liverpool — in the week following the Hillsborough disaster (Eyre, 1989, cited in Davie,

1993; Walter, 1991b). Whilst these figures inevitably serve rhetorically to illustrate the significance of these two events, they do not, for all that convey the magnitude and emotional intensity with which these events were experienced. Neither do quantitative measures of this sort, although conveying something of the ‘eventness’ (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 2) of my two case-studies, capture the degree of personal investedness in various ‘objects’ prior to the event of death, or the emotional intensity (and ambivalences) encountered thereafter. Citing Aristotelian precedent, Kear and Steinberg (1999a: 2) instead remind us that the quality of an event is that it ‘possesses magnitude.’ If, as in astronomy, stars and other celestial bodies are measured by their magnitude or ‘brightness’, it is perhaps fitting that the public mourning for Princess Diana — an individual who for many assumed celestial proportions — should be measured in terms of its magnitude.

Grotesquerie, the Carnavalesque, and the Inversion of Tradition

The public mourning following both the Hillsborough disaster and the mourning surrounding the death of Princess Diana can be seen as coming to represent an extraordinary public spectacle and spectacular media event (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a). Both events contained elements of great drama and theatricality. For pure drama, think of Diana’s funeral: of Earl Spencer’s electrifying funeral address, Elton John’s reworked rendition of *Candle in the Wind*, of the magisterial pomp embodied in its staging and setting. For the emplotment of events as social drama, think of the power struggle which ensued between the Windsor’s and the public at large; of the demands that the monarchy respect the feelings of the people by returning to London to show us ‘they cared’. Think

²¹ Spurlin (1999: 155) writes that he became ‘morbidly addicted’ to news reports about Princess Diana’s death, and later,

also, of the potential for revolutionary fervour which the ‘Diana events’ at some point appeared, if only fleetingly, to promise.²² So too, in the events which followed the Hillsborough disaster — the scarf-link between Anfield and Goodison Park or the final day of the ‘Anfield pilgrimage’ before the gates were closed for a final time to the public — there were elements of drama and performative theatricality. Drawing upon the work of Judith Butler (1997), Kear and Steinberg (1999a) suggest that mourning itself is performative and dramaturgical, helping to summon into place the identity of the mourner. They suggest that theatre too, at least in the Western classical formulation, evokes ‘multiple losses, restaging past events and resuscitating the voices of those who are no longer there’ (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 6).

Both events, however were more participatory than conventional theatre ordinarily allows. Both were people-led and appeared to embody aspects of the carnivalesque as envisioned in the work of Russian literary theorist and philosopher of language, Mikhail Bakhtin. Both embodied a creative inversion of rules governing everyday life to create ‘a parody of extracarnival life (Bakhtin, 1986: 7). It is the lack of parameters and footlights surrounding these events, as evidenced, *inter alia*, by the media’s struggle to keep abreast of public developments and the authorities inability to both contain and manage them which suggests

to television narratives about her life.

²² Some journalists at the time suggested that the possibility of radical political insurrection; of the fall of the House of Windsor following a swell of popular antipathy towards the royal household hitherto unseen since the Gordon Riots or the execution of Charles I, seemed a distinct possibility. Isabel Hilton (*Guardian*, 4 September, 1997) was thus led to write that ‘if a powerful demagogue had arisen from the crowd they would have stormed the palace gates’. Scott Wilson (1999: 47), meanwhile, reports the comments of Matthew Engel, who, writing in the *Guardian* on the day of, and following, Diana’s funeral, described the atmosphere in London as ‘intense, febrile, borderline irrational’, a mood unfelt ‘since the Gordon Riots, or the execution of Charles I’. Wilson writes that ‘while, for Diana, there may not have been a Lucius Junius Brutus to drive the Tarquin from Rome, there was an Earl Spencer’. Following this and the ‘electrifying’ funerary speech he made in Westminster Abbey, Wilson reports Engel’s comments on the day after Diana’s funeral: that ‘if Earl Spencer had gone one step further and called for immediate insurrection, they [the people] would have marched’. ‘All the

a ‘carnavalesque’ quality to events. For they were popular movements which sprang from ‘the people’, which challenged the moral codes of British society, and which momentarily contained the potentiality for an unpredictability of outcome. In this way, it is not that the carnival, by its very nature, promises political insurgency, but that its ludic unpredictability — which eludes attempts at disciplinary containment — embodies the *potential* for radical social and political transformation. On this John Fiske (1990) writes that whilst

Carnival may not always be disruptive. . . the elements of disruption are always there, it may not always be progressive or liberating, but the potential for progressiveness and liberation is always present. Even in the carefully licensed, televisually modified versions there are traces of the enormous vitality and energy of popular forces that survive defiantly and intransigently

(Fiske, 1990: 101–2)

Both events were also overwhelmingly characterised by exaggeration and excess (by, for instance, the sheer volume of flowers). Both were characterised by a degree of ‘liminality’ (Turner, 1977) in which social distinction and hierarchical rank were temporarily suspended as the community came together in a way resonant of that which social anthropologist Victor Turner (1977) has described as ‘communitas’. Like Bakhtin’s theorisation of the medieval carnival, which allowed the ‘lower orders’ of those societies to indulge their baser appetites through excessively bad taste and folk vernacular, the emotional expressiveness embodied in the Diana and Hillsborough events provided a counter-point to the refined manners and established social practices of dominant social groups in British society. That these events offended the sensibilities of these dominant groups can be seen from the

papers agreed’, Wilson writes, ‘that the violent emotions unleashed by the death had the potential to force epochal change’. Jeffrey Richards (1999: 72*n*) on the other hand saw the ‘Diana events’ as a ‘profoundly royalist phenomenon’.

responses they provoked amongst a section of journalists, academics and political theorists and lobbyists (e.g. Hitchens, 1998; O' Hear, 1998; Pilger, 1998).

These events were also 'producerly' (Fiske, 1990) and their very unpredictability took sections of established opinion by surprise, threatening disruption in the same way as carnival in medieval societies. Like Bakhtin's notion of the carnival, the Diana and Hillsborough events included subordinate social groups and identities elsewhere excluded from participation in political and representative processes. Both events, like the carnival, knew no footlights, for in Bakhtin's account, carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people but an event which they live; for it acknowledges no distinction between actors and spectators (Bakhtin, 1968). Like carnival, some of the practices first seen in the ludic public mourning which followed the death of Princess Diana and the Hillsborough disaster, although perceived by some as an affront — a form of grotesquerie or 'lower deck sentimentality' (Forester, quoted in Paxman, 1999: 241), have since been co-opted and incorporated within aspects of elite culture itself. Attempts have thus been made to replicate the sense of participatory '*jouissance*' embodied in the mourning for Princess Diana in the choreographed and licensed celebrations organised for Queen Elizabeth II's fiftieth anniversary jubilee in 2002. Not dissimilarly, Prince Charles and other members of the royal family have variously sought to re-brand themselves in an open, accessible and personal style characteristic of that which Princess Diana appeared to herald.

'Public' and 'Private' in Mediated Mourning

Whilst I have hitherto been referring to the events which comprise my case-studies as aspects of ‘public’ mourning, both events can be seen to challenge conceptions of ‘public’ and ‘private’ as they are ordinarily understood. As mediated events, many millions of people world-wide were affectively moved by these deaths, and mourned these events (especially the death of Princess Diana) without leaving flowers, signing condolence books, or leaving the confines of their homes. The two events which constitute my case-studies were public events by virtue principally of the ways in which mourners occupied *public space*, often municipal space (from supermarkets and royal residences, in the case of Diana, to football sites and city centre’s in the case of Hillsborough); by the ways in which mourning was openly participative and not restricted to the immediate family and friends of the deceased (as is often the case in episodes of ‘private’ mourning); and concomitantly, the ways in which it was permitting of those who were not known by the deceased personally. They were also public by virtue of the fact that they were mediated events made available to a global audience. In this way, much of my discussion hitherto has also focused upon the public expression and manifestation of what were ‘privately’ experienced emotions. Nevertheless, each event contained aspects of the private as well. The most ‘intensely personal’ (Walter, 1991b) aspects of these events (especially the ceremonial practices which commit the body of the deceased to the earth or to fire, thereby admitting the finality of loss) were by and large private, restricted to the family, friends and acquaintances of the deceased. This is, then, an aspect of the social private (Bailey, 2000). Diana, we will recall, was buried in a private ceremony on a small island-lake on the Althorp country estate where

she grew up.²³ The 96 victims of the Hillsborough disaster, meanwhile, were each buried or cremated in private ceremonies which were, save for official representatives of Liverpool F.C (including players themselves), attended exclusively by the family and friends of the deceased.²⁴

These aspects of the social private, including the spatial segregation of the dead from the living; of the sequestration of death by medical science and commercial funerary interests; as well as the ‘privatisation’ of funerary practice itself, have, as we saw in chapter 1 of the thesis, been traced to the historical rise of individualism within contemporary Western societies. Elsewhere, anthropologists have cast doubt upon the perceived human need for privacy (itself an etymological derivation of the word ‘private’) as a universal condition, by their empirical studies of non-Western societies.²⁵ In this vein, Bailey similarly reminds us that notions of the private have historically been used to connote a sense of privation; of bereftness and dispossession (Bailey, 2000: 397). Bailey goes on to suggest that notions of ‘public’ and ‘private’ each require a form of the other and are deeply sedimented within the basic common-senses of those who inhabit contemporary Western societies.

²³ Following Walter’s comments (1999: 111), it can perhaps be suggested that in the absence of being able to congregate at the home of the deceased (as is typically the case in ‘private’ funerary practice following the funeral ceremony itself), that fans and mourners during the two case-studies considered here occupied spaces recognised as a form of ‘spiritual’ or symbolic home. In this case of the Hillsborough disaster this tended to be either Anfield or Hillsborough, whilst following Princess Diana’s death, mourners gathered at various royal residences, especially Kensington Palace, Diana’s home.

²⁴ Walter (1991b: 602) reports that on Merseyside stories were widespread of photographers from the *Sun* posing as *Liverpool Daily Post* and *Echo* photographers in the hope of gaining access to ‘private’ funerals of those killed at Hillsborough. Families of the victims report being ‘door-stepped’ by *Sun* journalists and photographers. On this basis the *Echo* promised not to send photographers to any of the funerals, with a view to avoiding photographers from other newspaper posing as their staff and to spare families further grief from intrusive photographs.

²⁵ See, for example, Livingston Jones’ (1914) study of the Tlingit Indians of North America, where ‘privacy is hardly known’ (Jones, 1914: 58), or Margaret Mead’s (1929) study of Somoan society. See also, Dorothy Lee’s (1959) study of the Tikopia people of Polynesia, where the self is seen as ‘continuous with society’ (Lee, 1959: 74), or Clifford Geertz’s (1959) study of the Indonesian societies of Bali and Java, where, according to Geertz, privacy in our terms is about as close to non-existent as it can get. See also, Jean L. Briggs’ (1970) study of the Utku Eskimo community of Northwest Canada.

Bailey (2000) also reminds us that as well as being ‘common referents to deep and basic domains of social life’, ‘public’ and ‘private’ are fundamental ordering categories in everyday life. Consequently, Bailey suggests the categories of ‘public’ and ‘private’ are ‘basic and generative ordering principles (such as culture/nature; female/male; structure/agency) that sociological thought rests, trades upon and constantly reflexively questions’ (Bailey, 2000: 384). Only quite recently, however, as I suggested in chapter 1, has sociology begun to venture into terrain considered private. These ‘generative ordering principles’ have themselves informed and limited the disciplinary study of particular aspects of human life. The sociological private, of say, the social aspects of the predominantly female domestic sphere, has therefore remained something of a vanishing point.

Aspects of Fandom and Public Mourning

If the two mourning events which constitute my case-studies can be seen to constitute aspects of the social public (say, the occupation of public space) and the social private (aspects of funerary practice removed from the public gaze at large), they can also be seen to comprise aspects of the psychological private. In this way, concepts of fandom can usefully be applied as a means not only of illustrating aspects of the private as they are experienced within the interior realm of the human psyche, but the ways in which this depends upon a taking-in of that which is social. Here, then, I want to suggest that fandom serves both to obliterate distinctions between public and private as they are traditionally understood, whilst drawing upon these concepts as a source of meaning underpinning the very notion of celebrity. Simultaneously, and central to both types of fandom as identified

in this thesis: the *iconic* fandom of Princess Diana and the *totemic* aspects of football fandom associated with the Hillsborough disaster, are the symbolic investments of meaning upon which each is premised. In particular, the iconic fandom in which the hopes and fears of the fan are projected onto the celebrity as blank screen, can be seen to transcend, and yet is premised upon, notions of ‘public’ and ‘private’. The aura of mystery and fantasy element which sustains the relationship between the fan and celebrity is thus premised upon the quest for more information about the private life of the celebrity with whom the fan seeks to establish a relationship. Denied full access to the celebrity’s private or ‘real’ and unmediated life, the fan imagines and fantasises a relationship with the celebrity on the basis of knowledge which is publicly available, within the inner realm of human interiority. In this way, fandom, as Elliott (1999) puts it, involves ‘wrapping up a significant part of one’s self-identity with some other distant other’ (Elliott, 1999: 136). It is, moreover:

[A] common way of cultivating a sense of intimacy with distant others in contemporary culture. Fandom can enrich the emotional development of the self and may contribute significantly to an individual’s sense of the interpersonal world.

(Elliott, 1999: 139)

Nevertheless, fandom, as Elliott (1999) further suggests, can also destroy the self; for as its etymological origins as derived from the word ‘fanatic’ suggest (Dunning, 1999; Elliott, 1999), fandom can turn fanatical. According to Elliott the relationship between fan and celebrity is troubled precisely because a certain violence is built into it from the beginning. Fandom therefore contains an obsessive quality by virtue of the fan’s attempts to ‘lose’ a part of one’s own self to some distant other (the celebrity). In so doing, however, one risks the erosion of boundaries between self and other, ‘public’ and ‘private’, and more

especially in this case, fantasy and reality. In essence Elliott suggests that this may culminate in one losing a grasp of reality itself. For fandom, Elliott writes, can become a form of addiction.

It is an addiction in which the emotional stakes are high, for it involves considerable emotional investment in a non-reciprocal relation of intimacy; as premised only on fantasy. The psychological stakes are higher still, for fandom involves a form of projective identification in which a range of fantasies and desires, hopes and dreams are projected onto the celebrity. This itself can be seen as a form of psychic splitting ‘in which the good or desired parts of the self are put into the other in order to protect this imagined goodness from bad or destructive parts of the self’ (Elliott, 1999: 139). Needless to say, the celebrity, incapable of sustaining such projections and forms of fantasised idealisation, may often come to be despised by the once adoring fan. For once it dawns that the celebrity is unable to realise the investments made in him or her; that the celebrity is composed of the same human failings which narcissistic projection was meant to protect against, the fan may feel betrayed.²⁶

This, however, is not to underestimate the emotional intensity of the mediated relationships that fans have with celebrities as the referents of their affection. Indeed, the emotional intensity may if anything be amplified by the obsessive and fantasised attempts of the fan to fabricate a sense of intimacy with the celebrity of choice. For the very lack of face-to-face, inter-personal intimacy serves only to feed the idealisation of the celebrity in the eyes of the

fan. The ‘curious sort of violence intrinsic to fandom’ (Elliott, 1999: 139) of which Elliott writes, is fuelled by the asymmetry which is central to the relationship between celebrity and fan. This can be seen from the lack of reciprocity between fan and celebrity; and of the impossibility of ‘recognition’ of the fan by celebrity.

The Specificity of Iconic and Totemic ‘Public’ Mourning

Both of the public mourning events surrounding the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana, which I have been discussing as the principal foci of this thesis, can be distinguished from the more dutiful or ‘civic’ types of public mourning following, say, the annual marking of Armistice (although both contained elements of this). Where the latter forms of public mourning and ‘civic’ commemoration depend upon a certain dissonance between feeling and thought, the mourning which was summoned following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Diana implied and involved an injunction to act. This can be seen from accounts, including my own, which speak of an involuntary movement; of feeling compelled to ‘do something’, be it to sign condolence books or join the crowds who had gathered at principal sites of mourning. Both events ‘hailed’ a variety of different communities and social identities. In the case of Princess Diana, these were multifarious and reflect the polyvalent meanings which the iconographic Diana came to represent: hailing social identities invested in Diana as an icon of official culture (of what Diana *should* stand for as both the former wife and mother to future King’s of England), and social identities ‘outside’ and ‘othered’ who were ‘hailed’ by Diana’s own sense ‘outsider-

²⁶ In the most extreme cases, Elliott suggests that the pain of disillusionment may be too great: that the fan may come to despise the once-loved celebrity and entertain fantasies of revenge for the humiliating betrayal suffered’ (Elliott, 1999: 140).

ness' (the variety of things that Diana *could* stand for). In the case of the Hillsborough disaster the social identities 'hailed' tended either to be those invested in a particular sense of locality, itself reflected in the support for Liverpool F. C. as a *totem* of local identity (and of the community itself); or social identities bound-up with the victims because of affective links established as a result of football fandom. In particular, and as I will argue in chapter 5, the mourning for 96 fans of Liverpool F. C. unleashed and became bound-up with a mourning for Liverpool itself. For Liverpoolians exiled from the city it unleashed an unconscious yearning for *heimisch*, as that which is homely and familiar, whilst for many others within the city it provided an opportunity to mourn a variety of losses, especially economic and social, which afflicted a city in long-term decline.

At the same time, these two events, whilst summoning strong iconic and totemic identifications, also unleashed a variety of enmity dis-identifications with both the referents of mourning and the publicly expressivist ways in which they were mourned. Both Princess Diana and Liverpool generated and continue to generate strong feelings. Liverpool's celebratory culture which, as Grace Davie (1993: 201) puts it, 'wears its heart on its sleeve and displays a depth of emotion rarely seen in most parts of the country', is one in which outsiders are either 'irreversibly attracted' or repelled. Princess Diana, meanwhile, attracted degrees of veneration and denigration in equal measure, with those repelled by her perceiving her as a 'trash icon for our times', 'the Queen of England manquée', symbolic of everything hollow and 'schlock' about this our postmodern *Zeitgeist* (Fountain, *Observer*, 27 July 1997). This in part helps to explain the relatively muted response from within sociology to academic considerations of the public mourning for

Princess Diana.²⁷ Whilst the mourning for Hillsborough has attracted relatively little interest within sociology — no doubt perhaps because of its much reduced scale and political significance — it has, nevertheless, generated a less hostile response from within academia. We can perhaps add to Walter's (1999: 38–9) reflections on the academic snobbery within academia which greeted the mourning for Princess Diana, the dismissal of the events on the benign presumption that they were not only politically insignificant but characteristic of a form of feminine fandom which is routinely dismissed as 'embarrassing, excessive or trivial' (Barcan, 1997: 39). The mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster, on the other hand, despite prevailing political discourses surrounding football (and Liverpool itself) during the 1980s, as 'a slum sport watched by slum people' (*Sunday Times*, 19 May 1989, cited in Taylor, 1989: 100),²⁸ was above all masculine and thereby more likely to be characterised as 'normal, real and noble' (Sofouslis, 1997: 16). Academic consideration from within sociology, although marginal, tended to reflect this.²⁹

These discussions lead us back to the unconscious as a site which is both public and private; of the ways in which things that are 'outside' and 'other' are taken within the self, dis/identified with, and transformed through subjective experience, so that distinctions

²⁷ Much of the academic interest in the public mourning for Princess Diana came either from cultural studies (e.g. Kear and Steinberg, 1999; Merck, 1998; MacArthur, 1997; Re:Public, 1997; *Screen*, 1998; Woodhead *et al*, 1999); from academics on the margins of sociology (e.g. McGuigan, 2000); or from feminists (e.g. Burchill, 1998; Campbell, 1998; *Journal of Gender Studies*, 1999: 8(3)). Whilst some academics saw the 'Diana events' neither as a 'revolutionary moment' nor as politically insignificant (e.g. McGuigan, 2000), others (e.g. Davis, C., 1999; Harris, 1999) dismissed them as a result of media manipulation whilst maintaining a pretence of scholarly objectivity.

²⁸ For further discussion of the objections raised to the public mourning following the Hillsborough disaster, see Walter (1991b: 607–8). These themes, of the antipathy generated by the sense of 'Celtic expressiveness' in the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster, are further explored in chapter 5 of the thesis.

²⁹ Academic considerations of the Hillsborough disaster from within sociology have tended to cluster around one of the three principal areas: those which approached the disaster and its aftermath from the perspective of a sociology of football (e.g. Boyle, 2001; Money Penny, 2001; Taylor, 1989, 1991; Williams, 2001); those which addressed the management and response to disasters and which have considered the Hillsborough disaster from the perspective of criminal justice (e.g.

between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ become barely recognisable in such terms. Although constituted largely within the inner landscape of human interiority, the dis/identifications we make draw sustenance from, and are rooted in, an ‘exterior’ world which is primarily social, and simultaneously mediated by culture. This also returns us to my discussions in chapter 2 of socially inflected psychoanalysis. Elliott (1996) neatly sums up the complex interchange of public and private domains by suggesting that:

society enters fully into the construction of our most personal hopes and dreads. Social phenomena are not just incidental to the forging of personal identity; they in some part constitute the inner texture of self-experience. . . . That is to say, there is a mutual penetration of inner and outer worlds, from which the criss-crossings of fantasy and culture are fabricated and sustained.

(Elliott, 1996: 6)

Following this and Bailey’s (2000) comments on the unconscious as a key domain of the sociological private, we can see that the rigid and reified distinctions which separate ‘public’ from ‘private’ begin to melt away. For the unconscious, like other aspects of the ‘sociological private’ (Bailey, 2000), namely, the self and intimate relationships, while it is individually, subjectively and ‘privately’ experienced, is not formed in isolation of wider social, political and cultural processes. Instead, and as I have tried to demonstrate, it is society, culture and politics which, once internalised, constitute the ‘inner space’ and phantasmogoric texture of the unconscious. At the same time, distinctions between public and private are further undone in we consider that public discourses of contemporary culture — from advertising and narrative fiction, to cinema and television — are fabricated out of the ‘private’ realm of the unconscious imagination. The deep impressions left upon

Scruton *et al*, 1995; Scruton, 2000; Scruton and Davis, 2000); and those from within the sociology of death and dying

the unconscious by various ‘public’ discourses further remind us of Freud’s 1924 essay, *A note upon the mystic writing-pad*. Here Freud endeavours to illustrate the complex ways in which the impressions left by the exterior or ‘public’ world penetrate the very core of our individual (un)conscious imaginations, from where they are transformed within the imaginary. The impressions left on the repressed unconscious (the underlying wax of the celluloid surface in Freud’s ‘mystic writing-pad’ analogy), branch out in all directions, remain ‘legible in suitable lights’, and can be traced, Elliott (1996: 2) suggests, to the filtering effects of culture and society.

It is the combination or composite of factors: the amatory and emnitory investments of meaning in various ‘things’ which, mediated by culture, serve as polyvalent signifiers of ‘things’ which matter more than the referents themselves ever could (Kear, 1999). The unconscious subjective identifications made with these ‘things’, as central to the construction of social identity; and the subsequent attempts to withdraw these dis/investments which serve to produce the ‘spontaneous’ intensity and depth of emotion I regard as ‘public’ mourning. The unconscious, Bailey reminds us, is indeed ‘a locus of the most intense and determinant feelings and senses of significance’ (Bailey, 2000: 394), whilst Craib (1998) suggests that ‘our emotions’ — and by this we should include grief — ‘arise in the interplay between our experience of the outside world, and the unconscious phantasies we construct out of the contents of our internal world’ (Craib, 1998: 169).

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which have explored the mourning rituals following the disaster (e.g. Davie, 1993; Walter, 1991b).

Finally, before concluding this chapter, I want to return to take up a number of questions which I reported Anthony Elliott (1999: 11) as asking in the introduction to this thesis. Specifically, for whom exactly, in the case of public mourning, is the mourner mourning? How does contemporary culture mourn? And how might mourning of the self relate to cultural mourning? If, following the insights of Jacques Lacan, the contents of the unconscious are structured like a language, we can see how in the linguistic practices of the self, including the production of culture — from novels to academic writing — the unconscious is also refracted through and reflected in these very practices themselves.

At the end of the last chapter I pointed to the work of French feminist psychoanalytic theorist Julia Kristeva (1989) as providing the basis for a semiosis of mourning through her assertion that loss, especially that most grievous and wounding of losses: the separation of child from its mother, is registered and resisted ‘first in the imagination, then in words’ (Kristeva, 1989: 6). Kristeva has argued that creativity is borne as a precondition of loss: that ‘loss, bereavement, and absence trigger the work of the imagination’ as much as they threaten to despoil it (Kristeva, 1989: 9). I want to illustrate this point by drawing attention to a variety of cultural practices and representations, from the *semiotic* (i.e. that which is encoded largely within visual or aural imagery and signs), to the *symbolic* (i.e. that which is expressed through words, written and spoken, in the communicable realm of language).

In his recent book *The Mourning of John Lennon*, Elliott (1999) has suggested that Lennon’s life and song-writing can be seen chiefly as a struggle to mourn the various losses encountered throughout his life, from the death of his mother, who in 1958 was run-over by

an off-duty policeman shortly before John's eighteenth birthday, to the psychic loss of his mother, when, aged 5, Lennon was sent to live with his auntie. Elliott suggests Lennon's difficulty in acknowledging feelings of loss 'was an underlying driving force in his personal and artistic endeavours' (Elliott, 1999: 66). Seeking to deconstruct the meaning of Lennon's song-writing, Elliott suggests — following Wilfred Mellers (1996) observation that Lennon's music is both 'primitive and deeply melancholy' — that his music is suffused with a sense of pathos reflective of 'parental neglect and loss, the burdens of celebrity, and the complexities of human ambivalence' (Elliott, 1999: 172). From explicit attempts to mourn in songs such as '*Mother*', '*Julia*', and '*My Mummy's Dead*'; to Lennon's implicit preoccupation with mourning as echoed in childhood explorations of '*Penny Lane*' and '*Strawberry Fields Forever*' — songs which Elliott notes, 'recollect people and places in Liverpool' (Elliott, 1999: 63) — and in the traumatised incoherence of '*I am the Walrus*', Elliott draws attention to the pain of loss in Lennon's personal life as sublimated and encrypted within his artistic creations. Elliott suggests that, on one level, our 'private hopes and dreads feed into, and react against, our cultural heritage' (Elliott, 1999: 67), whilst on the other, that 'they are reflected and refracted through cultural rememberings, for 'when people look back on John Lennon's music, and The Beatles', they seem also to be viewing their own private histories, recalling moments of happiness and discontent' (Elliott, 1999: 177). Elliott summarises this point when he writes:

The loss of cultural ideals — whether expressed as mourning for the fading of rationality, certitude, or self-transparency — influences (and is influenced by) personal grief.

(Elliott, 1999: 67)

If the relationship between personal loss of various kinds and the filtering effects of cultural ideals is of mutual reciprocity, that is to say, if personal loss is both filtered through culture, whilst culture is simultaneously produced and filtered through the effects of personal loss, then the events which followed the death of Princess Diana provide an interesting glimpse into the range of cultural and political values being mourned through mourning, as well as through 'not-mourning' Diana (Johnson, 1999). Richard Johnson (1999) reflects that, in his own personal mourning for Princess Diana, he was mourning an aspect of his own life: the loss of his wife, Jill, of thirty-three years. Johnson (1999) reflects how, in the public mourning for Princess Diana, his own attempts to grieve the sudden loss of his wife were unexpectedly reawakened and aided by a process of *transference* (Jill's second name, he notes, was Diana). Johnson also suggests that various other cultural and political losses were being mourned by those people who refused the mourning for Diana.

Interestingly, Johnson considers the response of academics and journalists, who, in the aftermath of Diana's death, angrily denounced the public mourning for her. Journalists and academics of the political right (e.g. O'Hear, 1998; Parris, 1998) poured scorn on the 'feeling frenzy' and 'torrent of sentimentality' (Davis, C., 1999) which appeared to have engulfed the normally 'reserved' British public, while journalists and academics of the political left (e.g. Pilger, 1998; Hitchens, 1998; Wilson, 1997) decried the mourning for Diana as an irrelevant distraction from the important issues of the day. Elsewhere sections of the liberal intelligentsia (e.g. Gerrard, 1997; Lawson, 1997) derided the 'soap opera' quality of events and challenged the authenticity of people's grief by suggesting it was rather more vicarious than it was virtuous. Elements of both the 'old left' and conservative

right were generally at one in seeing the Diana events as further ‘depressing’ evidence of an attenuation of public interest in politics ‘proper’ and as the trivialisation of life in general. Consistent with a well-worn mantra of the political right, the Diana events were seen as further indictment of the ‘dumbing-down’ of standards in public life, in which feeling, image and spontaneity were elevated above reason, reality and restraint (O’Hear, 1998: 184). Others on the political right, including Melanie Phillips, have echoed these opinions by suggesting that the scenes which surrounded the death of Princess Diana were a reflection of the ‘self-indulgent sentiment that corrodes’ contemporary life and public policy (de la Bedoyere, *Catholic Herald* cited in Anderson and Mullen, 1998); of the ‘therapy culture’ and ‘kitsch emotion’ which routinely mistakes show for substance and pretends that ‘all pain can be hugged away’ (Phillips, 1998).

Nevertheless, what Johnson (1999) is suggesting here is that the denigratory passion which flowed from journalists and academics resistant to the mourning for Diana (as well as the, more obvious, valorised writing of those sympathetic interpreters of Diana’s life and the public events which followed her death), is itself indicative of the strong and contradictory feelings associated with mourning. What is being mourned here in the angry writing of journalists who objected to the public mourning for Princess Diana, are not, Johnson suggests (1999: 19), the multifarious identificatory possibilities which for many Diana appeared to embody, but rather the loss of political values, realities, and cultural ideals, which were epitomised and heralded by Diana and the public mourning events surrounding her death, which appeared to sound their death-knell. For those on the political left, ‘unable to identify with Diana’ and ‘see the democratic underside of her politics beneath the

privilege and hype' (Johnson, 1999: 35), their 'not-mourning' can, in fact, be read as the mourning for things which the Diana events seemed, if only implicitly, to confirm: say, the decline of 'real politics' as they are traditionally understood. Drawing upon Kleinian object-relations theory, Johnson suggests that in journalistic accounts of Princess Diana a degree of psychic 'splitting' can be discerned from those which, on the one hand, idealise Diana in a 'hyperbolic style which no one could mistake for measured judgement' (e.g. Burchill, 1998; Moore, in MacArthur, 1997; Morton, 1997) or, on the other, denigrate Diana as a 'trash icon for our times' (Fountain, 1997). Johnson (1999) writes of the 'good' and 'bad' versions of Diana which appeared in writing about her in the same way that Elliott (1999) describes the binary splitting of characterisations of John Lennon, as either wholly 'good' or wholly 'bad', which have appeared in popular biographies about him. This, Elliott suggests, serves to demonstrate the schizoid authorial investments in Lennon, which seek to ward off the ambivalence and ambiguity of individual subjectivity that might otherwise endanger attempts to achieve biographical certitude in representations of him. Elliott reminds us that the boundary between self and other is 'radically fluid'; that whilst 'the self may seek to keep inside and outside apart' — as in biographical writing of this sort — 'at the level of the unconscious one is inserted into the other', so that they become 'all mixed up and tangled' (Elliott, 1999: 25). In this way biography serves as remedial device for achieving authorial objectivity, for 'it offers a 'drastic cleaning up of the messiness of lived experience' (Elliott, 1999: 32).

Johnson, meanwhile, suggests that in resisting the mourning for Diana, something fundamental, yet with no less passionate, was being defended.

[T]he boundaries of ‘real politics’ [were] being patrolled here. Yet the mounting of these patrols suggest another kind of madness going on. By expostulating about *not* mourning Diana, critics add to the attention they so much deplore. . . . What is problematic in the attack on mourning is the (impossible) spitting off of thought and feeling, all too familiar in ‘science’, ‘intellectual seriousness’ and in the political left’.
(Johnson, 1999: 22)

Simultaneously, and using Johnson’s (1999) analysis of the ‘resistance-through-writing’ about the Diana events, critics of the public mourning for Diana from the political right can no less be seen as mourning the loss of ‘the way things once were’, no matter what period in twentieth century history we take as a reference point. This ‘golden age’ of moral rectitude is, like Bauman (1991) has suggested of attempts at dating the precise birth of modernity, one of ‘the many *foci imaginarii*, that like butterflies, do not survive the moment when a pin is pushed through their body to fix them in place’ (Bauman, 1991: 5), for they are invariably located in a distant and mythologised past.

Where Johnson (1999: 19) has suggested that those writing about Princess Diana and the mourning events surrounding her death — either sympathetically or from an ostensibly ‘alienated’ (Wilson, 1997) position of detachment — were unable to deal self-reflexively with their own subjective dis/investments, so we can apply such an understanding of the implausibility of notions of authorial objectivity to the consideration of other texts, especially those that deal in complex political and emotionally contested terrain. One such case, a ‘limit-case’, in Dominick LaCapra’s words (1992), where authorial objectivity appears to meet its limits, is in texts which deal with ‘severely traumatizing events’ such as the Holocaust. Here LaCapra (1992), has suggests that a certain ambivalence of identity

operates, wherein the ‘public’ duty assigned to the historical scribe (to represent things ‘objectively’) competes with (un)conscious desires to represent the ‘private’ identity of the ‘subject-position’ from which s/he speaks.

LaCapra suggests, then, that the role of the historian — or intellectual in general for that matter — is at best a partial and problematic identity, bound-up as it is with the various other ‘subject-positions’ that any social individual occupies. In particular circumstances, such as historical treatment of the Holocaust, LaCapra writes that ‘certain subject-positions may become especially prominent’, even ‘overwhelming, for example, those of victim or perpetrator’ (LaCapra, 1992: 12). That this is the case can more recently be evidenced from my own discussions (Brennan, 2001a) of the political porousness of identity in historical controversies which seek to establish the complicity of ‘ordinary Germans’ in the murder of six million European Jews (e.g. Goldhagen, 1996). Here, following LaCapra’s (1992) work on canonical texts about the Holocaust, I suggest that considerations of the Holocaust like Daniel Goldhagen’s book *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (1996) can themselves be seen as inflected with unresolved issues of mourning and loss. For not only does Goldhagen engage in the binary splitting of the ‘actors’ involved in the events of the Holocaust into ‘good’ and ‘bad’, venerating and valorising the victimhood of Jews whilst simultaneously denigrating Germans as the Holocaust’s overwhelming perpetrators, but he compulsively ‘acts-out’ a ‘still-present past’ in the muted trauma of analysis. Goldhagen, for instance, claims that the perpetrators of the Holocaust were ‘overwhelmingly and most importantly Germans’. That which ‘can be said about the Germans cannot be said about any other nationality or about

all of the other nationalities combined — namely no Germans, no Holocaust’ (Goldhagen, 1996: 6).

Popular historical considerations of the Holocaust of this sort can, from this perspective, be seen as a manifestation both of Freud’s notion of ‘repetition compulsion’, wherein in this case, attentive analysts, commentators, and those whose social identities implicate them in events, are never able fully to ‘escape possession by, or recovery from, a shattering past’ (LaCapra, 1992: *xii*); and of Klein’s notion of psychic splitting, wherein the loss of internalised ‘good’ objects impels the recreation of them in the fantasised realm of the (un)conscious imagination. We saw in chapter 2, for instance, the ways in which, according to Klein, the infant is able to ‘hallucinate’ (Mitchell, 1991) omnipotent power over his [*sic*] ‘good’ objects by fantasising control over them. In this respect, Goldhagen’s quest for historical certitude, in which the ambivalences between victim, perpetrator and by-stander — Primo Levi’s infamous ‘grey zone’ (1997) — became notoriously blurred during the events of the Holocaust, are smoothed-over and air-brushed out.³⁰ It is, then, losses like those encountered during the Holocaust (of people, places, possessions, traditions and concomitantly in some cases, a loss of the self)³¹ which can never fully be mourned that are compulsively ‘acted-out’, in this case symbolically, through the cultural practice of a kind

³⁰ For a discussion of ambivalences between victim and perpetrator in the Holocaust; of victims, like the *Kapos*, the often ferocious prisoner-functionaries of which Primo Levi writes, who cooperated with their oppressors, and of victims and perpetrators who do not correspond to Goldhagen’s dichotomous and caricatured versions in any significant sense, see Hilberg (1985, 1995)

³¹ Such a loss of self is dramatically illustrated by the enormous burden of guilt experienced by Holocaust survivors; as of having survived often at the expense of others. For the experience of Holocaust survival as casting doubt upon one’s own personal identity, especially as the stories of survivors were often not believed, see Levi (1988). For an account of the ways in which the muted trauma of the Holocaust extended beyond survivors themselves, specifically, to the experience of growing up Jewish in post-war Britain, see Seidler (2000).

of writing which has typically encrypted the Holocaust within melancholic ‘and at times mournfully elegiac discourses’ (LaCapra, 1992: 222).

Finally, if as we have seen using Kristeva’s distinction between the symbolic and the semiotic, mourning is manifested in the *symbolic* realm of language: from academic texts, through narrative fiction, and the verbalised story-telling characteristic of the collective memory, it can also be seen to be sublimated in the *semiotic* realm. These, however, are imperfect distinctions, for there is, as Kristeva herself acknowledges, considerable slippage between the symbolic and semiotic. Here Kristeva regards the semiotic and the symbolic as two modalities of ‘what is, for us, the same signifying process’ (Kristeva, 1984: 23–4).

These two modalities are inseparable within the *signifying process* that constitutes language, and the dialectic between them determines the type of discourse (narrative, meta-language, theory, poetry, etc.) involved; in other words, so-called ‘natural’ language allows for different modes of articulation of the semiotic and the symbolic. . . . Because the subject is always *both* semiotic and symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either ‘exclusively’ semiotic or ‘exclusively’ symbolic, and so is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both.

(Kristeva, 1984: 24)

Whilst writing can be seen, using Kristeva’s distinction, as largely a symbolic form, there are nevertheless aspects of language which outstrip the conventions of language and its stereotyped cultural forms. Elliott (1999: 64–66), for instance, suggests that aspects of John Lennon’s song-writing, such as ‘*I Am the Walrus*’, whilst at once profoundly meaningful and meaningless, nevertheless outstrip language, for ‘the very texture of signification is ruthlessly undone by the movement of metonymy and the simulacrum of representation’ (Elliott, 1999: 65). That mourning in the ‘texts’ which I have chosen to highlight here is not

at first sight strikingly obvious itself suggests mourning's oblique encryption — using the unconscious linguistic 'strategies' of metaphor and metonymy — within the text. In turn, of course, this invites a commensurate method of decoding and deconstructing the sublimated meanings, of displacement and condensation, within various 'texts'.

Meanwhile, in a rereading of J.D. Salinger's (1951) novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, Anne Roiphe (2002) has recently reinterpreted it too as a story of mourning and loss. Holden Caulfield's journey through various schools, she reminds us, begins with the death of his brother from leukaemia. His parents' attempts to shield him by not allowing him to attend the funeral, the silence which surrounds the death of a bullied classmate, and the famous passage about where the ducks in Central Park go in winter are, Roiphe suggests, attempts to articulate the denial of death in post-war American society. Holden's ruminations about where the ducks go in winter is a metaphorical device for conveying the silence surrounding the 'disappeared, the unspoken of, the dead.' Roiphe suggests that Salinger's novel encrypts the enormous feelings of loss many American families felt in the aftermath of the Second World War, when husbands, sons, brothers and lovers failed to return home. Roiphe even suggests that Salinger's novel was written amidst the shroud of silence which, for some fifteen to twenty years following the end of war, surrounded treatment of the Holocaust.

In the realm of that which is most widely recognised as the semiotic — representations in fine art, it is possible to discern in various works a melancholic or mournful pathos of loss. Robert Wyatt (2001: 35–6), as I reported in chapter 1, has suggested that the 'visual minimalist statements' of Mark Rothko 'allude to the ultimate absence' of death, whilst

Jonathan Jones (*Guardian*, 19 January 2002) has suggested that Andy Warhol's silkscreen images are 'bleakly mournful'. Jones suggests the repetition and multiplication of the same image in Warhol's most well-known work — the huge silkscreen images of Marilyn Monroe and Mao Zedong, or the everyday objects of American life, from Coca-Cola bottles to Campbell's soup cans — can be seen as a melancholic 'refusal to let go of the image; an insistence that we look again, that we do not forget' (Jones, 2002: 23). In this vein I am reminded of a tourist/mourner to Elvis Presley's Graceland museum, who, when asked by an interviewer for a holiday television programme why this was his sixth visit to Graceland, replied, 'in case I missed anything and so I can memorise *everything*'.

Elsewhere Susan Sontag (1977) has reminded us that photography, perhaps above all other mimetic arts, expresses a melancholic or mournful desire to preserve the image which it seeks to capture. She suggests that the documentary tradition of photography — when early photographers, from Eugène Atget to Jacob Riis, 'prowled' the streets of London, Paris and New York, 'looking for their slice of life' (Sontag, 1977: 54) — is rooted in endeavours to capture a seemingly mundane yet disappearing world. These, Sontag suggests, can be seen as mournful attempts to freeze time itself, for each captured image carries an 'irrefutable pathos as a message from time past' (Sontag, 1977: 54).

Behind the ritualized claims of American photographers to be looking around, at random, without preconceptions — lighting on subjects, phlegmatically recording them — is a mournful vision of loss. . . . photography's statement of loss depends on its steadily enlarging the familiar iconography of mystery, mortality, transience.

(Sontag, 1977: 67)

Photography, Sontag suggests, romanticises the past but provides an instant romanticism of the present, for ‘the photographer is not simply the person who records the past but the one who invents it; “through his eyes the now becomes past” (Berenice Abbott, cited by Sontag, 1977: 67). Barthes (1982) has similarly reflected upon the mortiferous power of photography, for death, he suggests, is the *eidos*³² of the photograph (Barthes, 1982: 15). The photograph, Barthes argues, is ‘the advent of myself as other: a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity’ (Barthes, 1982: 12). Less prosaically, the lead character in American novelist Don DeLillo’s (1991) book *Mao II*, makes a similar point when muses to the photographer for whom he is posing for a series of pictures:

“Sitting for a picture is morbid business. A portrait doesn’t begin to mean anything until the subject is dead. This is the whole point. We’re doing this to create a kind of sentimental past for people in the decade to come. It’s their past, their history we’re inventing here. And it’s not how I look now that matters. It’s how I look in twenty-five years as clothing and faces change, as photographs change. The deeper I pass into death, the more powerful my picture becomes. Isn’t this why picture-taking is so ceremonial? It’s a wake. And I’m the actor made up for the laying-out.”

(DeLillo, 1991: 42)

There is, perhaps, nevertheless, as Elliott cautions (1999), a danger of theoretical projection here: that by studying the dynamics of a particular phenomenon for long enough ‘you are bound to find it almost everywhere you look’ (Elliott, 1999: 11). Nevertheless, I have endeavoured throughout this chapter to extend the insights proffered by psychoanalysis beyond a focus upon the individual and to culture itself. Here I have suggested that not only are identificatory processes through which objects are selected for dis/incorporation within

³² The term *eidos* refers to the distinctive expression of the cognitive or intellectual character of a culture.

the self central to mourning of the sort which I consider here, but that various other ‘things’ besides the obvious referents of mourning were being mourned (even through ‘not-mourning’ them). It is principally these themes and the identificatory bases of mourning (and ‘not-mourning’) during the mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana that I explore through my analyses both of condolence book data (chapters 5 and 6) and of my own dis/investments and not/mourning of these two events (chapter 7).

CHAPTER 4

METHODS, METHODOLOGY AND FIELD NOTES

In this chapter I provide an outline of the methods and methodological strategies employed in this project. Drawing upon field notes taken during the course of the research, I report the practical, ethical and theoretical dilemmas I encountered; and the ways in which I comprehended, wrestled with, and sought to resolve vexed issues of this sort. It is here, in this chapter, that I seek, on the one hand, to explain my reasoning behind various methods and decisions which needed to be resolved pragmatically and, were, so to speak, encountered at ‘ground level’; and, on the other, to justify the wider rationale and logical consistency of my research methods and methodology.¹

Broadly speaking, this chapter can be seen as falling into two parts: the first dealing with a range of methodological issues generated by my use of condolence books; the second exploring a commensurate set of issues generated by the writing and analysis of my own autobiographical ‘memory work’ (Haug *et al*, 1987). In this first half I begin by outlining the ‘textu(r)al’² nature of my analysis of epistolary data gleaned from condolence books, and its merits over various other, more conventionally sociological, research strategies, such as interviewing, which might otherwise have been adopted in this project. I continue by describing the day-to-day practicalities involved in — and the methods selected for —

¹ I distinguish between the the terms *methods* and *methodology* by regarding methods as the practical means by which methodology, as a systematic theory of methods, is implemented.

² That is to say, the textural approach to textual data. An alternative would be to suggest simply that my research in general is textu(r)al for it attempts to provide a textured reading of textual data taken from two different sources: condolence books signed during the two public mourning events which this thesis considers; and my own autobiographical stories produced using the method of ‘memory work’.

gathering, storing, coding, and analysing the data from condolence books signed during my two case-studies in ‘public mourning’. In the second half of this chapter I reflect upon a range of practical and methodological issues that I encountered whilst undertaking the innovative method known as ‘memory work’. Here I attempt to explain what I did, how I did it, and to outline my adaptation of memory work as first outlined by the group of German feminist researchers who pioneered this method. In addition, and in the interests of methodological clarity and explicitness, I provide the reader with an outline of the routine stages of coding which were passed through *en route* to the subsequent analysis of the data produced using memory work. Before this, however, I discuss the intellectual origins and epistemological premises of memory work and locate this within the wider paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1960) and series of ‘turns’ (‘cultural’, ‘linguistic’, ‘narrative’ and ‘biographical’) occurring within the social sciences. In so doing, I discuss the role and function of memory itself and the ways in which a focus upon individual lives can illuminate wider social ‘structures’ and cultural processes in which the individual is enmeshed.

I begin this chapter in earnest, however, by providing a brief history of the project: of how I came to undertake it and shift its orientation away from my plans for the project as I had originally conceived them. Here too, I seek to explain my rationale for choosing two alternative, yet complementary, sites of meaning: condolence books and my own autobiographical memories, as points of entry for exploring the public mourning events which are the principal foci of this thesis. In so doing, I discuss a range of issues connected with the ethics of social research. Here I suggest that the increased recognition of the social identity and ‘subjectivities’ of the researcher, are key in determining not only the outcomes

of research but the motivation for choosing to research a particular topic; as well as the researcher's relationship to the data generated throughout the process of research itself. Various attempts to incorporate such 'recognition' within research design, through the greater reflexivity of the researcher, are, I suggest, a welcome addition to empirical practices across the social sciences and humanities.

The History of the Project and the 'Cultural Circuit'

We will recall from my introduction to the thesis the shift in orientation which this project has undergone since its inception. Principally, this involved a change in focus from a proposed concentration upon the public mourning following the death of Princess Diana in 1997, with a consideration of the mourning which attended the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. Here it was my intention to attempt to trace out the historical changes in *form* of public mourning; to provide an archaeology of mourning (and mourning practices) by exploring ostensible shifts in the ways royal figures are mourned. Such a project was premised upon an attempt to research these events from a position of presumed objectivity and value-neutrality; exploring comparatively one event against the other from a position of critical detachment. Yet, as we have also seen from the autobiographical vignette which I provide in the introduction, my real interest and motivation lay elsewhere, in a project which this proposal as it stood was decidedly not. The moment during a routine supervision meeting with my Ph.D supervisor, when, during a discussion of other public mourning events similar to the Diana ones — including the mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster — was a key turning point or 'watershed' in the history of the project. For here I became animated by the discussion of an event which I had, as a teenager,

mourned but never before considered exploring as a topic of research. It was a turning point not least because it set in train a number of changes in orientation fundamental to the new questions which my research was now asking. This shift in orientation amounted to more than simply a subtle shift in focus or the substitution of one particular public mourning event for another. For it involved a fundamental epistemological shift from a position of presumed value-neutrality towards harnessing my own subjectivities which my 'involvement' in these two events generated. The two events which became the new foci of my thesis: the public mourning following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana, were both events by which I was affectively moved, albeit in seemingly opposite directions; experiencing a profound sense of shock and sadness following the Hillsborough disaster, whilst experiencing a profound revulsion for the public mourning that followed the death of Princess Diana. Once my dis/investments in these events had been acknowledged it became a central intention of the project to critically reflect upon my own involvement in them as a source of research in itself. Following these acknowledgements; of feeling, as many others did at the time, 'deeply alienated' (Wilson, 1997) by the 'Diana events' but 'profoundly moved' by the Hillsborough disaster, it seemed both unthinkable and untenable that I could explore the topics which were the previous foci of my research from a position of critical detachment, especially given my disinvestments in royalty, of which I later wrote during memory work and which are reproduced in chapter 7.

This shift in orientation of the project inevitably led to a shift in the sorts of research questions I was asking. Principally, what were the meaning-making processes involved in

my own mourning and not-mourning of these events? In what ways was the meaning-making involved in my own mourning of Hillsborough similar or different to that of the people who signed condolence books for the victims of Hillsborough? And how might the messages people wrote in both sets of condolence books which I intended to analyse tell us something of meaning-making during, and previous, to these events within particular communities and culture at large? In other words, what sorts of meaning-making were involved in the mourning of these events and how might condolence books signed following them reveal processes of identification with, and ‘interpellation’, by aspects of culture? From this perspective, my decision to explore the mourning which followed the death of Princess Diana and the Hillsborough disaster, as particular points of focus, quickly became an attempt to trace out the processes at work within culture, and especially, my own negotiation of selfhood, and the production of subject-positions into which I was both inserted and worked myself into.

Aside from attempts to reconcile the inevitable imbalances in power between researcher and researched which my choice of condolence books and memory work — as particular sites of meaning — allowed me to attempt to bridge, and of which I shall say more shortly, my choice of complementary methodological research strategies can usefully be explored using Richard Johnson’s (1986) notion of a ‘cultural circuit’. In this way, the events which followed the death of Princess Diana and the Hillsborough disaster can be perceived as ‘moments’ within a wider circuit of culture through which meaning is produced. Each moment in this circuit: of production, representation, ‘reading’ and lived relations, are dependent upon earlier ‘moments’ within the overall circuit. This concept of the cultural

circuit, as Peter Redman (1999: 30–1) explains, suggests a ‘complex and uneven process of exchange, appropriation and re-presentation’ made between cultural texts (be they romance novels routinely read by women or the sports magazines read by men), and lived cultures and identities in which they have a particular resonance yet from which they remain independent and distinct. In this way, narratives that have a specific resonance within particular communities may find themselves taken up in more public representations. This can be evidenced from the ways in which the local vernaculars of the street are routinely appropriated and taken up and used in public representations such as television commercials. In turn, these narratives, when played back to a wider public audience become dispersed and much more widely available as a public resource. In this way, as Redman (1999: 31) again puts it, such narratives ‘may be absorbed into the “little cultural worlds” of new and different local’ and/or global publics, becoming transformed and deployed in substantially new forms.

From this perspective, and for the purposes of this project, the Diana and Hillsborough public mourning events can themselves be seen as particular ‘moments’ within an overall circuit of cultural production, representation, ‘reading’ and lived relations. The public mourning which followed the death of Princess Diana quite clearly depended upon earlier ‘moments’ in this circuit: of media commentaries, narratives and general representations about Diana’s life; of subsequent ‘readings’ of these narratives; and their incorporation and use within everyday social practices and lived relations, in say, popular conversation or positive identifications with Diana as a feminine or *feminist* source of iconicity. Such a model of cultural production can also be used to explain the negative reactions and

disidentifications with Diana following her death: what Richard Johnson (1999) has elsewhere referred to as ‘not-mourning’, which is to say, that many of those, including myself, who did not mourn Diana did not do so passively but as a form of resistance to various aspects of what Diana as an icon of official culture *appeared* to stand for. My resistance to the mourning for Diana can be seen as a resistance to various aspects of culture through which Diana’s image was mediated and with which I could not identify. In this way, alternative representations or ‘readings’ of narratives about Diana’s life can be seen as ‘dis/incorporated’ within lived relations by the different publics to whom Diana did not appeal

At the same time, the mourning (and not-mourning) which followed the Hillsborough disaster, although much smaller and more localised, yet no less intense amongst those whom it affected, can be viewed through the optic which Johnson’s notion of a cultural circuit provides. For in this way, meaning can be seen to be produced not only through representations of narratives and discourses about football (whether positive or negative) but through the particular meanings which football (as so often reflective of something else), embodies and which are maintained by and within particular sets of lived relations as situated in place and time. Football, I will argue in chapters 5 and 7, is so often reflective of something else, as say, a reflection of a community itself within which a club is based and comes to signify. That is to say, it contains the potential for *totemicity*. In this way, for example, my grandfather’s verbalised stories (and others like them) told to me as a child about watching football at Hillsborough in the 1930s, were taken up, reproduced and represented in some of the local media narratives within Sheffield following the Hillsborough

disaster. So too, nefarious tales about drunken Liverpool fans which circulated in some tabloid newspapers following the disaster can be seen to trade in historically situated discourses and narratives about Liverpudlians. Such representations, as I will argue in chapter 5, of Liverpool's 'outsider-ness', are themselves central to constitutions of discursive identity within the city, to the extent that they become routinely inhabited as lived identities and cultures.

Nevertheless, the two events which I have chosen as case-studies in public mourning, whilst they can be seen as particular 'moments' within the model of a 'cultural circuit' which I have previously outlined, are too complex and multi-faceted to represent any one of these moments — of production, representation, 'reading' and lived relations — alone. For many of these 'moments' occurred simultaneously during these two events as the circuit undertook endless and rapidly speeded-up revolutions. In this way, the events themselves, spanning roughly a week in duration, and comprising widespread media representations from which 'readings' could be made and mourning 'lived' — as mourners came together to share public space and engage in social practices symptomatic of the communities who mourned — can themselves be seen as a mini-circuit existing within the endless flow of circuits of cultural discourse. The Diana events provide countless examples of representations of Diana (from phrases Diana herself coined in the 1995 BBC *Panorama* interview, to the Burchill/Campbell coined epithet of the "People's Princess") which were later taken up and transformed in the messages people wrote in condolence books, in the cards people attached to bouquets of flowers, and in conversations amongst mourners who gathered to share public space with others who felt the same way. So too, the Hillsborough

condolence books in particular provide countless examples of the ways in which aspects of culture, such as the song “You’ll Never Walk Alone”, have been taken up and transformed to become a source of discursive identity and of lived relations on Merseyside. Suffice it to say at this point that the condolence books which I analysed were but one of a series of ‘moments’ within each of these mourning events, each of which were dependent on ‘moments’ from outside of the temporal frame of reference and ‘happenings’ which occurred during the actual period of mourning.

Having established these two events as ‘moments’ of cultural production — albeit ones which can be readily identified, for everything that goes on within life as such can be so incorporated with the cultural circuit — let me now explain the rationale behind my choice of condolence books and ‘memory work’ as related yet distinct sites of meaning. My choice of condolence books as an under-explored resource of cultural production, summoned by the death-events and public mourning which followed as the principal foci of this thesis, were chosen primarily for the data they might yield as to the meaning, symbolic or otherwise, which these events contained for the people who mourned them. As well as providing a ready-made sample of mourners, they allowed me a unique opportunity to explore not only contemporary cultural and epistolary practices of mourning but the textual representation and transformations of meaning as was manifested in epistolary condolence writing. It would also hopefully allow me to identify earlier ‘moments’ within the circuit of cultural production as well as the wider significance of ‘things’ being mourned besides the obvious referents of mourning. For as I began to suggest in chapters 2 and 3, loss routinely triggers and awakens echoes of losses encountered elsewhere, be they at the cultural or

inter-personal level — the two are also inseparably linked. For our relations with other people are mediated by culture, whilst our relations to culture are similarly mediated by other people with whom we engage in conversations about everyday aspects of culture, thereby reproducing the aspects of culture about which we talk.

My choice of memory work, meanwhile, as a site of meaning allowed me an alternative and retrospective vantage point (Denzin, 1970) from which to view my own relationship to these two events. If, generally speaking, my analysis of condolence books provided access to the distinct ‘moments’ of cultural production in which condolence messages were written and conceived, the practice of memory work and its critical focus upon the text, provided an effective tool for the interrogation of ways in which (my own) selfhood and subjectivity is, and was, brokered and maintained. In this way, the stories produced using memory work provide a source for the exploration not of subjectivity as such, for as Redman (1999: 75) reminds us, the self of unconscious desire is never quite the same as the self expressed in language, but of the ways in which subjectivity is narratively constructed in and through language.

At the same time, and whilst more closely approximating to, but never the same as, aspects of lived relations within the cultural circuit, memory work allowed me to trace out my own navigation and insertion within culture and cultural processes more generally, including the cultural production and mediation of memory itself. It is these processes, which have a wider resonance than the focus upon the individual life which my memory work seemingly

provides, that have been of particular interest to sociologists³ and those working within the field of cultural studies. Taken together, memory work and my analysis of condolence books, provided two different yet complementary vantage points from which to view the mourning and not-mourning following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana; one allowing me access to the immediacy and poignancy of the ‘moment’ in which condolence messages were written and conceived, the other allowing me to trace my own personal meanings as embodied by these two events.

Ethnographic Endeavours: Bridging the Gap Between Researcher and Researched

We saw earlier, in chapter 3, theoretical endeavours, including my own, to bridge the dichotomy in thinking (and its disciplinary incarnations in sociology and psychoanalysis) which separates considerations of human life into those which are ‘public’ and those which are ‘private’. In what follows, I seek to explain the practical means by which my combination of condolence book data (as a ‘public’ but also ‘private’ resource) and that gleaned from my own memory work (as an essentially ‘private’ or ‘interior’ resource) serves not only as an (episto-)methodological bridge between ‘public’ and ‘private’ domains of social life, but attempts to close-up the gap and imbalance of power which exists between researcher and researched. Such attempts to bridge the gap between researcher and researched have long been an axiomatic principle of much feminist research, which, in the interests of ‘sisterhood’, has sought empathetic engagement with other women as the objects of research, principally as a means of understanding female experiences of

³ The autobiographical experiences, and stories that individuals tell, are, as a variety of sociologists have reminded us (e.g. Chamberlayne *et al*, 2000, 2002; Erben, 1993; Evans, 1993; Plummer, 1983; Rustin, 1998, 2000; Stanley, 1993; Stanley

patriarchy (e.g. Oakley, 1974, 1981; Fonow and Cook, 1991; Smith, 1988; Stanley and Wise, 1993). In particular, feminists have challenged the orthodoxy of ‘malestream’ social science and its claims to produce value-free objective knowledge. Instead, feminists have argued that the traditional tools of social science, such as interviewing and the survey-method, are themselves reflective of a masculine view of the world and of human relationships more generally (Oakley, 1981). These perspectives on imbalances of power from within feminist epistemology have foregrounded the work of post-structuralists (e.g. Foucault, 1980; Said, 1978) and their theorisation of the knowledge-power nexus. From this perspective, which has explored the discursive power of language, to write about someone is to wield power, however unwittingly, by ‘objectifying’ those about whom one writes. Having others write about you, is as Patrica Hill Collins (1991) reminds us, to concede the power of self-definition to others who, better placed strategically, are able externally to impose their image of, and upon (often through hegemonic consent), the groups about which they write.⁴

By ‘writing myself into’ the research through the methodological use of the practice of ‘memory work’, I have sought not only to avoid the ‘objectification’ of those others who signed the condolence books which are a focus of my research, but to acknowledge, by

and Morgan, 1993), referential of the wider social structures and cultural practices of which the individuals are inevitably a part.

⁴ Hill Collins (1991) has championed a black feminist epistemology that embraces dialogue, experience and empathy with the subjects of her research. Such an epistemology, Hill Collins argues, simultaneously challenges and eschews Enlightenment derived notions of objectivity and detachment, which serve to ‘objectify’ those who are written about. Following Foucauldian notions of discursivity, Hill Collins suggests that African-American women have for centuries been subjugated by the externally imposed images of those — principally white men — who write about them. Such stereotyped cultural images, she suggests, of mammy, matriarch or jezebel, have been central to the control and subordination of black women. Nevertheless, and at the same time, Hill Collins suggests that narrative and epistolary practices, themselves an integral part of Black African American women’s culture, have been a central strategy for confronting externally imposed images and are an important site for the production of self.

laying myself open to a level of academic scrutiny, my own emotional and political dis/investments in these two episodes of public mourning (and the events which foreground them). Here Sasha Roseneil (1993) makes an important point, arguing that an acknowledgement of the identity of the researcher matters, for it is unavoidably present in the research process. The work of the social researcher is, Roseneil writes:

shaped by her social location and personal experiences. . . thus no researcher comes to her research a *tabula rasa*. Rather than seeking to 'bracket' our 'prejudgements' (our existing values and experiences), which is impossible, we should make ourselves aware of them, and expose them to the prejudgements of others.

(Roseneil, 1993: 180)

Following the work of Liz Stanley (1985), I therefore make use of memory work to explore my own 'intellectual biography' (as a consciously constructed social identity which we can present to others) and the ways in which this impinges upon the data, and its analysis, which I subsequently produce. Like Roseneil, for whom her doctoral research on the women's peace camp at Greenham Common was a 'labour of love'; the antithesis of alienated labour (Roseneil, 1993), my own subjectivity, feelings and experiences — both public and private — could not be wrenched from my own 'academic' and 'personal' interest in the events which followed the death of Diana and the Hillsborough disaster. This is partly so, as Roseneil forcefully reminds us, because our subjectivity, feelings and experiences provide both the motivation, and in my case, material for academic research.

At the same time, to reiterate, this complementarity of method: the analysis of condolence books side-by-side my own experiences and memories of the two events which provide my two case-studies in public mourning, is a means by which I seek to counter the 'inevitable

discrepancy in power' (Redman, 1999: 141) that exists between my privileged position as the person who attributes meaning to condolence messages, and the people who themselves wrote the messages and are, by virtue of this, the objects of my research. As I shall explore throughout this chapter, the methods adopted in this thesis seek to incorporate those established by feminist (e.g. Stanley and Wise, 1983, 1993), African American (e.g. bell hooks, 1989; Hill Collins, 1991) and ethnographic researchers (e.g. Becker, 1953; Hargreaves, 1967; Polsky, 1967), insofar as I have endeavoured to achieve a degree of reflexivity by virtue of exploring my own role (and social identity) in the construction and interpretation of the data. Within sociology itself such a view — one that recognises and harnesses the intersections that exist between the 'biography' of the analyst and the wider social structures and historical milieu of which they are a part, was already incarnate within the work of C. Wright Mills (1958) as early as the 1950s. Mills' advocacy in *The Sociological Imagination* (1958) that practitioners of the discipline learn to incorporate and critically reflect upon personal experiences in their academic enterprises: that selfhood is central to the craft of sociology (Mills, 1958), has, however, been given greatest heed in feminist research which has encouraged a 'unity of hand, brain and heart' (Rose, 1983). Where in traditional ethnography researchers seek typically, and temporarily, to 'infiltrate' and become members of the social group that they wish to observe (and research), so, as we have seen from my autobiographical vignette which I used to open this thesis, I was already a 'member' of the 'community' of mourners and 'non-mourners' during the events which comprise my two case-studies.

Social researchers have, then, come increasingly in recent years to reflect upon the situated social identity (Haraway, 1988) of the researcher in the design, implementation and outcomes of research. Dominick LaCapra (1992), as we will recall at the end of last chapter, has problematised the motivations of the analyst in choosing to focus on particular cases in the first instance. Mills (1958) also emphasised the role of personal involvement and biography in the construction of intellectual endeavour. LaCapra goes further by suggesting that the role of the intellectual is not a full identity but ‘at most a subject-position that should be complemented, supplemented, and even contested by other subject-positions’ (LaCapra, 1992: 10). The use of memory work in this thesis is therefore an attempt to do just that: to complement my analysis of condolence books with analysis which seeks to raise to the level of consciousness and critical gaze of others, my own motivations for this study. The autobiographical use of memory work in this thesis serves also to supplement my ‘deconstructivist’ interpretation of condolence book data: providing formal acknowledgement of my (the researcher’s) own social identity in the construction of knowledge. It seeks to provide a counterweight against the ‘objectification’ of those who signed condolence books (for I write as a ‘participant’ of the mourning events which my thesis considers). My use of memory work is an attempt to make myself personally accountable — by ‘putting *myself* on the line’ (Redman, 1999: 141, emphasis added) — for the claims I make about the performative utterances of others in my analysis of condolence book messages.

More particularly, it is the mutual validation of theory by the data, and the data by theory, which serves to ‘ground’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) the claims I make about the data in

subsequent chapters (chapters 5, 6 and 7) of the thesis. Drawing upon an approach akin to the formal grounded theory approach first fleshed out by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the data in this research are elaborated through, by, and against, the stock of theoretical (and local/informal) knowledges accumulated during, and preceding, the research process. In this way, following the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), my analysis of the data continued until it reached a point when it was sufficient to bear the weight of theoretical interpretation placed upon it. Glaser and Strauss (1967: 61) have famously identified the point at which the data fully elaborate their theoretical interpretation as that of ‘theoretical saturation’.

As we shall see, my research is theory-led to the extent that the data do not, as it were, ‘speak for themselves’ but are instead read through the grid of theoretical (Holland *et al*, 1998) and ‘local’ or ‘situated’ (Haraway, 1988) knowledges. This is not to suggest that concepts were simply ‘imposed’ upon the data because of prior commitments, on my part as researcher, to a particular theory or theoretical approach. Nor is it to suggest that my research involved a crude form of hypothesis-testing, in which various theories and truth-claims were inductively tested against the empirical data generated. For the object of my research was not to test or establish truth-claims but to explore the production of meaning as it became accrued in the two mourning events which this thesis considers. Instead, and against the largely empiricist assumptions of Glaser and Strauss (1967); wherein theory either emerges from, or is tested against, the data generated, and where the tacit assumptions which the researcher necessarily engenders are seen as largely incidental or are overlooked altogether, I suggest that data is both constructed and interpreted through an indissoluble web of ‘situated’ (Haraway, 1988) and theoretical knowledges. The researcher

is, on this basis, not incidental but instrumental to the research process, for as Hammersely and Atkinson (1993: 21) put it, we are inevitably ‘part of the social world we study’. Of course, as I will seek to demonstrate elsewhere in this chapter, no social research is conducted in isolation of the wider social, political, and cultural world’s we each of us inhabit. Whilst this is certainly the case in terms most readily understood within sociology (as say, a recognition of inadvertent male and/or ethnocentric bias in interviewing), it is also true in research of a textual character, such as that which is the locus of this research. For my ‘reading’ of the data is one amongst a variety of other possible ‘readings’. It is, as Mieke Bal (1985: 4) puts it, a proposal that I can present to others. Researchers working within the field of cultural studies have done much in this regard to remind us that the interpretation of various textual data depends upon the situated knowledge and subject-position of the reader. Whilst ‘inert’ textual data do not ‘speak for themselves’ or react in the unanticipated ways in which interviewees might in the presence of a researcher, their interpretation is, nevertheless, refracted through a nexus of socially, culturally, and linguistically mediated reading practices. Nevertheless, and as an aspect of the process by which data are made meaningful, they are thereby inevitably and irrevocably transformed.

In this respect, all research is constructed and does not naturally appear or ‘speak for itself’ to the extent that the researcher, as instrument (and in this case, subject of research), (un)wittingly contributes to the outcomes of the research s/he undertakes. In undertaking any social research we assemble, through our strategic choice of methods and sources of

data, a view of the world which, perhaps without our endeavours, might not exist.⁵ It is in this way the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Nor does a recognition, on our part as researcher, of our own identity, be it gendered, 'classed' or racialised, make critical investigation impossible. Instead, it provides both a more textured picture of the social world we claim to study, and forces us to confront and acknowledge openly our own subjective dis/investments which might otherwise be masked by empiricist claims to value-neutrality. The practice of autobiographical reflection in social scientific research serves both to expose our own values, experiences and 'prejudgements' to the critical attention of the audiences for whom we write (Roseneil, 1993), and to excavate for ourselves 'prejudgements' which we were perhaps previously, at best, only half aware. The methodological practice of memory work, I shall argue elsewhere in this chapter, itself raises issues of authorial complicity which might otherwise go largely unacknowledged. Indeed, that which is not explicitly confronted has a tendency, I will argue, to return tententiously in the form of the repressed.

Insofar as I have attempted to create an inter-subjective dialogue and close-up the gap between *researcher* and *researched*, I have entered into an intra-subjective dialogue with myself (as researcher and subject of research). From here I have endeavoured to explore my own self as a conduit of social and cultural influences; as a 'participant' in the events which I take as my case-studies in public mourning (mourning one event but not the other). At the same time, and following Hans Gadamer's (1976) suggestion that 'prejudice' is the

⁵ Giddens (1976), albeit in a slightly different context, writes that while human beings are responsible for the transformation of *nature*, they do not make it. Instead, it is *society* which is a human production, and 'while not made by

ontological condition of all human existence in society, I have sought to reflexively harness and acknowledge my own social, political and intellectual subjectivities: as one who actively constructs meaning about the social world through researching and writing about the events which I describe; whilst seeking to deconstruct the essentialism of subjectivity itself as something which is, rather, fashioned through narrative practices of the self in which a biographical self presentable to others is created.

Condolence Books as Textu(r)al Research

As I have earlier suggested in this chapter, my analysis of condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana is an attempt to explore the messages contained within them as performative utterances reflective of the wider speech communities of which they were constitutive. Some of these speech communities, for example, fans of Princess Diana or Liverpool F.C, existed prior to the two death-events and public mourning which followed them. Others, however, specifically, the community-at-large who mourned each of these events (as the community-in-mourning), were temporally summoned by a sense of *communitas* (Turner, 1977) in which differences amongst various communities were temporarily put aside. Using the ‘thick descriptions’ recommended by Clifford Geertz (1975), I have endeavoured to explore the epistolary content of messages by attempting to situate them within the speech communities, as communities of meaning (Lash, 1997), from which message signers, as members of these communities, inevitably drew.

any single person, society is created and recreated afresh. . . *The production of society*’, he writes, is a skilled performance, sustained and “made to happen” by human beings’ (Giddens, 1976: 15).

My research is the first to explore the books of condolence signed following the Hillsborough disaster and provides an alternative focus to the little research that has hitherto been undertaken in this area on the condolence books signed for Princess Diana (e.g. Jones, 1999).⁶ My analysis is ‘textu(r)al’ by virtue of its focus upon condolence books not as an abstracted textual resource but which strives to capture the texture of the discursive practices, social identities and communities of meaning of which they speak. Where much sociological research routinely draws upon written material that is of a documentary or textual nature (diaries, life histories and autobiographies), it has tended, for the most part, to treat them as unproblematically referential of the material realities of lives so described (Stanley and Morgan, 1993: 1). At the same time, however, and whilst approaches from within cultural studies (as broadly constituted), especially speech-act-based sociolinguistics and conversation analysis, have done most to problematise the ‘meaning(s)’ of texts themselves, they have nevertheless been chastened for abstracting texts from the everyday social practices in which they are embedded (Lash, 1997: 150). These claims notwithstanding, it has, of course, been the explicit intention of the now defunct Birmingham school of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) to strike a balance

⁶ Bethan Jones (1999) has provided a comparative analysis of a random sample of messages taken from condolence books signed for Princess Diana at civic offices in the central business and shopping district of Reading, with a ‘similar random sample of messages that were available on the world wide web’ (Jones, 1999: 203). In all, Jones analysed 1,808 messages taken from the paper books and 1,017 messages taken from internet condolence books. Jones (1999) provides a thorough break-down and content analysis of the messages and reports, for example, that 46 per cent of messages she analysed referred to an afterlife, whilst only 10 per cent of the paper book messages made mention of Prince’s William and Harry. Jones provides rather little, however, in the way of analysis which might link what people wrote to the meaning which Princess Diana, as the referent of mourning, embodied for those people who wrote condolence messages. Jones’ analysis also leaves unexplained the inter-subjective dynamics of mourning and meaning-making, and the significance of condolence book signing more generally as a contemporary social and cultural practice. Jones’ (1999) analysis tells us much about the social composition of those who signed the sample of condolence books, for instance, that 72 per cent of the sample of messages were written by women compared with 16 per cent by men. Her research also tells us much about the actual content of messages themselves, that, for example, 16 per cent of messages made reference to Diana’s charitable work. Nevertheless, the ‘so-whatness’ (Labov, 1972: 366) of the data which Jones presents, because it is not fully elaborated against existing theoretical literature is left unclear.

somewhere between these two positions. From its inception, the CCCS endeavoured, on the one hand, to avoid the abstraction and ‘fetishisation’ of texts characteristic of the literary-critical tradition — as a ‘too text-bound practice’ (Hall *et al*, 1996: 9), whilst on the other, seeking to avoid the sociological, context-bound tradition which has done little to question the authorial intentions and presumption of benign subjectivities of those responsible for the production of texts. The hermeneutical interpretation of texts, and empirical research into their ‘reception’ by various audiences has, then, been largely the preserve of the type of materially ‘grounded’ cultural studies characterised during the 1980s by the work of the CCCS Birmingham (see, for example, Johnson, 1986).

What my ‘textu(r)al’ approach to condolence book messages hopes to combine is at once a critical analysis of — and disposition towards — the ‘textual’ character and epistolary practices of condolence messages and message writing; and a sense of the ‘characteristic colour’ and tenor (Williams, 1984) of messages which marks them as indicative of socially situated cultural practices. To this extent, my analysis is both ‘textual’ and ‘textural’, for it aims to capture a particular ‘moment’ in the lives of those who mourned the two events which comprise my case-studies in public mourning. At the same time, my analysis considers the signing of condolence books following the death-events which constitute my two case-studies in public mourning, as particular ‘moments’ within a wider series of public mourning events related to each death-event. In turn, as I have earlier suggested, the particular ‘moments’ represented by condolence book signing can themselves be seen as related to a much larger and on-going circuit of cultural production (Johnson, 1986) through which meaning is made. Nevertheless, the dual methods I employ in this project and the

‘textu(r)al’ reading I make of condolence messages are strategies intended to ‘prise open different dimensions of lived totality’ (Pollert, 1996: 647), especially the ordinariness (Williams, 1958) of lives which have otherwise been ‘systematically occluded in all previous sociology’ (Crook, 1998: 523). It is for this reason that I employ the syntactical device of calling my analysis ‘textu(r)al’.

Nevertheless, social meaning was attributed to particular messages on the basis of a process of strategic inference, wherein the things that people wrote were explored using a variety of knowledges (local, theoretical, and empirical). In the case of the Hillsborough condolence books, messages were explored against the background of local and popular histories of Liverpool and its people. That is to say, against the intangible and ‘particular sense of life’ that Raymond Williams (1984) has called a ‘local structure of feeling’. At the same time, my analysis of the condolence books signed following the death of Princess Diana were read against the global feminine structures of feeling which the events following her death helped make publicly available as a discursive resource which had hitherto been marginalised but could, following the public mourning for Princess Diana, be temporarily expressed and inhabited as a lived identity.

My analysis of condolence books, as I have earlier suggested in this chapter, was principally conceived with a view to capturing the particular ‘moment’ and mood in which messages were written and conceived; as reflective of the wider cultural circulation and production of meaning. As a ‘public’, yet also ‘private’ and intimate resource contained within the epistolary act of writing, it is difficult to see how interviews, conducted retrospectively with

people who mourned these two events could capture the sort of information which condolence books contain. Specifically, the interiorised and mournful tropes, and sense of personal meaning and identity, which these events appeared to embody and invoke. Commensurately, it is difficult to see how the particular social dynamics of the interview, as a traditional sociological resource for gathering information, lend themselves to eliciting the sense of meaning — often unconsciously encrypted in writing as a source of the sociological private (Bailey, 2000) — which my thesis explores.

Whilst endeavouring to be reflexive in the claims I make about the meaning of condolence messages by placing myself on the same critical plane (Roseneil, 1993) as the more obvious subjects of my research, it is nevertheless possible that those who wrote messages in the condolence books would either contend or not recognise themselves in the analytical claims I make about them. Yet Beverley Skeggs (1995) insists that just because research subjects do not see themselves in or share the researchers interpretation of events does not invalidate research. The possible contestation of the findings of my research by those who signed condolence books is perhaps increasingly likely given that my analysis borrows extensively from the insights offered by psychoanalytic theory. Here we will recall from my discussions in chapter 2 of the thesis that the process by which an individual becomes conscious of what is unconscious is a most difficult and painstaking task. It is a process met by an unparalleled energy of resistance, by which an individual protects repressed feelings or thoughts against their integration into conscious awareness (Horney, 1966).

In this respect, I follow the precepts of psychoanalytic theory by suggesting, for instance, that the fantasised and unconscious element of messages is itself a compensatory device for dealing with loss (e.g. Elliott, 1999; Kristeva, 1989). Anthony Elliott (1999: 59), as we will recall from chapter 3 of the thesis, has suggested, albeit in a slightly different vein, that much of the fantasy content of the song-writing of John Lennon — in particular the lyrics to the song *Strawberry Fields Forever* — can be seen as a strategy for displacing the acute sense of loss Lennon had experienced throughout his own life (and when the Beatles retired from touring).⁷ In the same way, I suggest that a great many of the seemingly ‘trivial’ fantasised messages that people wrote in condolence books can be understood as a means by which individuals sought escape from the reality and oppressions of the ‘horrible present’ in which my two case-studies were constituted.

Indeed, when describing the concept of a ‘structure of feeling’ as a ‘particular sense of life, a particular community of experience hardly needing expression’ (Williams, 1984: 64), Raymond Williams points to its ‘delicate’, ‘least tangible’ and — most significantly in this regard — *unconscious manifestations* in the culture and cultural practices of a period (Williams, 1984: 64–5). Given this, and Freud’s notions of ‘resistance’, by which the unconscious is defended against attempts to raise these — often unpalatable — ‘truths’ to the level of consciousness, we should not be surprised if message signers do not see themselves in research findings.

⁷ Elliott locates the meaning of the song ‘*Strawberry Fields Forever*’ within Lennon’s childhood and his reported comments (Golson, 1981) that Strawberry Fields referred to a Salvation Army home for orphans, where ‘as a kid’ he and friends would sell bottles of home-made lemonade for a penny at their summer garden parties. Elliott suggests (1999: 59) that these comments of Lennon’s, that “we always had fun at Strawberry Fields” (in Golson, 1981), serve to illustrate that ‘by turning to pleasurable childhood memories Lennon displaced the acute sense of loss he felt when The Beatles retired

My analysis, in short, seeks to raise to the level of perception the internalisation of external objects: the shuttling (Elliott, 1994: 26) of inner and outer worlds, from which, according to Melanie Klein, a sense of self emerges. That is to say, the ways in which ‘objects’, through a process of internalisation, are transformed within the imaginary realm of the unconscious. My analysis underscores the ways in which external criteria enter fully into the construction of our most personal hopes and dreads; that social phenomena are not incidental to the forging of personal identity but constitute the inner texture of experience itself (Elliott, 1996: 6). My analysis of condolence messages serves to excavate the mutual penetration of inner and outer worlds; the *combinatoires* (Lash, 1997) of fantasy and culture from which human interiority is fabricated and sustained (Elliott, 1996).

In Search of Condolence Books: Practical Issues of Access and Selection

Before I could conceive negotiating access to the condolence books signed during my case-studies with the ‘gatekeepers’ of my research, I first needed to locate their precise whereabouts. I knew from memory and media reports of the time that condolence books had been opened for the public to sign in the aftermath of both the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana. In the wake of the Hillsborough disaster, condolence books — or books of remembrance (*Sheffield Star*, 17 April 1989; Comer, 1989) as they were variously referred to at the time — were opened by council authorities for the public to sign at Town Hall’s in Sheffield and Liverpool.

from touring’ (Elliott, 1999: 59). Moreover, they illustrate the ‘profound interconnections between selfhood, memory, and the poetic language of music’.

I could not, however, have anticipated how difficult it would be to trace the condolence books signed for the victims of Hillsborough when I first began my attempts to locate them in March 2000. Initial inquiries led me to contact the Town Hall's in Sheffield and Liverpool, from where I was passed to Sheffield City Council's bereavement service, responsible for burials, cremations and the general maintenance of the city's cemeteries. None of the people with whom I spoke at this stage were able to help in my search for the condolence books, other than to suggest alternative avenue's of inquiry by which I might hope to locate them. Various lines of inquiry led me to Liverpool F. C; the archives and public record's department of Liverpool City Library Services; and the Hillsborough Family Support Group (HFSG) — a campaign group established by families bereaved by the disaster with the aim of providing emotional support, whilst campaigning to re-open the official inquiry into the disaster and bring charges of criminal manslaughter against those persons seen as responsible for the disaster.⁸ It later became evident from my researches that many of the families bereaved by the disaster at Hillsborough had never even seen the books of condolence signed in the aftermath of the tragedy.

Nevertheless, from here my inquiries led me to the two cathedrals in the city of Liverpool: the Anglican and Metropolitan (or Roman Catholic Cathedral), where a memorial book

⁸ The Hillsborough Family Support Group waged a campaign spanning some eleven years for what they perceived as justice. The group's campaign for justice was halted after it failed to bring a private prosecution for manslaughter against the two senior police officers whose decision it was to give the order to open the perimeter gates allowing a surge of fans into the enclosed 'pens' which culminated in the deaths of ninety-six fans, mainly through asphyxiation. Both police officers were cleared of criminal negligence in July 2000. In February 1998 the then Home Secretary, Jack Straw, had earlier ruled, on the recommendations of Lord Justice Stuart-Smith's investigation, against re-opening the inquest into the deaths claiming insufficient material to justify a further public inquiry. For a comprehensive account of the background and implications of the verdicts of accidental death returned by Lord Justice Taylor in the initial inquiry into the public disaster and the background to the private prosecution for manslaughter brought by the families of the victims, see Scraton (2000). For a detailed account of perceived inadequacies in the legal processes, especially the inquests and their judicial review, see Scraton *et al* (1995). For an exposé of tabloid media reportage about the alleged behaviour of

containing the names of those who died at Hillsborough was kept. None of the people with whom I spoke at the city's two cathedrals knew of the whereabouts of the condolence books, which were routinely confused for the memorial book held at the Metropolitan Cathedral. It was at this point that I began to doubt the very existence of condolence books for the Hillsborough disaster. Unsure of the reliability of my own memory — had I, in light of events surrounding the death of Princess Diana, imagined the existence of condolence books for Hillsborough? — I reviewed newspapers and television news footage of the time to confirm my convictions. Despite confirmation of the books' existence, the people with whom I spoke at the city's two cathedrals assured me that they did not have the condolence books in their keeping. On the verge of giving up my quest to locate the whereabouts of the condolence books, and following the suggestions of my supervisor, I contacted the press with news of my difficulties in locating the whereabouts of the condolence books. I had, it should be said at this stage, already begun to conceive the possibility that I would be unable to locate their whereabouts.⁹

In May of 2000 I contacted a journalist at the *Guardian* who had written a number of articles on the Hillsborough disaster and the Hillsborough Family Support Group's "campaign for justice for the 96". Simultaneously, I contacted a journalist at the local *Liverpool Post and Echo* who seemed interested in running a public interest story on the

Liverpool fans in the days following the disaster, see Coleman *et al* (1990). For the findings and recommendations made by the official inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster, see the official reports by Lord Justice Taylor (1989, 1990).

⁹ In the event I had made contingencies for alternative research strategies and sources that would yield data germane to my research intentions. I began, for instance, to draw up a shortlist of people with whom I might interview to garner narrativised accounts and memories of their involvement in the disaster, however physically — if not psychically or emotionally — removed their involvement may have been. I have spoken already in this chapter of the difficulties of interviews (whether face-to-face or otherwise) in eliciting data of a sensitive and/or sociologically private (Bailey, 2000) nature. Nevertheless, it was important at this stage of my research — given the difficulties I had encountered in locating,

disappearance of the condolence books. On 25 May 2000 the *Liverpool Echo* ran a story on page two of its newspaper claiming ‘H’boro Books are Missing: Messages of condolence have “disappeared”’. In it, Liz Hull wrote that:

Thousands of messages of condolence written after the Hillsborough disaster have disappeared. People from across Britain expressed their sympathy through the books after the 1989 tragedy — but now no one seems to know what happened to the books. A spokesman for Liverpool City Council said they did not have the messages, but thought they had been sent to either Liverpool FC or the city’s Anglican cathedral.

(Liverpool Echo, 25 May 2000: 2)

The article went on to report the comments of spokespersons of Liverpool City Council, Liverpool F. C, and the Anglican Cathedral, all of whom claimed ‘they had never received’ the books. A spokesman for Liverpool City Council explained the logistical difficulties in storing condolence messages written for so many different victims, claiming that ‘when Princess Diana died the condolence books [signed in Liverpool] went to her next of kin to be held with those from the rest of the country at the Althorp estate’. A cathedral spokeswoman, meanwhile, was reported as claiming that the original condolence messages signed in the cathedral were sent to Anfield, the home of Liverpool F. C, and that the cathedral had ‘never received any messages from the town hall’. A spokesman for Liverpool F. C, meanwhile, was further quoted as claiming that we ‘do not’, nor ‘ever’ have ‘had them’ here. Liz Hull reported faithfully my comments to her that each of the authorities with whom I had spoken were keen to pass responsibility for the books whereabouts on to other agencies who were in some way connected with the tragedy.

never mind gaining permission to access, condolence books — that I begin to countenance alternative research strategies

The potential for scandal in this episode was made clear by the reported comments of Phil Hammond, of the Hillsborough Family Support Group, who was ‘concerned’ by the disappearance of the books. Sheila Coleman, co-author of published reports into the media reporting and legal processes following Hillsborough (Coleman *et al*, 1990; Scraton *et al*, 1995) and spokeswomen for the Hillsborough Justice Campaign — a break-away, broad-based, and more radical campaign group formed in 1998,¹⁰ was on record as saying that ‘if people took the time to write them [the messages] the least the local authority could do is keep them somewhere safe where people could have access to them’.

Following this, and within a day of publication of the story, I was contacted by Liz Hull at the *Liverpool Echo*, informing me of news of the whereabouts of the condolence books. On 27 May 2000, therefore, news that the condolence books had been found made the front page of the *Liverpool Echo* (‘Found!’ *Liverpool Echo*, 27 May 2000). Inside on page two of the paper, under the banner headline ‘Now H’boro books may go on show to public’, Liz Hull reported the discovery of the books. The books, she wrote:

were discovered in a locked filing cabinet by a worker at Liverpool [Anglican] Cathedral after reading about their disappearance in Thursday’s *Echo*. They were found in the office of one of the cathedral’s canons. Now they could be brought out of storage and put on permanent display for people in the city to read. Rt Rev Dr Rupert Hoare, Dean of Liverpool Cathedral said: “The Hillsborough books

should my endeavours in this regard come to nought.

¹⁰ The Hillsborough Campaign Group is more broad-based to the extent that it includes survivors and others sympathetic to their cause, as well as the families of those who died in the disaster. The original Hillsborough Family Support Group, formed days after the disaster by Trevor Hicks, who lost two daughters in the disaster, has, according to a report in the *Guardian* (May 8, 1999), only ever included families bereaved by the disaster. The report by Simon Hattenstone and Tom O’Sullivan (1999) tells of the tensions which have since developed between the two groups, ‘fuelled by a difference over tactics’. The Campaign Group, they suggest, ‘tired of being “reasonable” and “dignified”’ have favoured tactics ‘more in common with a strike: street protests, leafleting, boycotts, rallies. It wants to pursue fresh legal actions, but is determined to make a noise, too. The Support Group [HFSG] has responded by expelling some members who joined the Justice Campaign’ (Hattenstone and O’Sullivan, 1999).

have never been lost and have been kept safe by one of the canons of the cathedral. We will review where the books should be kept long term. I have had a chance to look at them and am very much moved by the heartfelt sentiments and feelings they express, and I fully understand that many people will want to know where they are being preserved". . . Phil Hammond, of the Hillsborough Family Support Group, said: "I'm really glad they have been found. It will be good for them to go where people can see them."

(Liverpool Echo, 27 May 2000: 2)

My three month struggle to locate the Hillsborough condolence books now at end, I set about negotiating permission to access them with the church authorities. Despite the unwelcome publicity that my efforts to trace the condolence books had generated for the Anglican Cathedral, the church authorities in Liverpool were accommodating of my request to view the books. After putting a formal request in writing, and following a preliminary visit to the cathedral in Liverpool in June of 2000 to meet with a senior cleric, canon Noel Vincent, in charge of the condolence books, I was granted access to the books for the purposes of my research. After a brief meeting with the canon I was taken to a vestry within the cathedral where I was allowed to browse through the seven books of condolence signed following the Hillsborough disaster. More than just casually peruse the messages contained within the condolence books, I used this opportunity to make a 'reconnaissance' of the data: to make a preliminary mental survey of what the books contained and what needed to be done to best facilitate the reproduction and retrieval of the data.

Whilst the books of condolence signed for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster were difficult to locate, yet unproblematic to access, the opposite was true of the books signed for Princess Diana. After making routine inquiries with my local Town Hall in Leicester,

where, like elsewhere throughout Britain, people had queued to sign condolence books for the late Princess, I was informed that all the books signed nation-wide had been sent to Diana's ancestral home at Althorp in Northamptonshire. In March of 2000, I contacted the authorities at Althorp with a view to gaining access to the condolence books signed for Princess Diana. Once again, as in the case of Hillsborough, I was asked to put in writing my formal request to view the books to Earl Spencer's private secretary, Diane Scott. After viewing my request, including the purposes for which I required access to the books, a decision, I was told, would be made as to whether or not to grant me permission to view the books.

When I received a reply to my request, however, in June of 2000, permission to view the books was denied on the grounds that the huge amount of books accumulated by the Althorp estate were insufficiently 'organised and catalogued' as to be 'made available for inspection'. Nevertheless, and not content to concede attempts to access the condolence books signed for Princess Diana, I telephoned Earl Spencer's secretary to discuss Althorp's rejection of my initial request. Following our conversation, David Horton-Fawkes, the general manager of the Althorp estate and visitor centre, invited me to Althorp to further explain my research and how I planned to use the data contained within the condolence books. After visiting Althorp in August 2000, and following discussions regarding my research intentions, I was again invited to put in writing my request to view the condolence books. On this occasion, my request was approved by the authorities at Althorp, who this time offered to provide me with a room in the family estate in which to do my research.

Nevertheless, it was clear from my conversations with David Horton-Fawkes heretofore that the Spencer family, perhaps not unreasonably, viewed the condolence books as their own private property. My endeavours to access the condolence books signed both for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster and, more especially, for Princess Diana, themselves invoke a series of issues central to discussions of ‘public’ and ‘private’. It is perhaps, on one level, not unreasonable for the Spencer family to regard the many thousands of cards, condolence messages, and various other ‘offerings’ sent to Althorp following Diana’s death, as their private property, — to one day be read by Diana’s sons William and Harry — in the same way as funeral cards, in private funerary practice, are retained by the family of the deceased. Nevertheless, this ‘sequestration’ of condolence books is perhaps, on another level, somewhat incongruous with the very public nature of the mourning and discourses that surrounded Diana’s death.

Condolence books themselves were, following the rhetoricality (Kelleher, 1999) of media discourses about Diana as the ‘People’s Princess’, ‘producerly’ (Fiske, 1990), popular and, above all, *of* ‘the People’. Here, Joe Kelleher (1999) provides an interesting, if complex and esoteric, argument by suggesting that much of the rhetoric and *rhetoricality* — as the art of persuasive speaking — that surrounded the Diana events, was a discursive technology and device by which widespread consent to the public mourning for Princess Diana was won. Kelleher cites Tony Blair’s performance-to-camera on the steps of Downing Street following Diana’s death as an act of rhetoricality *par excellence* — the statesman’s threnody (Kelleher, 1999: 79). Kelleher re-invokes the work of Samuel Ijsseling (1976) who has suggested that rhetoric ‘nearly always has something to do with property, with

acquired or supposed rights' (Ijsseling, 1976: 11, cited in Kelleher, 1999: 88). In so doing, Kelleher suggests a simultaneously ambivalent rhetorical relationship surrounding the Diana events between the deference towards, and 'transgressive challenge to', the prestige and privilege of royal authority (Kelleher, 1999: 88).

Rhetoric, Kelleher argues, summoned a range of 'peculiarly ambivalent identifications' (Kelleher, 1999: 85–6) during the Diana events. For it invoked simultaneously notions of a 'democratic' and sovereign people (in public demands that the Windsor's return from their Balmoral estate and *show* 'us' they 'cared', or that the royal standard be flown at half-mast over Buckingham Palace), with 'peculiarly symbolic (or "royal") operations of governance, power and privilege' (Kelleher, 1999: 86). Moreover, — and if rhetoric is invariably linked with property relations — Kelleher explores Princess Diana herself as the central referent of ownership during the mourning events which surrounded her death:

Perhaps the property at stake there was the Princess herself, through the demand that somehow the 'Queen of Hearts' might be ceremonially returned, by a royal family who had seemingly done with her anyway, to the hearts of the people who had become (and were all along) the rightful possessors and possesseees of her person. . . to the extent that 'possession only exists by virtue of the word' (Ijsseling, 1976: 11), the *discursive* ambivalence of the rhetoric makes its appearance, which is perhaps how we best recognize it. The return of rhetoric. . . activates ambivalence through instituting property disputes as discursiveness.

(Kelleher, 1999: 88–9)

Here a little is required by way of explanation, for what Kelleher appears to be suggesting is that contestations of property and privilege were themselves dispersed, and mediated by and through, a media amplified rhetorical discursivity. In the rhetorical performances of the

various actors involved in this unfolding drama — Blair's threnody and Diana's 'impressive somatic performance' (Kelleher, 1999: 88) in the by now infamous interview which Diana gave to the BBC *Panorama* programme in 1995 — various sections of 'we' the public were both 'interpellated' (thereby laying claim to some form of possession of Diana), and disenfranchised by an absence of meaningful ownership (see, for example, Elizabeth Wilson's 1997 essay). It is this latter experience, Kelleher writes, which left some of 'us' feeling that we were 'somehow missing the plot' (Kelleher, 1999: 89).

If possession, however, as Ijsseling (1976) suggests, exists only by virtue of the word — as the performativity of language; the enunciative and symbolic functions of the speech-act (for example, "with this ring I thee wed") — it nevertheless remains the case that the Spencer family, through *de facto* appropriation of the public messages of condolence signed for Princess Diana, have assumed ownership, in material form, of the public utterances that greeted her death. Issues of ownership and of the property relations of condolence books signed for Princess Diana are, however, complex. On the one hand, messages of condolence as traditionally conceived are written — as a source of comfort and act of solidarity — to and for the family of the deceased. From this perspective condolence books cannot be claimed as the 'people's property', for in the giving of 'gifts' we do not expect to have them returned to us. Unusually, however, in this case, the overwhelming majority of messages that people wrote (as we shall see in chapter 6) were addressed *to*, and were therefore presumably *for* Diana herself. At the same time, and as I have earlier intimated, it becomes apparent if we conceive the signing of condolence books as an inter-subjective speech- (or series of communication) events, that the messages that people wrote were intended for

other members of the speech-community-in mourning (Bakhtin, 1986). In this way, following the comments of Graham Dawson (1994: 24), it is clear — especially if we conceive the messages as epistolary narratives — that stories are always conceived and told with an audience in mind, whether actual or imagined. Following this logic, and the impossibility that Diana as the deceased could receive and thereby ‘appropriate’ the messages addressed dialogically *to* and *for* her (as the *hauntological*), there is a strong case to made for some kind of public display of the messages.

On this point a number of outstanding issues need briefly to be addressed. For one, protestations such as those that I have highlighted here regarding the property relations of the books (as the “people’s books”), may well, in light of Kelleher’s (1999) arguments, be seen simply as a product of media rhetoricality and the ‘moralizing discourses’ (Kelleher, 1999: 83) surrounding Diana’s death, by which people were ‘sutured’ to particular subject-positions. This said, it is nevertheless reasonable to assume that the books — like various other fiduciary property of the state which is held, however euphemistically, “in trust” under the custodianship of the monarchy — be put on proper public display for people to read. This, of course, could greatly be hastened by digital information technologies and the ‘virtual’ display of condolence messages via the world wide web. Think, for example, of Stephen Spielberg’s *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation* which has sought to videotape and preserve the testimonies of Holocaust survivors and witnesses.¹¹

Storing, Sampling and Cataloguing Condolence Data

¹¹ Since its establishment in 1994 Spielberg’s Visual History Foundation has collected over 50,000 eyewitness testimonies in 57 countires and 32 languages. For more information visit www.vhf.org.

Having established access to both sets of condolence books I faced having to decide upon the most expedient and viable methods of reproducing and retrieving the data; in addition to decisions regarding issues of sampling. In the case of the Hillsborough condolence books such a decision was unnecessary by virtue of the relatively small and ‘self-selecting’ sample of data which the books provided. The seven books signed in the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster provided a manageable and ‘ready-made’ sample of data.

The Diana books, however, necessitated a strategic rationale for selecting condolence books with which to work, for the authorities at Althorp kindly allowed me to select my own sample of books from the many thousands they held in their keeping. Unlike in the case of the Hillsborough disaster, condolence books had been signed and sent to Althorp from around the world. In order to maintain some consistency with the local-national¹² focus of the Hillsborough books, I restricted my focus on the Diana books to those signed within a British, or more particularly, English context. On my visit to Althorp in early November of 2000 I was guided by Diane Scott, private secretary to Earl Spencer, to a set of out-buildings where the many thousands of condolence books and personal tributes to Princess Diana were kept. In this, an unheated room measuring some 80 square meters, plastic storage crates filled with condolence books were stacked high to the ceiling. Here the condolence books were organised only to the extent that they were sorted into crates on the basis of their place of origin. I ‘randomly’ selected five books from a variety of places and locations within the English regions: Swindon in Wiltshire, Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire,

¹² Although signed locally in Liverpool, the Hillsborough books contained messages from visitors to Liverpool from elsewhere in the UK, as well as from overseas, who were presumably visiting Liverpool as tourists during the time of the

the Leeds deaf and blind club, South Kesteven District Council in Lincolnshire, and from a crate marked simply 'Yorkshire'. I took one further book, from Ashton-under-Lyne in Cheshire, should I require further data than that which was contained in the five books selected for analysis.

Decisions regarding how best to reproduce such a large volume of epistolary data at this stage presented something of a logistical headache. I would need considerable time to work with the condolence books from each of my case-studies and it was, therefore, impractical for me to do this *in situ* in the two locations where condolence books were held. Instead, I needed to devise a strategy for the reproduction (and later retrieval) of the data. In the first instance I entertained the idea of using a digital camera to record each of the pages from my sample of condolence books, from which I could 'down-load' images to a suitable computer software package. Such a strategy, however, I reasoned was impractical given that the glare produced by flash photography would likely reflect onto the pages thereby producing unreadable images. Following this I considered the use of the various software packages available for the textual analysis of data. Despite this I still required some method of recording the data in order that it could be input into a software package at some later date, were I to adopt the use of computer software in the management and analysis of my data.

Instead, I resolved to photocopy the condolence books from each of my samples and began the labour intensive task of photocopying each of the pages using facilities provided by the

Hillsborough disaster. For a discussion of mourning tourism and the ways in which the tourist can become inadvertently and accidentally moved by stumbling upon sites of mourning, see Walter (1999: 35).

Althorp visitor centre. I was careful to record the location from where each of the condolence books had been signed and to number each of the pages to facilitate the location and retrieval of particular messages.¹³ It was important that I retain the messages in the order in which they were written, so as to capture the linearity and continuity of message themes which previous research in this area has indicated. Walter (1999), for instance, reflecting on Bethan Jones' (1999) reported research on condolence books, has (as we saw earlier in chapter 1), suggested that:

Those sitting down to write in the books of condolence. . . would scan the previous few entries, and write their own variation on that page's emerging theme.

(Walter, 1999: 23)

Jones has herself suggested in this regard that messages in the paper books of condolence (as opposed to the internet messages which she also analysed), 'often ran in thematic blocks, with authors clearly reading the preceding messages before composing their own' (Jones, 1999: 205).

Quantitative Content Analysis of Condolence Books

Analysing Condolence Data According to Basic Content

Once the books had been fully catalogued by adding page numbers and recording their place of origin, I could begin the primary analysis of the data contained within them. Aside from the more 'impressionistic' readings of the condolence books I had made hitherto, in which I perused the books in a way borne more out of intellectual curiosity than a systematically devised method for recording their content, I set about implementing a

¹³ I followed exactly the same procedure for the Hillsborough condolence books, using the photocopying facilities

method for accurately recording the occurrence of particular themes and message types. In the Autumn of 2000 I began first by undertaking a systematic method for recording the quantitative occurrences of messages contained within the Hillsborough condolence books — as a rudimentary content analysis — followed in the Spring of 2001 by an analysis of the books signed for Princess Diana.

I did so, not least, as a means of systematically trawling the data set in order to gauge the ‘actual’ or empirical content of the books, but also by way of re-visiting my initial and impressionistic ‘readings’ of the data. This is not, however, to dismiss the significance of some of my hunches towards messages which were qualitatively rather than quantitatively represented. These qualitative messages, which, because of their numerical infrequency, are not represented in this, my quantitative ‘headcount’ (see table 1.1 and 1.2 in Appendix), can be seen as *ideographic* rather than *nomothetic*.¹⁴ That is to say, they reflect the distinctiveness and particularity of social experience and may or may not be representative of the commonalities of wider social experience. Sociology, as traditionally conceived, has for the most part been characterised by the *nomothetic* mode of epistemological activity; with the generality of things and the common features that they share rather than with the distinctiveness of the individual happening. These, nevertheless, are imperfect distinctions and contain the possibility that messages which were ostensibly distinctive and ideographic — by virtue, say, of their *mode* of expression — are also nomothetic; representative of wider social experience and the shared meanings of those who signed condolence books.

provided by the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool.

Qualitative research, by and large, where the intention is (sometimes) to explore people's subjective experiences and the social milieu through, and in, which they occur, can be seen to be characteristic of idiographic rather than nomothetic epistemological activity (Plummer, 1983). The aim of most qualitative research, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) remind us, is, unlike positivism's search for universal 'laws', 'downplayed in favour of detailed accounts of the concrete experience of life within a particular culture and of the beliefs and social rules that are used as resources within it' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 10).

Nevertheless, this quantitative exercise, wherein issues of quantity and/or recurrence are understood to have some significance, was not an end in itself but a preliminary heuristic device: the first step on the road towards organising the data into meaningful categories (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 36). It was in other words, a preliminary stage of methodically recording the 'actual' occurrences of particular messages; a method for extrapolating qualitative data from a considerably larger set of data. My numerical computation of the data contained within my sample of condolence books began with a simple 'headcount' of the signatures contained within each of them. The books signed for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster contained some 7,000 signatures, whilst in the case of the books signed for Princess Diana, I counted, and later analysed, 3,321 signatures. This disparity in numbers arose primarily as a consequence both of variations in the size of each condolence book and from an inability to predict in advance the number of signatures that each book

¹⁴ The terms 'ideographic' and 'nomothetic' have been widely credited to a speech made in 1894 by the German philosopher Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915). For discussion of Windelband's original use of the terms, see Lamiell

contained. In any event, my analysis proper was qualitative and not quantitative in nature. Besides, all 3,321 signatures in the books signed for Princess Diana were accompanied by a — sometimes lengthy — message, compared to the 2,195 signatures which contained no message in the Hillsborough condolence books. Once this figure had been subtracted from the total number of signatures in the Hillsborough books it left a total of 4,800 signed messages, much closer to the 3,321 signed messages contained within the condolence books signed for Princess Diana.

Condoling by Proxy

Whilst the overwhelming majority of signatures contained within condolence books were ostensibly signed by the individual who had waited in-line to write their message, a number of messages appeared to be signed by proxy on behalf of others who were not physically present at the book signing's. For instance, a single message was often signed — in the same style of handwriting, and this is the key — on behalf of several different individuals. Take the following message, and widely repeated theme, from one of the books signed for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster:

In loving memory of the Liverpool fans who lost their lives at
Hillsborough.
You will never walk alone.
You will walk with God.

Doreen, Ellen, Thelma and relatives

In such instances, where handwriting style was uniformly represented, I counted these multiple signatures as one signature, so as to avoid artificially inflating the 'actual' number

(1999). For an interesting account of Windelband's ideas as characteristic of *fin-de-siècle* debates within European social, political and philosophical thought, see Baumer (1977), especially part IV, ch. 5.

of people who queued to sign condolence books. Where, however, in the multiple signature of messages there was a discernible difference in handwriting style, I counted each of these as individual signatures. Messages signed by couples, for instance, say, by ‘Mr and Mrs Johnston’, were, for reasons which I will outline below, assigned specifically to a category of ‘couples’.

Coding Condolence Messages by Social Composition

From here I moved towards providing some breakdown of the social composition of the people who signed condolence books in each of my case-studies in public mourning. On the basis of my cursory readings of my sample of condolence books, and the information provided by message signers (principally gender, and in the case of children, age)¹⁵ I created male/female categories with which to colour-code the data. Little else in terms of social characteristics, other than gender, could be discerned from the data. Here I colour-coded by hand (with a view to later counting) each signature using one of two colours to denote the apparent gender profile, depending upon the name given by the signer. This was straight forward enough where routine and gender specific forenames such as Janet or John, or gendered titles like Mr or Mrs, were given. This was less so, however, where unisex forenames, or where only the initials of the signer were provided. In these cases a category of ‘gender unknown’ was created.

By assigning messages ostensibly signed by an individual on behalf of a partner to a category for ‘couples’ I avoided making assumptions about the gender of the ‘actual’ signer

based on my hunches about the data. For it is common under patriarchal conventions of written English for women to sign epistolary messages on behalf of their male partners and for their partner's (fore- and sur-) name to take precedence over their own, say, for example, a message signed 'Mr and Mrs John Smith' by Mrs Smith. Indeed, upon marriage, the woman adopts the man's surname in an act of political sovereignty which, as Anthony Elliott (1999: 77) reminds us, was dubbed the 'Name of the Father' by French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan.¹⁶ Nevertheless, it would have been presumptuous to automatically make such assumptions, *post hoc*, about the gender of a message signer/writer without being there at their execution to witness and record these social characteristics (which, of course, I was unable to do). Aside from domestic or household labour which, as recent evidence continues to suggest (e.g. Sullivan, 2000), is routinely and disproportionately undertaken by women, much epistolary, kinship and emotional labour (e.g. Hochschild, 1983) is routinely undertaken by women on behalf of children, husbands and male partners. This is borne out in both sets of condolence data, where 45 per cent of the contributors to the books signed for Princess Diana were women (compared to 10 per cent of men), and where 33 per cent of the contributors to the Hillsborough books were women (compared to 22 per cent of men).

It is clear from the preceding paragraphs that even when dealing with the most basic of data such as this that the data do not 'speak for themselves'. Rarely are the data relating to one particular topic to be found neatly bundled together at the same spot in each interview, or in

¹⁵ It was common in both sets of data gathered from condolence book signing for children to give their name followed by their age.

this case, condolence books (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 35). The data themselves had first to be processed and required that I make strategic decisions about their categorisation. In this sense, even the seemingly most routine aspect of recording (for the purposes of historical and scholarly record) the ‘actual’ and numerical content of condolence books can be seen as a heuristic activity. In this way I was not simply, as Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 29) put it, counting but already beginning to attach ‘codes as a way of identifying and reordering data’, allowing ‘the data to be thought about in new and different ways’.

Preliminary Coding of Condolences by Message Content

Once I had established some general picture of the social, specifically, gender profile of the people who signed condolence books in each of my two case-studies, I began recording the variety and numerical occurrences of particular types of message based on content. That is to say, the things people actually wrote as opposed to the later thematic decontextualisation of the data (Tesch, 1990). In practice this again involved colour-coding by hand each of the particular types of utterances contained within a single message. This primarily involved coding the messages according to the actual or indigenous content of messages. Here Anselm Strauss (1987) usefully distinguishes between sociologically constructed codes and *in vivo* or indigenous codes which derive from the terms and language used by the participants of social research themselves.

¹⁶ Elliott (1999: 77–8) writes of Yoko Ono, who, profoundly troubled by the logic of this patriarchal convention, wrote the song “Mrs Lennon”. This, Elliott suggests, was a means of grappling with the ways in which patriarchy refashions women’s psychic reality and the ways in which patriarchy itself is experienced in and through language.

More often than not, as can be evidenced from the message I cited earlier, and again here, from the Hillsborough books of condolence, messages contained several overlapping and/or ‘competing’ thematic categories:

In loving memory of the Liverpool fans who lost their lives at
Hillsborough.
You will never walk alone.
You will walk with God.

Doreen, Ellen, Thelma and relatives

In this instance the message can be seen to combine secular, popular (through reference to the popular song and adopted anthem of Liverpool F.C, “You’ll Never Walk Alone”) and religious sentiment in a ‘unique’ (Davie, 1993) matrix reflective of the local structures of feeling on Merseyside. Elsewhere, throughout both the Diana and Hillsborough books it was common for messages to combine secular with (popular-) religious themes. Similarly, in the Diana books, messages combined references to various aspects of Diana’s life: for example, her charity work, perceived compassion, and treatment at the hands of the royal family. With this in mind, and using various colours and symbols, I systematically trawled each condolence book, placing a signifying mark against the various themes that appeared in each message. This marking, in this case, of photocopied transcripts of pages taken from actual condolence books, is what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 185) elsewhere describe as ‘coding the record’. In turn this corresponded to a key of *in vivo* (Strauss, 1987) categories that I had created on the basis of previously surveying the data and which served to identify the code(s) which I had placed by each message.

Each time I came upon a new theme that I had not previously accounted for in my key of codes, I created a new category, giving each new theme an unused colour or symbol. After going through each message, page by page, book by book, placing a mark by messages which contained the theme for which I was looking, I calculated the number of times this theme appeared within a book. I did this for each book using the categories of message I had previously discerned or discovered whilst coding, writing the figure for each message type or social category in a gridded table which I produced for each condolence book. Upon completion, I added the figures for each category together to produce a final table of contents, one for the Hillsborough books (see table 1.1 in Appendix), another for my sample of condolence books signed for Princess Diana (see 1.2 in Appendix).

In the case of the Hillsborough books I discerned some fourteen different *in vivo* (Strauss, 1987) categories of message, ranging, for example, from simple (popular-) religious inscriptions such as “God Bless” to more secular messages of condolence such as “In deepest sympathy”. In the case of the Diana books I initially recorded twenty-seven different, yet overlapping, indigenous categories of message ranging, from messages which spoke of Diana’s charitable work, to those which referred to Diana as the “People’s Princess”.

Whilst these categories emerged from the data, they were, nevertheless, at the same time unconsciously informed and structured by my ‘theoretical’ and substantive reading around the topics of my case-studies previous to undertaking this content analysis. That is to say, on the *basis of all others texts* I had encountered. For instance, whilst a great many of the

messages people wrote in the Hillsborough books left traces of local identity (say, those which made direct or implicit reference to the city of Liverpool, its people, or places within it), my decision to label this category ‘place’ was undoubtedly influenced by my theoretical and empirical readings in this area from the work of human geographers (e.g. Bale, 1991, 1994; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974). Categories and concepts are, as Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 31) remind us, ‘identified or constructed from prior material, theoretical frameworks, research questions, or the data themselves’.

Whilst these figures represent the ‘raw’ content of messages within the condolence books, it was also possible to distinguish a variety of broader message types based on the *form* or *mode* of expression. In the Hillsborough books these were primarily three-fold, consisting of (1) poems, (2) signed messages, and (3) signatures containing no message. In the Diana books, whilst there were a small number of poems, all signatures, as I have earlier suggested, contained, without exception, some form of individually contributed epistolary message.

Again, even in this most routine exercise of content analysis; of recording the numerical occurrences of particular utterances based on what people wrote in condolence books, the preliminary or ‘raw’ data were, nevertheless, constructed to the extent that they were each assigned to a particular message type. Coding of this sort, as I learned through working closely with the data, and as Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 37) remind us, is ‘never a mechanistic activity’ for the categories into which we put pieces of data ‘are by no means automatic’ but require strategic decision making on our part as researchers. It is therefore an

interpretive and analytical process, for as Mieke Bal (1985) suggests when referring to the systematic analysis of narrative, it does not imply ‘some kind of machine into which one inserts a text at one end and expects an adequate description to roll out at the other’ (Bal, 1985: 3). The point, as Coffey and Atkinson (1996) argue, is not to search for the ‘right’ set of codes — for any other analyst could conceptualise the data in myriad different ways — but ‘to recognize them for what they are: links between particular segments of data and the categories we want to use in order to conceptualize those segments’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 45).

Condensing the Quantitative Data: From Codes to Themes

Having at this point established fourteen different ‘quantitative’ varieties of message content within the Hillsborough books (see table 1.1, Appendix) and twenty-seven within the Diana books (see table 1.2, Appendix), I moved to re-code, and in so doing, *reconceptualise* the data into broader *thematic* categories. Some of my coding categories were already sufficiently broad as to accommodate a variety of expressions of the same theme. For example, the category marked ‘religious content’ included a range of verbalisations along the lines of, say, the colloquial and (quasi-) religious phrase “God Bless”, through “our prayers are with you at this time”, to more liturgical inscriptions and psalmic citations (see table 1.1 and 1.2, in Appendix). Nevertheless, there remained room to amalgamate other message types into broader thematic categories of message. Messages which repeated the themes of remembrance (“We will not forget you” or “You will never be forgotten”), of peace and tranquillity (“RIP” or “Eternal peace”), and of general

condolence (“In deepest sympathy”) were assimilated into a broader category of ‘conventional secular message’ (see table 2.1 and 2.2, Appendix).

This process of data ‘reduction’, wherein I further condensed the data into broad thematic categories can be seen as a strategy for reducing a large and unwieldy set of data to manageable portions or ‘chunks’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest here that in reality such a process, of indexing and attaching labels to the data, and of reducing it to a set of ‘equivalence classes and categories’, comprises a mixture of ‘simplification’ and ‘complication’ of the data. Coding, they suggest:

[N]eed not be viewed simply as reducing data to some general, common denominators. Rather it can be used to expand, transform, and reconceptualize data, opening up more diverse analytical possibilities. . . The general analytic approach here is not to simplify the data but to open them up in order to interrogate them further, to try to identify and speculate about further features.

(Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 29–30)

This process of condensing data remained an essentially preparatory process, allowing me to think and reflect upon each of my two data sets, from where comparisons could be drawn. Such a process of data ‘reduction’ provided me with a clear overview or aerial vantage point from which to view the data as a whole. Having worked closely with the data, coding each individual message by hand, I was now able, to move from a position of abstraction to one of generality, and as we shall see, back again, as I moved to qualitatively analyse individual messages reflective of wider structures of feeling.

From Quantitative to Qualitative: Reconceptualising Condolence Data

At this point I began recording qualitatively significant and/or unusual messages from each set of condolence book data by entering them within a database; extrapolating qualitatively significant messages from the larger set of ‘quantitatively’ occurring data. Once I had done this for each book I produced a summary sheet of the key points about each book. Insofar as the incidences of data for which I was looking were not neatly bundled together at particular locations within the condolence books, I began by physically ‘disaggregating’ or ‘decontextualising’ (Tesch, 1990) the data. In practice this involved a process of re-ordering the messages, cutting and pasting segments of the data to create files on my computer containing long and short messages, as well as those expressed through poetry. Once accomplished, and I had a clear idea of the categories of message contained within the qualitative data, I began coding the data by identifying *in vivo* (Strauss, 1987) codes, building up a criteria of categories based on the content of messages themselves. Each message was given several codes depending upon the content of the message. The following message, for instance, from the Hillsborough books was given two codes denoting both its religious content and sense in which it conveys the local structure of feeling:

Liver birds on their chest. God only takes the best.

(Indecipherable signature)

Once I had completed this for each book within my two sets of condolence data, I could begin to pool all the messages from each data set, ordering them according to what I perceived were their over-arching and outstanding themes. This involved tagging each

message with one or more code depending upon the categories contained within it. Having determined the over-arching theme within each message I cut and pasted the messages, placing them under labelled categories or sub-headings within my word-processor. In the case of the Diana books I placed each of the qualitatively significant messages under twenty-five different qualitative labels, whilst for the Hillsborough books I identified eighteen different thematic codes which I ‘tagged’ onto each message. It became clear from these categories that this process of coding the data by decontextualising and removing it from its original context, was informed, on the one hand, by theoretical frameworks and, on the other, by the data themselves. Some of the data were, moreover, coded according to their *form* or *style*, as this often came to be the message’s dominant ‘theme’. Some messages, for instance, were coded as ‘intertextual’ because of the ways in which they indexed and drew meaning from other popular ‘texts’ already in circulation. It became evident upon reading some of these messages that ultimate meaning lay outside the message itself in some other ill-defined cultural space (Fiske, 1990), between condolence messages as text and other ‘texts’ from which they inevitably derived meaning. In this sense, and because popular texts have ‘leaky boundaries’ (Fiske, 1990: 126) from which they flow into one another, I pursued the deconstructivist impulse (Harvey, 1989) to look inside one text for another.

Analysing Condolence Book Messages

From here, and having undertaken various stages of coding the data — itself a heuristic activity¹⁷ — including a final stage of data ‘simplification’, I began my analysis of the

qualitative meaning of individual messages. This was achieved principally through providing a clear *visual display* of the data in such a way that it could be easily read and understood. Specifically, this was undertaken via the use of analytic diagrams linking concepts and themes. Huberman and Miles (1994) suggest that data display of this sort is an important part of the analytical process, helping us to visualise the data as a whole, from where it can be further reconceptualised. Coffey and Atkinson (1996), meanwhile, argue that codes and conceptualisations of this sort are not set in stone but should be thought of as organising principles for they:

are our own creations, in that we identify and select them ourselves. They are tools to think with. They can be expanded, changed, or scrapped altogether as our ideas develop through repeated interactions with the data.

(Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 32)

Coding in this sense should not be seen as an activity which is performed once and for all, but as an on-going process open to later revision and reconceptualisation. In asking questions of the data in this way — concretely, for instance, what justified placing a particular message type within a particular thematic category? Or why choose this one and not another? For the data did not always readily fit into the thematic categories I had created, or else straddled more than one category. Some types of qualitative messages were so widespread as to permeate all thematic categories of message. Again, Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest that such ‘exceptions, misfits, and “negative” findings should be seen as having as much’ analytic importance as do the easily coded data. Once in a position

¹⁷ As Coffey and Atkinson (1996) remind us, ‘our decision making implies analytic ideas at *every* stage of the coding process’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 47, emphasis added).

to view the data across all the various codes in this way, they suggest that one should not be tempted to ‘ignore incidents, events, individuals, or chunks of data that do not “fit” into the codes’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 47).

The creation of thematic categories into which I could ‘drop’ existing types of message expanded and contracted until I was sufficiently happy that they could fully accommodate the types of message contained within them. In other words, I ‘played with’ and ‘explored’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 46) each of these categories until I was convinced that each thematic category was sufficiently load-bearing as to withstand the questions I asked of it. Dey (1993) further suggests that once the data are displayed in coded form, that the categories and codes which have been created can, and should, be explored to test their sustainability. Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 46) suggest also that an important element of data interpretation is the practice, where necessary, of abandoning, changing, re-sorting and renaming the categories and codes which have been created. Indeed, I did just that, and did not settle upon the final names and content of categories until quite late in the process of analysing the data, for the data did not interpret themselves, nor in all cases did thematic categories of message spring readily to mind. Aside from analysing the qualitative meaning inscribed within particular individual messages, I looked routinely, as Delamont (2002) suggests, to identify patterns, themes, and commonalities — as well as contrasts, paradoxes and irregularities — between, within, and amongst my two sets of condolence book data. This enabled a position from which I could make generalisable statements about the data.

Memory Work and the Autobiographical Method

Memory work, as Peter Redman (1999: 139) usefully reminds us, was first developed by a group of feminist writers associated with the German libertarian Marxist journal *Das Argument* and, as Susannah Radstone (2000: 18) suggests, was brought to the attention of a British audience by the publication in 1987 of Frigga Haug's *Female Sexualisation: A Collective Work of Memory* (Haug *et al*, 1987).¹⁸ In essence, memory work is not concerned with the historical accuracy of what is remembered but with the social and cultural processes of memory itself, as well as with the ways in which memory is seen as central to lived experience. This of course has particular pertinence to social groups and identities who have experienced traumatic or painful pasts; in which personal (and collective) memories oppressively foreground and continue to exert influence both upon the present and the future. More routinely, however, memories, as Thomas Butler (1989: 12) suggests, are central to constitutions of the self more generally, for they remind us who we are, constituting us to the core.

Memory Work, as conceived by Haug *et al* (1987), involves the writing and collective analysis of personal memories, often of self, but invariably of others too with whom we are daily engaged and who help shape our own sense of self (Reissman, 1993). As I have suggested, memory work is less concerned with an attempt to unravel and rediscover a previously undiscovered past (King, 1997) than it is with exploring the socially and culturally mediated processes of remembering. In this way, the method of memory work

¹⁸ For an account of memory work's reception and later adaptation and use by sections of postgraduate students and staff at the CCCS Birmingham, see Clare and Johnson (2000).

seeks to harness the subjective experiences of memory, using it to trace out the imbrication of culturally mediated narratives and unconscious processes within memory itself. For in this way, as Annette Kuhn (2000) suggests, memory can be seen not as a blind-process but as the active production of meaning:

Once voiced, even in ‘inner speech’, memory is shaped by secondary vision: it is always already a text, a signifying system. . . for while it might refer to past events and experiences, memory is neither pure experience nor pure event. Memory is an account, always discursive, always already textual.

(Kuhn, 2000: 189)

Nevertheless, as Radstone (2000: 11) suggests, this recognition, that memories are ‘complex productions shaped by diverse narratives and genres’ replete ‘with absences, silences, condensations and displacements’ does not reduce them to fiction, for:

Although it is now acknowledged. . . that memory’s tropes — of metaphor and metonymy — may be similar to those of poetry, and although it is now recognised that memory’s condensations and displacements are similar to those found in dreams, memory work does not reduce memory to fiction, to dream or to poetry. . . Memories, that is, continue to be memories and it is their relation to lived historical experience that constitutes their specificity.

(Radstone, 2000: 11)

In this way, as Kuhn (2000) again suggests, memory work can be defined as: the ‘conscious and purposive staging of memory’; an ‘active process of remembering which takes an inquiring attitude towards the past and the activity of its (re)constructions through memory’ (Kuhn, 2000: 186). Whilst memory work is the active and conscious staging of memory, the content and processes of remembering can be seen to operate unconsciously ‘behind the

backs' of the person experiencing the memory, for Minerva's owl, as Hegel famously put it in the preface to *Philosophy of Law*, flies only at night (Hegel, cited in Plekhanov, 1972: 102, 311n). Researchers working within this particular field of memory tell regularly of the unanticipated memories and outcomes which the use of memory work frequently produces (e.g. Clare and Johnson, 2000: 212; Haug, 2000: 161). In turn, this points to the fluidity of memory and the unconscious processes involved in remembering and serves to further undercut and destabilise Cartesian notions of the self as a priori governed by rational forces of which the subject is consciously aware. Seen in this light, memory work

undercuts the assumptions about the transparency or the authenticity of what is remembered, treating it not as 'truth' but as evidence of a particular sort: material for interpretation, to be interrogated, mined for its meanings and its possibilities.

(Kuhn, 2000: 186)

It is principally this, the discursive emphasis upon memory and de-centred notions of the self, that distinguishes memory work from the recent turn to biography within aspects of sociology (e.g. Chamberlayne *et al*, 2000). This focus within sociology upon individual lives as the site of social meaning, although welcome and long over due (Rustin, 2000), has tended, for the most part, to concentrate upon conscious aspects of the self as unproblematically represented in literary or documentary sources. Such considerations have more in common with the traditional literary genres of biography and autobiography: as the textual construction (-graphy) of a unitary and coherent self (auto-), as reflected in a linear retrospective on the life of oneself or an other (bio-), than they do memory work.

Where these genres, of auto/biography¹⁹ routinely serve to conceal and cover over the contradictions which might otherwise make a life (and the self) appear inconsistent and contradictory, memory work seeks to undermine the conscious self-editing of text by demanding that the writing of memories be undertaken rapidly and within a limited period of time. This is intended not only to limit the scope for the conscious editing and volume of material produced, but so as to make the contradictions of everyday life available for analysis (Clare and Johnson, 2000: 198). Here, then, the memory work method can be seen to approximate the methods of ‘free-association’ and ‘automatism’ first developed in Freudian psychoanalysis. In memory work, however, attention is most closely paid not to the slips and silences of the patient as analysand (as in traditional psychoanalysis), but to the aporias and ‘sudden ideas’²⁰ which, with proper analysis, become manifest within, and can be teased out of, the *text*. Herein lies the fundamental difference between psychoanalysis and memory work. For although approximating to some of the techniques developed within psychoanalysis, like free-association and the injunction to obey the ‘basic rule’ to write that which ‘comes most urgently to mind’ (Redman, 1999: 139), memory work lays no claim to analyse the individual as producer of a particular story. Instead, attention is focused upon the text and the discourse by which the subject *speaks* and is

¹⁹ Stanley’s (1992, 1993) notion of ‘auto/biography’ challenges the genre distinction between biography and autobiography and between reified and dichotomised ordering principles such as self/other, public/private, immediacy/memory (Stanley, 1993). It serves further to undercut rationalist assumptions about the subject by drawing attention to the radical fluidity (Elliott, 1999) between self and other. Elliott (1999), meanwhile, discusses the routine slippage, projection and psychic splitting which occurs between self and other during the writing of the biographical subject. For a discussion of these issues in popular biographies of John Lennon, see Elliott (1999: ch.1). See also Evans (1993), who usefully points to the blurring of distinctions between the genres of biography and autobiography by suggesting that biography tells us much, if not more, about the biographer than it does about the subject of biography.

²⁰ The term ‘free association’ properly derives not from Freud but from Brill’s mistranslation of Freud’s term, *freier Einfall*, into English. Freud’s German use of the term *Einfall*, as Charles Rycroft (1995: 59) helpfully suggests, means ‘irruption’ or ‘sudden idea’, not ‘association’ as it has been translated. Freud’s use of the concept refers to ideas which occur to the analysand spontaneously and without straining. The ‘basic rule’, then, of ‘free-association’ as practised in

spoken. This is perhaps also where memory work and the recent turn to socio-biography within aspects of sociology part company. For in this way, Michael Rustin (2000) suggests that the turn to biography within sociology can be seen as emerging from a general dissatisfaction with versions of (post-) structuralism, wherein ‘once all the decodeable attributes of individual expression have been identified and traced to their cultural context’, the individual becomes something of a vanishing point; ‘a residue that lies beyond explanation or specification (Rustin, 2000: 42). Crucially, however, what memory work and aspects of the turn to biography within sociology share in common is a desire both to reverse the traditional ‘top-down’ focus of social science by using individual experience as a starting point from which to trace out more social and cultural processes affective of, and by which, the individual is constituted.

In this light, both memory work, which is my concern here, and the turn to biography within sociology, grow out of a general concern and unease at the lacunae in our knowledge about individual lives. This neglect of the individual within social science, which has filtered biography out of its fields of interest, has been principally filled by the arts and humanities who have ‘been working in various imaginative biographical registers for centuries’ (Rustin, 200: 35). Rustin points in particular to literary fiction, and more recently to cinema, for their ability to capture and express aspects of individual lives — in fictional characters such as Raskolnikov, Estragon and Vladimir, or Anna Karenina — as representative of social being (Rustin, 2000: 49). A similar point has been made recently by the literary theorist and novelist David Lodge (2001, 2002), who has pointed to the novel as a key device within

psychoanalysis is that the analysand obey the injunction to tell the analyst whatever comes to mind without reservation or

European culture for expressing the texture or ‘qualia’ of human subjectivity; for relating phenomenal experience and seemingly providing a window on the consciousness of others. It is principally this, and the growing disillusionment within sections of sociology at the empiricist, and largely objectivist, orientation that until recently had come to dominate the disciplines which make up the social sciences, which, according to Rustin, has led to a ‘biographical turn’ representing something of a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1960).²¹ Following this, and the powers of generalisation upon which the truth-claims of objectivist aspects of social science have been traditionally rooted; as not in the particular, the individual or the local but in quantitatively occurring and readily observable phenomena, Rustin (2000: 49), suggests that understanding of the social world can be equally accomplished through the luminosity of individual lives.

The putatively reported ‘memory wave’ (Kansteiner, 2002) sweeping the social sciences and humanities, like the ‘biographical turn’ within sociology, is diverse and wide-ranging and can be traced to a variety of sources. It can be seen, for instance, in the psychoanalytic method developed by Freud, which as I have suggested in chapter 2 of the thesis, de-centred rationalist conceptions of knowledge by re-directing attention towards an as yet uncharted subjective realm of the unconscious. The psychoanalytic method first pioneered by Freud (as the ‘talking cure’) was itself rooted in the use of individual case-histories, told in narrative form, in which patients were encouraged to recall and reflect upon early childhood memories. The harnessing of memory in psychoanalysis through attempts to summon that

restraint.

which has been forgotten or displaced within the unconscious (either in dreams or in the unconscious repression of painful memories), is central to understanding the anxiety and neurotic mechanisms which arise from a failure to diminish and filter-out unwanted memories.

Memory work can also be seen to have an analogue in the so-called ‘narrative turn’ affecting large swathes of social science, which has begun to explore the ways in which culture itself has increasingly begun to ‘speak to itself about the nature and import of its own speech’ (Nash, 1990: *xi*). That this should be the case can be seen principally from the fact that narrative is the chief means by which memories are expressed. It can also, as Rustin (2000: 41) again points out in reference to the ‘biographical turn’, be traced to developments from the 1960s onwards occurring outside of the academy itself; from the widespread challenge to cultural authority as ‘new “voices” of generation, gender, class, and ethnicity demanded to be heard’. In this way, memory work and the ‘biographical turn’ within the social sciences can also be seen as developing from a dissatisfaction with ‘historicist’ accounts of the past which focus not only upon the historical accuracy of *what* is said, but upon the social status of *he* (for traditional biography has tended to concentrate upon the deeds of ‘great’ men) *who* is saying it — namely, a focus upon the personal histories of the great and the good. Against this traditional focus of biography upon the lives and deeds of ‘great men’, the growing use of socio-biography and of memory work

²¹ Rustin (2000), points to notable exceptions to this objectivist dominance of sociology, not least in the phenomenology of Wilhelm Dilthey and the importation of his ideas amongst a generation of Weberian sociologists.

within social science has rightly shifted attention to ‘ordinary’ individuals as ‘historical personages’ (Haug, 2000) in their own right.²²

Here too, we can point to the work of a post 1960s generation of radical historians and their focus upon oral testimonies which challenged ‘received’ views of ‘H’istory (e.g. Passerini, 1983; Popular Memory Group, 1998).²³ In this way the search for counter-histories and personal narratives serves to reverse the established order of things by beginning not with ‘society’ or ‘dominant ideas’ but with the personal memories of groups and/or individuals and the ways in which these are related to wider culture. To this extent the turn to memory and biography within social science can be said to be a ‘bottom-up’ approach, providing an alternative to ‘top-down’ models of cultural transmission, such as structuralism, and its starting point as ideology. Instead, as Radstone (2000: 11) suggests, memory work can be seen as a tool for exploring the ways in which individuals work themselves into existing social structures; and more insidiously, the ways in which subjects come to capitulate to their own subjugation. The provenance of memory work can also be traced to the work of feminist historians (e.g. Chamberlain, 1975; Roberts, 1975; Rowbotham and McCrindle, 1977), who have used oral testimony to substantiate and illuminate marginalised histories and domestic lives, as another aspect of the ‘sociological private’ (Ribbens McCarthy and

²² Haug (2000), in a memory work project with local women from in and around the Hamburg region of Germany, discovered that on the whole the women tended to downgrade the value of their own experiences and not to think of themselves as historical personages. To counter the ‘excessively brief’ and ‘laconic’ statements which the women made about themselves when asked to write in the first person, Haug and the team of researchers from Hamburg University asked the women to write in the third person, thereby encouraging the women to see themselves as historical personages whose memories were worth recording (Haug, 2000: 176n).

²³ This important, yet relatively under theorised, perspective regarding the subjectivity and political nature of historical remembering was perhaps given its most significant fillip by the critique in 1982 of oral history’s empiricist premises by the Popular Memory Group at CCCS Birmingham (Popular Memory Group, 1998). In it they challenged oral history’s unquestioned validation of the individual and presentation of the past which they perceived as epistemologically impoverished (Chamberlayne *et al*, 2000: 4).

Edwards, 2001)²⁴ that would otherwise have remained inaccessible through conventional research methodologies. It is also here, at the nexus of self, the unconscious, and intimate relationships (Bailey, 2000), that sociologists have increasingly turned to the use of biographical and epistolary sources (e.g. Plummer, 1983; Stanley, 1984)²⁵ to help illuminate elements of the social. This seeming paradigm shift within the social sciences is also reflected in the turn towards reflexivity within general in sociology, especially among feminist sociologists (e.g. Cotterill and Letherby, 1993; Roseneil, 1993; Stanley, 1992, 1993).

Memory work, then, does not attempt to provide an alternative ‘truth’ or counter-historical account to prevailing views of ‘H’istory by seeking simply to substitute one version of historical ‘truth’ for another. Neither does it attempt to provide access to a ‘pure’ source of self; of ‘lived experience’ as unsullied by cultural meaning, for as we have seen, there can be no access to a ‘pure’ source of memory untainted by the filtering effects of culture. Aspects of Lacanian psychoanalysis and of post-structuralist notions of a de-centred self have, as we saw in chapter 3 of the thesis, gone further than this by challenging the very existence of the self outside of the confines of language. Memory work, nevertheless, operates at the interstice of dualism within social science, holding in tension the binaries of

²⁴ Chamberlayne *et al* (2000: 5) remind us that the focus upon oral and biographical sources by feminist historians during the 1970s served to provide a glimpse into ordinary women’s lives which had hitherto been obscured by a reliance upon more conventional documentary sources. This new found focus helped illuminate aspects of the feminine ‘private’, from issues of domestic life and labour in general, to the lived experience of motherhood, sexuality and birth control. For further accounts of oral histories of this sort, see Gittens (1977), Hall (1977).

²⁵ Plummer (1983) identifies Thomas and Znaniecki’s *The Polish Peasant* (1958), first published between 1918–20, as the first substantive sociological foray into the previously uncharted terrain of oral and life histories, linking, for the first time, individual biography with social structure.

subjectivity and objectivity, inner and outer worlds, or individual and society, with which it routinely operates (Radstone, 2000: 11).

Despite this, there is still considerable unease and anxiety within sociology, even amongst those embracing the use of memory and narrative, as to its status and value. Ruth Linden's (1993) ventures in experimental ethnography and autobiography, whilst claiming to challenge the 'rhetoric of positivism', acknowledges her own feelings of anxiety experienced throughout the project. Linden reports the recurring question within 'inner speech', of "but is it sociology?", which gnawed away at her throughout the research project. A routine presumption about subjectivist epistemologies in general is that they engage uncritically with the self or others as the particular focus of their research, whilst criticism levelled at memory work in particular has tended to perceive it as a form 'self-indulgence' or 'navel gazing'. Perhaps understandably, given sociology's epistemological premises which have sought meaning in the typicality of 'social facts', there has been considerable reluctance among many of its practitioners to willingly embrace methods which at first sight appear to concentrate upon the particularity of single lives. Attempts therefore by sociologists — and similarly, as Judith Okely (1992) also reminds us, by anthropologists — to incorporate autobiography within their academic work have typically been met by a benign form of resistance in the shape of caustic cynicism. Okely thus suggests that a popular 'put down' of autobiography within anthropology has been to pejoratively label it 'narcissism' (Llobera, 1987: 118, cited in Okely, 1992: 2). Yet Okely provides a fitting rejoinder to such accusations by usefully pointing to the distinction between the classical Greek myth of narcissism, as self-adoration, and the reflexive

incorporation of critical self-scrutiny and self-awareness within one's research (as the classical Greek injunction to 'know thyself'). Okely goes further by suggesting 'those who protect the self from scrutiny could well be labelled self-satisfied and arrogant in presuming their presence and relations with others to be unproblematic' (Okely, 1992: 2).

Doing Memory Work

Memory work, as conceived by Haug *et al* (1987) and others²⁶ is based upon a collective process of writing and analysis. Specific topics or themes are first identified, individually written about, and are then subjected to a process of collective analysis. During this intermediate stage of memory work, individuals, as Peter Redman (1999) writes, are encouraged to:

write about the memories triggered by these topics or themes, following a characteristic process in which a key image or incident is focused upon, and the concrete details, sights, smells and feelings surrounding this are built up in an active effort of remembrance and with the minimum attempt to interpret, analyse or select according to any criteria of 'relevance' (Haug, *et al*, 1987: 71–2).

(Redman, 1999: 138)

Like Redman (1999), however, my own use of memory work involved an adaptation of the collective process of writing and analysis. Instead of the collective process of writing and analysis my own memory work was conducted alone. Nevertheless, I followed the basic precepts of the memory work method advocated by Haug *et al* (1987) and Clare and Johnson (2000), and began by identifying various themes on which to write short 'story fragments'. I initially identified some eleven different storied themes about which to write.

Whilst the majority of these were directly connected to my own memories and experiences of my two case-studies in public mourning, many others were only indirectly related and concerned wider issues of identification, mourning and loss experienced in my childhood and early adult life. These themes were not, as is the case in more traditional autobiography, an attempt to write a ‘whole life’ but focused instead principally upon personal experiences and memories related to my two case-studies.

With all of this in this mind I set about the task of writing down my memories in connection with each of the eleven themes I had previously identified. The bulk of my writing was conducted during the summer months of July and August 2001. At this point I made the strategic decision to conduct the writing of my memory work out of doors, *al fresco*, away from the routine pressures of daily life which serve to inhibit the flow of long-term memory. Armed only with a pen and hard-bound book of sheets of A4 paper, I spent the long summer days in the shade provided by my local park writing my memory work. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is in these contexts that long-term memory is most easily accessed. Freud, for instance, advocated that in therapeutic sessions resistance to the analysand’s unconscious is best facilitated by relaxation, whilst it has been a long established practice for writers, both academic and literary, to retreat to remote locations free of the distractions that might otherwise hinder creative thinking. The memory work group which met at the CCCS Birmingham between 1982–6, themselves retreated to the Cotswolds for a week of concentrated work (Clare and Johnson, 2000: 207).

²⁶ For example, the group at CCCS Birmingham which met regularly between 1982 and 1986. This is not to be confused with other groups, such as the Popular Memory Group (1982), which met during this period at the CCCS Birmingham and which frequently shared overlapping themes and membership (Clare and Johnson, 2000: 222*n*).

It is worthwhile noting here that the practical or ‘working memory’ upon which we daily rely is, in essence, limited to the short-term recall of practical or routinely purposeful information (appointments to keep, basic food items to buy as part of our weekly shop and so forth). That which is not of immediate practical value, or has long since been forgotten, is secreted within the recesses of long-term memory and is that which is perhaps closest to our unconscious. It is the earliest memories and experiences of which we are largely unconscious, which continue to exert considerable influence throughout our later adult lives. The displacement, often of painful, memories within long-term memory serves perhaps the rather more practical function of forgetting. For to live in, and thereby remain wedded to, a traumatic and painful past is, according to Freud, as we saw in chapter 2 of the thesis, to experience the psychological condition of melancholia; as an unresolved aspect of mourning. Nevertheless, even pleasurable memories are displaced by the need to ‘get on’ with everyday life.

That which is perhaps most striking and paradoxical, however, is that events which at the time were experienced as unpleasant or painful can come to be remembered with fondness. In this light memory can be seen to serve an important analgesic function: of either transforming bad experiences into good memories or by retaining only good memories whilst filtering out unwanted bad ones. This capacity and propensity for nostalgia, as the circumvention of memory (Lasch, 1991: 82–3), has been capitalised upon and augmented by the heritage industries of post-industrial societies. This cultural fetishisation of memory (and events within living memory), can be seen in the ‘theme parks’ which attempt to recreate the hardships of war time experience (the Eden camp in North Yorkshire) and in

the commodified re-packaging of the past into saleable consumer goods (the High Street retailer *Past Times*). Seen in this light, nostalgia, as the culturally mediated yearning for the past, can be seen as a corollary of fantasy; a compensatory device for dealing with loss (Elliott, 1999: 59). The flip-side of pleasurable remembering of this sort is of course the neurosis which Freud termed repetition-compulsion, where the individual as the site of memory is forced to continually 'act-out' a painful or traumatic past.

Aside from this, my use of memory work brought with it a train of difficulties which I had not previously anticipated. The experience of undertaking memory work was, at once emotionally absorbing and unsettling. Peter Redman (1999: 139) has written in this way of his experiences of memory work as 'incredibly absorbing and intense'. Where at the outset I began by writing my memories connected principally with the eleven themes I had identified in advance, I felt also impelled whilst writing these memories to write of things which came most urgently to mind (Redman, 1999). I wrote about — and in so doing revisited and relived — painful 'dammed-up' memories; of personal mourning and loss, which until this point I had avoided thinking about. I wrote, for instance, about my mourning of the death of my grandmother from cancer, and of my 'unhappy' first year away from home at university. I wrote also of very early childhood memories, so distant in fact that I came to doubt their occurrence, thinking maybe that they had become memories constructed through the stories of Others, and had the need to check their accuracy with my mother. These 'flashes' of memory, which caught me 'unawares' whilst writing my stories on themes previously identified, I either broke away to write, thus endeavouring to capture

the particular ‘moment’ and immediacy of the memory, or else made a note to write about such memories at a later date.

Not only does this serve to illustrate the ‘basic rule’ of memory within psychoanalytic considerations of the unconscious: that all lines of thought, no matter how seemingly ‘irrelevant’, lead to that which is significant, but it demonstrates the unpredictable ways in which memories are triggered. Frigga Haug (2000: 161), writes of the unforeseen surprises that memory work produces for its writers. Mariette Clare (2000: 212) has written in this way of the unbidden tears precipitated by the particular recollection of memories from her teenage years. Clare also writes of the unforeseen risks of emotional exposure embodied in the practice of memory work and of the unforeseen reception by others of the memories we make available for public analysis.

The practice of memory work can, therefore, be seen to carry with it a number of risks, not least the risk of unleashing a range of personal anxieties in the process of making available for others a range of disclosures which had hitherto remained private. Notwithstanding the narrative practices which exist for disavowing and exculpating ourselves of particular past’s and previous aspects of our former selves, memory work and the practice of writing the self can in this way be seen as a subversive activity, for it forces us to cast doubt upon our selves in order to make ourselves appear credible to others (Haug, 2000: 175). It is, in short, a practice that challenges our own preconceptions about ourselves and the ways in which subjectivity itself is constructed through the iterability of story-telling and narratives practices of the self.

My use of memory work generated a range of vexed questions and issues too numerous to discuss in detail here, but which are nevertheless worthwhile mentioning in brief. Amongst the thorny issues with which I wrestled were: when to stop doing memory work (for the writing of memory triggered many others which, although ostensibly unconnected with my two case-studies in public mourning, I felt compelled to write about, and which generated a huge amount of material); the inevitable temptation to write longer stories in order to clarify the ‘contradictions’ and ‘inconsistencies’ of the self which emerged through the shorter story fragments written within a specified time limit; and the thorny issue of finding an appropriate balance in narrative style, between writing for the self and/or writing with a sufficient degree of clarity and qualification so that others may fully understand the stories I told.

Coding and Analysing Memory Work

Finally, once I had completed the writing of my memory work, sixteen stories in all (see boxed text below), I set about the process of, first, coding the data as a preliminary step towards its analysis, from which meaningful conclusions could eventually be drawn. In essence this involved various stages of data simplification and complication (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996), and of decontextualising and recontextualising (Tesch, 1990) the data, using a procedure akin to that which I discussed earlier in this chapter in reference to my coding of condolence book data.

This process of coding began simply by word-processing each of the hand written stories as a means both of facilitating their later storage and retrieval, and of making their reading and

analysis easier on the eye. Once this was complete I began coding the data using the method adopted by Peter Redman (1999: 143). In it Redman follows the procedure which I have touch upon earlier and which Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 185) describe as ‘coding the record’. That is to say, I made marginal comments and identified ‘categories, themes and examples’ on the printed copies of my reproduced stories, so helping to retain the ‘integrity and “locatedness”’ of the stories as they were first conceived. In this first reading I was concerned only with noting the occurrence of particular words, phrases and themes, thereby providing only a ‘very thin and flat set of categories’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 40).

Stories Written during Memory Work

Stories of Mourning and Loss

- ‘Saturday 15 April 1989’ (on hearing the news of the Hillsborough disaster)
- ‘The Week Following the Hillsborough Disaster’
- ‘The Week Following Diana’s Death’
- ‘Beautiful Woman Dies’ (on hearing the news of the death of Princess Diana)
- ‘Steeling Memories’ (a story about photography)
- ‘On Mourning a “Thing”’ (my earliest memory of experiencing mourning and loss’)

Football Stories

- ‘My First Match’ (on being taken to Hillsborough as a child)
- ‘Field of Dreams’ (a story about sportised scopophilia)
- ‘On Saturday Afternoons’ (a story about my inculcation in football)
- ‘Crushing’ (a story about a close encounter with crushing at Hillsborough)
- ‘Some Early Recollections of Watching Wednesday’ (sub-cultural teenage investments in football fandom)

Epiphany Stories

- ‘On Spiritual-Political Enlightenment’ (a story of my own ‘interpellation’)
- ‘College Days’ (investments in discourses of ‘intellectualism’)
- ‘My First Year at University’ (a story about home-sickness and the death of my grandmother)

Stories of Intellectual Transition and Ambivalence

‘My Visit to Althorp’

‘My Visit to Liverpool’ (stories of research visits to access condolence books)

From here, however, I moved simultaneously to a higher level both of abstraction and generality, undertaking a second reading as a means of attempting to ‘do justice to the dense descriptive language’ (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 40) used in the stories themselves. In this way I attempted to go beyond the first reading by exploring the deep structure (Gremais, 1983) of the meaning(s) encrypted in the language of stories. In this second reading I therefore sought to make sense of the stories as a whole, focusing principally upon their functionality (Labov, 1972) and other narrative devices routinely deployed in storytelling. Here, following Greimas’s (1983) argument that meaning is ‘phenomenal’: that it exists only as a signifying whole beyond the limits of the sentence, I endeavoured not to dwell too long on particular words or phrases within the text but to consider the meaning embedded within the story as a whole.

To this extent, memory work’s intention to deconstruct the text, to ‘clear a path and not simply follow the suggested meaning that the writer has conveyed in the text’, but instead to ‘make visible any gaps, ruptures or contradictions’ (Haug, 2000: 160) owes much to Lacan’s combination of Saussurean semiotic linguistics and Freudian psychoanalysis. Arguably, Lacan’s single greatest contribution in this regard has been — borrowing from Roman Jakobson notions of metaphor and metonymy — to theorise the imbrication of social and linguistic processes within the unconscious. For here of course Lacan regards the contents of the unconscious as signifiers. The linguistic means through which the primary

processes of the unconscious depend for their expression, and distortion (Grosz, 1990), as represented in the twin poles of metaphor/condensation and metonymy/displacement.

In addition to this second reading of the stories produced through memory work, I developed a criteria of interrogative questions (reproduced as specimen 1.1 in Appendix) which could be asked of each story. This check-list of questions against which the stories could be read ranged from the straightforward ('what is the manifest content of the story; its main themes, and recurring words?'), to the more complex ('what is the story's latent content? What is being said by not being said. What is implied in the story?'). Once the various stages of reading were complete I produced an A4 summary sheet, including the major themes contained within each story. This was a key stage in moving away from a reliance upon the primary or 'raw' data itself, towards secondary summaries, for this was an important strategy in helping to make the data manageable. As measure of avoiding the common-sense psychologising which has a tendency to impose itself by the back door (Haug, 2000: 157–159), I adopted a third-person narrative when referring to myself as author.

Finally, the last stage in this process was to categorise the stories according to their overriding thematic content. In practice this involved the further reduction of A4 summary sheets to a list of key words by which the content of stories could be readily ascertained. This again pertains to the visualisation or data display which Huberman and Miles (1994) recommend as a key element of the analytical process. Once the over-arching themes within each story had been identified a clearer picture of the categories of story with which I was

dealing began to emerge. Here again, this thematisation of story type was informed both by wider theoretical knowledge and by what the data themselves appeared to be telling me.

In the first instance three different types of story were discerned: (1) those which tell of my investments in football (of its intersection with sportised masculinity, processes of schooling, and as cultural resource mediating inter-personal relations); (2) stories which tell of ‘epiphany moments’ (Denzin, 1988) and of my ‘interpellation’ by left-wing political discourses during my adolescence; and (3) stories which, either explicitly or implicitly, relate to issues of mourning and loss. Each of the different stories can be seen, more or less, as corresponding to different periods and different aspects of myself as I moved through the ‘chain’ of discourse (Miller, 1977–8: 25–6). The first set of stories can be seen, to relate to my late childhood and early adolescence, the second to my adolescence and early adult years, while the third cut across all periods of the my life. I later created a fourth category for accommodating stories which did not ‘fit’ within existing categories. These set of stories are those which inadvertently relate my own intellectual movement and sense of ambivalence towards the ‘Diana events’ which occurred during the process of undertaking this research. They are stories which, with careful analysis, make perceptible my own residual dis/investments in these events.

In this chapter I have endeavoured to explain the rationale behind my combined use of condolence books and data drawn from memory work, suggesting that both of these are best conceived as particular ‘moments’ of meaning within a wider circuit of cultural production. At the same time, I have suggested that my dual methods serve to help close up the

imbalance in power which exists between researcher and researched, as well as to point to the role of the researcher as an active producer of research outcomes and knowledge about the social world. Following this, I have suggested that the textual data which this thesis considers is rich in meaning reflective of social identities and wider social and cultural practices. I have outlined routine methodological dilemmas and theoretical antinomies encountered during research, pointing to ways in which these were overcome. I have attempted to outline the precepts of the method known as memory work and to locate some of its origins within wider changes occurring inside and outside of the intellectual academy. In what follows (chapters 5 and 6), I attempt to situate the condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana as reflective of local and global structures of feeling and meaning, whilst beyond this, in chapter 7, I attempt to explore my own dis/investments of meaning that became accrued in these two events.

INTRODUCING BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE

In recent years the opening and signing of books of condolence following public disasters and the deaths of public figures has become a widespread feature of contemporary public mourning practices. From the Hillsborough disaster in 1989, through the death of Princess Diana in 1997, to the tragic deaths of the Cambridgeshire school-girls Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in 2002, condolence books have become all but ubiquitous during episodes of public mourning of the sort which this thesis considers.¹ Indeed, so widespread has the injunction to sign books of condolence become that when Marks & Spencer announced its decision in April 2001 to close its stores in mainland Europe, staff in its Paris store opened a book of condolences for Parisian devotees of the store and British expatriates to sign (*Independent*, 7 April 2001).

Even more striking, the opening and signing of books of condolence appear to be ostensibly without historical precedent. From the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, through the death of Winston Churchill in 1965, to the death of John Lennon in 1980, my research has found no record of the public signing of books of condolence. What did in fact become evident from my researches was that the popular appeal of condolence book signing following high-profile public disasters and the deaths of well-known

¹ Recent examples include the opening of condolence books following the death of popular BBC television presenter Jill Dando in 1998, of former Beatle George Harrison in 2001, and following the deaths of HRH Princess Margaret and Her Majesty the Queen Mother in the winter of 2002. Books of condolence were also opened for the public to sign following the events of September 11 2001, the murder of the two ten-year-olds Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman; and the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster of 2003. In addition to 'traditional' paper books of condolence, electronic (and thereby globally available), condolence books now provide a readily accessible means by which members of the international public can express their condolences.

public figures has now increasingly begun to be taken up in the mourning for ‘ordinary’ members of public at large.²

Notwithstanding the claims of researchers who suggest that condolence book signing can be seen as a reversion to a more traditional form of socially proscribed mourning that was prevalent during the Victorian period (e.g. Jones, 1999), or that it represents a ‘formal (religious)’ variety of mourning ritual (e.g. Walter, 1991b), my research suggests that the messages contained in the condolence books I analysed are, *inter alia*, indicative of contemporary cultural and linguistic forms; of bricolage (Jameson, 1991), polyphony (Bakhtin, 1984), and *intertextuality* (Kristeva, 1984, 1986) characteristic of postmodernism. If, as Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawn and others (1983) have suggested, modernity (and modern institutions) relies not only upon pre-existing traditions but *creates new ones*, then the opening and signing of condolence books can, as such, be seen as an ‘invented tradition.’ For whilst the signing of condolence books is as we have seen for some (e.g. Jones, 1999; Walter, 1991b), resonant of formalised Victorian mourning practices, their actual use has only recently been pressed into service. Thus, Hobsbawn suggests that many nineteenth and twentieth century ‘traditions’ which at first sight appear or claim to be old are in fact quite recent in origin

² A cursory survey of internet websites suggests that the opening of both paper and electronic condolence books for less distinguished, ‘ordinary’ members of the public, is a recent addition to the ceremonial practices surrounding death. Folklorists might see the wider provenance of this in the epistolary mourning practices which reached their apogee in the Victorian period — as arguably one of the most literate societies in recorded history. It is here that the practice of sending condolence cards and — especially among the professional and business classes — holograph letters of condolence, first became widely established. The messages written in condolence books can also perhaps be likened to the epistolary notes routinely attached to flowers in more ‘social private’ instances of mourning. Here epistolary messages tend not to be enclosed in envelopes but are left open with the express purpose of allowing others to read them, thereby affirming, normalising and validating their contents (Francis *et al*, 1999: 124).

and sometimes invented. The contact therefore claimed with the past is, according to Hobsbawm, 'largely factitious'.³

These discussions aside, I use the two chapters which follow these prefatory comments to report the substantive empirical findings from my research into the condolence books signed in the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster and following the death of Princess Diana. In each I discuss separately the contents of condolence books from each of these events, whilst attempting to draw out the similarities, differences, and wider cultural significance for contemporary society at large. Using actual examples of the messages people wrote, and drawing upon a variety of theoretical frameworks for their interpretation, amongst them, deconstructivist, psychoanalytic, post-structuralist, and socio-linguistic, I suggest that the dialogic and polyphonic relations (c.f. Bakhtin) which underpin condolence book signing says much about inter-personal relations and intersubjectivity in conditions of (multi-) mediatised postmodernity.

From this perspective, condolence book signing of this sort can be seen as part of a wider series of *communication events*, wherein a diverse variety of, often mutually competing, communities and fan groups temporarily coalesce. Drawing upon the socio-linguistic 'speech act' theory of Mikhail Bakhtin and other early twentieth century Russian theorists of language, most notably the work of P. N. Medvedev and V. N. Voloshinov (who, collectively, became known as the Bakhtin circle), I suggest that the practice of condolence book signing is a performative iteration through which the identity of the signer is narratively summoned. Following the Bakhtin circle's assertion

³ In response Giddens (1997: 93) has argued that whilst the concept of 'invented tradition' may appear to be something of a contradiction in terms, upon closer scrutiny, it turns out to be something of a tautology. 'For *all* traditions', Giddens writes, 'are invented traditions'. The 'genuineness' of tradition, according to Giddens, derives its

that language is inherently social in nature: that meaning emerges *only* in dialogic relations *between people*, I argue that condolence books represent (and draw upon) materially situated *speech communities* — however contingent — engaged in *inter-* and *intra-*group dialogue.

At the same time I simultaneously seek to problematise a range of issues bound up with condolence book signing. For instance, and following Foucault's (1979) discussions of authorial intentionality, I ask — if only implicitly — what *is* an author as conceived in the act of condolence book signing? What is a condolence message and how might we begin to unpack its intentionality? How is the problematic between sender and addressee constituted in condolence book signing? Whom, for instance, is the writer of condolence book messages writing? Following this, and my earlier reference to Anthony Elliott's (Elliott, 1999: 11) musings on the significance of loss for culture at large in previous chapter's of the thesis, for whom, we might ask, is the mourner mourning in these episodes of public mourning? For as I have hitherto sought to demonstrate, mourning — as psycho-social process — carries considerable symbolic freight, unleashing a range of (frequently 'dammed-up') dis/investments and dis/identifications which until this point may otherwise have remained unacknowledged. To what extent also, following Franz Kafka's meditations (1964, 1999) regarding the existential impossibility and absurdity of intersubjective communication through writing, can the messages contained within condolence books be seen as a form of *intrasubjective* dialogue with the self. Kafka's invocation of the problematic between sending and addressing is especially pertinent in this regard, for it suggests the possibility that

authority and authenticity not from having been established for aeons, nor from how accurately it encapsulates the past, but from the connection of ritual practice and formulaic truth. For further discussion, see Giddens (1997: 63–5).

condolences are written as much for self as they are for others; that condolence messages are conceived with existential as well as communicative intent.⁴

In the first of these chapters, my analysis of the Hillsborough books of condolence, I begin — before going on to discuss the substantive themes which emerge from my analysis — by outlining a case for Liverpool exceptionalism, providing a brief history of the sense of ‘otherness’ which characterise discursive formations of Liverpoolian identity. It is this sense of ‘otherness’ which is perhaps most strongly reflected in the messages contained within the Hillsborough condolence books. For clearly, those people who queued to sign books of condolence did not arrive at them a *tabula rasa*. Here, then, I attempt to locate the dialogic utterances and ‘inner speech’⁵ (Volosinov, 1976) of those people who wrote messages in the condolence books within a local and particular ensemble of historically constituted social (and political) relations — what Raymond Williams (1984) has elsewhere referred to as a ‘local structure of feeling’. That is to say, the predominant themes to emerge from my analysis of the Hillsborough books of condolence are unmistakably borne of the concrete material lives (and identities) of communities on Merseyside during the late 1980s.

⁴ In *Letters to Milena* (1999) Kafka suggests that in the epistolary practice of writing, the one who writes denudes himself [*sic*] before the ‘ghosts’ who ‘read’, and in so doing, re-write the words of he [*sic*] who writes. The ‘ghosts’ to which Kafka metaphorically refers are the invisible and quasi-physical ‘spirits’ which insert themselves between thinking and writing. According to Kafka, in writing we lay ourselves bare to these ghosts, who, peering over our shoulders as we write, determine the content of what is (and what is not) said. In epistolary address, according to Kafka, because of the strictures which language places upon expression (we can never truly express in words the convictions of our love for an other), the author is writing to himself. Because the ‘ghosts’ who sit on our shoulders reject and return the words we use to us, our thoughts, according to Kafka, just as in the writing of a personal journal or diary, are written but not communicated; written but not read. Kafka’s comments, it would seem, neglect to consider that a motivating factor in the production of letters and diaries is that they later be read, sometimes posthumously, by those for whom they were — if only subconsciously — conceived. Kafka’s very notion of ‘ghosts’, if somewhat paradoxically, concedes that our written words, even if undelivered, are always conceived with others in mind. For an interesting discussion on the antinomies of inter- versus intra- subjective dialogue in Kafka’s thinking, see Koopman (2003).

⁵ Volosinov’s conception of language, in contrast to Kafka’s, including his notion of ‘inner speech’ is, *ab initio*, social territory, for the social milieu in which it is conceived ‘reach right to the inner depths of the psyche’ (Dentith, 1995: 19). From this perspective, there is ‘no such thing as thinking outside orientation toward possible expression and, hence, outside the *social orientation* of that expression’ (Dentith, 1995: 134, emphasis added).

The distinctive texture and meaning of these messages is, then, indexed to a particular, yet widely shared, community of experience; so widespread that it hardly requires expression (Williams, 1984) among those who inhabit this particular ‘structure of feeling’. Such a ‘structure of feeling’ is perhaps also akin to the notion of ‘habitus’ first developed by Norbert Elias and later taken up in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1979), which I elaborated in chapter 1: as a collective social psychology in which the fortunes of those living within a geographical area ‘become sedimented into the habitus of its individual members’ (Elias, 1996: 19). The pervasiveness of just such a ‘local structure of feeling’ can also be felt by the ways in which it penetrates the ‘inner landscape’ of those who inhabit the culturally situated historical, material (and geo-political) *forms*⁶ through which ‘ordinary’ lives are routinely lived. The concrete set of social relations which, as varieties of structuralism have reminded us, exist (relatively) independently and *objectively* of the individuals who constitute them, are then returned to us, using Richard Johnson’s (1986) notion of a ‘cultural circuit’, in the *subjectively* transformed phantasmagoria of condolence messages. They can be seen, in a slightly different light following Freud’s 1924 essay, *A note upon the “mystic writing-pad”*, as impressions left upon the repressed unconscious. Here we will recall from my discussions in chapter 3 of the thesis, the ways in which the psyche is likened to a child’s writing apparatus,

⁶ Johnson (1986: 282) presents a case for a ‘Marx-influenced’ cultural studies by suggesting that culture be viewed as the combination of consciousness and ideology. Johnson reminds us that where Marx’s analyses is routinely concerned with production; with theorising the commodity-form, it was also concerned with theorising the production of consciousness and ideology within historically-specific circumstances. In this way, just as individuals sustain themselves through economic and material (re)production, so they sustain and (re)produce themselves *subjectively*. An important analogue of economic production in Marx’s theorising is, therefore, the production of consciousness or ‘species-being’, as Marx puts it in the 1844 *Manuscripts* using the Feuerbachian derived concept. That objectively existing structural or economic *forms* are experienced and inhabited *subjectively* can be further evidenced by Marx’s concept of alienation (*entfremdung*). For it is the organisation of economic production within society at a particular stage of historical development that determines the social relations of production and with it man’s [*sic*] species-being. It is thus in the objectively existing conditions (or laws) of capitalist economic production that men [*sic*] *subjectively* experience estrangement from their own species being. For Johnson, then, cultural studies too is concerned with production: with the production of *historical forms of consciousness or subjectivity*, or the *subjective forms by which we live or the subjective side of social relations*’ (Johnson, 1986: 280).

wherein the inscriptions made by the child upon the celluloid surface remain on an underlying wax pad.

In other words, then, and *pace* the suggestion by Scott Lash (1997: 150) that speech-act-based socio-linguistics explores utterances in abstraction of everyday embedded social practices, I begin from a premise of linguistic materialism: that speech (both ‘inner’ and outer) — as an aspect of the psychic interiority which characterises the personal or ‘private’ domain — is indexical to social processes which shape subjectivity. To this extent, there is certain inseparability of social, political and economic processes which characterise ‘society’ — as that which is experienced as ‘exterior’; and the inner realm of human interiority, which is characterised, amongst other things, as the *taking-in* of this social exterior.

My analysis of the Hillsborough books of condolence in chapter 5 is followed in chapter 6 by a discussion of the key themes to emerge from my analysis of a sample of the condolence books signed for Princess Diana. Here, building upon my interpretation of the messages contained within the Hillsborough books of condolence, I suggest that the messages reflect both the sense of iconicity which the ‘Diana figure’ (Johnson, 1999) embodied and the expansive spaces this provided for a polyvalent range of subjective identifications (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a). The messages contained within the Diana books can be seen to represent a form of *women’s writing*⁷ (Pearce, 1994), for they provide a positive space for women to celebrate their subjectivity. Indeed, they can further be construed as dialogue *between* women: as writing *by* women *for* other women

⁷ I use this, following Pearce (1994) and the debates which she traces regarding ‘gynocriticism’ (Showalter, 1986), not in a biologically essentialist sense but to describe the thematic, stylistic and genre *différance* of women’s writing. In this way, the messages contained within the condolence books signed for Princess Diana can be seen as attempts to challenge, and dialogue with, existing structures of patriarchal discourse.

perceived to be their equals (Pearce, 1994: 102). More importantly, the expressivist genre conventions ushered by the Diana books of condolence appear to operate independently of the actual gender of the message signers themselves, for men as well as women were 'interpellated' by the discourses which Diana helped publicly inaugurate. In this sense, and following the work of Patricia Yaegar (1988), the expressivist feminine speech adopted in the Diana books addresses the silences which are routine throughout dominant and hegemonically constituted masculine discourse(s). Instead, and by a particular subterfuge (Yaegar, 1988: 30), men are 'persuaded' to speak in tones sympathetic to, and consonant with, a particular type of popular feminine expressivism.

Modes of Expression

Following this and the particular *tone* in which messages are addressed, the books of condolence which I analysed can be said to contain three discernibly different message types or *modes of expression*: (1) those which carry some form of *epistolary* address; (2) those expressed using the *poeticity* of language; and (3) those which carry *only* the inscription of the *signature* of its bearer. Whilst the Hillsborough books of condolence contain all three of these modes of expression, the Diana books contain only messages expressed in epistolary or poetic form. As I go on to suggest in chapters 5 and 6 which follow, this is perhaps reflective of the more 'civic' and dutiful mourning occasioned by the Hillsborough disaster compared to the multifarious issues of celebrity, *iconicity* and self-other relations which the life and death of Princess Diana invoked.

Insofar therefore as a third of the contributors to the Hillsborough books left *only* a signature, they can be said, following Walters (1991b) observations, to be more

characteristic of a ‘formal’ or ‘civic’ practice associated with public mourning. Here I wish merely to suggest that those who left only a signature can be seen more readily as fulfilling a dutiful obligation to the deceased (and families bereaved by the disaster) than those who left longer messages suggestive of a wider identificatory and interpellatory ‘injunction’ to mourn. At the same time, however, the signature (and iterative act of signing) are underscored by a sense of pathos and historicity which outstrips the simplicity of the signature itself. For here, as Bennington and Derrida (1993) suggest, the signature is capable of detaching itself and of functioning in the absence of its bearer; that the act of signing is an attempt to mark in writing that which is elsewhere enunciated in speech.⁸ Whilst the signature, as Bennington and Derrida remind us (1993), provides poor security for the authenticity of writing, it nevertheless, in the case of condolence book signing, marks an attempt on the part of its bearer to *testify* and take responsibility for a series of profound emotions associated with loss. In this way, the condolence signature — especially if we consider the Latin etymology of the term condolence: as combining *com*, meaning ‘together’, and *dolere*, meaning to ‘grieve’ — marks a substantive attempt to express sympathy with the bereaved. Taken together, in the condolence books which contain them, each individual signature represents a collective enterprise; an attempt, however facile, to share the burden of loss, to reaffirm our bonds to humanity by ‘recognition’ (Benjamin, 1990) of an other’s suffering (Zunin and Zunin, 1992). At the same time, the signature, as Derrida and Bennington (1993) also suggests, bears an intimate relation to death itself, for it announces the death of its bearer:

⁸ The signature, according to Derrida, whilst attempting to mark the ‘I-here-now’ of enunciated speech, is, however, ‘contaminated’ not only by virtue of being detachable from its bearer, but by its very iterability. The signature cannot, moreover, guarantee the unified agency of emission. It is, for instance, repeatable by others besides its actual bearer, opening up the possibility of falsity and simulacrum.

So we shall say that even while I am alive, my name marks my death. It already bears the death of its bearer. It is already the name of the dead person, the anticipated memory of a departure. The mark which identifies me, which makes me rather than anyone else, deappropriates me immediately by announcing my death, separating me a priori from the same self it constitutes or secures.

(Bennington and Derrida, 1993: 148)

Following this, the *poeticity* of messages: as the stylised transformation of the emotion or event so described (Jakobson, 1981), can be seen in a variety of euphonic linguistic devices, from the creative wordplay of language fabricated out of colloquial or local useage, to the deployment of rhyming couplets and longer pieces of poetry as traditionally conceived. Roman Jakobson (1981) has famously identified the intrinsic contingency and temporal and cultural instability of what passes for poetry, observing that ‘the borderline dividing what is a work of poetry from what is not is less stable than the frontiers of the Chinese empire’s territories (Jakobson, 1981: 741). Nevertheless, just as Jakobson maintains that the poetic function, *poeticity*, is an element *sui generis* which cannot be mechanically reduced to other elements, so there are messages contained within condolences I examined which, as Kristeva (1989: 22) puts it, transpose affect into a series of rhythms, signs, forms. Jakobson, however, gets to the very heart of the poetic function when he asks, how does *poeticity* manifest itself? Poeticity, Jakobson writes:

is present when the word is felt as a word and not a mere representation of the object being named or an outburst of emotion, when words and their composition, their meaning, their external and inner form acquire a weight and value of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality.

(Jakobson, 1981: 750)

Such *poeticity* can also be understood, following psychoanalytic theory — especially (post-)Lacanian varieties in which identity is summoned through the subject’s insertion

within the law governed world of language and symbols — as bearing an intimate relation, not with death as such, but with *loss*. Language in this respect occupies an essentially ambivalent position: it is at once the means by which we negotiate and ‘figure out’ loss, but it is also a device which effectively ‘fills in’ for and seeks to deny that which has been lost, whilst simultaneously yielding up the losses by which we are marked. Words, then, according to Elliott (1999: 47–8), drawing upon the work of Kristeva (1984, 1989),⁹ provide a ‘stopgap’, helping to close-up the wounds created or opened by lost love. More radical still, language — especially poetic language — provides a means through which loss may be negated or displaced. Language therefore provides a range of possibilities for managing and coming to terms with loss, not least via its symbolic encoding and sublimation. In this way, language provides, amongst other things — and this is the key point to bear in mind — the cultural means for managing loss. It is, as we saw towards the end of chapter 3 of the thesis, the medium through which contemporary culture both mourns and yet simultaneously seeks to avoid and to evade the pain precipitated by loss.

Finally, — and by far the largest category of message type contained within both the Hillsborough and Diana condolence books — that condolence messages contained some form of epistolary address (and addressee, assumed or otherwise), suggests an underlying *communicative* or *dialogic* function underpinning the practice of condolence book signing. In contrast to the emotive function of poetic language with its focus on the

⁹ Kristeva (1984; 1989) we will recall from my discussions in chapter’s 2 and 3 of the thesis, has identified two ‘modalities’: the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. Kristeva, like other (post-) Lacanian feminists Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray, defines the semiotic as a pre-linguistic feminine space which precedes the constitution of the subject (and hence subjectivity). By locating poetic language as the places ‘at which the semiotic makes an incursion into the order and conventions’ of the symbolic realm (Burke *et al*, 2000), Kristeva has argued that creative language has the radical potential to disrupt and ‘ruthlessly undo’ (Elliott, 1999) stereotyped social, cultural, and linguistic forms. Signification is, then, in Kristeva’s terms, a process which is predicated on the interaction of both a unified and ordered linguistic structure (the *symbolic*) and a ‘disruptive’ and diverse signifying space (the *semiotic*).

addresser, Bakhtin's *polyphonic* notion of dialogism: as the responsible engagement with, rather than the mere celebration of, the other's word, focuses attention on the *addressivity* of language and the relations *between* its users.

The distinctions I make here between emotive poetic language and dialogic epistolary language are, however, imperfect and are not intended to be rigid. This can be seen especially from the fact that the poems contained within condolence books which I present in chapters 5 and 6 are not arcane but are popular and communicative. Nevertheless, Bakhtin's emphasis on the *polyphony* of language is important to the extent that it gives primacy to all voices party to a particular dialogue.¹⁰

To this extent, books of condolence are truly participatory and can, following the work of John Fiske (1990), be properly considered to be 'producerly'. Notwithstanding the multifarious theoretical discussions principally addressed to the kinds of reading practices which more conventional cultural and media 'texts' invite (e.g. Barthes, 1975a, Eco, 1979; Hall, 1980), books of condolence — albeit as epistolary text — are 'producerly' to the extent that they invite the possibilities of a 'reading' which is both passive, undemanding, and in which its meanings are already made; and yet which challenges the reader to mine the books for a profundity of meaning beyond the taken-for-granted assumptions (of their excessiveness and obviousness) which they contain. On a more rudimentary level, books of condolence are 'producerly', serving a democratising function to the extent that, without the imposition of limits on who may

¹⁰ In contrast to *monologism*, from which Bakhtinian notions of *polyphony* should be primarily distinguished, polyphonic dialogue and forms of address are those which grant equal authority to all participants in any given dialogue.

or may not contribute, ordinary people themselves participated in their construction. They are, if you will, documentary attempts at genuinely social history in the making.¹¹

Using the Bakhtin circle's theory of language, each condolence message, and the wider practice of condolence book signing itself, can be seen to be inescapably *social* in character, occurring as it does, only *between* people and the wider speech communities of which they are a part. Bakhtin's notion of *heteroglossia* or 'multi-speechedness' is itself central to an understanding of the multiplicity of 'voices'; of different social groups and classes, of the local and the global, of different generations, to which condolence books give expression. It is the means by which Bakhtin is able to ground the particularity of these 'different languages' and subtly nuanced voices within socio-linguistic structures characteristic of time and space.

A fundamental starting point, therefore, for the Bakhtin circle — *pace* neo-Kantian philosophy and Saussurian linguistics, which presuppose language as the product of an isolated consciousness — is, therefore, its view of language as embedded within the matrix of *relationships* and social milieu in which it occurs and which make it possible at all. In common with Bennington and Derrida's (1993) argument of the impossibility of a 'private language', and view that a text is never closed upon itself (for to make a text absolutely idiomatic would be to bar all reading and understanding of it), the Bakhtin circle's understanding of language is indisputably located within the bounds of intersubjectivity. According to Bakhtin (1984), 'a single consciousness is *contradictio in*

¹¹ By this, Fiske seeks to convey the sense in which the 'producerly' text combines elements of 'readerly' and 'writerly' (Barthes, 1975b) tendencies within texts. The 'producerly' is a text whose reading does not challenge the reader to make sense out of it, does not 'faze the reader' with its shocking sense of difference from other texts and from the everyday. It has the accessibility of a 'readerly' one and the 'openness' of a writerly one. In the popular 'producerly', therefore, just as in the 'writerly', the reader is both challenged to make sense out of it and invited to participate in the construction of its meaning.

adjecto' [a contradiction in terms] for 'consciousness is in essence multiple'. In this respect also, Volosinov (1973) writes that:

A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, then the other depends on my addressee. A word is a territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor.

(Volosinov, 1973: 86)

In an attempt to explain and further clarify the position of Bakhtin's thought, Lynn Pearce (1994) uses the analogy of the telephone. As a medium of communication the telephone depends both upon a sender and an addressee, for if a conversation is to take place at all the sender must be able to engage (or at least envisage) an addressee with whom to converse. Pearce explains the sense of awkwardness we often experience when speaking into answering machines as stemming, in part, from a lack of reciprocity. It is, according to Pearce, precisely this lack of response at the other end of the telephone line which causes us to momentarily flounder. Better still, perhaps, this point could equally be illustrated by the sense of awkwardness we sometimes feel during the momentary time-lag — between uttering a few words and awaiting a reply — experienced on long-distance telephone calls. Unsure that our message has been received — and compounded by an inability to see, and therefore, 'read' the markers of body language which indicate to us that our addressee is in receipt of our message — we may be unsettled and begin to repeat the sentence. Pearce's chief point here is that Bakhtin's theory of language, or more accurately, of *dialogism*, is premised upon interaction between individuals (or groups of individuals). In this way, the cues we receive from those we are seeking to address can be seen to determine, and help shape, our subsequent responses, and *vice versa*. It is this, then: the notion that language and meaning emerge only *between people* in interaction, which makes Bakhtin's work of

particular interest sociologically. It is, moreover, a guiding thread which arguably runs throughout all of Bakhtin's writing.¹²

That condolence books should be seen in this light can be discerned both from the multifarious attempts to initiate dialogue (with the deceased; the bereaved; authority figures; other mourners or fan groups; the self; and an 'ideal' other — the 'superaddressee'); and from the shared use of language upon which any given speech community depends. Indeed, the Bakhtin circle went to considerable lengths to emphasise that a messages' *addressivity* (whose constitutive quality is of being addressed to someone) need not necessarily be between two people. For according to Bakhtin the

addressee can be an immediate participant-interlocutor in an everyday dialogue, a differentiated collective of specialists in some particular area of cultural communication, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, a superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign, and so forth. And it can also be an indefinite unconcretized *other*.

(Bakhtin, 1986: 95)

According to Bakhtin (1986: 126) all utterance presupposes a 'superaddressee', to whom 'the speaker appeals over the head, as it were, of the immediate addressee' (Redman, 1999: 65). This 'superaddressee' is an imagined 'ideal listener' capable of readily comprehending the intended meaning of the speaker. Just as our sense of self and our sense of the otherness of the other person are grounded in (and are constituted by, and through) *dialogic* relations, so too language and its forms are, as Volosinov

¹² Whilst some writers have expressed a view that intersubjectivity underpins the whole Bakhtin canon, others, such as Simon Denith (1995) draw a profound distinction between his early and more mature work. Denith (1995: 13) suggests that the kind of argument found in Bakhtin's writing of the 1920s — such as the 'abstractedly philosophical and ethical manner of his essay *Author and hero in aesthetic activity* — differs sharply from the more 'profoundly sociological' emphasis found later in the decade in the work of Medvedev and Volosinov and in Bakhtin's own work in the 1930s.

(1987) reminds us, ‘the products of prolonged social intercourse among members of a given speech community’¹³. In this way, Volosinov explains the elements of shared language which constitute a speech community:

Each individual creative act, each utterance, is idiosyncratic and unique, but each utterance contains elements identical with elements in other utterances of the given speech group.¹⁴ And it is precisely these factors — the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical factors that are *identical* and therefore *normative* for all utterance — that insure the unity of a given language and its comprehension by all the members of a given community.

(Volosinov, 1973, in Morris, 1994: 26–27)

In what follows, I shall argue that the signing of condolence books in each of my two cases can be seen to constitute a variety of pre-existing speech communities (each with their own nuanced style of address), in a broad-based, yet temporally constituted, social collective. That such diverse and often mutually opposed speech communities should temporarily coalesce is made possible by the temporally constituted liminality and sense of *communitas* (Turner, 1977) embodied by the speech-community-in-mourning (Bakhtin, 1986).

¹³ Volosinov (1987) contends that ‘every utterance is *the product of the interaction between speakers* and the product of the broader context of the whole complex *social situation* in which the utterance emerges’ (Volosinov, 1987, in Morris, 1994: 41). Taking as his point of departure neo-Kantian and Renaissance-influenced notions of *monadology* — of the individual not as the product of social relations but of his or her own unique consciousness and way of seeing the world — Volosinov argues that ‘not a single instance of verbal utterance can be reckoned exclusively to its utterer’s account’. Volosinov, like Bakhtin, can therefore be rightly be seen as a thinker for whom the network of others selves with, and upon, whom we are inevitably dependent and interlinked is of central importance: his is clearly a vision of humans not as Leibnizian monads but as *social selves* enmeshed in interlocutory relations.

¹⁴ A similar distinction, can be gleaned in Saussurian linguistics between notions of *langue* and *parole*. Ferdinand de Saussure’s notion of *langue* refers, of course, to the system of signs and conventions underlying the individual utterances which Saussure calls *parole*.

CHAPTER 5

BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE PART 1

HILLSBOROUGH: THE LOCAL, THE TOTEMIC AND THE POPULAR

The Hillsborough disaster, as we saw in the introduction to this thesis, occurred at the tail-end of the 1980s, a decade characterised by social, economic and political transformation, upheaval and unrest.¹ None more so were the effects of economic ‘restructuring’ and ‘reform’ felt during this time than on Merseyside — an area once famed for its docks and ancillary blue-collar industries. Between 1980 and 1987 the city haemorrhaged some 50,000 jobs in manufacturing alone — half the total at the peak of its manufacturing height (Williams, 1987). The Hillsborough disaster of 1989, when considered alongside the Heysel disaster of 1985 and the Toxteth riots of 1981, completed a trinity of calamities and topped a miserable decade for the people of Liverpool, which has since been reduced to European Union Objective One status (Belchem, 2000). In what follows, and as a prefatory stage *en route* to my discussion of the contents of the condolence books signed for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster, I seek to provide a brief historiography of the city through which the unique ‘local structure of feeling’ inflected within the books of condolence can be properly understood.

¹ Paradoxically, despite the impression of political hegemony which the re-election of consecutive right-wing Conservative government’s throughout the 1980s gives, the decade was characterised by widespread social and political unrest. This was manifested chiefly in a wave of riots in several British inner-city areas, including Toxteth in Liverpool, and series of industrial disputes, principally, the year-long miners strike of 1984–5. Each of these electoral victories (in 1979, 1983, 1987) were, however, secured with a minority of the popular vote, each around the 42 per cent mark (Kavanagh, 1991). For a discussion of the policies of Thatcherism as popular authoritarianism, see Hall and Jacques (1983, 1989). For a discussion of Thatcherism as the rolling backwards of state provision of social welfare and rolling forwards of the repressive aspects of the state, see Gamble (1988, 1990). For a discussion of the social divisions which the policies of Thatcherism created, see Jessop *et al* (1988).

I begin, therefore, by attempting to situate these messages within the socio-linguistic habitus in which forms of local identity on Merseyside are routinely inhabited. I institute my discussions by first setting Liverpool's recent (and seemingly irreversible) economic and demographic decline — as that for which the city is now perhaps best known and (mis)represented in popular culture as home to wags, 'scallies' and ne'er-do-well's — against the now largely forgotten proud and distinguished maritime and commercial status of a port once elevated to 'world city' status, or as the *Illustrated London News* reported in 1886, 'the New York of Europe, a world-city rather than merely British provincial' (Belchem, 2000: *xiii*). Following this I begin my discussions of messages contained within condolence books by exploring those reflective of the mediated nature of public mourning; as summoning social identities from beyond the immediate community of mourners most directly affected by the Hillsborough disaster. From here, I turn to consider messages reflective of the cultural practices and social identities that constitute Liverpool's local structure of feeling, especially those reflective of the imbrication of football, religion and a communitarian ethic grounded in a distinct identarian sense of place. Following this, I turn to consider messages reflective of the sense of liminality between rival sets of football fans and those reflective of the sense of totemicity embodied in football and Liverpool F.C 's former 'legendary' manager Bill Shankly. I continue by exploring messages reflective of the diasporic quality of Liverpudlian identity, of the exilic condition and the spirit of homeliness. Hereafter, I consider messages indicative of the linguistic pathways of loss through which the work of mourning is both navigated and negated. Finally, I conclude my discussions by reflecting upon the intertextual nature of language from which meaning is drawn and the sense in which condolence books can be seen to constitute the 'multi-speechedness' of a

variety of linguistic communities temporarily summoned as a speech-community-in-mourning (Bakhtin, 1986).

The Case for Liverpool Exceptionalism

Liverpool: City of the Sea

The rise of Liverpool in the eighteenth century as trading port and city of international commerce, perhaps only second to, and at times eclipsing, London (Wilkinson, 1993) stemmed in part from its strategic position as gateway to the embryonic British Empire — indeed, Liverpool was often referred to as the ‘second city of the Empire’ (Wilkinson, 1993: 1). More sinister, Liverpool’s commercial importance and wealth grew out, and on the backs of, the eighteenth century transatlantic trade in human slaves. Local historian Peter H. Williams (1971) reports that in 1771 Liverpool based slave ships carried more slaves than the population of the city itself. Liverpool’s average annual trade in slaves during this time accounted for over a third of the world average (Williams, 1971: 30). In volume 1 of *Capital* Marx writes that ‘Liverpool grew fat on the basis of the slave trade’ and provides figures on its rapid expansion (Marx, 1976: 924),² whilst the distinguished social historian Edward Thompson (1980) in his seminal work, *The Making of English Working Class*, reminds us that Liverpool was ‘enriched with the profits of black slavery’³ (Thompson, 1980: 66). Local manufacture grew rich out of providing the tools necessary for sustaining the traffic in human lives: the branding irons and instruments used to forcibly press open the jaws of slaves who preferred death over what could scarcely be called life (Williams, 1971: 30).

² Marx reports that in 1730 Liverpool employed 15 ships in the slave trade. By 1792 this figure had grown to 132 (Marx, 1976: 925). He also reports the local prosperity and employment generated in this period by the slave trade.

³ Williams (1971) reminds us that as the Americas began to open up to a range of commercial possibilities in the late seventeenth century, it had been ‘white slaves’ — ‘poor ignorant rustics’, that were first transported ‘and sold in exchange for hogsheads of tobacco to make Liverpool’s merchants men of wealth and power’ (Williams, 1971: 29).

King Cotton to the Rescue: Liverpool gets Baled Out

Following the abolition of slavery in England in 1833 Liverpool continued to prosper as an international trading port.⁴ Where previously it had shipped slaves abducted from Africa and taken to the New World, it now found a substitute trade in cotton.⁵ Liverpool's Westward facing geographical position at the mouth of the river Mersey derived considerable strategic benefit from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century steam-powered industrial revolution that was rapidly turning Britain into the workshop of the world (c.f. Marx). Liverpool provided ample opportunity as an outlet for the burgeoning nearby Lancashire textile industry to export its wares. The newly completed trans-pennine Leeds-Liverpool canal, the largest of a rapidly expanding network of water-way arteries connecting Britain, further provided a ready-made link for the transportation of woollen goods produced in the industrial towns and cities of Yorkshire, and Liverpool as gateway to the rest of the world. This was quickly followed by developments in rail transportation, when in 1830 the first passenger railway was opened connecting Liverpool and Manchester (merseyworld.com).

Catherine Rothwell (1996: 6) reports that at its height Liverpool registered some 700 warehouses capable of holding 2 million bales of cotton. For almost a century, from the end of the eighteenth up until the turn of the nineteenth century, Liverpool became emblematic of, and synonymous with, commercial success. This new found confidence was, as Colin Wilkinson (1993) reminds us, reflected in the architectural grandeur of

⁴ Liverpool's last slave ship sailed in 1807 (Williams, 1971: 30). By this time Williams reports that over 2 million slaves had been shipped to the West Indies.

⁵ For an account of the role of cotton in Liverpool's economic development and its position as the conduit for a newly developing international division of labour, importing cotton from the colonies for the Lancashire textile mills to spin and weave, before exporting their finished articles, see Williams (1971), especially ch. 3. For a discussion of the development of mechanised cotton spinning in England as both encouraging a relationship of dependence by newly acquired colonies upon the English economy and of promoting the growing of cotton, and thereby the African slave trade, in the so-called border slave states of the United States, see Marx (1976: 579, 571).

buildings which first emerged during the eighteenth century and which continue to dominate the city-scape of Liverpool to this day. Liverpool, for instance, is home to an impressive array of Georgian architecture and sweeping rows of terraces built to accommodate the city's expanding class of eighteenth century merchants. Even today Liverpool can boast more Georgian buildings than the regency city of Bath.

Elsewhere in the city, the Albert Dock, built between 1841–6 and covering some 1.25 million square feet (Albert Dock.com), stands as testament to the self confidence and economic prosperity which flowed from the city during this period. Opened in 1846 by the Prince Regent, the Albert Dock — the first enclosed non-combustible dock warehouse system in the world — was built to accommodate sailing ships carrying up to 1,000 ton's in cargo capacity. By the turn of the nineteenth century, however, only 7 per cent of ships using the port were cargo carrying sailing ships (Albert Dock.com). Despite the shrinkage in world shipping trade in Liverpool, whose effects could be felt (especially within the local economy) as early as the first decade of the twentieth century, the city's imperial status continued to be reflected in a series of buildings which continue to dominate the city's waterfront. These buildings, known collectively as the 'three graces': the Port of Liverpool Building, opened in 1907; the Royal Liver Building, opened a year later in 1908; and the Cunard Building, opened in 1917, have come to stand as powerful *totemic* symbols of Liverpool's sea-faring identity. So too, the ferry which links Liverpool with neighbouring Birkenhead and the Wirral. Since the 1950s, when a new type of ferry boat was seen on the river Mersey, the ferry has become emblematic of Liverpool, a source and signifier of local identity and topic of

popular music.⁶ The ferry has since undergone something of an apotheosis, passing into popular local mythology since popularised in the 1960s by the Merseybeat sound of Gerry and the Pacemakers and their reverie 'Ferry Cross the Mersey'.

On Liverpool's relationship with sea Rothwell (1996: 6) writes that 'Liverpool thought in terms of the sea, the Mersey its high street'. Whilst considerable numbers of the local population on Merseyside were employed in activities which were (in)directly attributable to the economic boon that shipping brought to the area, many more were employed in dock work and in the ship yards themselves. Ship builders Cammell Laird and Harland and Wolff became major employers on Merseyside, as did shipping companies like Cunard who, at their height, employed large numbers in the commercial maritime 'nerve-centre' (Rothwell, 1996) that was the Royal Liver Building. It is also here, on top of the Royal Liver Building, that arguably the two most powerful totemic *signifiers* of the city, the Liver birds, are perched.⁷ And although, according to the local popular historian Peter Aughton (1990), the story that Liverpool itself was named after an extinct fowl called the Liver Bird is largely apocryphal, the Liver Bird continues to convey considerable symbolic freight both within the city and beyond.⁸

Liverpolitania: Florence of the North

⁶ The history of the ferry can be traced to the Middle Ages when Liverpool burgesses were granted permission to use the Birkenhead ferry free of tolls. The Prior of Birkenhead, however, whose monks operated the ferry, charged travellers who visited Birkenhead Prior a small toll (Rotherwell, 1996).

⁷ The provenance of these two stork-like creatures can be traced, according to Rothwell (1996) to the twelfth century. Now firmly entrenched within local folklore, the birds, Rothwell (1996) suggests, were first seen to appear on the coat of arms of the city's patron, Saint John the Evangelist. According to Rothwell, popular legend has it that the birds first visited 'the Pool' holding laver — a type of seaweed — in their beaks. This is corroborated by local historian Peter Aughton (1990), who writes that the original Liver Bird was an eagle, the ancient symbol of Saint John. This, Aughton writes (1990: 174), was later adopted by King John and used on his coinage. For further discussion of the popular mythology surrounding the tall and graceful cormorant known as the Liver bird, see Aughton (1990: 174).

⁸ Aughton (1990) writes that it was the novelist and sailor Herman Melville, who on his first visit to the city in 1839, was unwittingly responsible for spreading the fiction that Liverpool was named after the Liver Bird. Copying the story in good faith from a guidebook he used on his visit to Liverpool, Melville repeated it in his novel *Redburn*.

A distinguishing feature of Liverpool regularly remarked upon by commentators and historians is the cosmopolitan mix which international shipping brought to the city. Peter Williams (1971) in his unusually entitled book *Liverpolitania: A Miscellany of People and Places*, refers not to the received term of ‘Liverpudlians’ to describe the local inhabitants of the city, but instead coins the neologism ‘Liverpolitans’. Liverpool’s commercial success during the nineteenth century was an undoubted draw in attracting huge numbers of immigrants to the city. This success elevated Liverpool to ‘world city’ status, leading to its appendage as the ‘second metropolis’ — the first city after London to introduce a system of postal districts (Belchem, 2000: *xii*).

Due in part to its physical proximity and the perilous economic position of Ireland during the 1800’s, Liverpool attracted huge numbers of Irish immigrants in search of work and a better life. During what became known as the ‘hungry [18]40s’ the city saw an influx of some 90,000 Irish immigrants in the space of only three months. Within a year this figure had swelled to 300,000 (Williams, 1971: 11) — a figure no doubt augmented by the ‘push’ initiated by the so-called Irish potato famine of 1845–9. By this time the lure (or ‘pull’ in socio-geographical terms) of economic prosperity meant there were already some 49,000 Irish-born in Liverpool, some 17.3 per cent of the population (Belchem, 2000: 132). By 1851 22.3 per cent of Liverpool’s population were Irish-born (Belchem, 2000: 203).

Besides the large Irish contingent within Liverpool during the nineteenth century — a cultural influence which continues to reflect the unique make-up of the city as, in the words of one the city’s most famous son’s, John Lennon, ‘a kinda Irish place’ — the

Widely read, especially in America, Melville’s novel soon became an American classic, the story of the extinct Liver Bird rapidly passing into popular folklore from where it became established as ‘fact’ (Aughton, 1990).

city also became home to a wealth and variety of ethnic communities the likes of which Britain had not seen before. Liverpool thus became home to a welter of various other ethnic groups: from European Jews escaping pogroms in Russia and Poland during the 1890s and early 1900s (Williams, 1971: 21); through the Chinese settlers of the nineteenth century (Wong, 1989), as reputedly the largest and longest established Chinese community in Europe (Wilkinson, 1993: 28); to the Kru (or Kroo) men from the Liberian coast of West Africa (Lane, 1987a). Indeed, notwithstanding the erroneous folkloric claims that Liverpool's black population is descended from slaves (Lane, 1987a: 117), black seamen from West Africa, the West Indies and the USA were a common sight in the city as early as the 1830s — a feature remarked upon by Herman Melville (1977) in his novel *Redburn*, first published in 1849.⁹

Social and economic historian John Belchem (2000) has recently made the case — albeit with caution — for a form of precursory multi-culturalism in Liverpool that was not seen throughout the rest of the United Kingdom until late on in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, minorities were routinely excluded from indigenous community life. Separateness, as Tony Lane (1987a) puts it, was 'forced upon the black population rather than voluntarily entered into'. Liverpool docklands, he writes, 'certainly had an extremely varied population, but only those of European origin were wholly assimilated and accepted' (Lane, 1987a: 121–2). The Toxteth riots of 1981 were themselves born of the social and economic exclusion — especially in housing and employment — long

⁹ For a discussion of Liverpool's position at the forefront of musical innovation: as attributed to the 'cultural implant' of the latest US albums which 'Cunard Yanks', sailors on the Atlantic run, brought back with them in the 1930s, see Belchem (2000: 61). Belchem writes that music offers a useful insight into Liverpool's distinctive sense of 'otherness'. Its seafaring cosmopolitanism, he argues, made Liverpool particularly receptive to foreign ideas such as syndicalism and American popular music. The rise of the Merseybeat sound has itself been attributed to sailors on the Atlantic run: 'We used to get the soul records and the rock and roll records long before anyone else got them just because we were here and the sailors would bring them back' (Kenny Johnson quoted in McManus, 1994, cited by

endured by Black Liverpudlians. Accordingly, Dave Hill (2000) writes that the city's most distressing paradox was this: that despite its outward perception as one of Britain's most 'vibrant and cosmopolitan seaports', the 'deep-rooted black element of this historic cultural mix seemed to have been erased from the city's otherwise attractive collective identity' (Hill, 2000: 139).¹⁰

Capricious Celts: Liverpool as England's Celtic Other

Notwithstanding the variety of international communities like the Lascar and Kru drawn to Liverpool because of its strategic location as an international trading port, it is, above all else, the Celtic inflow and inflexion of Liverpool which has marked the city out as the least English of all English provincial cities. This is echoed by Belchem when he writes that:

Cosmopolitanism was a point of Merseypride, a factor that raised Liverpool above provincialism, but it was seldom given an inclusive (or 'melting-pot') inflexion. What made Liverpool different was not its precocious multi-cultural demographic profile. . . but the disproportionate celtic presence in an English city.
(Belchem, 2000: *xiii*)

Indigenous in-migration (of Scots, Irish, Welsh and Manx) have all contributed to a unique matrix of Celtic influences within the city. It perhaps helps explain Liverpool's distinctive adenoidal 'scouse' accent, which contains a 'little of Lancashire, but a lot of Dublin and a bit of Wales' (Williams, 1971: 17).¹¹ Here, as Belchem (2000) explains, where the industrial conurbations of northern England grew out of conglomerations of

Belchem, 2000: 61). Elsewhere, Sara Cohen (1991: 9) has made comparisons between Liverpool's 'outward looking' musical identity and its sister city in the USA, New Orleans.

¹⁰ For more on racial segregation and discrimination within Liverpool, especially the worrying social exclusion of black Liverpudlians from watching (or playing for) either of the city's professional football teams, Liverpool or Everton, see Hill (1989, 2000); Williams (1987). For an account of the black struggle for historical recognition in Liverpool, see Christian (1995–6). For an account of racism in inter-war Liverpool towards people of colour and their exclusion from notions of 'scouseness', see Frost (1995–6).

small towns and villages — ‘augmented by short-distance rural in-migration which tended to reinforce their culture, character and status as regional centres’ (Belchem, 2000: *xii*) — Liverpool was forged in the crucible of long-distance in-migration, setting it apart from its environs. It was, as Belchem (2000) puts it, in the north *but not of it*: the ‘would-be Florence of the north’ (Belchem, 2000: *xi*).

This sense of *difference* or ‘apartness’ is, I will argue, crucial to Liverpool’s sense of identity. This sense of Celtic ‘otherness’ is a means by which Liverpool distinguished itself from industrial Manchester and commercial London (Belchem, 2000). As Belchem neatly summarises, Liverpool, and its ‘sub-region’ of Merseyside, ‘was (and has continued to be) highly distinctive, differing sharply in socio-economic structure, cultural image and expression, political affiliation, health, diet and speech from the adjacent industrial districts’ (Belchem, 2000: *xi–xii*). Before returning to take up some of these points, let me concentrate for the time being on Liverpool’s distinctive sense of Celtic ‘otherness’. It is in part this sense of Celtic *difference*, especially the type of ‘Celtic expressiveness’ which characterised the public mourning following the Hillsborough disaster, which according to Tony Walter (1991b) generated widespread antipathy towards Liverpool by offending the sense of English reserve characteristic of mainstream white UK culture. For Liverpool, as we have seen in chapter 3, ‘is a celebratory culture, one that wears its heart on its sleeve and displays a depth of emotion rarely seen in most parts of the country’ (Davie, 1993: 201). Seeking to explain the exceptional scenes which followed the Hillsborough disaster Walter writes that:

In white UK culture, there are (apart from class divisions) two cultures: an English reserve and a Celtic expressiveness. These are

¹¹ For a socio-linguistic discussion of the origins of ‘scouse’, as ‘not just a pattern of speech but a micro-culture in historical formation’, see Belchem (2000: 31–64).

often seen dramatically in the different feel of Manchester versus Liverpool or even Edinburgh versus Glasgow. Celtic expressiveness offends English reserve (though it may well be enjoyed by the English on holiday in Southern Ireland). To the English, Celts are dangerously unpredictable, and a crowd of Celts even more so — hence the stereotype of Liverpudlian football supporters as liable to get into trouble, despite their generally good humour and usually good relations with local police. Hence perhaps also the stereotype of the Liverpool worker as likely to take unofficial strike action at the drop of a hat.

(Walter, 1991b: 607–8)

Beyond the ‘displeasure’ and sense of unease at this Celtic expressiveness in general, and impatience with (media-constructed images of) Liverpudlians as ‘self-pitying’, ‘self-indulgent’ and ‘mawkish’ in particular,¹² there perhaps lies something more pernicious. Cultural stereotypes, of Liverpudlians as, on the one hand ‘work-shy’ or feckless, and on the other as prone to political militancy and aggression, are nothing new and can be seen as far back as the late nineteenth century (e.g. Lane, 1987: 103). As Walter (1991b) has also pointed out, despite evidence which supports a view of the usually good natured, law-abiding behaviour of Liverpool fans (at least at domestic football matches, if not at games played abroad in European competitions) (Williams, 1987),¹³ the finger of suspicion when trouble does occur at football matches has tended to point in the direction of Liverpool fans. There is no better illustration of this than in media reports which followed the Hillsborough disaster itself. The *Sun* laid claim to tell ‘the truth’ about what ‘actually’ happened at Hillsborough: that it was the violent and

¹² For a discussion of media reporting by the ‘quality press’ of local reaction on Merseyside to the Heysel and Hillsborough disasters, as ‘self-indulgent’, self-pitying’ and ‘mawkish’, see Belchem (2000: 62). This, he suggests, as in media reporting of the local public fury that followed the abduction and murder of the toddler Jamie Bulger in 1993 by two young boys, is an unwelcome complement to the revived tabloid assault on scouse violence, militancy and arrogance’ otherwise on the wane in the absence of industrial and political disputes. For a recent example of the ‘self-pitying’ and ‘sentimental’ image of Liverpudlians which Belchem claims the media have helped to construct, see Raven (*Guardian*, 26 June 2001).

¹³ Williams (1987: 27) reports figures during the 1980s which suggest ‘very low levels’ of arrests and the generally ‘commendably orderly behaviour’ of Merseyside fans travelling to domestic away matches. However, the report also adds that while ‘Merseyside fans largely deserve their reputation for their *lack* of involvement in large-scale,

drunken behaviour of Liverpool fans themselves which precipitated the disaster. Allegations made by the newspaper, that ticketless Liverpool fans forced open a perimeter fence to gain entry to the ground were subsequently found to be untrue.¹⁴ Nor was this the first time that fans from either of Liverpool's two football clubs had been wrongly accused of loutish behaviour by the media. In August 1986 initial media reports of fighting amongst English football fans aboard a ferry bound for Holland suggested that it was Merseysiders who were involved. Later reports, however, confirmed instead that it was fans from Manchester and London who were responsible (Williams, 1987).

Beyond this, it is possible to suggest that such derisory cultural stereotyping of Liverpudlians can be seen as an extension of centuries-old anti-Irish English racism. Prevailing stereotypes of 'Scousers' which exist in contemporary cultural discourse are not far removed from — contradictory — cultural stereotypes of the Irish (and Celts in general) as ingratiating rogues, heathen drunkards, and/or religious fanatics.¹⁵ The Liverpool-Irish, as Belchem (2000: 55–6) writes (of whom Heathcliff was 'the great outsider/other of Victorian literature'), have yet to be fully rehabilitated in revisionist narratives of the Irish in Britain — as the 'celebration of widespread distribution, successful integration and "ethnic fade"'. Instead, the Liverpool-Irish of the nineteenth century, much like Liverpudlians of the twentieth, have been dismissed as unable or

destructive disturbances abroad, European travel for the Merseyside clubs has hardly been trouble-free' (Williams, 1987: 16).

¹⁴ Whilst, as Williams (1987: 12) has suggested, there is considerable evidence to suggest that 'bunking in' (gaining access to games without tickets) was a widespread and 'celebrated' practice amongst Liverpool fans at away games (leading to near disaster and chaos at the European Cup Final in Paris in 1981), there is nothing to suggest that such a practice conspired to produce the deaths of 96 fans at Hillsborough. Significantly, however, statements first issued by senior South Yorkshire Police officers, that large numbers of ticket-less Liverpool fans had forced open a gate leading to a crush in the terracing area, were widely reported by the media in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. Not surprisingly, these quickly became established as fact. In the days following, yet more scurrilous stories, of drunken Liverpool fans stealing from the dead, urinating on them, and assaulting emergency workers, were reported by the *Sun* under the banner headline 'The Truth'. For a detailed account of the attempt by South Yorkshire Police to shift responsibility for events which eventually culminated in disaster, and the taking up of these reports by sections of the newsprint media, see Scraton (2000), especially ch. 6.

unwilling to take advantage of opportunities elsewhere in Britain or the New World (Belchem, 2000).

An enduring cultural legacy of immobility, inadequacy and irresponsibility, this “Irishness” has purportedly set Liverpool apart. Immune from the enterprise culture, their descendants have sunk further into economic depression and (ungrateful) welfare dependency, remaining working-class when all around have moved onwards and upwards. An anachronism elsewhere in Thatcherite Britain, the term “working-class” retained a residual pejorative relevance — a form of linguistic devaluation — when applied to Liverpool and its “celtic” lumpenproletariat.

(Belchem, 2000: 56)

These comments aside, the cultural stereotyping of Liverpudlians, like those applied to the Irish (and minority ethnic communities more generally) operate according to a peculiar cultural double-standard: embracing non-threatening aspects of its culture whilst rejecting those perceived as likely to overwhelm white Anglo-Saxon values and ‘traditions’. Hence, the popular cultural ‘renaissance’ in all things Irish in recent years has been limited to those readily commodifiable and co-optable cultural signifiers of Irishness — however misplaced these may be — such as the Irish theme pub or the musical extravaganza *Riverdance*. So too, white UK culture can be seen to readily embrace the most benign aspects of Liverpudlian culture (its inimitable associations with football and popular music and its ‘lairy’ humour — as amplified by popular television sitcoms like the *Liver Birds* and *Bread*), whilst rejecting those things which do most to offend the sensibilities of hegemonic white UK culture (say, the openly expressivist public mourning following the Hillsborough disaster).¹⁶

¹⁵ For an illuminating account of the origins and development of anti-Irish racism, as located chiefly in English colonial rule, see Curtis (1991).

¹⁶ Walter (1991b: 607) reports that in the week following the Hillsborough disaster, one national Sunday newspaper dubbed Liverpool the ‘world capital of self-pity’.

The continued practice of a number of religiously inflected mourning rituals characteristic of Irish Catholicism long since attenuated within white UK culture (for example, the receiving of the body of the deceased within the family home prior to burial); and a degree of residual religious sectarianism¹⁷ unknown in ‘mainland’ British culture, save perhaps for that of Glasgow, serve only to reinforce the exceptionalism of Liverpool as a British city without parallel. Liverpool’s ‘otherness’ is augmented both by a degree of geographical remoteness (a feeling reinforced by the fact that when arriving in the city by train one finds oneself at terminus); and by an acute feeling amongst Liverpudlians (especially during the 1980s) of political and economic abandonment by a London-based central government who appeared to care little for a region blighted by long-term industrial decline.

Contemporary Configurations of ‘Scouse’ Identity

Liverpool’s distinguished (yet elsewhere often forgotten) history, as I have tried to demonstrate in the previous discussion, has made the city’s recent social and economic decline difficult to swallow, especially for natives of the city. In what follows, and finally, before turning to analyse the messages contained within the condolence books signed for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster, I seek to explore the ways in which the socio-economic fortunes of the city have impacted upon contemporary constitutions of local identity and the way this has shaped local structures of feeling within the city. I

¹⁷ Although today much attenuated, Liverpool during the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century was marked by a form of religious sectarianism unseen in other parts of the UK, with the exception of parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland. Williams (2000: 19–20), reports that strong religious areal divisions existed in housing within Liverpool until the city slum clearance programmes of the 1950s and 1960s. So too, employment practices in the 1930s and 1940s were influenced by religious background, whilst schooling in the city was delivered largely along religious lines (Williams, 2000). Unlike Glasgow (‘mainland’ Britain’s other infamous hotbed of religious sectarianism), however, religious sectarianism did not penetrate and underpin support for either of Liverpool’s two football teams. Whilst, as Raymond Boyle (2000) points out, Everton during the 1950s became identified in the eyes of some fans as the team supported by Catholics (due largely to the number of Irishmen playing for them at the time), neither Everton nor Liverpool operated sectarian player signing policies in the way that Glasgow Rangers had done right up until the 1980s.

made the important point earlier in chapter 2, and it is worth making again here, that the social, economic and political processes which characterise ‘society’, in other words, that which is experienced as ‘exterior’, are — following the precepts of a socially inflected psychoanalysis — crucial to the formation (and understanding) of personality as experienced at the ‘micro’ or personal level. Inevitably therefore, perhaps, feelings of acute loss have come to permeate and provide a backdrop to configurations of Liverpudlian collective identity in recent years.

That loss should be a condition which characterises the city-wide experience of Liverpudlians can be seen (and has been felt), most readily not only in the shape of the job losses to which I referred at the beginning of this section on Liverpool exceptionalism, but also in terms of population loss as an (in)direct corollary of the dire economic situation on Merseyside — especially during the 1980s, an unparalleled nadir in the city’s history. Liverpool’s social and economic downward spiral from a position of ‘world city’ has therefore been rapid and steep. Liverpool’s steady slowdown in its share of international shipping, although traceable to the period immediately before the First World War (Williams, 2001), was rapidly accelerated from the mid 1960s onwards. Here John Williams (1987) writes that ‘the signposts’ for the city’s long-term decline were already ‘provided by the slide into virtual inactivity’ of the city’s port facilities. The once prestigious and innovatory Albert Docks were closed as early as 1972. What’s more, the fall in Liverpool’s share of all ship arrivals in the UK was halved between 1966 and 1994, and was thereby effectively eclipsed by east coast UK ports (Parkinson, 1985). The loss of the transatlantic passenger service to the south coast of England and the post-war transfer of trade links between Britain and America to that

of Britain and Europe meant, in the words Liverpool playwright Alan Bleasdale, that by the 1980s the port was simply ‘facing the wrong way’ (cited in Williams, 1987).

By the 1980s, Liverpool, like many other cities in the industrial north of England, was ravaged by the combined effects of neo-liberal economic restructuring and recession. Unemployment — especially youth and long-term unemployment — remained some way above the national average, reaching catastrophic proportions during the 1980s¹⁸ (Parkinson, 1985: 11). Unlike most other cities, however, Liverpool, as an EEC report of 1985 made clear, was ‘probably worse placed for any form of sustainable economic recovery’ than almost any other in Britain (cited in Williams, 1987). Added to the widespread poverty¹⁹ and unusual socio-economic structure — namely, the docks-centred local economy based on casual employment that Belchem has earlier highlighted as a feature of Liverpool exceptionalism²⁰ — which served as a disincentive to inward investment in the city, Liverpool’s ‘militant municipalism’²¹ of the 1980s further served to ward off any effective local or regional entrepreneurial development.²²

Poorly managed and rapidly depopulating, and with a large, unskilled workforce which was overly dependent on the failing docks, and with few new private-sector white-collar service jobs

¹⁸ Yosser Hughes, the tragi-comic anti-hero of Alan Bleasdale’s 1982 BBC television drama *Boys from the Blackstuff*, became emblematic of the sense of despair and hopelessness on Merseyside during the 1980s. Bleasdale’s bleak portrayal of life on Merseyside during the 1980s can be read a lament to male working class culture itself.

¹⁹ Williams (1987: 8) reports figures from an EEC report of 1985 which claimed that Liverpool at the time was the poorest city in northern Europe. Ranked using an index compiled from measures of income level, car ownership and housing, Liverpool scored 43 compared to a European average of 100.

²⁰ For a discussion of Liverpool’s belated industrial diversification, see Belchem and Power (1993). For a discussion of industrial relations on Merseyside as the legacy of waterside casualism, see Bean and Stoney (1986). For a discussion of cultural factors, including working practices fostered by waterside casualism, as contributing to Liverpool’s ‘distinct (and distorted) economic structure’, see Belchem (2000).

²¹ Liverpool during the 1980s became a stronghold for the Trotskyist political faction Militant Tendency. Practitioners of ‘entryism’, Militant successfully infiltrated large sections of the mainstream Labour Party, including the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and local constituency parties, until expulsion proceedings were issued against it by the then Labour leader Neil Kinnock. Belchem (2000) writes that ‘having captured control of the moribund party machine, Militant chose to operate municipal politics in Liverpool “Tammany” style — Chicago rather than Petrograd on the Mersey’ (Belchem, 2000: 63).

²² Williams (2000: 155) writes that there was little prospect on Merseyside during the 1980s for the ‘sort of small firms and cultural-industry development’ which lay behind the economic revival of cities like Manchester.

attracted to the city, Liverpool in the 1980s was an unattractive commercial proposition for both foreign and domestic capital.

(Williams, 2001: 155)

For some in the city an attack on the militancy of the then Trotskyist Liverpool city council felt like an attack on the city itself. For others, the macho militancy of the city council served to further reinforce Liverpool's marginalisation from inclusion in mainstream political decision-making. Little wonder, then, that given Liverpool's perilous economic profile at this time, the city should haemorrhage population at a rate analogous to that which it was shedding jobs. Between 1951 and 1986 Liverpool's population plummeted from around 900,000 to 483,000 (Cohen, 1991: 2). Nevertheless, whilst Liverpool has long been the site of mass emigration (to the new world and beyond during the nineteenth century) and Liverpudlian identity long been associated with a certain diasporic quality, the 1980s witnessed an intensification (especially among the young) of the desire to leave the city.

Traditional routes of escape, namely through success in the fields of popular music, show business and sport — activities which since the 1950s have become synonymous with Liverpool — came increasingly to be seen as the only way out for many young people during the 1980s. Sara Cohen (1991), in her exploration of rock culture in Liverpool, has written that whilst local artists and up-and-coming rock bands have depended heavily upon the support of the local community as a springboard for their success,²³ they have nevertheless been forced to leave the city in search of wider

²³This widespread sentiment, that 'Liverpool will support its own' (Williams, 1971: 17) is also reflected in the comments of Keva Coombes, leader of Liverpool City Council at the time of the Hillsborough disaster, when he said that no Hillsborough victims' families 'would go without . . . This city will look after its own' (cited in Taylor, 1991: 15, 23n). On this Coombes was as good as his word, with the city council offering to cover the cost of funerals for those bereaved by the disaster, whilst crematorium workers in the city offered to work for nothing (Walter, 1991b: 610).

recognition.²⁴ As Cohen reports (1991: 3), during the 1980s especially, being in a band was perceived by many young people at the time as the ‘fastest way out of the jungle’.²⁵ Whilst sport (and popular music) offered an escape route for the talented few who were lucky enough to make the grade (mainly, in the former case, working-class lads with a proclivity for football or boxing), for the majority left behind during the 1980s, watching football in particular provided a form of *escapism*, providing a safety-valve as Philip Carter, former chairman of Everton F. C put it (cited in Williams, 1987: 7), from the misery generated by youth unemployment. For despite all else negative that was happening in Liverpool during the 1980s the unparalleled success of the city’s two football teams was a rare beacon of light. In the twenty-five years up to 1987 the city was home to a championship winning team no less than a remarkable sixteen times (Williams, 1987). As John Williams (1987) puts it, ‘to talk about football on Merseyside during the 1980s’ was ‘to talk positively and proudly’ about a region which in other respects had been ‘written to shreds’²⁶ by the print media.

All of this said, Liverpool’s sense of ‘apartness’ from the rest of the UK (and feelings of being ‘hard done by’ in comparison to the rest of the UK)²⁷ are reflected and taken-up in (often inflated) self-referential discursive representations of local ‘Scouse’ identity.²⁸ It

²⁴ Local historians have commented that Liverpool will support its own only as long as its famous sons and daughters remain loyal to their roots; that Liverpool will support its home grown talent ‘but only while *its* own still call it *their* own’ (Williams, 1971: 17).

²⁵ BBC Radio 4, ‘Dancing in the Rubble’, 29 October 1982, cited in Cohen (1991: 3).

²⁶ Following the Heysel stadium disaster of 1985 involving Liverpool supporters, the chairman of Liverpool F.C Supporters Association, Bob Gill, reacted by suggesting that this was the last thing that Liverpool needed: ‘we don’t need this disaster to bring down Liverpool — it’s already been written to shreds’ (in Williams, 1987: 7).

²⁷ As Williams (1987) writes, there is a widespread general perception amongst the people of Merseyside of being unfairly treated in comparison to the rest of the UK. This feeling is reinforced, for instance, by the regional dominance of Manchester as the choice of base for regional television and newspapers in the North-West. It is a feeling given further impetus by the fact that of the many new service sector jobs created in the North-West in the 1980s, most went not to Liverpool but Manchester.

²⁸ Belchem (2000: 58) has argued that since the ‘Merseybeat’ style of the 1960s has become ‘retro-chic’ — ‘a fashionable accessory’, so ‘scouseness’ (and the scouse vernacular) are no longer concealed but accentuated and cultivated. Whilst this may certainly be true, it is also the case that scouse identity (and self-referential perceptions of ‘otherness’) has long been galvanised by the generally hostile attitudes towards Liverpool from within the rest of the

is these, and the mournful undertow of messages for a by-gone era when Liverpool ruled the (air-)waves and led the world in ‘popular cultural and performance domains’ (Williams *et al*, 2001) — of sport, music, comedy and drama — which my analysis of the condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster principally explores. The past is of course central to any understanding of the ways in which collective social identity is configured, not least the historically situated local structures of feeling on Merseyside in the late 1980s which my analysis takes as its point of focus.

Loss, I will argue, is in many ways central to local structures of feeling on Merseyside. Besides the obvious referents of loss being mourned in the condolence books signed for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster, there is a palpable sense that the passing of Liverpool’s proud commercial and maritime accomplishments, and of the ‘Merseybeat’ revolution of the 1960s (as the birthplace of the original Britpop), are themselves being mourned. Consider for a moment the following passage taken from Catherine Rothwell’s (1996) nostalgic trip in words and photographs through a Liverpool of yesteryear. In it, like various other local histories of the city, Rothwell conjures a baleful and evocative sense of the past in elegiac tones which hanker after a ‘golden age’ of innocence lost.

Shipping lines and shipbuilders have past like ghosts, but memories surge back: a liner coming into Liverpool on the Mersey’s racing tide out of sunset of gold and crimson; the intensely white wings of wheeling gulls flashing over burnished waters; the cries, the smells, the bustle and tang of a great port.

(Rothwell, 1996: 6)

UK. It is in this respect that Tony Lane (1997: *xiii*) writes that ‘Liverpool is the only city in Britain (apart from London) upon which other Britons have definitive opinions’, and for whom Liverpool ‘is seen as a city of problems where the people themselves are reckoned to be part of the problem’.

Here, and in what follows, I point to the psychic internalisation of place and a sense of 'place(ness)', as encrypted within the performative utterances contained within condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster. For just as, according to Marx (1970), men [*sic*] make history only 'under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past', so too the condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster are a product of Liverpool's exceptional history, sedimented in the collective (un)conscious of contemporary Liverpudlians. In this respect, and following a decade of disaster when Liverpool made the headlines for all the wrong reasons, nostalgia-driven memories of Liverpool in its heyday (especially those within living memory which have since become the mainstay of the city's nostalgia and tourism industries), may in part serve to displace the acute sense of loss triggered by the 1989 Hillsborough disaster. For Liverpudlians who know their history (and one suspects that, in a city so bound by communal traditions, many do), Liverpool's dramatic fall from grace, like the 'traditions of all the dead generations', can be seen to weigh 'like a nightmare on the brain of the living' (Marx, 1970: 96).

Communitas, Liminality and Recognition of the Other

That which is striking about public mourning of the sort considered herein is the way in which, as we have seen from my discussions in chapter 3, it serves to blur 'in-principle' distinctions between 'mediated' and 'face-to-face' mourning (Johnson, 1999: 18). Both the Hillsborough disaster and the death of Princess Diana were, as I have suggested, media events *par excellence*; thoroughly mediated both by the televisual and photographic image, thereby permitting of those ordinarily outside the bounds of community as physically or spatially constituted. The messages I present here in this section can therefore be seen to reflect not only this but the ways in which people

considered as outside of, and beyond, the immediate community directly affected by the Hillsborough disaster were drawn into the grief which it occasioned. This in turn can also be seen as reflective of the sense of ‘communitas’ and ‘liminality’ (Turner, 1977) occasioned by grief, wherein social division and rank are temporarily put aside.

I don't come from Liverpool. . . I wasn't even at Hillsborough —
but I cried today. Liverpool, you will never walk alone.

(Paula Andrews)

I've never been to a football match. I'm not even a Liverpoolian but
my heart goes out to the relatives of the 95 dead.

(Unsigned message)

I am an outsider but I am drawn into your sorrow. With sympathy
and respect.

(C. J. Carter)

We did not know you but we will always remember.

(Martin and Helen)

It is messages such as these which appear to demonstrate the simultaneous desire to narratively acknowledge one's own sense of grief, whilst at the same time acknowledging the sense of surprise at being ‘moved’ by the deaths of people with whom they had no immediate connection and lacked the physical proximity which characterise the grief occasioned by the loss of a ‘face-to-face’ relationship. For it is proximity, according to the moral philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1982: 95–101), which suggests a moral relationship, for it begets the possibility of responsibility for, and towards, the Other. This moral responsibility for the Other, according to Zygmunt Bauman (1992), is indeed a surprise, for it appears uninvited: ‘it is not let in *knowingly*’, neither has it been ‘deliberately conceived, nor accepted with a sigh of resignation. It is

there whether I know it or not' (Bauman, 1992: 42). This, of course, is deeply contested terrain, especially from a sociological perspective, for it appears to suggest that morality is born of existence pure and simple and does not explain the seeming absence of morality and *being for the other* in incidences of inter-personal violence such as domestic abuse.²⁹ Nevertheless, these arguments notwithstanding, it can be seen from the messages presented above, using the work of Levinas (1991), that this recognition of the Other, albeit mediated rather than 'face-to-face', is that which confirms and reaffirms our bonds to humanity. Bauman adds to this by suggesting that moral responsibility is 'all the greater the weaker and more helpless the Other', for it is precisely the weakness of the Other which makes me responsible (Bauman, 1998: 19).

Local Structures of Feeling on Merseyside

Following this, the messages which I reproduce in this section are reflective of the various *structures of feeling* on Merseyside as typified, *inter alia*, by an unusual blend of religion, politics and sport; and by strong identificatory and signficatory associations with place. They can be seen to reflect the heteroglossia of language and the ways in which a variety of communities, not just those most directly affected by the Hillsborough disaster, were summoned during the public mourning which it occasioned. Nevertheless, the message which I present below is significant to the extent that it explicitly acknowledges the 'particular sense of life' (Williams, 1984) which gives Liverpool its 'characteristic colour'. Alert to the subtle differences in style, speech and behaviour which mark Liverpool's 'otherness', it is a message which characterises Raymond Williams (1984: 64) notion that a 'local structure of feeling' can be best

²⁹ Bauman (1992) attempts to clarify Levinas's position, that morality is born outside of ontological categories: that responsibility is 'the essential, primary, and fundamental structure of subjectivity' (Levinas, 1991: 97) and that 'ethics is prior to ontology', by suggesting that 'morality is *better* than being', not that it precedes it in linear time

grasped by observing the small differences in style, speech or behaviour, ‘in someone who has learned’ the ways of a particular community ‘yet was not bred in them’:

To friends and families of the victims, I am not a true Scouser, but I have lived here for too many years to say that Liverpool isn't my home. I grew up here, all my friends live here and I love the city dearly. I know nothing I can say could possibly heal your wounds, but I hope I can offer encouragement in that I share your grief. My guilt lies heavily upon me as I am leaving Liverpool to live elsewhere and I feel as though I betray my city. I want you to know that wherever I go I take the memory of Hillsborough with me, my red scarf will follow me everywhere and I shall never forget you. I love Liverpool as it has loved me and it is with great sadness that I leave. Take care, you are a city blessed with a unity, spirit and a friendship like no other in the world. You'll never walk alone.

(J Bale)

This itself can be seen to demonstrate an awareness of this ‘distinct sense of a particular and native style’ to which Williams (1984) refers. For here in particular Williams writes of a ‘local structure of feeling’ as that which can be best understood if we think of:

[A]ny similar analysis of a way of life that we ourselves share. For here we find a particular sense of life, a particular community of experience hardly needing expression, through which the characteristics of our way of life that an external analyst could describe are in some way passed, giving them a particular and characteristic colour. We are usually most aware of this when we notice the contrasts between generations, who never talk quite “the same language”, or when we read an account of our lives by someone from outside the community, or watch the small differences in style, of speech or behaviour, in someone who has learned our ways yet was not bred in them . . . [I]n a way of life we know intimately, it will surely be so when we ourselves are in the position of the visitor, the learner, the guest from a different generation: the position, in fact, we are all in, when we study any past period.

(Williams, 1984: 64)

and ‘constitutes its *determining cause*’ (Bauman, 1992: 43). For a fuller discussion of Bauman’s reading of Levinas, see Bauman (1992: 41–8; 1998).

The message presented above is intriguing because of the ways in which it points to the internalisation of ‘things’, in this case the city of Liverpool itself, which is anthropomorphised and reflective of Freud’s (1917: 243) comments in chapter 2 of the thesis on mourning as routinely the reaction not only to the loss of a person but to ‘some abstraction’. The sense of ‘guilt’ reflected in the message by the signer’s leaving of Liverpool can also be understood both, following the work of various psychoanalysts (e.g. Klein, 1940; Lindemann, 1944), as a natural reaction to loss, and as indicative of the strong identarian and communal ethic characteristic of Liverpool’s ‘local structure of feeling’. For as I have earlier suggested in chapter 3 of the thesis, pointing to the work of Grace Davie (1993: 201), Liverpool is a city in which outsiders are either ‘irreversibly attracted’ or repelled. This sense of Liverpool exceptionalism is reflected elsewhere in condolence messages:

God bless you Liverpool. You’re very special.

(Joan Smith, Yorkshire)

Several further messages also begin to illustrate the ways in which local structures of feeling on Merseyside are both routinely inhabited and narratively represented. For in this way as Judith Butler (1990) has suggested, identity is routinely asserted and established through a process of *signification*. From this perspective, the enabling conditions for the assertion of identity (and therefore of agency), are provided by the linguistic structure of signifying practices themselves.³⁰ In part inflated by self-

³⁰ Butler (1999) suggests that the assertion of substantive identity (the substantive “I”) is an arduous task and that it appears only through iteration: as the ‘consistent and repeated invocation’ of linguistic rules ‘that condition and restrict culturally intelligible practices of identity’. What is more — and this is the crucial point — to understand identity as a *practice* (and as a signifying practice), is, according to Butler, ‘to understand culturally intelligible subjects as the resulting effects of rule-bound discourse that inserts itself in the pervasive and mundane signifying acts of linguistic life’ (Butler, 1999: 183–84).

referential myth, inflections of Scouse identity are, nevertheless, denoted and connoted³¹ (Barthes, 1973) in the socio-linguistic structures through which various ‘performance and oral traits’ (Williams, 2001) can be articulated. These traits — whilst they are illustrative of the psychic taking-in of that which is socially exterior (namely, social conceptions of place) — can be seen specifically within the context of Liverpool, as combining and drawing upon historical discourses and myths, local patterns of consumption and employment, as well as spatial environments ‘in order to reveal markers of local social formations and identity’ as well as ‘expressions of local character’ (Williams, 2001: 103).

Every red sky will remind us. Sleep in peace.³²

(W. Mansfield)

Liver birds on their chest. God only takes the best.

(Indecipherable signature)

Messages like the one above can be seen to adumbrate the imbrication of football, religion and a totemic sense of place within discursive constructions of local identity on Merseyside. Such imbrication, has elsewhere been discussed as a ‘unique’ feature of life in Liverpool (e.g. Davie, 1993; Walter, 1991). This was most dramatically shown in the days following the Hillsborough disaster when ‘religious, civic and footballing rituals became intertwined’ (Walter, 1991: 608). Here, the Liver birds (as emblematic of local identity on Merseyside and as represented on the club crest and shirts worn by the players of Liverpool F.C), religion, and local pride are seamlessly bound together by the *poeticity* of locally inflected language. It can also be seen in the message below which

³¹ Barthes’ two orders of signification: *denotation* and *connotation*, refer, in the first instance, to the literal relationship between the sign and its referent. The second, *connotation*, operates metaphorically by way of association, alluding to that which is not spoken; expressing mental representations, often unconsciously, through a variety of semiotic strategies, including, metonymy and metaphor.

combines politics and religion in a way suggestive of Liverpool's distinctive patterns of political affiliation and acute sense of religiosity:

Supporters of the world unite! God bless.

(Steve and Rita)

This, of course, is taken from, and unselfconsciously inverts, Karl Marx's rallying cry in the *Communist Manifesto*, for workers of the world to unite, forging this to the unique blend of football and religion within the city. Such creative word-play can be seen in the following messages, the first, intertwining football and religion in Liverpool, can be seen in the form of an acrostic, the second, combining popular religious sentiment with a local apperception of place and fantasised wish for ascension:

L ive
F or
C hrist

(D. L. Hope)

God bless you all. Hope you get the ferry to heaven.

(Tracie, Jamie and Jane)

Here Belchem (2000) has suggested that verbal invention and surreal word-play are a further characteristic of Liverpool exceptionalism. Belchem has identified scouse humour as a compensatory device for coming to terms with the economic hardship Liverpudlians experienced during the inter-war years, claiming that this 'spread beyond the bonding rituals of workplace' to become 'a defining characteristic of the scouser'. 'Young men in particular, Belchem claims, prided themselves on their wit, mouthiness and verbal invention (Belchem, 2000: 51).

³² Liverpool's club colour's are of course all red, whilst their nick-name is 'the Reds'.

We have seen earlier in this chapter the centrality of the ferry as emblematic of discursive constitutions of Liverpudlian identity (as the subject of lyrical choice in the Merseybeat sound of the 1950s and 60s). We have also seen, especially in chapter 2 of the thesis, the role played by unconscious fantasy in the work of mourning — as compensating for loss (Kristeva, 1989). That fantasy should here intervene in the interstice between mourning and identity can be seen from Anthony Elliott's (1999: 59) comments on the 'profound interconnections between selfhood, memory' — and in this case — the poetic language of loss. In this way, fantasy can be seen as providing an (un)conscious moment of escapism from the horrible present in which loss occurs. More precisely in psychoanalytic terms, it serves to ward off the realm of 'abjection' which Kristeva (1982) associates with the ultimate 'nothingness' promised by the death drive. In this way, identity construction — as 'undertaken in and through the process of language' (Elliott, 1999: 51) — can be seen to offer a form of fantasy compensation from the horrifying void that, for the unconscious, constitutes death. Elsewhere, other messages illustrate the totemic sense of social identity in Liverpool as resolutely characteristic of the more 'traditional' communities rooted in collective experiences; of the very strong communal sentiments expressed in a popularist and sentimental idiom that characterise totemic or tribal identity (Barker, 1981) and which appear impervious to rationality.

You are eternally in the spirit of the people of Liverpool.
(J. Morrison)

Dying is casting your spirit into the wind. You are here in
Liverpool.
(Unsigned message)

To all our lovely Liverpool people. Our heart is broken. We love you all (and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes). Their light will never go out. RIP.

(Unsigned message)

Not lots of hearts, just one enormous heart and it is broken. The heart of Liverpool. Never forgotten. RIP.

(Unsigned message)

Football, Liverpool and the Shadow of Shankly

If the messages I have presented hitherto suggest a strong communal ethic based on a general sense of place and of the imbrication of football, religion and politics as characteristic of the ‘local structure of feeling’ on Merseyside, then other messages speak of particular features of local identity, in this case the way in which football in Liverpool is central to the daily routines of the city’s existence (Davie, 1993: 201). In addition, the messages which I present in this section are suggestive of the sense of ‘communitas’ (Turner, 1977) between an often mutually hostile community of football fans. The condolence messages reported here signal, therefore — if only temporarily — a suspension of the ‘hostilities’ and ‘aggravation and enmity’ (Taylor, 1989) which have come to define relations between opposing sets of supporters.³³

To all those suffered.

(A Millwall fan)

My dear cousin Brian and all the other victims of Hillsborough.
We’ll walk besides you.

(From his Evertonian cousin, Jack)

³³ For a discussion of the unusually good natured relations between rival sets of football fans following the Hillsborough disaster, see Walter (1991b: 610). For a discussion of the unusually ‘friendly’ FA Cup Final between fierce city rivals Liverpool and Everton in the May following the Hillsborough disaster and the sense in which the creation of ‘shrines’ at Anfield and Hillsborough seemed to mark a ‘cleansing of a sport bespoilt by a history of divisiveness and violence since the 1960s’, see Taylor (1989: 92).

Good night and God Bless – you are all champions.
With love, Mark and Jennie (Manchester City fans)

We went through it at Bradford. Why did you have to suffer it too?
(J. Simmons)

Like the various other occasions in English football following disaster's of this kind, the messages contained within the Hillsborough condolence books from fans of teams other than Liverpool serve to remind us of the ways in which the Hillsborough disaster 'transcended all the meaningless rivalries which give football its only meaning' (Money Penny, 2001: 233). Football, as we have earlier seen throughout this chapter, is both central to constitutions of local identity in Liverpool and to a variety of other cultural practices engaged in throughout the city. Accordingly Williams *et al* (2001), suggest that football has:

become a central part of the taken-for-granted "social practices" that characterize the social formation in the city of Liverpool and help — along with highly distinctive patterns of politics, work and consumption, relations of religion, gender and ethnicity and socio-economic and spatial distributions — to provide the city with a specific "structure of feeling".

(Williams, Hopkins, and Long, 2001: 3)

To say that football matters in Liverpool is, therefore, perhaps to understate its significance. Speaking to the *Guardian* in 1987 following his expulsion from the Labour Party, the former deputy leader of Liverpool city council Derek Hatton claimed that this 'paled into total insignificance' compared to his very palpable disappointment that same day on hearing the news that his beloved Everton had been beaten by city rivals Liverpool (*Guardian*, 25 April 1987). Asked in 1985 if football perhaps matters *too much* to people in Liverpool, Hatton replied that the question was like asking if mice

care too much about cheese (Williams, 1987). Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, the messages here reflect the deep significance of football throughout the city; its imbrication with religion as well a sense of being ‘hard done by’:

We were never allowed into Europe, but God thought you were all
good enough to enter heaven. From a life-long Reds fan.
(From a life long Red)

I learned to follow Liverpool a long time ago. My father, who
taught me, never lived to see Hillsborough but he’ll welcome those
in heaven who never returned home. There but for the grace of God
goes everyone here.
(Susan Hayes)

English clubs were prevented from entering European cup competitions following the Heysel stadium disaster of 1985 involving Liverpool fans, whose actions indirectly led to the deaths of 39 (mainly) Italian supporters of the Turin team Juventus. (Only quite recently, in 1991, was this ban on English clubs lifted by football’s European governing body UEFA). John Williams (2001) sums up the peculiar reaction to Heysel in Liverpool and wider feelings of being ‘hard done by’ when he writes:

In Liverpool, itself, sentiments after Heysel were mixed, ranging from deep shock and real shame that some people from the city were directly involved in such an appalling football tragedy, to open anger at the predictably spiteful and vicious press coverage that football, and especially the city, attracted as a result of the disaster. The city’s strong self-identity, its semi-Celtic local culture, its long-term industrial decline and depopulation, and its social, cultural and geographical relative isolation from the mainstream of Englishness, all allied to a formal and deep popular opposition to the politics of national government in Britain in the 1980s, turned Liverpool in on itself for mutual support after Heysel, as would also happen again later following the disaster at Hillsborough.
(Williams, 2001: 112)

In other messages, as we have seen, there is an explicit recognition of the sense of *learning* involved in football fanship; of being inculcated in the social, cultural (and

ritual) practices bound-up with football fandom. For football fandom, as we saw in chapter 3 of the thesis in the work of Bale (1991) and Walter (1991), is a performative ritual enacted on a weekly basis. Expressed purely in sociological terms, fanship of a particular team is rarely ‘achieved’ but is more often than not ‘ascribed’ (Dunning, 1990), usually patrilineally.³⁴

Other messages combine an anthropocentric view of an afterlife with references to football and a form of *addressivity* which presumes a listener (perhaps a superaddressee?), readily capable of comprehending their meaning. This anthropocentric belief in an afterlife is a view made popular, according to Bethan Jones (1999: 206), during the Victorian period, when the ‘evangelical idealization of the family unit and the influence of romanticism’, combined with the attenuation of literal beliefs in hell and damnation (in which reunion was conditional), conspired to produce a belief in the ‘romantic reunion of loved ones in heaven’.

Gordon Horn, rest in peace now. Bobby, Denise, Julie and Andrew
— your one and only mate. Keep us a seat in the stand’s mate.

Shanks’ will be heart-broken to embrace so many. With him you
will never walk alone.

(R. J)

You’ll Never Walk Alone. Shanks’ is there.
(J. J. Hughes)

These last two messages, and many others besides in the condolence books I analysed (see table 1.1 in Appendix) refer colloquially to the late Bill Shankly as ‘Shanks’, the

³⁴ See, for example, the prefatory dedication in Lansdown’s and Spillius’s (1990) *Saturday’s Boys*: ‘To our Dads for taking us in the first place’. This life long attachment to football, the editors write, tend, for the most part, to be ‘made young and among boys, so apologies to Kate Hoey, our only female’ contributor (Lansdown and Spillius, 1990: 2).

legendary, ‘still-idolized and iconic Scottish manager’ (Williams *et al*, 2001) of Liverpool F. C, who engineered unprecedented on-field success for Liverpool throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, and can be seen to reflect a locally inflected romantic belief in life after death. Many others add as an appendage the popular exhortation, ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’. The adoption by Liverpool fans of the song ‘*You’ll Never Walk Alone*’, from the Rogers and Hammerstein musical *Carousel*, has by now been well documented. The sociologist of religion, Grace Davie (1993: 208–211), describes it as ‘Liverpool’s 23rd psalm’, before going on to explain its prescience, and ubiquitous take up, during the mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster. Davie usefully plots the song’s journey from a Broadway musical of the 1940s, through its adoption in the 1960s by the Liverpool group Gerry and the Pacemakers, to its appropriation and ‘permanent associations’ with Liverpool F.C. The song has, indeed, long since become synonymous with, and ‘inseparable from’ (Davie, 1993), the ‘very idea of’ Liverpool F. C, its origins now long forgotten. Others too (e.g. Ward and Williams, 2001: 73) have reflected upon the adoption of ‘*You’ll Never Walk Alone*’ and the spontaneous singing by the Anfield Kop during the 1960s of songs by Merseybeat bands.³⁵ This, Williams (2001: 102–3) suggests, was the received public ‘reading’ of Liverpool supporters at that time following the regular televising of football highlights on the BBC’s *Match of the Day* programme, which began in August 1964.

Nevertheless, such messages are also reflective of the ways in which the iconic, or rather, totemic image of former manager Bill Shankly was taken up, to heart, and contributed to ‘the particular “structures of feeling” in the club and the city’ during the

³⁵ Ward and Williams (2001: 73) record a particular incident during a match in 1963 in which a player lay concussed on the pitch: ‘The trainer came on and helped the player to his feet, and then the player slumped forward across the trainer, who held his weight. The Liverpool fans burst into song: *He loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah*’.

1960s (Ward and Williams, 2001: 53). Allied to the success which Shankly brought to Liverpool, turning around a club which had faced the ignominy of relegation from the old First Division into one which, in the space of five years, had delivered a league Championship (and beyond that the club's first European trophy, the UEFA Cup in 1973)³⁶, was, in Ward and Williams' (2001) view, a shared appreciation of values widespread amongst the people of Liverpool at the time. Shankly's resolutely 'down-to-earth' approach to life, his roots in Scottish socialism,³⁷ and apperception of traditional working-class values founded on collective struggle, struck a cord and achieved a wider resonance with the spirit and people of 1960s Liverpool. Speaking of Shankly's unique ability to 'reach out' and address the Liverpool public, especially when publicly addressing large crowds of adoring Liverpool fans (as he did on many occasions following the team's return home from successful cup triumph's), Ward and Williams (2001) write that:

Shankly's messages appealed to the Liverpudlian confidence of the time. The Beatles were the most famous music group in the world. . . Cilla Black was a big pop star and local poets. . . Roger McGeogh [and] Adrian Henri. . . were creating a national stir. Comedians Ken Dodd and Jimmy Tarbuck were household names, and the city produced a string of boxing champions from Alan Rudkin to John Conteh. Liverpool and Everton were winning trophies regularly and Roger Hunt, Ian Callaghan and Ray Wilson had played for England in the successful 1966 World Cup Finals. And, for several years in the late 1960s and mid-1970s, Harold Wilson ran Britain from the nearby Huyton constituency. All in all, the city had optimism, employment and good humour.

(Ward and Williams, 2001: 73)

³⁶ From taking charge of Liverpool in 1959, who at the time were a Second Division club, Shankly quickly steered Liverpool to the Second Division Championship (1961–2), followed by three league Championships (1963–4, 1965–6, 1972–3), two FA Cups (1965 and 1974) and the UEFA Cup in 1973.

³⁷ For a discussion of Shankly's socialism, as rooted in his 'communitarian' upbringing in a small Scottish mining village, see Bowler (1996). For a discussion of the intersection between Shankly's socialism and the working-class values emblematic of Liverpudlian social identity, see Ward and Williams (2001).

A host of other things, it seems, were therefore being mourned here, not least the halcyon period of the 1950s and 60s when Liverpool ruled the airwaves and Liverpool F. C under Bill Shankly scaled unprecedented and previously unthinkable heights. That Bill Shankly should command such *totemic* status in Liverpool is evident from a number of messages, including the one below, which inverts the quote for which Shankly is arguably most famous.

Shanks' only got it wrong once. He said football was about life and death — it shouldn't be.³⁸

(Unsigned message)

The notion of *totemicity*, as I began to sketch out in chapter 3 of the thesis in my discussions of both Freud's (1913) and Durkheim's (1912a, 1912b) use of the concept, can be seen, as applied here to Bill Shankly, especially in psychoanalytic terms, as the projection of the symbolic desire for protection onto a 'father-like-figure'. For here, following Freud's theorisation of the veneration of 'objects' following the act of original parricide committed by the primal horde, it is these 'objects' themselves which were seen to offer a form both of self-representation and protection. Durkheim's (1912b) views on totemism, controversial even at the time, thus referred principally to elementary forms of religious life as embodying an 'extraordinary primitivity' (Stanner, 1967: 219). Durkheim (1912a) suggested that since neither man [*sic*] nor nature contain, in themselves, a sacred character, they must obtain it from another source. Indeed, as we have also seen in chapter 3, football itself is routinely perceived as a surrogate religion, providing countless spiritual and communal functions. Suffice it to say, therefore,

³⁸ Shankly's original and oft-quoted comments were that 'some people think football is a matter of life and death'. But 'I can assure them', he told the *Sunday Times* (4 October 1981), 'it is much more important than that'.

following Durkheim, that the ‘totemic principle or god’, in this case Bill Shankly, is ‘nothing else than the clan itself, personified and represented by the imagination under the visible form’ of the totem itself (Durkheim, 1912a: 206).

Exile, Nostalgia and the Spirit of Homeliness

If the condition of exile, is that of enforced absence; the compulsion — for what ever reason — to leave one’s home (Tabori, 1972: 37), it is conceivable that Liverpudlians themselves should constitute a diasporic community. Liverpudlians, as I have sought to demonstrate in the opening part of this chapter on Liverpool exceptionalism, have, for generations, faced the exigency of having to leave their city in search of work and a better life elsewhere. Liverpudlians, much like the Irish émigrés from whence many of them came, have long been dispersed throughout the rest of the UK and beyond. Notions of ‘Scouseness’ and of Liverpool itself (and the ways in which these are taken-up in performative and identarian repertoires through which selfhood is established and confirmed) can be seen to be profoundly mediated by a variety of discursive formations. The messages below, which invoke in some way or other nostalgic notions of ‘home’, were ostensibly written by Liverpudlians exiled from the city and are indicative of the sense of the ‘homely’ that the Hillsborough disaster unleashed.

With love and sympathy to all the bereaved, from an expat
Liverpudlian.

(L. Crewe)

Even though I was far away, in my heart I was home that day.

(Brian Poulter, Exmouth)

Just popped home to say you’ll never be forgotten.

(Jim, London E16)

It is almost inconceivable that a British born person living within the U.K should refer to themselves as an 'expat'; with the exception perhaps of a few industrial towns, cities or regional counties/centres located in the north of the British Isles (where strong conceptions of self-identity based on region, in some instances religion, are formed and fermented, in part, by cultural myth). Nevertheless, the messages presented above can be explained by the discontinuous sense of memory (Schlesinger, 2003, forthcoming) provided by the 'exilic condition'. For as Schlesinger suggests, there is 'the before of everyday life in one milieu and the exilic thereafter of wherever one ends up'. These messages invoke common-sense notions of home, yet can be mined for a profundity of meaning which such assumptions routinely overlook. Home, of course, is where, according to popular proverb the heart is (Simpson, 1992). It is also, in psychoanalytic theory, the site where primary identifications are first forged: a place of warmth and security as manifested in the bond between mother and child (e.g. Benjamin, 1990). For behaviourists (of animals and humans alike), the desire to return home to a familiar or safe area (characterised by the adjective, 'homing') is considered a phylogenetic disposition.

Following this, it can be seen that processes of memory (of what and how we remember) are central to our sense of self and that this in turn can be related to how public forms of memory may shape our self-understanding, and inform our sense of belonging to nations or other collectivities (Schlesinger, 2003, forthcoming). It is this profound internalisation of place characteristic of Liverpool's strong communal ethic which, if anything, is not weakened but strengthened by exile, for the exilic condition forces one to re-think the relationship between the place of one's origin and the place where one has settled (Burgi-Golub, 1997). It is, then, the nostalgic space provided by

the discontinuity of memory of those exiled from Liverpool which was seemingly triggered by the Hillsborough disaster. For exile, Schlesinger writes, throws light both on ‘how we relate to others in defining who we ourselves are’ and ‘activates the narrative imagination in the constitution of the self’.

This dialectic between ‘home’ and ‘away’ can further be explored using the work of Christine Kraft Alsop (2002). Home during childhood, is according to Alsop, central to constitutions of selfhood, for it may provide the security enabling us to develop an ‘inner compass’ with which to navigate the adult world.³⁹ Hereafter, ‘in every second of our life’, we rely unconsciously upon this ‘inner compass’ for guidance. In a way reminiscent of Raymond Williams’ (1984: 64) comments on the ineffable sense of style characteristic of particular *structures of feeling*, Alsop writes that only when we leave home do we become aware of the existence of this ‘inner compass’. This ‘inner compass’, instilled during childhood as a means of orientation in the world, remains focused on home, wherever we may end up, linking memories established elsewhere with our present. For notions of home dialectically link our past with our future; ‘being home dialectically refers to being away’ (Alsop, 2002: 3). A native of post-war Germany (now living and working in the United States), Alsop claims that she was made painfully aware of this ‘inner compass’ as a means of basic orientation⁴⁰ whilst listening to news reports following the events of 9/11. Alsop reports ‘missing the familiarity of German radio and TV’, which for her, provide a ‘basic orientation in a

³⁹ Alsop (2002: 2) suggests that childhood is the foundation of home, for it is here, in child play that we first encounter a sense of ‘home’ and ‘away’. ‘Crawling on the floor of the family room a baby will frequently turn around to make sure her caretaker is still insight before crawling around the couch, the chair, or even out of the room.’ This sense of security, she writes, provides the child with an ‘original template’ allowing for future development and orientation in the world, for ‘the child who can return to a safe haven after each step forward can’ go on to ‘explore the unknown’.

moment of utter confusion'.⁴¹ It is thus, during events like 9/11, the Hillsborough disaster or the death of Princess Diana, that 'our inner compass fails and we are inclined' to fall back on 'our original template for meaning and understanding' (Alsop, 2002: 11). It is perhaps this which explains the desire of Liverpudlians living elsewhere to be at home following the Hillsborough disaster. Nevertheless, there can be no unproblematic going back to the place which has been lost, for as Schlesinger suggests (2003, forthcoming), the act of reminiscence and of nostalgia does not take us closer but further away from our origins.⁴²

Indeed, the relationship between those who leave and those who stay behind can often be seen as fraught with resentment. For in this context, the 'intense local patriotism' and patronage of local artists and institutions by Liverpudlians extends only as far to those perceived as staying loyal to their roots (Williams, 1971: 17). This is also a point reflected in the work of Sara Cohen (1991: 11), who has suggested that 'home-grown' bands like the Beatles were frequently criticised or 'treated as deserters' if they choose to leave the city to live elsewhere. Popular music itself, nevertheless, is a medium which reflects the acute sense of ambivalence engendered in the dialectical relationship between home and away. The song-writing partnership of Lennon and McCartney symbolises in poetic form the tension in this relationship. Countless Beatles' songs, including *Penny Lane* and *Strawberry Fields Forever*, were written as childhood

⁴⁰ Alsop goes on to explain that this 'original template' established during childhood is significant because it allows us, when perceiving others, to 'read' their bodily and facial gestures and tone of voice 'in a way that allows projections into the future because we can rely on a long history of experiences' (Alsop, 2002: 3).

⁴¹ Upon delivering a talk on this self-same topic, Alsop was approached by a Canadian woman who, having left her home some 35 years earlier, had experienced no longing to return until the events of 9/11 when, inexplicably, she felt an immediate longing to be back in her home town.

⁴² For further discussion of 'homesickness': as the nostalgic longing for a home that no longer exists, and whose inability to provide the physical and spiritual needs leading to the exigency to leave home in the first place are, over time, obscured, see Alsop (2002). Homesickness itself of course can be seen, using Freudian psychoanalysis, as a yearning for a place which has been lost.

explorations which recollect people and places in Liverpool (Elliott, 1999: 63). Yet John Lennon's relationship with his home town, like that of the other Beatles, was to say the least ambivalent. Lennon took up permanent residence in New York City in 1971 (until his death in 1980) and is reported to have once said that he wished he had been born in New York.

No Place like Home: Sportscares and the Internalisation of Place

Yi Fu Tuan (1974) has famously referred to the condition which 'couples sentiment with place' as 'topophilia'. Other social geographers, building upon Tuan's earlier work, have made a convincing case for the affective ties which humans make with their material environment. Edward Relph (1989) has argued that landscapes and space are not 'just incidental visual backgrounds to other social concerns but are part of our being that enters directly into the quality of our lives' (Bale, 1991: 131), whilst John Bale (1994) has suggested this intense attachment to a sense of place is mediated by nostalgia, myth (Barthes, 1973) and a variety of cultural representations through which a sense of place is discursively mobilised. In this way, the presumed 'innocence' or 'naturalness' of physical landscape and sense of environment (whether urban or rural) have been shown to have profound ideological implications. Bale points to the rural myth connoted by baseball in North America. For despite its urban origins in New York and Hoboken, New Jersey, baseball in the United States continues to endlessly play upon symbolic associations with 'the frontier, of the countryside in the city, of the rural idyll; it is sportified nostalgia' (Bale, 1994: 151). Even the long-believed story of the game's rural origin, Bale writes, in a cow-pasture in Cooperstown up-state New York, turned out to be a myth. The town today, he suggests, is an urban simulacrum, continuing to cash in on the myth which is its very *raison d'être* and where any

distinction between reality and myth has been successfully eroded.⁴³ Not dissimilarly, myths surrounding British football as a quintessentially working-class game continue to persist despite its reputed origins in the public school systems of Eton and Rugby (Dunning, 1999).

Hillsborough as a Totem of Local Identity

Notions of ‘home’, and especially of ‘topophilic’ attachments to particular sportscares (Bale, 1994), can be seen to be reflected in a series of condolence messages. The dramatic sense of loss hastened by the sudden, unexpected, violent and widespread loss of life at Hillsborough unleashed a sense of topophilic sentiment and identification amongst people only indirectly connected with the disaster. Here, I am referring to Sheffield Wednesday fans who, like myself, were profoundly moved and distressed by events which had occurred in our ‘home’ ground; a place we knew intimately and called ‘home’. Such topophilic sentiment, unconsciously absorbed through the performative and iterative weekly ritual of football fandom, had, I suspect, for those who, like me mourned, remained dormant until unleashed by the calamitous events of April 15 1989. It is precisely this unconscious interiorisation of place; ‘of being inside and belonging to *your* place as an individual and as a member of a community, and to know this without reflecting on it’ (Relph, 1976: 65), which Relph (1976) refers to as a sense of ‘placeness’. This sense of ‘placeness’; of Hillsborough as ‘home’, echoed as it is in the messages, letters and comments I present below, is reflected in the degree of personal responsibility felt by fans of the team whose ground played host to the FA Cup Semi-Final in which the disaster occurred.

⁴³ Bale suggests that the baseball movie *Field of Dreams*, which itself plays upon notions of a rural American idyll, could just as easily have told essentially the same story in a suburban setting, but for it to work on a U.S audience the baseball park had to be in rural Iowa.

To all who died or lost loved ones in the tragedy, in our city and
our home, and on behalf of all the clergy in the diocese of Hallam.
(Indecipherable signature – A Sheffield Wednesday fan)

From a Sheffield Wednesday fan — Hillsborough will never forget
you.
(Jacqui Cole)

That such toponymic sentiments for particular sportsplaces as a sense of ‘home’ should unselfconsciously be absorbed can be seen from the fact that only recently, in undertaking this thesis, have I have come to analytically reflect upon and acknowledge my own investments (and those bordering and bound-up with them), unleashed by the Hillsborough disaster. These sentiments, and my unconscious motivations in mourning Hillsborough, were productively mined and further explored through the auto/biographical use of the method known as ‘memory work’, excerpts of which I reproduce in chapter 7 of the thesis.

Indications that such sentiments of ‘placeness’ were widespread in the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster are suggested not only by the messages contained within condolence books but by the comments of local journalists, local residents, and most notably, by the Sheffield-born academic and sociologist of sport, Professor Ian Taylor.⁴⁴ Taylor writes of the deep attachments forged between football fans (and some, not all, sections of the local community)⁴⁵ and the football ground as ‘an emblem of locality’. In particular, Taylor articulates the personal meaning that the Hillsborough disaster held

⁴⁴ See Taylor (1989: 93–94), who points to the comments of Sheffield-born sports reporter Paul Thompson in the local newspaper the *Sheffield Star* who, on the Monday after the disaster, wrote an article under the headline ‘Oh no . . . not Hillsborough’

⁴⁵ For a parallel discussion of sportsplaces as landscapes of fear, see Tuan (1979). Here Tuan writes of the ways in which topographical spaces may be experienced differently by individuals and social groups. Particular landscapes which generate a sense of toponophilia in some may generate a sense of fear or *topophobia* in others. For a discussion of the antipathy which British football stadiums generate in local residents living nearby them, see Bale (1991, 1994).

for him. On hearing breaking news of the disaster whilst living in Ottawa, Canada, Taylor writes that a gradual realisation:

dawned on me, a life-long supporter of Sheffield Wednesday, that ninety-five people had met terrifying deaths on 'my' ground, and — to render the tragedy even more graphic for me — that they had died, crushed and asphyxiated, at my own 'end', the Leppings Lane End, where I had spent so many hours of my childhood and teenage years. For me, this was not a tragedy like Bradford City, Heysel, Zeebrugge or even the Kings Cross fire (though I had been to that place during many a visit to London): it was absolutely tangible, real and personal. I felt as if I knew every step and every crush barrier at the Leppings Lane End. And I was mortified, like every Wednesday supporter, by the thought that Hillsborough, so often described in Sheffield as the 'Wembley of the north' had now joined Burden Park in Bolton; Ibrox in Glasgow, Valley Parade in Bradford, and, of course, the Heysel Stadium in Brussels, on the list of post-war graveyards on European or, more particularly, on English soccer grounds.

(Taylor, 1989: 89–90)

Equally telling of the affective ties unconsciously forged between people and sporting place is a letter written to the *Green'Un*, Sheffield's weekly Saturday sports newspaper, which expresses, in part poetic, part ponderous form, the profound sense of devastation and personal injury felt by some local supporters of Sheffield Wednesday.

I watched helplessly — was it a dream? Was it real?
Even now I wonder will I wake from this nightmare?
Then I see more and more pictures in the press, on TV and more
tears of grief.
It was not a nightmare
It was real
But why Hillsborough?
The best ground and normally the best organized ground I've ever
been to. It happened at my second home — the home of Sheffield
Wednesday, my club, the club I love. Oh why? . . . Oh why?
I feel partly responsible. I feel actually guilty that this could happen
at Hillsborough. There must be many reasons for this tragedy, but
what can I do now? All I Know is that football must go on. But
please remember, you at the top, you in control, some of us can
only afford to stand up, and want to stand up!

Treat us with respect, as human beings, not cast aside as football fans. We are all equal and we love our national game. Don't lose it. Play the Cup Final in respect of those who lost their lives through their love of the game — may they “walk on” forever.⁴⁶

J. Wigfield, Sheffield.

Green 'Un letters page, April 22 1989.

Taylor, in fact, elaborates on the possible reasons behind such experiences, suggesting that Hillsborough itself can be seen as a totemic feature of local identity in Sheffield. In much the same way as I have suggested that various totems of Liverpool, such as the Liver birds, the Liver building and the ferry can be seen as signifies of Scouseness, Taylor suggests that the Hillsborough stadium can be seen as a source of local pride from which Sheffielders draw a sense of identity.⁴⁷

[F]ootball grounds across the country have always had an almost religious hold on football fans and, indeed, on the families and kin on whom these, mainly male, fans have imposed their weekend and mid-week-evening obsession. In different parts of the country . . . these shrines have taken on . . . [an] important additional significance as an *emblem of locality*, often quite widely shared, irrespective of gender. . . Sheffield itself, unlike Liverpool (with its inimitable waterfront and its Victorian and Georgian arcades), and Manchester (with its venerable Victorian insurance buildings and St Peter's and Albert Squares) is a Northern industrial city with no really outstanding architectural or other features. . . for many working Sheffielders, however, the symbol of the city's local pride (particularly since the closure of Bramall Lane as a Yorkshire cricket ground) has been Hillsborough itself.

(Taylor, 1989: 93).

Taylor (1989: 92) alludes, by way of a brief reminiscence, to the symbolic freight which is bound-up in such associations: between people, place and personal identity. Taylor writes affectionately, and nostalgically, of matchdays spent with his father during the

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the affective ties between the fan and the football stadium, of as strong if not more so than the fan's links with the team itself, see Bale (1994: 133).

⁴⁷ Bale (1991) suggests this it is difficult to find anything other than football which so readily provides a sense of place-pride. 'No other regularised ritual exists to project a place-name to a national audience each week' (Bale,

1950s, where they would ‘get off the tram at Parkside Road’ and walk ‘along Penistone Road to spend a few minutes outside the Players’ Entrance (hoping to catch a glimpse, perhaps, of Albert Quixall, the “Golden Boy” of the Hillsborough faithful)’. Football itself, Bale (1994) has argued, is bound-up with a sense of nostalgia and myth emblematic of traditional working-class masculinity, especially as represented in aspects of culture such as boys’ comics (say, *Roy of the Rovers*) or the paintings of Salford artist L. S. Lowry (most notably his painting ‘Going to the Match’).⁴⁸

Suffice it to say, then, at this point, that football in particular, and sport in general, is regularly asked to ‘bear a freight of symbolism that it can scarcely contain’. Writing in the *Guardian* (17 April, 1989) in the days following the Hillsborough disaster, Jeremy Seabrook gets to the heart of much of the mourning which followed in its train by suggesting that football continues to represent ‘the passion of locality and of places once associated with something other than football teams’.⁴⁹ Seabrook’s comments are made in connection, not with Sheffield, but with Liverpool. Nevertheless, the same observations can be said to ring true: that football continues to stand-in for a range of identifications which are sustained, if not factitiously, then through the deployment of nostalgia and tradition. Whilst the industrial specificity which ascribed to particular space a distinct sense of place have long since past — and are today but fragments of collective memory, football clubs and their links with the locale from which they were

1991:135–6). Hillsborough itself is a district of Sheffield as well as home to one of the city’s two professional football clubs.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of comparisons between the sporting iconography of football (as confined to the industrial north, set amongst Lowryesque images of factories and chimneys) and cricket (as connoting quintessential images of ‘Middle England’; of village greens, warm beer and old ladies cycling to church), see Bale (1994).

⁴⁹ Football commentators routinely refer to sporting encounters between city rivals Wednesday and United as ‘steel city derbies’. Each of the Sheffield’s teams associations with place (and with tradition) continues to be reflected in each of the clubs nicknames: the Blades and the Owls. Wednesday were, until their move to Hillsborough (in the district of *Owlerton*) in 1899, known as the Blades, whilst United at this time were known as the Cutlers, each reflecting their associations with the city’s industrial past.

born, retain a connection with the past (albeit if only by way of faintly invoking historical tradition). Their longevity and veritable histories (many of the professional football teams of today were founded in the mid to late nineteenth century) bear witness to sweeping economic, political and social change. To this extent football teams, as significatory emblems of locality, can be seen to embody various layers of meaning which outstrip those associated with the actual game in itself. Football, according to Seabrook (1989), ‘continues to reach’ aspects of *social being* which cannot be fulfilled through public consumerism; representing instead the ‘passion of locality’, which, in the case of Liverpool, contains ‘an unbearably tragic quality’ (Taylor, 1989: 94) and symbolism which this ‘great maritime city, with its decayed function rooted in an archaic Imperial and industrial past’ (Seabrook, 1989) is no longer capable of sustaining.

Nevertheless, the affective ties made between people and particular sportscares, as ‘eulogized space’ (Bachelard, 1969: *xxxi*), be it awe-inspiring or humdrum, can be likened to the emotional ties forged with home more generally. For as Tuan (1974) has suggested, familiarity with place, when it does not breed contempt, breeds affection. Here Bale (1991, 1994) has likened the bonds between various football supporters and their ‘home’ ground with notions of home more generally. And whilst nostalgia and myth, as we have seen, can be said to factitiously augment such a sense of ‘placeness’, they do not, in themselves, account for the strong affective ties themselves. This affection for a particular sense of place, and the ways in which it may contribute to the configuration of social identity, has been variously theorised: as stemming from its distinctive character or sense of *genius loci* (Raitz, 1987); from its distinguishing

architectural features⁵⁰ (e.g. Taylor, 1989); by the architechtronics of the stadium, including the unconscious evocation of sensory pleasures, visual, aural, olfactory and tactile (e.g. Bale, 1991, 1994); and through familiarity, an incarnation of the past and pride in ownership (Tuan, 1974). It is in part these aspects of ‘placeness’ which may go someway towards explaining why people like myself were especially moved by the Hillsborough disaster, for it bespeaks the manner in which our own sense of self is tied to the wider social context in which we find ourselves existing (Brooks, *Guardian*, 7 February, 2003).

Linguistic Pathways of Loss

Following the work of Kristeva (1984), in which the unconscious *poeticity* of creative language can be seen to disrupt the existing symbolic order giving rise to social and linguistic convention, I now turn my attention to messages which appear to semiotically navigate (and negate) the sense of loss occasioned by the Hillsborough disaster. These linguistic strategies for managing loss: of poeticity, fantasy and displacement are the means by which loss is both managed (Elliott, 1999: 48) and simultaneously negated (Kristeva, 1989: 53). Language, as we shall see from the messages I present, is an ambivalent medium for negotiating loss, for it serves both to *displace* and *articulate* a grievous recognition of loss. To this extent it can be seen to serve both a *dialogic* and non-communicable *semiotic* function: serving the practical communicative purpose of articulating to others — through dialogue — the pain felt by loss, whilst simultaneously serving an *expressive* function focused both on an addressee and upon the *addresser*.

⁵⁰ Taylor (1989: 92n) writes of the ways in which football supporters have ‘retained strong affection for particular architectural aspects of the stadium (the famous “cottage” at Fulham, the grand entrance to Villa Park, the Clock face at Highbury)’. This popular interest in the football ground is, Taylor claims, never reflected in ‘established opinion’ and the ‘recognised literature’ on the history of British architecture, thus reflecting its class bias. For more on the architecture of British football grounds, see Inglis (1987).

Kristeva complicates and casts doubt upon language as a straight forward medium of communication by introducing a ‘layer’ of semiosis within language between the semiotic (drives and their articulation) and their signification (a so called thetic phase). Nevertheless, a variety of messages also serve to illustrate the points at which language reaches its limits in expressing otherwise ineffable emotions.

Anger and Guilt in the Work of Mourning

Following the work of a variety of psychoanalysts which I discussed in chapter 2 of the thesis (e.g. Engel, 1961; Lindemann, 1944; Kübler-Ross, 1970), a number of messages express the sense of anger and guilt embodied in the work of mourning as emotional ‘stages’ through which the mourner must pass *en route* to ‘recovery’. In this way, public condolence books allow people to give vent to emotions ordinarily silenced by social conventions associated with traditional forms of funerality, providing a forum in which to express the palpable sense of anger which, in this case, the Hillsborough disaster generated.

Where there is no vision the people perish. No more.
(Unsigned message)

May profit never be put before lives again and the safety of all put
before that of the few.
(J. K. Scott-Taggart)

No cages! No turnstiles! Unlimited capacity — at the ground you
have gone to now.
(Joan Pattern, Liverpool 8)

Other messages can be seen as reparative dialogic attempts to mend damage previously done, reflecting both a sense of guilt and remorse as routine aspects of loss.

Philip — we shall miss you dearly. We never meant to hurt you those times at school. We are sorry and we know you know we never meant you any harm. May you rest in peace.

(Love Alison)

Death Denial and the Work of Mourning

Aside from aspects of fantasy, which I will turn to shortly, a variety of messages can be seen as performative enunciations that attempt to make solid or real that which they proclaim in words; to summon and enact the action being verbalised: to bring back the dead, to undo the grievous and irreparable damage done. Widely repeated utterances; that ‘we will always remember them’ or ‘I shall never forget you’, can be seen less as statements of fact or claims to some kind of propositional truth, than as forms of ‘inner speech’; as appeals and self-assurances to never forget. Various proclamations to ‘never forget’ the victims of Hillsborough, can be seen as linguistic attempts to overturn the painful reality of loss and the reality that, in time, those who have ‘gone before us’ will inevitably fade from thought. Such *wish-fulfilments* — of eternal life in another place — as Elias (1985) has suggested, play a considerable palliative role in alleviating the fears associated with one’s own transience.

We didn’t have time to say goodbye but in our hearts you will never die.

(Unsigned message)

To live in the hearts of those you loved is not die

(Indecipherable signature)

Following the ‘speech-act’ theory of the philosopher/semanticist, J. L. Austin (1962), the functionality of these messages lies less in terms of what they *say* and more in terms of what they attempt to *do*. It is thus the act of remembering, however vain, which is

being summoned and appealed to here through language. The deployment of *performative enunciations*, recognises, if only unconsciously, the functional weight which words carry. They are spoken, or rather written — Derrida's (1978) concept of *différance*, serves to destabilise the distinction between written and spoken language — in the facile attempt to prevent the possibility which these enunciations themselves embody.

Fantasy and the Escape from Reality

Fantasy provides a compensatory device (e.g. Kristeva, 1989) for managing loss by allowing temporary release from the reality of the present. Not dissimilarly, therefore, such enunciations can be read psychoanalytically as feeding into *phantasmagoric* forms of displacement. *Dialogised* forms of address, as constituted in condolence books, between the bereaved and the deceased, can be seen (in their broadest sense), as inter-subjective attempts to continue the dialogue abruptly and interminably interrupted by sudden and unannounced death (e.g. Kaplan, 1995).

Goodbye my love, keep my side of the bed warm. Don't forget the
yellow roses on 21 August.

(All my love, your Margie xxx)

I want to be with you but I must stay behind. Goodnight, God bless.
(Mum and Dad)

God love you Keith. Rest now with Granddad. We'll see you soon
love.

(Mum)

To Anthony. Mum sends her love. God Bless. Mum.

Good night, God Bless Gary – love your sister Julie.

Goodnight, God Bless my precious son Gary. All my love
sweetheart.

(Mum. xxx)

Seemingly incongruent with the more formal and demure forms of address we ordinarily come to associate with various forms of condolence, the messages contained within the Hillsborough books weave together informal and deeply personalised messages with the everyday popular and (quasi-) religious vernacular — of ‘God Bless’ — characteristic of *local structures of feeling* on Merseyside. Following this, many of the *dialogic relations* constituted in the Hillsborough condolence books, between the bereaved and the deceased, and amongst the bereaved themselves, are addressed *to*, or *for*, a transcendental mediator or ‘superaddressee’. We have already seen earlier the sense of *totemicity* as constituted in the relations between Bill Shankly, the former manager of Liverpool F. C, and the people of Liverpool. So also, a range of *dialogic* messages can be seen both to address God directly and fall back upon popular religious discourse when all other forms of address appear so ill-equipped for the job in hand.

Oh please Lord. Please tell me why. Why did my friends have to
die? To our 95 angels in the Kop in the sky. You will never be
forgotten. Sleep peacefully fans. Goodnight.

(Joanne)

To God, why did you choose Philip or any of them for that matter.
It shouldn’t have happened. RIP. You’ll never walk alone.

(Joanne)

In this last message, which can be seen to combine the popular abbreviation and tombstone inscription ‘RIP’ with the popular local aphorism ‘You’ll never walk alone’, there is a sense in which the words can be seen to flow directly from a stream of (un)consciousness, as correlates of the writer’s mental faculties. This outwardly

actualised utterance can be seen to throw light on the dialectic between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ speech; as a distinction theorised by Freud (where ‘free-association’ and the injunction to obey the ‘basic rule’ lead directly to that which is of greatest import), in the behaviourism of William James (where the contents of the psyche are emptied onto the page in a stream-of-consciousness), and radically recast in work of Volosinov (for whom ‘inner speech’ is made up of multiple and contradictory material obtained from, and oriented towards, the *social world*). For in Volosinov’s terms the process of ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ verbal life goes on continuously, with the outwardly actualised utterance ‘an island rising from the boundless sea of inner speech’ (Dentith, 1995: 141).

That the utterances I have presented above, including the creative word-play deployed in messages discussed earlier in this chapter, should be seen as a form of fantasy can be seen from the fact that a wish-fulfilment is a likely and prominent factor in their motivation (Freud, 1927: 31). Notions of fantasy, as I have sought to illustrate throughout the thesis are central to psychoanalysis, for they are the ‘psychical expression’ of ‘instinctual needs’ (Isaacs, 1952); the mental representation of somatic and psychic experience, they underlie every mental process (Britton, 1998: 110). From this perspective there is ‘no impulse, no instinctual⁵¹ urge or response which is not experienced as an unconscious phantasy’ (Isaacs, 1952: 83). We have seen this in the work of Melanie Klein and the ways in which the infant, experiencing hunger in the absence of the mother, hallucinates a ‘good feed’ by recreating the mother/breast in the

⁵¹ Whilst psychoanalysis is often referred to as an instinct psychology, Freud abolished the idea of human instincts as automatic unlearned responses to specific stimuli. Instead, Freud developed the concept of ‘*Trieb*’, often mistranslated as ‘instinct’ but properly meaning ‘drive’, which unlike the instincts of other animals is not innate but produced in and by the peculiar and almost infinite variation of human experience. *Homo sapiens*, in this view, are weak in instincts and rely upon certain biological or organic drives (the need, say, to satisfy thirst and hunger or for self-preservation — Freud’s ‘life instinct’).

realm of the imagination (Mitchell, 1991: 16). Fantasy in this sense emanates from *within* — often as a reaction to loss — and imagines what is *without*.

Fantasy can be seen to intervene following loss, in the messages I present here and can be seen to reflect the mourner's reluctance to relinquish the personal relationships severed by death. For if, following Freud, reality-testing shows that the love-object(s) no longer exists, one's reluctance to relinquish libidinal bonds may cause the mourner to seek to re-create an image of the lost love-object in the realm of fantasy.

Goodnight and God Bless Brian. We'll meet again in a better place.
(Debbie and Paul Clarke)

The brightest stars in heaven tonight are Shanks' boys saying
goodnight. God Bless.
(R. J. Talbot)

Do not grieve for those that leave us
They are not lost but gone before
Joyfully to give us welcome
When we reach the other shore.

(G. Kelly)

Messages like this can be said to serve a *truth-evading* function by describing (and hallucinating) what are, to all intents and purposes — given what we know about the reality of death in an increasingly disenchanted and rationalistic world (c.f. Weber) — unrealistic representations. They can be seen to provide comfort to the bereaved by the temporary yet willed suspension of reality, demonstrating the robust purchase which the imagination continues exert within common speech (Britton, 1998: 1). Following Kristeva's (1984) assertion that language itself derives from the terrifying realm of 'abjection' provided by the death-drive, in which we glimpse the possibility of our own

finitude, the instinctual semiotic is that which precedes meaning and signification and is re-activated by loss.

In the speaking subject, fantasies articulate this irruption of drives within the realm of the signifier; they disrupt the signifier and shift the metonymy of desire, which acts within the place of the Other, onto a jouissance that divests the object and turns back towards the autoerotic body. That language is a defensive construction reveals its ambiguity — the death drive underlying it.

(Kristeva, 1984: 49)

It is fear of this void and the terror that this induces, which leads to the ‘obsessive manipulation of space and time in order to eliminate the danger of gaps appearing in the external world, and compulsive space-filling mental activity to eradicate any gaps in psychic space’ (Britton, 1998: 112). It is fantasy which provides a compensatory device, closing up — by way of manic mental activity — the terrifying fissures opened by loss. In this light, condolence book signing itself, can be seen as a ‘concentrated “obsessive” activity’ (Johnson, 1999: 20) involved in the work of mourning.

The Poeticity of Loss

The very *poeticity* of language, wherein the meaning and composition of words, as well as their external and inner form, ‘acquire a weight and value of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality’ (Jakobson, 1981: 750), can be seen as represented in a number of messages which transpose affect into ‘rhythms, signs, forms’ (Kristeva, 1989: 22). This manifestation of affect, ‘when the word is felt as a word and not a mere representation of the object being named’ (Jakobson, 1981: 750) can be seen in the messages I present here and in those I have presented hitherto reflective of the creative word-play of locally inflected linguistic forms.

I watched you drowning in a sea of silent sorrow.⁵² Walk on.
(E. H. Liverpool 8)

The longer, more recognisable forms of poetry represented here as versified letters, express the *semiotic* desire to describe an affective reality — in stylised form — as it was personally and profoundly experienced, and from a *communicative* desire to convey the personal testimony of those involved in the disaster.

I was there that bright sunny day
When hopes flew high like scarves from cars
I was there

I was there that bright sunny day
When the whistle blew and the agony began
I was there

I was there that bright sunny day
When the red sea spilled onto the pitch
I was there

I was there at Anfield in the rain
Where the scarves and flowers lay in silent tribute
I was there

Each flower-laden car could have been for me —
or you — or someone that we loved
We *all* were there

A fan
RIP

This desire to personally narrate the events of 15 April 1989 can also be seen as an attempt to provide a corrective to the inaccuracy, and in some cases, willed manipulation of media reports of the disaster. The repetition of words ('I was there') can itself be seen, using psychoanalytic theory, as means of preventing the working-out of loss within the psyche, for it can be seen as the refusal to let go of lost love (Elliott, 1999: 49). Kristeva too (1989: 14) writes that the poetic form can be seen as a means of

⁵² This sense of silence is reflected throughout a variety of narratives surrounding the Hillsborough disaster. It is reflected in the narrative accounts of those who were there at Hillsborough (see, for example, the account of Trevor

sublimation; an attempt ‘through melody, rhythm, semantic polyvalency’ which prevents the psychic working-out of loss just as it shifts the metonymy of desire. The poem below conveys the very palpable sense of anger on Merseyside at media reports which accused Liverpool fans of despicable acts of depravity whilst simultaneously conveying the imbrication of football and religion on Merseyside, as well as acknowledging the humour and wit which are seen as characteristic hallmarks of the local vernacular.⁵³

We’ve bowed our heads in silent prayer
And asked ourselves how could it be
Each of us have shed a tear
For friends again we’ll never see.

We’ve had the finger pointed too
That’s filled our hearts with pain.
Those accusations false, untrue,
Brought the heartache back again.

They say in time we will forget
They say in time we’ll heal
But Liverpool will not forget
That’s the way we feel.

And soon the time will come to say
Let’s lift our heads with pride
For all the flowers that we lay
We won’t forget who died.

We’ll bounce back, we know it’s true
And again we’ll act the fool,
And whether you be red or blue
God bless the folks of Liverpool.

PP. J McLennon.

Lost for Words: the Limitations of Language in the Aftermath of Loss

Hicks in Taylor *et al.*, 1995: 55), in a narrative fragment from my own memory work (see, ‘Saturday April 15, 1989’, in chapter 7), and in a passage from Don DeLillo’s (1991) novel *Mao II* (see extract 1.1 in Appendix).

⁵³ For a discussion of humour on Merseyside, as emerging from the waterside casualism of the docks and providing a psychological response to Liverpool’s economic and structural problems, see Belchem (2000: 46–58). Interestingly, the malapropisms characteristic of John Lennon’s own Joycean forays into prose writing, *In His Own Write* (1964) and *A Spaniard in the Works* (1956), of which Anthony Elliott (1999) writes, can themselves be socio-linguistically

Here, we can see from a range of messages the difficulty in expressing in words the delicate and often ineffable emotions elicited by loss. It is perhaps little wonder that on occasions such as the writing of condolence messages people fall back upon platitudes and phrases which seem shallow and worn out (Elias, 1985). We have already seen from a range of messages which I have presented hitherto the ways in which a ready-made stock of phrases, from ‘God bless’ to ‘RIP’, are readily drawn upon in moments such as this (see table 2.1 in Appendix). It is presumably in this way that Peter Marris (1974) has suggested that loss results typically in a reversion to the familiar through a desire to assimilate the reality of the present into pre-existing conservative structures of meaning.

The reliance upon a range of bodily or somaticised metaphors through which to express feelings of grief (‘I am heart-broken’, ‘my heart is heavy with sadness’ etc.) serve to demonstrate the limitations of language pertaining to loss (as well to emotions more generally). Reference to anatomical body parts are routinely made to express a variety of amorphous and intangible emotions which are difficult to convey through discourse.

Words are few — feeling deep — God bless.

(Sandra Holland)

Yet language itself is a key medium through which we might access and come to understand the emotions of others as well as our own (Jagger, 1989: 148). Language, as Stevi Jackson (1993) reminds us, contributes both to the cultural construction of emotions ‘and is a means by which we participate in creating a shared sense of what emotions are’ (Jackson, 1993: 207). One such shared understanding of emotion can be seen to cluster around the heart, which is routinely asked to stand-in for a range of

located within vernacular of Scouse humour. The comic malapropism or verbal ‘near-miss’ is, according to Belchem (2000: 53), known locally as the Malapudlianism or Merseypropism.

emotions associated with love. Thus whilst the heart is an anatomical organ which bears little relation to the ways in which it is used in cultural discourse (as *signifier* of a range of emotions, including love, compassion, sadness etc.), it nevertheless serves an important *metonymic* function: as naming that which language otherwise finds it difficult to describe. Here condolence books are littered with pithy and epigrammatical phrases which draw upon the heart to express the pathos of loss.

Elias (1985), as we saw in chapter 1 of the thesis, has argued that the range of words available for use in situations surrounding death is ‘relatively narrow’. In such situations, where social tradition provides people with ‘fewer stereotyped expressions or standardized forms of behaviour’, the task of ‘finding the right word and the right gesture’ falls increasingly upon the individual; upon the individual’s own powers of invention and expression (Elias, 1985: 23, 24). However, following Bakhtin’s (1984) notions of *dialogism* and *heteroglossia* — *vis-à-vis* his critique of monologism (and notions that the individual can ever be the source of language) — messages contained within the Hillsborough books of condolence suggest rather that their meaning can be apprehended only by reference to other ‘texts’ already in circulation within society. Before concluding this chapter I return now to the ‘invented tradition’ (Hobsbawn, 1983) of condolence book signing with which I began my prefatory comments to this and the chapter which follows, locating outstanding messages both within the heteroglossia of language itself (and the heterogloss world from which they are drawn), and the historical specificity of local and postmodern cultural forms which characterise the contemporary *Zeitgeist*.

Heteroglossia, Intertextuality and the Re-invention of Tradition

Following the comments of communication theorist John Fiske (1990), no single text — in this instance, condolence books, even if taken together — can ever bear its full meaning(s) in isolation of others. For as Fiske (1990) suggests, meaning ‘can only exist in that ill-defined space between texts that both draw upon it [the text itself] and contribute to it, which exists only in its constant circulation among texts and society’ (Fiske, 1990: 6). The postmodernist view of language and communication, in contrast to the modernist position, serves to ruthlessly undo the ‘tight and identifiable relation’ between what is being said (the signified or ‘message’) and how it is being said (the speaker or ‘medium’) (Harvey, 1989). Deconstructionism, as Harvey puts it,

is less a philosophical position than a way of thinking about and “reading” texts. Writers who create texts do so on the basis of all other texts and words they have encountered, while readers deal with them in the same way. Cultural life is then viewed as a series of texts intersecting with other texts, producing more texts.

(Harvey, 1989: 49)

Following this, what I want to suggest here is that condolence books and the messages contained within them should be conceived intertextually, as the ‘transposition of one (or of several) system(s) of signs into another’.⁵⁴ This can be gleaned both from the most explicit manifestations of intertextual messages, and from all others within the books I analysed which ‘cannot be reduced to a problem of sources and influences’ (Barthes, 1973) and which serve to demonstrate the intrinsically intertextual nature of language itself. Examples of the former, of messages whose source is readily identifiable and which unconsciously or automatically index another text without quotation marks (Barthes, 1973) can be seen in the ubiquitous use of the song, come

⁵⁴ This is taken from Dentith’s (1995: 96) own translation of Kristeva’s (1974) *La Revolution du Langage Poetique* (see Kristeva, 1974: 59–60).

local proverb, ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’ (a text which, as I have tried to demonstrate earlier, has undergone a variety of transpositions). So too, such intertextuality can readily be seen in messages which transpose only part of that self-same text in the knowledge that it will be effortlessly understood within the context in which it is read.

And don’t be afraid of the dark

(Unsigned messages)

Such seamless intertextual weaving can also be seen in messages which incorporate the lyrics of popular music into customised forms of personal condolence address. Specifically, this can be seen in the following message which, combining local Scouse vernacular (with its tendency towards ‘diddymisation’ — ‘a seemingly contradictory liking for short forms and pet names formed by adding a “y” to the first syllable’ (Belchem, 2000: 53), appears unconsciously to index another, widely available (yet not specifically local) text without the use of quotation marks, namely the Pink Floyd song ‘Shine on you crazy diamond (parts 1–7)’ taken from the 1975 album ‘Wish you were here’.

To Churchy, miss you loads. Shine on you crazy diamond. Loads a love, Joanne.

Nevertheless, and as Fiske (1990: 125) suggests, whilst intertextual competence is central to the popular productivity — and the analysis — of creating meanings from texts, it is also true, as Barthes (1973) has usefully suggested, that intertextuality is itself a prerequisite of any text, whose meaning is contained within a ‘general field of anonymous formulas whose origin is seldom identifiable’ (Barthes, 1973). In keeping with Bakhtin’s polyphonic notion of *dialogism* (as a process which never fully achieves resolution), meaning is always incomplete, for each utterance or text, taken as a whole,

is but one moment in the wider circulation of meaning. Indeed, as we have seen in the preface to this chapter in the work of Volosinov (1973: 86), a word can be seen as a ‘bridge thrown between myself and another’. Here Kristeva draws out its implications provocatively (Dentith, 1995), by recasting Bakhtinian notions of dialogue and Volosinov’s notion of ‘inner speech’.

The writer’s interlocutor. . . is the writer himself, but as reader of another text. The one who writes is the same as the one who reads. Since his interlocutor is a text, he himself is no more than a text rereading itself as it rewrites itself.

(Kristeva, 1980: 87)

Here, then, ‘texts’ in their broadest sense (as signifying or sign systems — be they books, advertisements or materially useable cultural products themselves), can be seen both as initiating, and dependent upon, inter-subjective communication and dialogue. The relationship between notions of intertextuality, inter-subjectivity and dialogism are, however, a source both of convergence and tension in the work of Kristeva and Bakhtin.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, following the logic of Kristeva’s (1984) notion of intertextuality, it is possible to see Liverpool itself as made up of a series of sign systems; of various signifiers and signifieds. These signifiers of place (the Liver birds, Birkenhead ferry, Anfield, Scouse dialect etc.) and Liverpool itself as the ‘text’ which, taken together, they comprise, are, as we have seen, imported within the Hillsborough condolence books as another, more conventionally recognisable text. It is these signifiers of place and local identity which give the Hillsborough books of condolence their distinctive hue.

⁵⁵ Dentith (1995) usefully contrasts the Russian intellectual tradition of the 1920s and 30s from which the Bakhtin circle’s work first emerged, with the French intellectual tradition of the 1960s, whence Kristeva (and Barthes) began to engage with Bakhtin’s writing on Rabelais and Dostoevsky. For a discussion of the contrast between Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism and Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality, see Dentith (1995: 94–98).

In this way, Fiske has argued against the study of texts in isolation, suggesting instead that their meaning(s) can only be brought to fruition *intertextually* through exploring the ways in which one is inserted within a series of others. Here we are again reminded of Richard Johnson's (1986) notion of a 'cultural circuit', in which the meanings of cultural objects are transformed in a dialectical movement involving, broadly speaking, production, circulation, and consumption. 'Each moment', Johnson writes (1986: 284), 'depends upon the others and is indispensable to the whole'.⁵⁶ Here *intertextuality* and ways in which meaning-making is constituted are best understood by analysing the ways in which 'texts' (or cultural objects) are promoted commercially, the ways in which they are talked/thought about by their users, and the meanings that the press and other social commentators make of them' (Fiske, 1990: 123–4). Where Fiske (1990) has written of Madonna as a culturally available 'text', 'full of contradictions', so Johnson (1999) has written of Princess Diana, 'or the Diana figure', as a 'rich resource for the cultural and psychic work of others' (Johnson, 1999: 24). These 'texts' are endlessly incomplete, 'for no one text is sufficient', no text a completed object.

My analysis of condolence messages has demonstrated not only the *intertextual* weaving⁵⁷ of messages (un)consciously drawn from a variety of texts and speech genres (of religious and secular, popular and traditional, national and local), but the *heteroglossia* or 'multi-speechedness' of messages drawn from a polyglot of different speech communities. The Bakhtin circle's single biggest contribution in this regard has been to cast doubt upon neo-Kantian (and Saussurian) conceptions of language as

⁵⁶ For an alternative version of the 'cultural circuit', as applied specifically to the 'story of the Sony Walkman', see du Gay *et al* (1997).

⁵⁷ The term 'intertextuality', although coined by Kristeva in the 1960s from her engagement with Bakhtin's work on Rabelais and Dostoevsky has its etymological origins in the Latin term 'intertexto', meaning literally, to intermingle whilst weaving.

created, *ex nihilo*, as the product of an isolated consciousness.⁵⁸ Instead, Bakhtinian influenced socio-linguistics has pointed to the very social nature of language; its historical and geo-political situatedness and the ways in which it depends, and draws upon, meaning already in circulation within the economy of any given speech community. We have already seen, from my discussions hitherto, the ways in which I have sought to index the messages contained with the Hillsborough books of condolence to wider *structures of feeling* on Merseyside during the late 1980s.

Bakhtin has also theorised the inevitable tensions which ensue from centripetal pressures intended to fabricate a unitary or ‘national’ language in which all can participate; and centrifugal pressures towards a variety of languages of different speech communities which constitute ‘the apparent but false unity’ of national language (Dentith, 1995: 35). What, however, prevents these polyglot of ‘languages’ (of different social groups and classes, of different generations and ‘political’ groupings) from falling apart is the *context* in which they are spoken. They are given unity not just superficially in the covers which bind the pages of condolence books in which they are contained together, but by the shared sense of ‘*communitas*’ (Turner, 1977) and pathos felt and generated by various speech communities, which, in the moment of loss, is temporarily fashioned as a speech-community-in-mourning (Bakhtin, 1986).

In the Hillsborough books we have seen the multifarious ways in which messages have drawn upon texts outside and beyond the immediate context of the Hillsborough disaster for their meaning. From those which draw upon and deploy phrases culled from popular culture and already in widespread circulation within *local structures of feeling* on

⁵⁸ See Volosinov’s (1986) critique, in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, of what he calls ‘individualistic subjectivism’ and the presupposition that ‘the source of language is the individual psyche’ (Volosinov, 1986: 48).

Merseyside (*viz.*, ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’, which locally has long since become proverbial); to those which unselfconsciously mix religious verse with sporting metaphor, which draw upon traditional forms of condolence, and/or which cryptically allude to an inimitable sense of shared ‘placeness’; all messages within the Hillsborough books of condolence, without exception, can be seen, in one form or another, to be either socially or culturally located. They are, in other words, palimpsests whose underlying influence continues to shape the meaning of messages from which they are fashioned.

I began this chapter by attempting to sketch out a brief historiography of Liverpool through which condolence messages might be read. Here I began to suggest that the pervasive theme of loss is a characteristic city-wide experience, materially and historically grounded, unconsciously absorbed and reflected in cultural practices and the tropes of collective memory. I further suggested that Liverpool’s sense of ‘otherness’ as well as the strong communitarian ethic characteristic of local structures of feeling on Merseyside became of *leitmotif* of the mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster and that this is widely reflected in the performative utterances contained within condolence books. The condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster reflect the popular and local idioms of language characteristic of Liverpool’s local structures of feeling and the self-referential take up of social identities which characterise the sense of ‘otherness’ that Liverpool embodies. I have further suggested in this chapter that the condolence messages I analysed reflect the ‘unique’ imbrication of football and religion on Merseyside; of the ways in which football is totemic of the city itself and has become central to the daily routines of the city’s existence. In a way not unconnected, I have pointed also to the residual sense of religiosity within the city as

an enduring legacy of Celtic immigration and its representation in popular religious discourse throughout condolence messages. It is principally this, and the patterns of speech redolent of, and anchored to, strongly identifiable communities grounded in a particular sense of place which distinguish the Hillsborough condolence books as unmistakably *local* in character. I concluded this chapter by pointing to the social and intertextual nature of language, suggesting that discursive representations of Liverpool itself as ‘text’ were mobilised, and social identities connected with it summoned, in the mourning which followed the Hillsborough disaster. In this light, the practice of condolence book signing as represented in this chapter and the one which follows, can be seen as communication events; as nothing other than ‘people speaking publicly’⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ This is taken from Sergei Ivanov’s 1920 poster, designed in post-Revolutionary Russia, presumably to publicise Soviet campaigns aimed at mass literacy. It is reproduced on the cover of Hirschkop’s and Sheperd’s 1989 edition of *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*.

CHAPTER 6

BOOKS OF CONDOLENCE PART 2

DIANA: THE GLOBAL, THE ICONIC AND THE POPULAR FEMININE

When news of the Princess's death became known in the early hours of Sunday morning, 31st August 1997 the first floral tributes started to arrive at Kensington Palace. At the same time books of condolence were opened at St James Palace. London witnessed the extraordinary sight of people of all ages, class and race queuing for hours, some times overnight, to write their own personal tribute to a much loved Princess. Books of Condolence were also opened all over the country — in hospitals, schools, homes for the elderly and town halls. These books began to pour into the Princess's offices at Kensington Palace and at times the sheer number threatened to overwhelm the staff. Over 175,000 letters and 150,000 cards were received at Kensington Palace and 200,000 letters and tributes at St. James' Palace. Each one had to be opened and recorded because many of them contained donations of money, small and large amounts, for the newly launched memorial fund.

In addition to the British condolence books, tributes began to pour in from all over the world. They came not only from official government's and embassies but also from ordinary individuals, from department stores and community centres. Some were elaborately bound, others were simple exercise books with touching drawings and poems from small children. All will be kept and treasured by the family.¹

(Inscription from the Althorp Visitor Centre)

Where in the last chapter I discussed the condolence books signed following the Hillsborough disaster, in this I turn to discuss the performative utterances from a sample of condolence books signed following the death of Princess Diana. If, as I suggested last chapter, the *totemic* identifications reflected in the Hillsborough condolence books can be seen as characteristic of a masculine and local structure of feeling; then the *iconic* identifications forged with Diana — as the principal referent of mourning — reflected in the Diana condolence books can be seen as characteristic of *feminine* and *global* structures

¹ For a break-down of the recorded U.K locations from where books of condolence signed for Princess Diana came, see Table 3.1 in Appendix. These do not account for the total sum of books sent to Althorp (estimated to be in the region of

of feeling which the ‘Diana events’ helped publicly inaugurate. This difference can be seen to stem in part from both the iconic/feminine and totemic/masculine forms of identification as constituted by the principal referents of mourning in these two events (the public mourning following the death of Princess Diana and the Hillsborough disaster respectively); and subsequently, from the respective speech-communities (one feminine, the other masculine) which each of these death-events summoned. In essence, my arguments in this chapter are limited to exploring the performative utterances contained in condolence books signed following the death of Princess Diana as expressing a desire for affective communication and ‘recognition’ of social identities routinely elided by patriarchal discourse and hegemonic forms of masculinity. It was these kinds of expressivist emotional discourses, and ways of *being* and acting that Princess Diana appeared to embody, and which became writ-large following her death, that are principally reflected in the condolence books which I analysed. It is condolence books in particular which during the public mourning for Princess Diana provided an affective space for the articulation of social identities hitherto marginalised within mainstream cultural discourse. It is they above all else which perhaps represent the most feminine ‘moment’ within the wider series of what I refer to here as the ‘Diana events’.

Whilst many thousands of books were sent to Althorp from around the world (from 125 different countries in all), my analysis (as I suggested in chapter 4 of the thesis), in order to maintain some kind of comparative focus with the Hillsborough books, is restricted to

100,000), but presumably represent condolence books, from UK locations in particular, whose place of origin was recorded in the first days and weeks following Diana’s death when the task still seemed halfway manageable.

books signed in a variety of English regions.² These five books, of different shapes and size, drawn from the 100,000 which the authorities at Althorp estimate were sent to the Spencer family estate, represent a variety of urban and rural locations within the English regions, from Swindon in Wiltshire to South Kesteven in Lincolnshire. Others too, including the book from Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire (one of the few Parliamentary constituencies that remained Tory at the 1997 General Election), can be seen to represent a cross-section of the population of ‘Middle England’ who mourned Diana’s death. Others meanwhile, namely the book signed by members of Leeds Deaf and Blind club, can be seen to represent a section of the ‘constituency of the rejected’, to which Earl Spencer referred in his funerary address, and upon which Diana drew considerable support during her life (for her work with a variety of charitable groups and organisations)³ and following her death. It was of course in this light, as Kear and Steinberg (1999a), put it, that Diana’s investment in these campaigns:

retroactively accrued the value of a reciprocal cultural capital through which ‘her’ campaigns became beatified as *causes célèbres* and Diana herself was recast in a performatively ‘heroic’ light as a ‘tragic’ figure — a lost champion of the dispossessed and redressive righter of wrongs.

(Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 5)

² Books of condolence were also opened and signed at the department store Harrods in London, where those queuing to sign the books were served free food and drinks (Nava, 1997: 20). These provided an alternative focus to books of condolence opened elsewhere, presumably, as Mica Nava (1997) suggests, for those wishing to celebrate the coupledom of Diana and Dodi al-Fayed and to commiserate with the al-Fayed family. According to a spokesman for Mohamed al-Fayed, some 60,000 messages of condolence were received in the books opened at Harrods (reported in Nava, 1997: 20). For a discussion of the symbolic associations that particular sites of mourning had for the different publics who mourned Diana, see Nava (1997: 20).

³ Diana’s charitable activity following her divorce from HRH the Prince of Wales centred mainly, according to Andrew Morton (1997: 252–3), on The Leprosy Mission, Centrepont (a London-based charity for the homeless), The National AIDS Trust, the Royal Marsden National Health Service Trust (a cancer hospital) and the Great Ormond Street Children’s Hospital. Later, and most famously, Diana took a leading role in the Red Cross’s campaign against landmines (reported in Johnson, 1999: 29).

Nevertheless, taken together, these books, I will argue, can be seen as a local/national inflection of a globally constituted event and of globally manifested themes which clustered around Diana's *feminine* and *feminist* iconicity. Indeed, Diana's polyvalence meant that she could represent both a sense of trans-national globality (especially in her position as international celebrity and 'humanitarian' activist), whilst simultaneously providing a totemic reflection of the nation-as-local (especially as embodied in her former role as royal ambassador). The universalising tendencies that Diana embodied can and should be seen therefore, in the condolence books I analysed, as 'locally' and temporally inflected; expressed in a congenial atmosphere of post-Thatcherism. It is this oscillating nexus of the global and the local which, amongst other things, made Diana 'slippery and unstable as a media text' (Begbie, 1997: 122).

I begin my discussions by suggesting that the condolence books signed following the death of Princess Diana represent a positive feminine space for the expression and articulation of *feminine* and *feminist* social identities. This I suggest stems not so much from what the messages *say* as from what they *do*; from performative utterances as an inter-subjective form of dialogue between message writers and their addressees. Message writers, by reading the messages written and addressed principally *to Diana* (as a presence that was absent) by others members of the speech-community-in-mourning (Bakhtin, 1986), occupied the dual role of *addresser* and *addressee*. These forms of dialogic 'engagements', I suggest, served the important function of aiding the 'recognition' and validation of

identities which were hitherto marginalised — as the ‘abject’⁴ — within ‘malestream’ cultural discourse. Following this, I turn to discuss the specific content of the condolence books signed for Princess Diana more directly by exploring examples of particular messages. I begin by exploring a selection of messages which can be seen as reflective of the cultural public sphere (McGuigan, 2000), in which condolence books themselves provided a popular forum in which to debate the key issues of the day invoked by Diana’s death. I continue by exploring messages (and condolence books more generally) as suggestive of the ‘active, enthusiastic, partisan’ and ‘participatory engagement’ characteristic of fandom (Fiske, 1990: 147–8). In particular, I point to messages as reflective of popular feminine fandom; of the genre and narrative conventions of fantasy and romance through which Diana’s life and death were ‘read’. Following this I point to the informal speech and heteroglossia of language contained within condolence books as both reflective of the speech communities and social identities ‘hailed’ by Diana’s death; and as presenting a challenge to the traditional protocols of conventional funerary address. I continue by discussing a range of messages that mobilise a Diana, not as pure media image, but as grounded in material engagements and charity activism. I conclude with a consideration messages indicative of a range of subjective identifications and psychic transferences triggered by the death of Princess Diana. In this way, whilst messages can be seen as engaging in a form of inter-subjective dialogue with *other mourners*, they can also be seen, because of the issues they invoke, to simultaneously dialogue with *patriarchal*

⁴ Judith Butler (1999: 169) describes the abject as that which has been ‘expelled from the body, discharged as excrement, literally rendered “Other”’. Following Kristeva’s (1982) initial discussion of abjection in *Powers of Horror*, Butler writes that it is through the expulsion of alien elements that the identity of the expelled is effectively established. As we have seen, in the case of the identities mobilised by the work and image of Princess Diana, it is the exclusion of marginalised

discourse and hegemonic masculinity itself. These messages contained within condolence books, I suggest, are also indicative of both sides of the relationship between celebrity and fan, providing insight into the subjective identifications forged *with* and provided *by* Diana as a culturally resonant social figure embodying a powerful sense of *iconicity* (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 7). In this way, drawing upon notions of a ‘cultural circuit’ as earlier outlined in chapter 4 of the thesis, condolence messages can be seen to throw light upon processes of meaning-making: of intersections between particular ‘moments’ within the overall circuit, and between particular ‘readings’ of Diana as ‘text’ and their use within everyday lived relations. That is to say, the ways in which particular ‘readings’ and ‘representations’ of Diana’s life, as ‘text’, are taken up and ‘used’ within everyday social spaces; intersecting with a range of social identities as they are routinely lived. The categories through which I discuss messages are, however, imperfect distinctions and must remain so if we are to grasp the complexity of the meaning inscribed within condolence messages. Themes contained within particular messages, because of their richness, threaten regularly to burst out of the categories into which I have placed them for the purposes of heuristic discussion. So too, my analysis aims to strike a balance somewhere between considering message writers as bearers of discursivity whilst simultaneously as historical personages in their own right. In other words, it is not my intention to analyse the people who wrote messages in condolence books but rather to infer discursive meaning from the messages they wrote; as subjects who both *speak* and are *spoken through* discourse.

groups (racial, sexual, and those defined by physical disability) from representative processes, and their seeming invisibility within in the body politic more generally, which constitutes their profound sense of abjection.

Whilst the overall composition of my sample of condolence books signed for Princess Diana is markedly gendered and can be seen from the *social profile* of those who signed the books (45 per cent were identifiably women compared to the 10 per cent who were identifiably men), it is not this in itself, I will argue, that marks the books as feminine but the popular expressivist idiom and *style* of address adopted. Here I do not wish to suggest that the feminine specificity of the condolences contained within the Diana books reflects the reactionary gendering of emotion in the way in which some critics have (e.g. Wilson, 1997: 140). Nor to exclusively feminize — and thereby ghettoize — the public mourning for Diana, as conservative critics tried unsuccessfully to do when crowds first began to gather (Johnson, 1999: 34). For television *vox populi* at the time with male interviewees routinely expressed a desire for the elaboration of alternative masculinities and a sense of male emotional connexity (Mulgan, 1997). At the same time, and whilst other research in this area has suggested that it was women in particular who actively participated in the public mourning for Princess Diana (e.g. Jones, 1999; McKibben, 1997),⁵ the ten per cent of men who signed the sample of condolence books for Princess Diana themselves represent a significant minority.

Nevertheless, that which, amongst other things, distinguishes the Diana from the Hillsborough books is, on the one hand, the overwhelmingly *epistolary* nature of messages (all contributors, without exception, left some form of epistolary address, in contrast to the 69 per cent of contributors to the Hillsborough books who left an epistolary message and

⁵ Jones' (1999: 204) research, like my own, indicates that many more women than men signed condolence books for Princess Diana. The figures which Jones presents show an even more marked difference between messages written by women (72 per cent) and those written by men (16 per cent).

the 31 per cent who left only a signature), and on the other, their peculiar form of *addressivity* (98 per cent of messages are addressed directly to Diana in the second-person singular). This in part serves to distinguish the condolence books from the more traditional forms of address associated with the sending of condolence cards offering messages of sympathy to the bereaved and closest kin of the deceased and speaks of the iconic nature of public mourning which followed Princess Diana's death. Although as we saw last chapter in my analysis of messages from the Hillsborough condolence books, a routine feature of mourning appears to be the attempt to continue a dialogue with the dead in a life (and 'conversation') cut unexpectedly short (Kaplan, 1995). This idea of 'dialoging with the dead' can also be explored from a psychoanalytic perspective as a means by which we attempt to recreate — through the introjective practices of writing — a version of the lost object within ourselves (e.g. Johnson, 1997a; Kear, 1997). Nevertheless, it also begins to point to differences between feminine/iconic and masculine/totemic forms of fandom. The former, as Zoë Sofoulis (1997:16) and other writers have pointed out (e.g. Barcan, 1997; McRobbie, 1978; Williamson, 1988), is more likely to be dismissed as 'trivial', 'delusional' and 'irrational' than the totemic identifications that many 'men around the world act out in relation to soccer or football stars, games and animal races' which are considered 'normal, real and noble' (Sofoulis, 1997: 16).

Surprisingly, only 5 per cent of the messages I counted were addressed to Diana's sons William and Harry, and even fewer were addressed to Diana's blood relatives — the

Spencer family — in general.⁶ Only a single message from a total of 3,321 was addressed to Diana's family by marriage, the Windsor's, from whom, according to various reports, she had long been estranged.⁷ Children too, as indicated by the passage reproduced above from the visitor centre at Althorp, were amongst those who wrote messages in books of condolence. In the books I analysed I counted some 49 contributions from teenagers and children as young as 4 — although presumably these were written by adults and parents on behalf of very young children.⁸

Diana as the *Hauntological*: Condolence Books as Dialogic Feminine Space

I have suggested that the Diana books in particular should be seen as gendered, not simplistically from the gender profiles of those who signed them, as a form of biological essentialism — for as Lynne Pearce (1994: 104) has suggested, 'all attempts at linking textual practice to authorial gender are doomed to failure' — but from the *dialogism* of the messages themselves. Here two points are worthy of consideration. The first relates to the way in which Diana is characteristically addressed as the *hauntological*,⁹ a presence which, as Kear and Steinberg (1999a) suggest, is both absent and is made to appear more powerfully radiant — like the *Quem Queritas* trope¹⁰ — in death than in life itself. The

⁶ It is unclear, whether — as in the case of the Hillsborough disaster, where friends and families of the victims themselves signed the public books of condolence — Diana's closest friends and family signed their own books of condolence.

⁷ Diana's relations in particular with the Queen and the Queen Mother were widely reported to be suffused with acrimony. See, for example, Morton (1992).

⁸ For discussion of some of the meanings in the prominence of children in the national mourning for Diana, see Hockey and James (1999).

⁹ The 'hauntological', as Kear and Steinberg (1999: 12n) remind us, is taken from Derrida's (1994) discussion of the spectral transformation of the ontological into the ghostly. Specifically, Derrida's exploration of the hauntological pertains to the spirit of Marx(ism) and its status as *revenant*: a spirit that keeps coming back, again and again.

¹⁰ The *Quem Queritas* trope, Kear and Steinberg (1999:12n) write, 'refers to the women of Nazareth by the Roman guards at the tomb of Jesus'. When asked by the guards, 'whom do you seek', the women reply, 'Jesus of Nazareth, who was here and is risen'. It is in this theatrical trope, Kear and Steinberg suggest, that the sacred figure 'appears to disappear in order to reappear more powerfully prominent than before'. It was, in this case, Princess Diana, who (or rather, whose political symbolism), in the event of death, reappeared more brightly and with greater resonance than in life itself.

second, relates to Bakhtin's concept of *dialogism* and the ways in which this has been adopted by feminists and can be used to explain the *functionality* of condolence books as a contemporary cultural resource. These two points, as I will attempt to explain, are interrelated, for Diana, as the iconic referent of mourning, was represented in condolence books as the *hauntological*, a spectral presence providing a mediating link between various marginalised and hegemonic social identities that came together following her death, in this case, to dialogue with each other through the signing of condolence books.

The concept of dialogism can usefully be applied to the messages contained within condolence books signed for Princess Diana by considering power relations as a central feature of Bakhtin's original theory. Bakhtin contends that dialogue rarely exists between equal parties but is instead reflective of the social position in which speakers find themselves existing. Following Lynne Pearce's (1994) work and the comments of Patricia Yaegar (1988), the condolence books signed for Princess Diana can be seen to have created a positive *feminine space* in which women, in particular, not only address the silences in men's speech but in which men were 'persuaded' and invited to speak in a direction and tone consistent with, and sympathetic to, women's concerns. It is in this vein that Ruth Barcan (1997: 37) has perceived Diana's death as unleashing 'a sudden and overwhelming irruption of the "popular feminine" into a masculinised public sphere'. For a week or so at least following Diana's death, Barcan (1997: 38) has suggested that 'discussions about feelings triumphed, often in explicit opposition to the discourses and institutions of official, masculine culture', as suggested in the message below:

The people are speaking, you showed compassion, we have been touched by your presence, you will live on in our hearts and we will be the greater for knowing you.

(Audrey Howe, Bickerstaff Ormskirk)

In this way, books of condolence provided not only a counterpoint to dominant and hegemonic masculine discourse but a dialogic space in which women, as well as a significant minority of men, could — through narrative and epistolary practices of the self — renegotiate their own position within society. The assertion of identity (of the ‘substantive I’), as we will recall from my discussions last chapter, provided by the signifying practices inscribed within language itself (Butler, 1990). As a variety of feminist writers and theorists have pointed out (e.g. Haug, 2000; Herrmann, 1989; Pearce, 1994), as important as it is, following the edict of the Women’s Movement for women to learn to say ‘I’, the terms of collective address by which women position other reader’s as ally is of equal importance. And although the messages contained within the condolence books claim no explicit gender-specific solidarity, they do at least raise to the level of metatextual consciousness a sense of equality and solidarity (Pearce, 1994: 107). That they do so can be seen from the deployment of the personal pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’, which help foster a sense of ‘comradeship’ between the writer of messages and their textual addressee(s).¹¹ The following message is typical of both the terms of address and issues of abjection as routinely invoked throughout the condolence books:

¹¹ Pearce (1994: 107n) points to the way in which, in her earlier book *Dialogic Theory and Women’s Writing*, she sites the example of Marge Piercy’s (1987) novel, *Small Changes*, as opening with the dedication: ‘For me. For you. For us. Even for them’. This statement, Pearce suggests, ‘clearly registers a bond between the self and the female “other”, and positions it *against* the (implicitly) masculine third person plural.

Thank you for the way you truly cared and loved the uncared for and the unlovely. . . you were an example to us all. I only wish you knew how much we all cared about you.

(Lisa and Sarah)

Pearce, and those writers closest to her,¹² have preferred to look not at the way in which women's writing dialogises with patriarchal discourse but with a *female or feminist addressee*. As Pearce (1994) herself puts it, 'rather than search for the elusive "difference" of women's writing in either the sex of the author (i.e., who a text is by) or its content (i.e., what is it about) we concentrate, instead, on *who a text is for*' (Pearce, 1994: 106). Thus, according to Pearce:

Women's writing is best understood not as writing *by* women but as writing *for* them: what genders a text is not its authorship but its *potential readership* — the way in which interlocutors *within* the text (i.e., the textual addressees) and its actual readers are positioned as female or, indeed, feminist.

(Pearce, 1994: 106)

Although referring to women's writing, Pearce (1994) nevertheless makes an important point here. For as Sally Begbie (1997) points out, drawing upon Toril Moi's (1997: 108) distinction between *feminism* as a political term and the *feminine* not as an essence but a cultural definition that represents the lesser in patriarchal society, 'third-wave' feminists and Diana shared common ground.¹³ For if, as Kristeva (1997: 207) suggests, the feminine

¹² Pearce points to feminist writers like Patricia Yaegar who, 'rather than accept the view that women are forever exiled from a patriarchal language which is not their own', instead see in women's writing a potentially 'emancipatory strategy' by which they seek to claim a space for themselves in androcentric language and culture (Pearce, 1994: 104–5). Yaegar claims that women have been making language their own for hundreds of years, whilst Mary O'Connor (1991) points to African-American women's writing as producing texts in which 'a dialogic interaction with dominant and ruling discourses (of gender and ethnicity) is the source of power and herald of change' (Pearce, 1994: 105). In this view, the more voices that can be 'ferreted out, the more discourses that a woman can find herself an intersection of, the freer she is from the dominating voice' (O'Connor, 1991: 202, cited in Pearce, 1994: 105).

¹³ For further discussions of Diana's perceived feminist iconicity see, for example, Barcan (1997); Begbie (1997); Brunt (1999); Campbell (1998); Hey (1999); Journal of Gender Studies Special Issue (1999); Merck (1998); Paglia (1992);

is not a cluster of meanings but a position that is marginalised, both ‘third-wave’ feminists, like Begbie, and Princess Diana were both involved in similar work. ‘We were’, as Begbie puts it, ‘determined not to see the role and work of women undervalued’; ‘we were determined to work at the centre and not at the periphery’ (Begbie, 1997: 122). It is as we shall later see in this chapter, Diana’s work, as feminine kinship work that is routinely undervalued within patriarchal society, that endeared her to a feminine audience with whom they could subjectively identify.

Nevertheless, as I will also later suggest, whilst condolence book messages — by invoking a range of issues central to feminism that Diana herself helped to make publicly available — can be seen to dialogue with existing patriarchal discourse, they can also be seen specifically as messages written and conceived with a *feminine* or *feminist* addressee in mind. In this way, as Janice Radway (1984) has earlier suggested, the popular *feminine*, whilst not overtly *feminist*, may at least provide the *potential* for feminist resistance, identification and eventually emancipation. As I have indicated, then, whilst an overwhelming majority of messages (98 per cent of those I analysed) were addressed to, and were thus presumably *for* Diana, it is equally, if not more, conceivable that these messages were intended *for* other women (and perhaps to a lesser extent, for men ‘hailed’ by an emotional expressivity elided by hegemonic masculine discourse). For as we will recall from my discussions in chapter 4, Graham Dawson (1994: 24) suggests that stories,

Smith (1989). For a discussion of ‘third wave’ feminism: as complicating the understanding of feminism by embracing ‘second wave’ feminist critiques of beauty culture, sexual abuse and patriarchal power structures, whilst emphasising ways that desires and pleasures, including beauty, can enliven activist work whilst recognising the importance of maintaining a critique of beauty and patriarchal power structures, see Heywood and Drake (1997). An alternative formulation of ‘third wave’ feminism would be to suggest that it seeks to move beyond the equality/difference impasse posed by ‘second wave’ feminists whilst not acceding to the sense of defeatism implicit in postfeminism.

or in this case epistolary messages, are always conceived with an audience in mind, whether actual or imagined. That Diana should so repeatedly and powerfully be invoked as direct *addressee* or interlocutor, speaks both of the imaginary and phantasmagoric possibilities embodied in the relationship between iconic celebrity and fan; and specifically, of the *hauntological* Diana, in which her resonance was ‘spectacularly amplified in the event of her sudden removal’ (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 3).

In chapter 5, following the primacy of social structure which Bakhtin ascribed to language (to the social situatedness of particular utterances or forms of speech), I located the utterances contained within the Hillsborough condolence books as reflective of local structures of feeling on Merseyside. Here, in this chapter, I suggest that the expressivist and emotional articulacy¹⁴ of the messages contained within the Diana books can be traced to aspects of women’s position within, and resistances to, patriarchal society. This can be seen both from the fact that certain aspects of Princess Diana’s iconography, including her former position as the embodiment of conservative femininity (Simmonds, 1984) and her later position as iconic celebrity, summoned feminine speech communities in which Diana was a principal subject of everyday talk. Everyday talk, as the oldest and most basic system of communication — facilitated and extended today by a variety of technological and electronic mediums of telecommunication — is both a principal means by which popular culture circulates (Fiske, 1990: 174), and in this context, was a vehicle through which

¹⁴ Not all commentators, or feminists for that matter, it should be said, saw the Diana events in this way. Several, for example Elizabeth Wilson (1997), saw the Diana events less as affirmation of the nation’s emotional articulacy and intelligence than of its emotional incontinence (Walter, 1999: 41).

women (and to a lesser extent men) were able effectively to engage both with the discursive issues of patriarchy which the (self-) reporting of Diana's personal life brought to public attention, and as a consequence, with each other.

Moreover, much of Diana's emotional work with a range of charities and groups marginalised by mainstream society, and which, as Richard Johnson (1999: 30) suggests, was, 'when the media would allow, private and hidden', was that with which a feminine audience could subjectively identify. Indeed, it precisely the epistolary and emotional labour that Diana routinely engaged in, such as replying to letters of fans and of providing comfort for those in physical or emotional pain, that is reciprocated (albeit too late) in the condolence books signed following her death. Epistolary kinship labour, as I suggested in chapter 4, routinely falls to women to perform often on behalf of men.

Condolence Books and the Cultural Public Sphere

If as I have hitherto suggested, the condolence books signed for Princess Diana can be seen to be largely feminine by virtue of their addressivity, they can be seen also to provide a basis for *feminism*, by virtue of the issues they engage. Utterances contained within the condolence books that I analysed engaged, both implicitly and explicitly, in a range of issues central the concerns of feminism. These issues, of the 'personal as political', including Diana's bulimia, attempted suicide, and her husband's marital infidelity, were already writ-large before Diana's death. They signal points of insertion within feminist discourse by which many women were 'interpellated' following Diana's 'ruthless but

elegantly understated expose of the sexual politics of elites in the infamous BBC *Panorama* interview' (Hey, 1999: 69).

It was through the discourses which this 'reading' and 'representation', as particular 'moments' within the wider circuit of cultural production (Johnson, 1986) of meaning surrounding Princess Diana, that many women could readily identify the *plaisir* (Barthes, 1975b) of their own experiences of womanhood. This notion of *plaisir* is significant, and one to which I will return at a later point during this chapter, because it is an everyday pleasure which allows the possibility of both evading and yet relating to the meanings generated by, and within, dominant ideology. Nevertheless, the recognition and engagement with issues of the feminine and feminist in condolence messages are all the more remarkable in and of themselves when considered against the silences on these subjects within dominant masculine discourse. In this way, following the work of Jim McGuigan (2000), the condolence books signed for Princess Diana can be seen as an aspect of the cultural public sphere as a site of:

affective communication and popular disputation over the conduct of life, specifically. . . the struggle to move beyond patriarchal relations between the sexes. . . [the] *articulation of politics, public and personal, as a contested terrain through affective — aesthetic and emotional — modes of communication.*

(McGuigan, 2000: 5, 14).

In this light, the following messages, which express a sense of anger at the sexual politics and treatment of Diana by the royal family, can be seen as containing 'the possibilities of a genuinely popular, mass-mediated cultural public sphere, however transient, distorted and mystified it may have been' (McGuigan, 2000: 12, 14).

Diana, you were the only Queen we ever had. I hope the monarchy dies, they deserve to, to have let you down the way they did. God bless and thank you for being you.

(Joan Rees)

The monarchy rejected you but the people didn't — you taught us how to care.

(John H)

What a beautiful person taken from us so tragically. The monarchy has a lot to answer for.

(Mr S. Murry, Nottingham)

Diana, used by the firm, denied support when most vulnerable, yet you have overcome, to be loved by many.

(Patricia Rawley)

Diana — you mirrored the nation's soul. I hope the great outpouring of grief will translate into a new mood of global charity in your memory.

(Sue and Geoff)

Messages such as these, as various commentators have suggested (e.g. Hey, 1999; Kear and Steinberg, 1999a; Orbach, 1998) coincided with a reconfiguration of political discourses in British society following the election of New Labour in the same year as Diana's death. According to Orbach, the events following Princess Diana's death and the election of New Labour provided an opportunity both for the integrating of emotion into public life and for the democratising and reshaping of public discourse itself. The 'Diana events', Orbach (1998: 61) writes, became a 'moment of participation in which there was a claiming and reshaping of public space, an insistence that public discourse respect the feelings of the

people and a moment of potential constitutional change'.¹⁵ This in part underscores the locally inflected global structures of feeling unleashed by the public mourning for Princess Diana as represented here in the condolence books that I analysed. For the emotional expressivity and previously marginalised political discourses which became publicly available in the immediate aftermath of New Labour's election victory and the death of Princess Diana stand in sharp contrast to the ruthlessly hegemonic masculinity which prevailed under Thatcherism/Majorism (see, for example, Epstein et al, 1998; Hey, 1999). As Kear and Steinberg (1999a) neatly summarise:

In local British time, the particular longitudes of mourning Diana navigated currents of 'release' that followed the succession of New Labour in electoral victory — with its attendant sense (if not substance) of a turning of the political tide.

(Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 4)

Nevertheless, particular messages within the condolence books also point to the more rampant forms of *emotionalism* which followed the death of Diana, especially the attempts to attribute blame following Diana's death, as a characteristically 'bad death', in the way outlined in chapter 1 of the thesis. Such public expressions of emotion, especially 'when divorced from and devoid of content' (Wilson, 1997), were seen by some, including feminists like Elizabeth Wilson, as not simply vacuous but dangerous. Unlike Orbach, who has welcomed the incorporation of emotions within public life whilst cautioning against the rampant forms of *emotionalism* that routinely accompany child sex-offender cases for

¹⁵ Both events, the election of New Labour and the public mourning for Princess Diana, promised the practical realisation of the political campaigns of the 1960s which campaigned under the slogan of the personal as political. They appeared to offer the potential, for integrating public and private spheres of life; for now at last 'we could have feelings about public matters best kept hidden — even from ourselves' (Orbach, 1998: 61). Both events, she writes, came to represent the 'nascent realignment of politics and emotions in which politics is understood as an expression of deep human feelings about belonging, justice and equality'.

example — as an ‘anaemic form of social engagement’ (Orbach, 1998: 62) in which underlying structural issues are set aside or remain unaddressed amid the cacophony of calls for ‘justice’ — Wilson was affronted by the suggestion that the outpouring of emotion for Diana signalled the feminisation of British culture.¹⁶

The great tragedy is that only one of the royal family died and not the rest of them!¹⁷

(No signature)

May God bless and care for you and your sons in their grief — why did they have to hound you to your death for the sake of a photograph?

(No signature)

Now your tormentors can no longer hurt you. My prayer for you and your family is peace, perfect peace and everlasting happiness.

(B. Meltham)

Diana — Queen of Hearts. Tragic victim of man’s greed. Special thoughts to Will, Harry and Dodi. R.I.P.

(Lesley Nichols)

Instead, however, these messages, and others like them that I present below, begin — with the exception of the message wishing death on the royal family — to speak reflexively about celebrity as the commodification of the human form; ‘the process by which people are turned into “things”, things to be adored, respected, worshipped, idolized’, but above all else, ‘things which are themselves produced and consumed’ (Cashmore and Parker, 2003, forthcoming). Whilst the sense of anger in these messages is directed principally at the

¹⁶ Wilson (1997) in this regard writes that this was ‘surely the greatest insult of all’, for it ‘reaffirmed a reactionary stereotype of women as the only sex with tear ducts, the only ones who “care”’ (Wilson, 1997: 140).

¹⁷ It is unclear to my mind whether the intention of this message was to express violently republican sentiment by wishing death upon the whole royal family, including Diana, or as reflecting a widely held sentiment at the time which ‘evinced anger with the Royal Family, and took the line that Diana was the best of the lot or worth more than all the other royals

paparazzi, who, in the immediate aftermath of Diana's death were an easy target for public vitriol, they begin — calmly and introspectively — to reflect upon the public's own complicity in the demands made upon Diana's image, which as Simon Critchley (1999: 157) has suggested, was 'truly death by *publicity*, with the *paparazzi* in the role of Aeschylus' Furies'. The emotions represented here, of anger, blame, and eventually guilt, are nevertheless, as we saw in chapter 2 of the thesis in my discussions of psychoanalytic stage-theories of grief (e.g. Lindemann, 1944) those which routinely accompany loss. This, however, was guilt which extended beyond that which stems from the sense of unconscious triumphalism of having survived and out-lived the deceased as the referent of mourning. For in consuming tabloid images and stories about Diana's life, some of Diana's loyalist fans (un)wittingly contributed to the press-pack's relentless pursuit of her. These performative utterances can be seen therefore to attempt to perform a reparative act, wherein the public's own complicity is acknowledged through attempts to summon Diana as the *hauntological*.

To our fairytale Princess and her new found Prince. Our prying eyes can see now the grief we have caused to the one's who loved you. You both hold a very dear place in our hearts, one that will never be taken away. Thank you for the moments of pleasure you gave us. God bless you both. Now our prying eyes will never again hurt you.

(Lisa)

Diana, so many sentiments of love and gratitude, words cannot express my feelings. You gave so much, *we took all and gave you little*. . . forgive us. You will always be an inspiration to me, for your ability to love, give and provide strength. I will tell my children and grandchildren of the 'Princess of People's hearts'. Your memory will live on. May you now rest in peace.

put together' (Brunt, 1999: 29). Such a theme was reflected in the message contained within the condolence books I analysed which read simply: 'a rose in a garden of weeds' (Eileen Faulkener).

(Victoria Tattesall, my emphasis)

Although your life was so very short and so very sad, you showed us such strength and courage. How sad that it takes an awful sadness such as this *to make us thank you and perhaps apologise*. You will always be in our thoughts and our hearts.

(M. Mansfield, my emphasis)

This sense of guilt, at having made unceasing demands upon Diana's image and of being unable to reciprocate the emotional and kinship work with which Diana was routinely engaged, produced, according to Scott Wilson (1999), 'an ever greater desire to consume her image, this time with the moral guarantee that it is for charity' (Wilson, 1999: 52). Wilson has suggested that a means by which mourners of Diana were able to assuage the 'pool of negative guilt' was by giving to charity, principally through buying copies of Elton John's record, *Goodbye England's Rose*.¹⁸

Nevertheless, what I have attempted to suggest hitherto in my argument is that condolence books represented an aspect of the 'cultural public sphere', as central to the communicative rights associated with citizenship, providing a forum where issues both 'emotional' and the 'rational' could coalesce in debates which were central to the key issues of the day. Significantly, condolence books provided a 'producerly' (Fiske, 1990) means by which 'ordinary' people could intervene — as social historians — in the historical process, providing an empirical marker' of that which has been lost (Alberts, 1997: 100).

¹⁸ The re-worked version of Elton John's and Bernie Taupin's re-worked version of the 1973 hit single *Candle in the Wind*, *Good-bye England's Rose*, quickly became the fastest and biggest selling record of all time, achieving sales of over 40 million copies (Griggs, 1997: 113, Richards *et al.*, 1999: 10). This in part can be seen as an attempt to appropriate and reclaim Diana as 'England's Rose'. Johnson (1999: 25) has argued that in the 'historical semiology of the nations, "Englishness" works best in domestic opposition to Welshness, Scottishness and Irishness(es).'

Saturday 6 September 1997. The nation stopped today to say goodbye.
(Terry Lawton)

It is with great sadness that I am even sitting here. The Queen has made a speech today. I don't know what she said nor do I care. The monarchy has let us down. All hope lies with William, who I hope we can support and love and let him grow into a wonderful King. My thoughts to Harry also. Your body died but your spirit never will. Love forever.

(Faye)

It is now Friday afternoon (5 September 1997) following *that* Sunday. The nation and the world is just full of grief and shock for *their* [emphasis added] Diana, Princess of Wales. We all had some knowledge of her tireless work in many areas of serious illness and injuries, individual relationships and her problems, and of course her very personal involvement, much of which went on behind the scenes. We have heard so much more about some of the happenings not previously public knowledge — it makes us realise more and more just what we have lost. If only she knew our feelings and gratitude, if only she knew. . . if only she. . . if only. . . if. . .

(No signature)

What messages like this serve to illustrate, aside from the continued investments in popular royalism which one of these messages appears to indicate, is the historicity of the temporal moment; the 'now time', in which messages were written. From this perspective, condolence messages both point to a popular awareness of history as archive (Wilson, 1999: 48)¹⁹ and of a desire to enunciate in writing the 'I-here-now' (Bennington and Derrida, 1993) of felt emotion and speech. Indeed, in writing these vignettes, itself a testimony to public memory, message signers frequently provide the time and date at which

¹⁹ Wilson's (1999: 48) suggests that the Diana events were extraordinarily historic yet politically negligible; that the signing of condolence books 'that no one will ever read' indicates a 'desire to record or rather bury one's trace in the archive of the event' established as televised spectacle. Wilson reports Decca Aitkenhead who, writing in the *Guardian* on the day prior to Diana's funeral (*Guardian*, 5 September 1997) suggested that attempts to shorten the queues and ameliorate the length of time for people waiting to sign books of condolence was misguided, for the longer the queues were, the better people liked it because their length guaranteed the sense of an historic occasion.

they were written. In this way, the enunciated speech of condolence book messages, as a first order of signification which writing attempts to represent and recuperate, function effectively in the absence of the person writing them and speak of the 'eventness' of the public mourning for Princess Diana: as an event which 'happens in a contained space of time yet occupies a theatrical duration that appears to speak beyond its own temporal and locational boundaries (Kear and Steinberg, 1999: 2).

The messages represented above, and others like them, should of course be read against the background of public anger which was evinced by the lack an affective response from the royal family in the immediate aftermath of Diana's death, namely the Queen's initial refusal to participate publicly in the mourning for Diana which I noted in chapter 3 of the thesis. The principal source of public discontent following Diana's death was, we will recall, the royal family's initial refusal to return to London from their summer break on their Scottish estate at Balmoral. It was this, and news when it subsequently filtered out, that Princes William and Harry were woken in the small hours of 31 August 1997 whilst at Balmoral with their relatives to be told of their mother's death, only to be expected to attend church with the rest of the family in the usual way, that confirmed a view already widespread among the British public of the Windsors as unemotional and cold, and by extension, aloof from 'the rest of us'.

There was a public debate being conducted in the media and condolence books as to what the appropriate response of the royal family should be following Diana's death. These debates focused upon the Windsors as emotionally introverted and detached (Critchley,

1999: 160) and extended to discussions about what the role of the royal family and a constitutional monarch more generally should be. Whilst public fury towards the royal family in the week following Diana's death intensified as anger towards the *paparazzi* dissipated when it became clear that they had had no direct role in her death, some commentators (e.g. Davies, 1999; Richards, 1999) have pointed to the British public as steadfastly monarchist in orientation. Sociologists of varying theoretical persuasions (e.g. Billig, 1992; Birnbaum, 1955; Shils and Young, 1953) have for some considerable time argued as to the significance of the monarchy in constitutions of British identity.²⁰ These discussions notwithstanding, it is clear that condolence books provided an important democratic (and democratising) function by allowing 'subaltern counterpublics' (Fraser, 1992) the opportunity to express, through public debate at the everyday conversational level, issues of affectivity which Diana's life (and death) dramatised; as on a par with issues of 'intellectual seriousness' which routinely operate within the official masculine sphere of 'politics proper'. Jürgen Habermas's (1989 [1962]) original concept of the public sphere, we should note, refers only to the arena of rational-critical debate as a feature of democratic societies.

Fandom, Celebrity and the Production of Personal Meaning

As seen in chapter 3 of the thesis, celebrities and the fandom associated with them, can enrich the emotional development of the self 'and may contribute significantly to an

²⁰ Shils and Young (1953), writing from a Durkheimian perspective about the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, argued that the monarchy were a morally unifying force within British society. Their thesis was attacked several years later by Birnbaum (1955), who criticised it on the grounds of its conservatism and complacency: as attributing a single, unitary meaning to the Coronation; and of failing to take account of the ambiguity of meaning surrounding the Coronation. More recently, and writing from a broadly leftist political perspective, Billig's (1992) research has suggested that it is very difficult for English-born people, irrespective of party political affiliation, to conceive of Britain without a monarchy.

individual's sense of the interpersonal world' (Elliott, 1999: 139). In this way, by pointing to a number of messages contained within the condolence books I analysed, I want to suggest that celebrities in general, and Princess Diana in particular, can be seen as providing 'a rich resource for the cultural and psychic work of others' (Johnson, 1999: 24). As Cashmore and Parker (2003, forthcoming) usefully point out, whilst celebrity is a 'slippery concept' eluding any real sense of academic definition, it can nevertheless be seen as a means by which celebrities are imagined and, thereby, symbolically "used" by people in their everyday lives' (Elliott, 1999: 9). It is of course the celebrity's *image*, in this case Princess Diana and the ways in which it is mediated, and not Diana herself, that become subjectively available for public consumption. This is articulated in a number of messages.

To Diana, I didn't know you but always looked up to you as a friend.
But now there is a gap in our hearts where you once were.

(Katie)

Dearest Diana, we never met you but always admired you. May you
now find all the happiness you deserve.

(Lynn Dennis)

Diana, we may not have known you but we shall certainly miss you.

(Stephanie Lewis)

Sentiments such as these which critics of the public mourning for Princess Diana could not understand (e.g. Wilson, 1997; O' Hear, 1998) simultaneously serve to help obliterate 'in-principle' distinctions (Johnson, 1999: 18) between 'face-to-face' and more 'mediated' mourning; between, as Elizabeth Wilson (1997) puts it, 'the death of someone who was actually a friend and the more ethereal loss of someone known only a media figure' (Wilson, 1997: 136). Indeed, Wilson's (1997) reference to Diana as 'someone known only

as a media figure' does not capture the essence of fandom which I attempted to elaborate in chapter 3; in which a significant part of one's own self is wrapped up with some distant other (Elliott, 1999: 136) as to dramatically reduce, and make obsolete, the distance and distinction which exists between self and other. In these messages and others besides them which I have discussed hitherto, and following Richard Johnson's (1999) comments, the loss occasioned by Diana's death was 'real' enough 'to produce significant actions and discussions within everyday spaces' (Johnson, 1999: 18).

Diana's relationship with people was, *pace* the comments of those who have suggested that Diana was no more than pure media image (Merrin, 1999), nevertheless, 'real' enough to 'compel' people to queue, often for up seven hours at a time (Engel, in MacArthur, 1997: 26; Francis, *et al*, 1999: 119), to sign books of condolence. Nor, as Johnson (1999: 18) also suggests, does Diana's celebrity and the mediated relationship between her image and her fans 'inauthenticate the feelings woven around her' image. For what these messages illustrate, amongst other things, including the meaning-making processes central to fandom, is the thoroughly (post-)modern mass-mediated relationships which media forms make readily available. Whilst of course it has always been possible for fans to conduct relationships with their idols solely within the imaginary realm of personal fantasy, what modern media forms do is to increase the amount of daily, round-the-clock personal 'contact' available with celebrity figures. Television, magazines, newspapers, and more recently, 'real-time' celebrity 'reality television' and digital technologies, make it possible for fans to engage at will in 'contact' with celebrities and serve to help blur distinctions between fiction and reality. In this way, McGuigan (2000) writes that it is 'now very easy'

to think of the royals, and of Princess Diana's life when she was alive, 'as a living soap opera, a kind of *Trueman Show* with, in this case, reality preceding fiction' (McGuigan, 2000: 7).

At the same time, the messages I have presented hitherto speak, as Fiske (1990) has reminded us, of the fandom associated with popular culture: as excessively partisan and as standing in sharp contrast to the distance and reserve characteristic of bourgeois 'cultural appreciation'. As we saw, for example, in the sample of messages I presented earlier that speak of Diana's perceived mistreatment at the hands of the royal family, fans 'draw sharp and intolerant lines between what, or who, they are fans of and what they are not' (Fiske, 1990: 147). In this case of Diana but not the Windsors. In this way too, the signing and summoning of identities through the writing of epistolary messages in condolence books for Princess Diana can be seen as what Bourdieu (1984) has identified as proletarian cultural practice. In this way, women's and proletarian tastes can be seen as similar not because women are proletarian or because the proletariat is feminine but because, as Fiske (1990) suggests:

both are disempowered classes and thus can easily align themselves with the practices of popular culture, for the people are formed by social allegiances among the subordinate.

(Fiske, 1990: 47)

Other messages and poems speak also of bonds forged between Diana and her fans; as though her death were experienced as a personal loss:

I feel as though I've lost a dear sister.

(B. Tunstall)

It feels like losing a member of the family. God Bless you.
(Jeff Havercroft)

Dear Diana,
We never met
Our lives did not cross
But we've known your death
Like a family loss

Our hearts are broken
What will we do
when we will see no more of you

You filled our hearts
With love and grace
No more will we see
Your smiling face

But we'll be strong
That would be your will
Your hopes in life, may your sons fulfil
You left a legacy we cannot replace
Our darling Diana with the smiling face

The angels came and took you that day
To a safe place so far away
So Lord God look after Diana please
We all know in time our pain will ease

The heavenly flight on your golden stair
Will be the final trip into your tender care

Goodnight and God Bless

(Sandra and Trevor Wilson)

It is precisely the expression of these kinds of sentiments which critics of the mourning for Princess Diana (e.g. O'Hear, 1998; Wilson, 1997), could neither understand nor at the time tolerate. O'Hear (1998: 183), for instance, cites as an example of the 'irrationality' of the public mourning for Princess Diana the man who said that her death meant more to him than that of his parents. Nevertheless, even those people who, like myself at the time (see,

for example, my discussions in chapter 7) could neither understand nor begin to share an appreciation of why Diana meant so much to the people who mourned her, were forced to concede the genuine nature of people's grief. Even the staunchest of right-wing critics of the public mourning for Princess Diana, Anthony O'Hear (1998), was led to write that people's emotion:

it has to be said, was genuine, misdirected maybe. . . but it was not insincere. . . Whatever it was people felt, they really felt it, no matter that most of them had never even seen Diana and knew of her life only from the tabloids.

(O'Hear, 1999: 183–4)

This returns us to where I began my discussions in this section on fandom whilst providing a basis for further discussions of the ways in which Diana's 'availability' as a media text enabled a range of meaningful subjective identifications. In what follows, I want to suggest that whilst both critics from the feminist left (e.g. Wilson, 1997) and from the political right (e.g. O'Hear, 1998; Phillips, 1998) have routinely dismissed the public mourning for Princess Diana as of negligible political or emancipatory significance, as 'vacuous' (Wilson, 1997), and/or as saccharine and self-indulgent: 'the elevation of feeling, image and spontaneity over reason, reality and restraint' (O'Hear, 1998: 184); the messages contained within condolence books provide an example of the ways in which the popular feminine may offer a form of resistance to the dominant masculine normality. It can be argued that the popular feminine idiom and themes expressed in condolence books reflect women's 'perpetual negotiation of sameness and difference' in their relationship to language which simultaneously is, and is not, [their] own' (Pearce, 1994: 100); whilst providing the basis

for a resistive space through which patriarchal institutions and dominant masculine ways of being might be challenged.

Fandom, Femininity and Popular Fantasy

Barcan (1997) suggests that ever since she appeared in the public domain in the early 1980s, Diana has figured as a metonym for a mass culture troped as feminine (Barcan, 1997: 38). It is within such infamous and long-standing gendered oppositions between 'high' and 'low' culture, she writes, that Diana was typically placed: as schmaltsy and slightly embarrassing, the queen not only of hearts but of a much maligned feminine kitsch. Indeed, a simple yet effective way down the years in which to delimit the impact of the feminine upon civil society has been to condescendingly dismiss all that is feminine as 'embarrassing, excessive or trivial' (Barcan, 1997: 39). It on this basis that Diana's political significance (and the mourning which followed), has been variously dismissed as inconsequential; the expression of vague and formless emotion (Wilson, 1997: 141). It is in this way that some critics have attempted to shunt, and thereby downplay the significance of, the 'Diana events' (including the public signing of condolence books), into the cul-de-sac of 'low' popular feminine culture from where it can be easily dismissed. Nevertheless, whilst a number of messages can be seen to reflect this aspect of 'low' popular feminine culture, they also begin to point to ways in which popular feminine culture can provide an evasive site in which to resist the dominant normality. It is this evasion and ability to temporarily lose oneself in the *plaisir* (Barthes, 1975b) of popular pleasures, which, as Radway (1984) has famously suggested in her study of women who read popular romance novels, may come to validate feminine and feminist values in opposition to patriarchal or

masculine ones. The following messages below may provide the basis for subsequent feminist identifications:

Diana, many years ago people used to think I was you and would run up to me in the streets calling your name. From that day to this I have always loved, admired and respected you. My heart goes out to your precious sons — you are unique and irreplaceable.

(Sharon, my husband Jim and sons Matthew and James)

Diana, I couldn't take you seriously at first — with those ludicrous hats! But you won me over with your compassion, for taking on the establishment. You were one of the first public figures to shake hands with someone with AIDS and that changed attitudes around the world. Your smile and work won't be forgotten. Bless you.

(Steve)

Lady Di, it's a shame, we women, had to lose you as such a brilliant feminist role model. You did it with class and style! And Dodi, thanks for bringing happiness to Diana's life in her last months on earth. Hope you both have a great new life together.

(Nicci)

This last of these messages reflects a number of themes worthy of further discussion (as do many others, but space does not permit the discussion of each individual message), not least, following Radway's (1984) work, the way in which the new hero in the Diana story, Dodi-Al-Fayed, is 'feminised'. For in the popular narratives already in circulation about Diana's life at the time, Diana can be seen to represent the feisty and spunky heroine who endures and survives cruelty and coldness from Prince Charles and the royal family; who

refuses to ‘go quietly’,²¹ and eventually finds happiness in a new relationship with Dodi Al-Fayed, who treats Diana with care and sensitivity and who in so doing validates a range of feminine values in opposition to those embodied by an emotionally introverted, detached (Critchley, 1999: 160) and masculine (Barcan, 1997: 42) royal family. Perhaps one of the key points to make here is that the popular fascination with the glamour and style associated and bound-up with Diana’s celebrity²² and popular royalism (Williamson, 1988) is that it offered a form of everyday pleasure (*plaisir* in Barthes’ terms) to millions of women (and indeed men). This, as Fiske (1990: 54) suggests, provides a different from of pleasure from *jouissance*, for where *it* offers pleasure derived from *evading* the dominant social order, *plaisir* provides pleasure by *relating to it*. Yet at the same time, *plaisir* involves the ‘recognition, confirmation, and negotiation of social identity, but this does not mean that it is necessarily a conformist, reactionary pleasure (though it may be)’ (Fiske, 1990:54). Such popular pleasure in the ‘text’, as John Fiske (1990) points out, is manifested in multifarious forms, each one dependent upon the individual meanings that the ‘reader’ produces in her engagement with the ‘text’. In the messages presented above, Princess Diana, as ‘text’, can be seen as providing multifarious sources of pleasure: from the scopophilic²³ delight many millions of women took from consuming images of Diana (and her dresses)²⁴ in popular

²¹ In the BBC *Panorama* programme Diana gave in 1995, Diana claimed that one of reasons behind the royal family’s perception of her as a ‘problem’ was her refusal to ‘go quietly’ following her divorce from Prince Charles. Diana claimed she ‘had a role to fulfil’ and would ‘fight to the end’ (BBC *Panorama* programme, 20 November, 1995).

²² Whilst some commentators have discussed Diana’s celebrity as an impediment to her political significance (e.g. Cousins, 1998), others (e.g. Johnson, 1999) have argued that Diana’s celebrity — as embodying a sense that Diana ‘belonged’ to all citizens of the world — served to limit the sense of nationalist appropriation characteristic of traditional popular royalism amongst the British public.

²³ I use the term scopophilia here not in the full sense in which Laura Mulvey (1975) has developed the term but simply to mean a pleasure in looking.

²⁴ For a discussion of the significance and meanings which Diana’s dresses occupied in the formation of public perceptions about Diana’s life, see Clark (1997). This theme is reflected in the message: ‘*Diana, I share my grief with you*

magazines, books, newspapers and television, to the more subjective pleasures which many women took from producing their *own* — yet widely shared — meanings, based on social experience, from which they were able to ‘lose’ themselves within stories written about Diana’s life (and of which Diana herself told). It is, then, the intersection of issues of particular concern to women (of say, issues of motherhood and the struggle to be heard both within patriarchal society and the oppressive confines of the bourgeois patriarchal family form) which became writ large in the life of Princess Diana (and mediated representations of it), that provided a source through which women could find positive space for recognition and confirmation of their own social identities. It is here, then, perhaps, following Radway (1984), that women were not only able to temporarily ‘lose’ but ‘find’ themselves in ‘the Diana story’.

Such themes, of popular romance and fantasy, are also reflected in a series of other messages, which I will discuss shortly below. Nevertheless, for the time being, and staying with the message above — which makes explicit mention of Diana as a feminist role model — I suggest that it can be seen as reflecting Elspeth Probyn’s (1990) distinction between ‘postfeminism’ and new traditionalism’, wherein Diana comes to stand for an icon of both. For on this basis, Diana became a feminist icon without ever uttering the ‘F-Word’ (Barcan, 1997: 40). The message in question appears to take for granted the victories gained by feminism, whilst simultaneously championing what Leslie Savan has called the ideology of the choiceoisie’, whose constituents are ‘successful women who want something more’ (Savan, quoted in Probyn, 1990: 151). In this formulation, then, new traditionalism is the

as you are a really wonderful, down to earth person. I will never forget you. I always admired your outfits. You are happy

companion ideology of postfeminism: ‘a paradoxical representation of the status quo as a new choice’ (Barcan, 1997: 40–41). According to Barcan (1997: 41), Diana’s ‘search for a role, her insecurity, her beauty, and her power’ were the classic embodiment of traditional femininity as an ‘almost archetypal distillation’. Yet, as we shall also see, Diana provided the expansive spaces for forms of feminist identification. As noted earlier, the ‘defining moment’ for some feminists (e.g. Hey, 1999: 69) in this quasi-feminist fairytale was of course Diana’s own ‘epiphany moment’ (Denzin, 1988) in the 1995 BBC *Panorama* interview. Diana’s “outing” of ‘the sexual politics of private life’, according to Hey (1999: 69), offered scope for ‘a gender and indeed a feminist identification.’ It was perhaps above all the crystallisation and bringing to public prominence of issues hitherto unspoken and unseen within the ‘private’, domestic (and/or feminine) sphere which made Diana such an unlikely source of feminist identification.

These themes, of Diana’s resistance to the sexual politics of aristocratic patriarchy (Campbell, 1998) with its emphasis on procreative sexuality, primogeniture and the obligatory heterosexual and heteronormative ‘family life’ (Spurlin, 1999: 156), are reflected implicitly throughout the condolence books. They are reflected in those messages I have earlier presented that refer *inter alia* to Diana’s ‘use by the firm’, of being ‘denied support when most vulnerable’ and are reflected again in messages which speak of Diana’s feminine strength:

Diana, you conducted your life with courage, dignity and fortitude.
You were, and always will be, an inspiration to women all over the
world, goodnight sweet lady. Sleep well.

now with Dodi at last. You will always be the People’s Princess’ (Kim Tizzard).

(E. Corpfen)

Whilst this message, and others besides it, is couched within the narrative framework of fairytale, specifically the myth of sleeping beauty, as central to the structure of Western feminine imagination (Boer, 1997: 85), it also draws implicitly upon the discursive representation of various ‘Diana’s’ (as victim *and* survivor: of patriarchal family life, of an adulterous and abusive marriage, of depression²⁵, of an eating disorder etc.). Diana’s appeal therefore, it seems, as reflected in condolence book messages, lay in her ability to combine aspects of traditional and modern femininity. Specifically, the combination of celebrity, glamour and the opportunity she provided for popular cultural consumption,²⁶ with aspects of traditional femininity as manifested in her earlier role as wife of the future heir to the British monarchy. Diana of course was at once the symbol, and servant, of aristocratic patriarchal privilege: an ideological artefact of conservative femininity in the early 1980s (Simmonds, 1984), initially addressing her husband-to-be as ‘Sir’ (a formulation which, as Barcan (1997: 38) writes, was ‘fascinatingly archaic’, yet, ‘more darkly, a condensation of the clichés of the classic erotic transaction celebrated in romance’); whilst later challenging the very precepts of aristocratic patriarchy (Campbell, 1998). In a further twist of Diana’s seemingly paradoxical and chequered life, which offered a variety of competing social and political ‘readings’, Diana challenged patriarchal royal convention by exposing the bankruptcy of royal primogeniture and procreative sexuality (insisting also that she, and not the royal family, be allowed to raise William and Harry as she wished), whilst

²⁵ According to Andrew Morton’s version of events, Diana’s depression and bulimia were themselves the result of a disappointing and desperately unhappy marriage (McGuigan, 2000: 11).

simultaneously insisting in her BBC *Panorama* interview in 1995 that she was grooming Prince William to be King, albeit a 'different' type of king with a strong social conscience.²⁷

The messages I have presented hitherto therefore demonstrate a widespread knowledge and competence amongst the speech community of Diana's fans/mourners: of Diana's personal torment, especially as reported the tabloids and in Andrew Morton's (1992) best-selling biography of Diana, *Diana, her True Life*, at the hands of what were perceived to be a largely uncaring and uncompromising royal family. In this way, Diana's thoroughly mediated image became an 'open' text whilst simultaneously maintaining a 'preferred' reading: of Diana as an officially sanctioned icon of royal romance (Kear and Steinberg, 1999). Significantly, and this is the crucial point, whilst 'preferred' readings are those proffered by the text, 'open' readings are produced by selections from the text by a *productive*, popular readership (Fiske, 1990: 146). Seen from this perspective, the messages people wrote in condolence books can be seen in sharp contrast to a view implied elsewhere (e.g. Walter, 1999) that people arrived at them a *tabula rasa*: that 'with no clear idea what to write they would scan the previous few entries and write their own variation of that page's emerging theme' (Walter, 1999: 23).

²⁶ Diana was seen by some as the 'patron saint of consumerism' (Begbie, 1997: 123) because of her flamboyant celebrity lifestyle and conspicuous consumption.

²⁷ Pressed on the issue of whether she was 'out to destroy the monarchy', Diana flatly denied it, insisting that the Crown was her son's birth-right and that she was carefully and comprehensively training Prince William to be King and to undertake his duties in an open and modern style which she herself had pioneered. Diana, however, refused to be drawn on whether, in the light of her divorce from Prince Charles, she thought the position of monarch should skip a generation and pass directly to William.

They reflect a knowledge — routinely devalued in mainstream masculinist culture — of issues central to experiences of contemporary womanhood, referring implicitly to ‘confessions’ made by Diana (in the BBC *Panorama* programme and elsewhere) that she was left largely to cope alone with, amongst other things, her new status following her marriage to HRH the Prince of Wales in 1981. Most notably, Andrew Morton’s book reveals Prince Charles’ ‘sneering ridicule’ towards Diana’s battle against bulimia (Morton, 1992, reported in Barcan, 1997: 38), whilst in the BBC *Panorama* programme Diana told of comments solicited by people (presumably other members of the royal family) who suggested that she was simply ‘wasting food’. Diana too appealed to the popular feminine imagination by invoking an emotional expressivity (of ‘TLC’), through a naive desire to heal the world with hugs (Barcan, 1997: 38).

Sadly missed, a caring beautiful women you were love personified!
(Karen Healy)

Your love and warmth touched the nation, never to be forgotten,
forever in our hearts. With love.
(Sheila and Chris)

Diana’s new religion of the heart, as Linda Woodhead (1999) puts it, of ‘Tender Loving Care’ and ‘Tender-Hearted Humanitarianism’, as we shall see in messages which I present in the remainder of this chapter, resonated with a public unused to such displays of empathy and compassion from the Windsors. Diana appeared in sharp contrast to the faux compassion and sympathy shown by other royal figures (and that most conspicuous of royal usurpers, Margaret Thatcher); to the seemingly unbridgable gulf, between ‘us and them’, that other royals successfully maintained and which separated them from their ‘subjects’. It

was this openly emotional approach that endeared her to large sections of the public but which sat uncomfortably with conservative views of nation and tradition. Conservative critics thus viewed Diana's emotionality as an 'absence of duty' and failure to 'understand the public role' (O' Hear, 1998: 185–6)

Elsewhere throughout the sample of condolence books I analysed, a number of messages reflect the popular narrative conventions (of fairy-tale, tragedy and popular romance) through which Diana's life, as an aspect of the 'cultural circuit' (Johnson, 1986), was both 'represented' and 'read'. These reflect the ways in which we both *speak* and are *spoken by* cultural discourse for they reflect the narrativisations of Diana's life already in-play within discourse — Andrew Morton (1992), for instance, refers to Diana as Cinderella no less than three times — whilst demonstrating the ways in which these are taken up and adapted in new and alternative 'readings'. In this view, the Diana events were thus 'predicated on and provided a catalyst for a distinctly "grand" narrational repertoire' (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 9). The multiple genres of folkloric tale through which the life and times of Diana Spencer are played out: 'the fairytale princess who marries her prince; the virgin bride with the wicked stepmother whose love is betrayed; or, in Hollywood vein, the naive girl who is discovered, transformed and a star is born' (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 9), are thus (re)dramatised on the event of Diana's death.²⁸ Struggling to comprehend the meaning of

²⁸ For a discussion of Diana's life as narrativised in the Hollywood vein of popular fairytale, see Richards (1999). For a discussion of Diana's life and royal wedding of 1981 as a media constructed fairytale set against the gloomy backdrop of economic recession in 1970s Britain, in which the public were eager for romance, see Clark (1997: 134). Here Clark writes that 'escapism' was the order of the day: 'A middle aged (frog) prince had eventually found his (beautiful/virgin) Cinderella and all would be well in the Kingdom. She must be Cinderella, for she had the crinoline frock, the tiara, and the slippers to prove it'. For a discussion of Diana's story as resonating with 'fairy and folk tales involving evil (step)parents, jealously plotting the downfall of the good and beautiful but unrecognised child', see Gibb (1997: 76). This presumably refers to Diana's purportedly acrimonious relationship with her step-mother, Raine, Countess Spencer. Several media reports (e.g. *Diana: Story of a Princess*, 1 July 2001, ITV) have pointed to the suspicion with which Diana

Diana's sudden death, a number of messages draw, quite unselfconsciously, upon these narrative frameworks as a means of making sense of its apparent meaninglessness. As Zoë Sofoulis (1997) puts it, 'part of the shock and incredulity many people experienced at the news of Diana's death stemmed from the dismay at a fairy tale cut short, like a fan's resistance to the sudden, unannounced cessation of a soap opera that they were expecting to go on indefinitely' (Sofoulis, 1997: 15).

It shouldn't have ended like this. Rest in Peace.

(Indecipherable signature)

We didn't want it to end like this, just when Diana had found true happiness. God Bless.

(Brenda and John Pickers)

You were the fairytale Princess of everyone's dreams but when we woke Sunday morning the dream had ended but your memory lives on.

(Denise Vickers)

Deprived of the happy ending which the many fans of Diana desired, condolence book signers re-write the story themselves, participating actively and productively in the social circulation of meaning. 'Rewriting' the 'script' — the what-would-have-happened — in this way fills the gaps in the text and can, according to Fiske (1990: 147), be just as productive as the predictive 'writing in advance' that is a routine component of fandom. Some of the messages below, part fantasy, part death-denial, appear to function as a compensatory or palliative device to stave-off the sense of meaningless and loss occasioned by Diana's death. For as we will recall from my discussions in chapters 1 and 2 of the

viewed Raine following her father's second marriage to her in 1976. Here Diana is reported to have viewed her step-mother as an usurper, especially following her father's death, when she is said to have attempted to sell-off items

thesis, death, on the one hand, 'is an absolute nothing, and absolute nothing makes no sense' (Bauman, 1992: 2), whilst on the other, it is the glimpsing of terror at the nothingness which *non-being* contains that provides the trigger for the creative imagination (Kristeva, 1984, 1989). Here, then, Diana and Dodi are phantasmogorically imagined, not in death, but as beginning a new life together:

Diana, your life was an example to us all. You gave love and happiness to so many people even through the most painful periods of your own life. Hope and pray that you and Dodi experience the same happiness as you begin your new life together.

(Liz and Matthew)

At least the press won't find you in heaven. May you find happiness with Dodi and your family in your 'second life'. Peace be with you. R.I.P.

(Lynn Rachel)

To Diana and Dodi, together forever in paradise. It will be a long time before we see the likes of such a lovely lady again.

(Angela Connor)

Lady Diana, I hope now you and Dodi will be happy away from unwelcome and undeserved pressures.

(Susan Carroll and family)

Our Princess Diana taken away from us so tragically. What have they done? They have taken away the most wonderful person on earth. You will be missed very much. The world won't be the same without you. Our Princess that can never be replaced. You and Dodi are together forever now where nobody can hurt you anymore. Peace be with you both.

(Mrs D. Murry, Nottingham)

Interestingly, Mica Nava (1997: 23–4) has further suggested that a powerful fantasy publicly prevailed following the news of Diana’s relationship with Dodi Al-Fayed. This, she argues, was ‘a defiant Romeo-and-Juliet romance’, for in her choice of Dodi Al-Fayed (an Egyptian, a Muslim, and a multimillionaire ‘playboy’) as lover, Diana was ‘challenging the conventional loyalties and snobbery of significant sections of her own class and also a good part of the traditional body politic of the nation’. For in ‘taking up with a Muslim’, Nava writes, Diana was ‘also embracing (in the view of most white British) the least favoured exogenous cultural and religious group’ (Nava, 1997: 23).

Another prominent theme through which Diana’s life was prismatically read and which is represented in condolence messages is that of Diana as figure of tragic misfortune. Here, as Kear and Steinberg (1999a: 10) suggest, the ‘narrational structures’ surrounding Princess Diana during death ‘appear to gain their performative effectiveness’ from a ‘powerful conjunction between ahistorical myth and historically grounded mythologies’. As Diana Taylor (1999: 199) puts it, just as Diana’s life seemed scripted, so everything about Diana’s death — which also seemed scripted — was ‘impossibly tragic’. Even the timing of Diana’s death, she suggests, was tragically ironic: ‘just as she was starting her new life, which she had attained against all odds, she died on the very night he gave her “the ring”. Not only that, she died with her lover — the latest version of the “star-crossed lovers” as one tabloid called them’ (Taylor, 1999: 199). This ‘universalising paradigm’ of tragedy is according to Taylor (1999: 198), the most powerful and readily available narrational structure within meaning-making culture (Taylor, 1999).

Such two tragic deaths — when you deserved some true happiness at last. May some good come out of your death — an end to intrusive press coverage.

(Linda Clough)

Diana, you had just found happiness. I pray that you are both together in heaven and sharing true love at last in private, peace and deepest love.

(Doreen Richardson)

So sad, so tragic for someone who did so much. You had just found happiness.

(Jenny Andrews)

The messages I have presented above, which draw upon and creatively adapt a range of narratives characteristic of wider popular feminine narrational structures, can be seen to provide a resistive feminine space combined with a redemptive belief in the power of popular romance. For in the Diana story as presented here, Diana is eventually rescued (and rescues herself) after a succession of failed and unhappy relationships, by Dodi Al-Fayed, her ‘new found Prince’, who stands as a counterpoint to the cruelty and coldness shown by Prince Charles (now the story’s anti-hero).

Informal Speech and the Hetroglossia of Language

These messages can also, however, be seen as resistive in another way, for their feminine informality provides a direct challenge to the established canonised language (Bourdieu, 1982) characteristic of dominant masculine discourse. In this way, the messages inscribed within condolence books can be seen as ‘carnavalesque’ to the extent that they at least offer elements of disruption and the *potential for* progressiveness and liberation (Fiske, 1990: 101) even if, as Kear and Steinberg (1999a: 2) have suggested, these were recuperated in

the 'reinscriptive dynamics' surrounding the Diana events. Nevertheless, condolence messages stand in sharp contrast both to the sonorous, solemn and sombre tones of the mainly male television presenters who provided the voice of 'official' grief (Barcan, 1997: 41) during the public mourning for Princess Diana, and the voices of 'reason' who decried the 'Diana events' as symbolic of everything that is 'fake' about contemporary society; in which Diana was sentimentality personified and canonised (Anderson and Mullen, 1998: 18) and where personal desire was put before duty, feeling before reason, caring above principle. In this view, Diana's own 'child-like self-centredness' (as the absence of duty) is, by implication, compared to the public mourners for Princess Diana who, according to Melanie Phillips, 'degrad[ed] the reality of grief by a display of self-absorption they falsely called compassion' (Phillips, *Observer*, cited in Anderson and Mullen, 1998). Consider for a moment, in this vein, the sneering condescension of BBC journalist Jeremy Paxman (1999) when he writes that the people who gathered to mourn Princess Diana:

[H]ung cards and photos on roadside railings and trees in the parks, accompanied by scrawled messages. DIANA WE LOVE YOU and HEAVEN HAS A NEW ANGEL were the most coherent.

(Paxman, 1991: 241)

In this way, therefore, the informality of messages that people wrote, as reflective of a popular feminine idiom, can be seen as a form of 'irreverence' characteristic of the playful *jouissance* as theorised by Barthes (1975b) and of the Rabelasian quality embodied in the medieval carnival as theorised by Bakhtin (1968). It was *inter alia* the very emotionality of the 'Diana events' and the expression of 'feminine emotions' ordinarily seen as belonging to the private or domestic sphere which irked critics of the time and can be seen to be

perceived as threatening precisely because of the ways in which emotions are routinely associated with the (feminine) body; outside of and beyond the control of rational or cognitive faculties. This, as Carole Pateman (1989) has usefully reminded us, has been used historically to justify women's exclusion from participation in the public sphere of civil society. This returns us to my discussions earlier in this chapter, to contestations of the role of emotions within public life (e.g. Orbach, 1998; Wilson, 1997). Sections of both left and right were seemingly at one in a concern that the 'ectoplasm of emotion' (Wilson, 1997) enveloping the nation would overwhelm the reason and rationality underpinning participation in aspects of democratic political life as it is traditionally understood.²⁹ Such assumptions, following the work of Pateman (1989), appear implicitly premised upon the binary assumption that to act emotionally is to temporarily suspend one's critical capacity for rational and reasoned argument.³⁰

Despite the apparent 'simplicity' and political 'vacuousness' with which the messages contained within the condolence books might be read, the precision and forthrightness of 'ordinary' informal speech — as William Labov (1972) has most famously suggested — belies its complexity and intellectual potency. This is especially so when set against the

²⁹ For many on the political left (e.g. (e.g. Fitzpatrick, 1997; Hitchens, 1998; Pilger, 1998; Ryan, 1997; Wilson, 1997), myself included, Princess Diana's position within society (her aristocratic up-bringing, royal title, and privilege which accompanied it) were difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with her ostensibly transgressive feminist politics and overriding sense of humanitarianism, as reflected upon by some commentators. Rather than engage in the difficult work of unravelling Diana's ambivalent political symbolism, for the most part Diana was conceived as just another member of the royal family. This closing down of psychic space is resonant of the way in which projection serves to ward off ambivalence by contributing to world that is 'dangerously concrete', in which things simply are as they appear, in which there is nothing to think about because the facts always speak for themselves (Elliott, 1999: 25).

³⁰ Pateman (1989) has argued that these assumptions have, for centuries, been linked in a biologically reductionist way to notions of the feminine as inscribed within a dichotomous view of 'Nature' and 'Civilisation'. It is this view of women's 'natures' as intrinsically 'irrational' (as belonging to 'Nature') which has underpinned the philosophical foundations of the modern state and which has traditionally contributed to their exclusion from 'public' affairs; confining women to the domestic realm where, according to Hegel (cited in Pateman, 1989: 20), the first virtue of the family is love and not justice. For discussion of the gendering of emotion as an aspect of widespread male prejudice, see also Gilligan (1993).

verbosity, pomposity and portentousness that typically characterise the forms of speech which, as Labov found amongst the white middle-class adolescents he studied (in contrast to the street vernaculars of young African-American adolescents) tend, for the most part, to reflect the speech-patterns characteristic of more privileged groups within society. Language, as feminism and the debates surrounding notions of ‘political correctness’ have illustrated, is a battlefield; a site of contestation for cultural and political identities and values.³¹

With this chiefly in mind, the general informality and ‘irreverence’ of messages contained within the condolence books signed for Princess Diana (and perhaps to a lesser extent the victims of the Hillsborough disaster), serve — with the potentially infinite variety and forms of language which emerge in everyday social life — to disrupt attempts to forge unity through the imposition of language reflective of dominant groups within society. In Bakhtin’s terms, the attempt to forge linguistic unity (from the diversity and *heteroglossia* of socially situated verbal interaction) is paid for at the price of the suppression and marginalisation of ‘voices’ that threaten to undermine attempts at unity. These decentralising (or centrifugal) ‘voices’ and tendencies within language, in contradistinction to centripetal forces aimed at eradicating difference in the name of unity (Burke *et al*, 2000), can be seen in the ‘multi-speechedness’ of messages contained within the books of

³¹ Burke *et al* (2000) point out, that opponents of ‘political correctness’ have made much of the alleged ‘politicising’ of language and culture. Yet language, they remind us, has always been, and always will be, political. In ‘debates’ surrounding ‘political correctness’ they write that ‘language only becomes “political” (almost a reproach) when used by groups challenging currently existing power structures and formations of identity’ (Burke *et al*, 2000: 5). What is routinely overlooked, they argue, is that dominant groups within society also ‘politicise’ language but that they do so in a way which ‘naturalises’ their own historical values and positions. Language itself, especially its ‘official’ forms, is in this view not simply a neutral medium for the conveyance of thought (Burke *et al*, 2000), but a system of diction which is inevitably ideologically loaded in favour of the dominant and most powerful social groups within in any given society.

condolence signed for Princess Diana. Where in the Hillsborough books of condolence the sense of *difference* and opposition spring both from local inflections of language (reflections of the regional specificity of language; of dialectal differences in vocabulary and grammar) and the sense of political anger generated by 96 ‘bad deaths’, so in the Diana books the sense of disruption and resistance manifests both in the informality and ‘jouissance’ of linguistic form (its popular and ‘producerly’ irreverence) and the feminine opposition to patriarchal and bourgeois/aristocratic reservedness (the passivity of the royal family following Diana’s death) and sense of injustice of Diana’s treatment by the popular press and sections of the royal family. It is these linguistic and bodily forms of expressivity which did most to offend the genteel sensibilities of (residually) dominant social groups within hegemonic white UK culture — as bastions of ‘official’ language (literally, in the case of the Diana books, of the ‘Queen’s English’).³² In this way, the condolence books signed for Princess Diana can be seen as reflective of Bakhtin’s notion of the ‘carnavalesque’ in two key ways: firstly, like the carnival they are admitting of social groups routinely excluded from participation in public life and ‘official’ discourse. Secondly, like carnival, the popular idiom through which condolences are expressed implies ‘an attitude of creative disrespect, a radical opposition to the illegitimately powerful, to the morose and monological’ (Stam, 1982, quoted in Stallybrass and White, 1986: 19). In sum, therefore, the perceived challenge which the emotionality of the ‘Diana events’ (and condolence book

³² Sociolinguists have long since demonstrated the nexus between social background and the variations, both written and spoken, within any given language. In British or English English, accent/less forms of pronunciation and usage — variously referred to as ‘received pronunciation’ (RP), Oxford, BBC, or the ‘King’s’ or ‘Queen’s English’ — have, through a particular subterfuge, and in contrast to the ‘estuary English’ characteristic of particular regions within the UK, come to be widely accepted as its ‘proper’ or ‘correct’ form. It is this dialect above all others which, as Trudgill (1979: 19) writes, carries not only a certain social cachet but is highly valued, with ‘certain economic, social and political benefits’ tending ‘to accrue to those who speak and write it’.

signing as one aspect of this) presented came less in the shape of a direct political *coup d'état* (of ousting the Windsors and replacing them with who knows what) than in the way in which they appeared to challenge the traditional masculine ways in which politics itself operates; by the exclusion of emotions from the public sphere (Barcan, 1997; Orbach, 1998).

Beyond Media Image: Charity Activism, 'In-touchness' and the Ethic of Care

Finally, at this point, having hitherto discussed a range of messages reflective of the popular feminine fandom associated with Princess Diana (which for some critics suggested an 'ethereal' relationship (e.g. Wilson, 1997) between Diana as pure media image and her fans), I want now to discuss messages reflective of a range of other subjective identifications which the 'Diana figure', as Johnson (1999) puts it, made available. These messages do more to 'ground' the identifications forged with Diana within materially constituted social relations: of 'charity activism' (Kear and Steinberg, 1999) and emotional kinship work with which she was routinely engaged. Richard Johnson (1999: 24) has pointed to the variety of 'Diana's' that were subjectively available — as a social, cultural and psychic resource — to a range of different publics. This charitable work, as various commentators have suggested, and deliberate association with international causes (such as the banning of landmines or her work with people living with AIDS), extended beyond the bounds of what has normally come to be expected of royal visits.³³ Richard Johnson (1999:

³³ See, for example, Johnson's (1999: 29–30) comments on Diana's engagements with, and 'recognition' of marginalised social groups or Nava's (1999: 112) comments on the ways in which Diana's charitable impulse extended 'beyond the conventional parameters of Victorian philanthropy'. Here, according to Johnson, Diana's great appeal lie in her ability to 'reach out' to groups on the margins of society. It is in this way, Johnson (1999: 36) suggests, that 'other social identities, usually more marginal still, like the ill and the dying, the mutilated and the disabled, the war victims, the anorexic and the bulimic, were included in Diana's world, and through her in the nation'.

30), for instance, writes that ‘it is quite wrong to imply that everything’ Diana did ‘was self-seeking in a narcissistic way, not least because much of her charitable work was, when the media would allow, private and hidden’.³⁴ These themes are reflected in a number of messages which speak of Diana’s work as more than “going through the motions” of a royal job and which anticipate Johnson’s (1999: 30) comments about the — largely unrecognised — ‘lengths she was prepared to go to’ in her charitable work:

Diana — so much more than a beautiful face. . . you gave your heart to everyone. It wasn’t just ‘going through the motions’ of a royal job. We could see you gave it your all — a full and loving commitment to everything you did, and we love you for it. I feel a light has gone out and life will be colder without you. Maybe you didn’t follow the path of convention and tradition always — but you blazed a new trail where there was no path and I pray that others may follow it.

(Jo Grande and family)

Dear Princess Diana, you were our one and only Queen of Hearts. You helped so many people with your work. It is just a pity it wasn’t always recognised. You will be greatly missed. I hope you and Dodi will be happy together forever and will rest in peace

(Cheryl Blissett)

Besides, and in addition to this, Diana’s ability to ‘reach out’ to the disaffected in a genuine and palpable way resonated with a public gratified by Diana’s validation of a much maligned emotional cultural capital and a recognition of those ‘othered or marginalized in power relations and in representational processes’ (Johnson, 1999: 29). Diana’s iconic

³⁴ Intriguingly, Johnson (1999) pushes the limits of analysis by exploring Diana’s ‘beyond the call of duty’ charitable work as a quest for her own personal ‘recognition’. Drawing upon Kleinian ‘Object-Relations’ theory, Johnson suggests that Diana’s ‘gift’ for knowing ‘instinctively’ what to say and do to make a real connection with people experiencing terrible hardship and suffering can be seen to stem, perhaps, from Diana’s own need, as a ‘woman who was often a “good object” in the minds of others’ — but who, according to reports, felt undervalued in her personal marital relations — to ‘restore the “good objects” within her self. In short, Johnson (1999: 31) postulates that Diana attempted to meet her own needs by projecting them on to others, from where she could more readily care for those people more outwardly identifiable as the ‘unrecognized’, ‘unrecognizable’ and ‘untouchable’.

embodiment: as an ‘outsider’ of sorts within royal circles (Johnson, 1999: 23), with a flair for the common touch (MacArthur, 1997: 101)³⁵; as someone who, on the one hand, combined the glamour of an international celebrity with the divine authority bestowed upon royalty, and on the other, the appearance of someone who — despite immense privilege and the power inscribed in the relations between Diana and her ‘subjects’ — understood the concerns of ordinary people, is a widely repeated theme throughout the books of condolence.

That Diana could skilfully navigate and overcome the condescension which routinely characterises the ‘charitable’ impulse in relations between royalty and their ‘subjects’; between the obvious and paradoxical gulf which existed — precisely because of vast inequalities in power and wealth — between her and her ‘subjects’, can be seen from condolence book messages which routinely describe Diana as ‘ordinary’ but ‘special’. It was in this context, Johnson (1999) suggests, that Diana:

developed her personal styles of interaction — touching and, more important, being touched, concentrating hard on listening to others, approaching people through shared “human” territory (through her fandom of soaps, for instance!), using humour and a general informality to break the royal distance — but still use it. Her own self-ascriptions — “I am a humanitarian. I always have been and I always will be (quoted Katherine Graham in MacArthur 1997: 95) — and her wish for her royal boys — “I want them to grow up knowing there are poor people as well as palaces” (quoted W. F. Deedes in MacArthur 1997: 69) — were hardly socialist or republican (palaces and poverty it seems will remain).

³⁵ As Johnson (1999: 29) too points out, sympathetic commentary and first-hand accounts by those who actually met Diana in person report her proclivity as a ‘natural counsellor’. Christopher Spence, founder of the AIDS charity The London Lighthouse tells in this respect of the way in which ‘time after time over a ten-year period’ he ‘watched her intuitively knowing what to do and say in order to come close to another person — often people very near to death.’ ‘She knew’, Spence claims, ‘how to make a real connection, enabling people to talk from their hearts about what really mattered. She could sense what someone, or even a whole group of people, might need with unfailing accuracy’ (quoted in MacArthur, 1997: 101).

(Johnson, 1999: 29)

Diana's style of 'being in the public world', as Mica Nava (1999: 112) puts it principally her 'spontaneity, warmth and vulnerability', as well as her *in-touchness*, illustrated the limitations not only of formal political processes but also of the 'old-fashioned, emotionally constrained and out-of-touch royal family' (Nava, 1999: 112). These messages can be seen to point to what Nava (1997: 112) describes as 'the extraordinary process of mutual recognition and identification between' Diana 'and the people':

She was a paragon of compassion and had that ability of being able to communicate with the high and mighty and the sick and lowly. We shall not see her like again.

(Joan Hibbett)

You are the only royal lady that shook hands without gloves. You also learned sign-language to communicate with deaf people. You truly are the People's Princess and their Queen of Hearts.

(Maureen Wood)

I remember you from your wonderful visit to the Leeds Centre for the Deaf and Blind in 1987. I was very proud to be chosen to act to escort you around the building with a sign language interpreter. I found it easy to talk, sign and lip-read from you as if I knew you everyday. You looked a beautiful, stunning and attractive Princess but also a down to earth lady — really fit to be Queen of England. This is a big loss to the world. I am shocked, numbed and emotional. I can't believe you are gone but I believe you will be rewarded in eternity, in another life — another beautiful world full of happiness. Hope your spirit will be with your lovely two sons and guide and care for them and your fans. Thank you.

(Evia L. Wichremaratne)

It was, then, Diana's readiness to abandon the stuffy protocol associated with other members of the royal family which, as Martin Jacques (1997) has written, made Diana appear

a new kind of public person, a new kind of leader. . . [exposing] the chasm between the traditional institutions of governance — Westminster and Buckingham Palace — and the culture and concerns of the people. . . Tradition, deference, protocol, hypocrisy, men in suits. . . were progressively besieged by authenticity, emotion, informality, the female. . .

(Jacques, 1997: 6–7, quoted in Nava, 1999: 111–12)

In Diana's 'face-to-face' relations with ordinary people, she can be seen to begin to repair the centuries old gulf between 'the people' and royalty, wherein 'the people' are rejected as 'everything which appears to them savage, dirty, lecherous' (Muchembled, 1988). Other messages reflect an attempt to recognise, albeit too late, and in a way characteristic of the sense of regret which typically accompanies grief (Johnson, 1999: 27), the work which Diana had done with a range of charities and humanitarian causes. Other messages, meanwhile, reflect an idealised version of Diana — as 'a paragon of virtue' (message signer) — which, as Johnson (1999: 21) points out, like the 'sweet princess' represented in Julie Burchill's book of colour photographs of Diana, idealises her as a 'spirited, compassionate and beautiful English woman' (Burchill, 1998: 9, 236, quoted in Johnson, 1999: 21).

Dear Diana, I wish I could have met you. You were always an exceptionally special person. I wish there were more people in the world like you and then it would be perfect.

(Betty Jo Miller)

Such messages, including those which refer to a fantasised after-life and which mobilise a Diana of celestial or saintly proportions (as a ‘shining star’ or ‘beacon of goodness’)³⁶ can be perceived both as a form of death-denial, unconsciously conceived as a wish-fulfilling linguistic device providing comfort and solace. The following message can be perceived in a similar light, wherein Diana is idealised as a figure frozen in time, and is reflective of Johnson’s (1999: 21) comments that such aphorisms (that Diana ‘will stay forever young’, could ‘live on through our memories’, had ‘gone to heaven’ or was an ‘angel’) can themselves be seen as a ‘border patrol’, albeit an ‘internal’ one, for regulating the sense of panic and chaos which routinely ensue from loss:

You had so much love inside your heart, which you gave without condition. You wanted to do so much for so many people, and you gave so much and received so little in return. Your light will now shine on forever. You will stay forever young and beautiful. I now take comfort in knowing you are in a place where you can watch over everyone and be our guardian angel.

(Cheryl Denning)

Other identifications with the ‘Diana figure’ were made available too, most notably those which Diana’s work with a range of AIDS charities helped mobilise. We have seen already from a previous message, in which her work with AIDS sufferers is acknowledged (‘You were one of the first public figures to shake hands with someone with AIDS and that changed attitudes’) how Diana’s charity activism and powerful *iconicity* more generally helped provide expansive spaces of subjective identification’ (Kear and Steinberg, 1999a: 7). Here again, and *pace* Spurlin’s (1999: 161) comments regarding the reductionist, ‘easy’

³⁶ Other messages refer more explicitly to Diana’s beatification: ‘This tragedy will unite races all over the world as you pass in sainthood. You will remain forever young. Sadly missed’ (Lyle Graham).

and wrongheaded way in which Diana is perceived as a gay icon³⁷ simply by virtue of the ways in which ‘she touched and spontaneously hugged AIDS sufferers, many of them gay men, without gloves and without restraint’, is a message which stresses the important work, symbolic and real, which Diana did with a range of AIDS charities in which gay men in particular were prominent:

Thank you for being a friend to the lost and lonely and for your support
and help to gay people. I will miss hearing about your good work so
much

(Philip S)

Here we begin to see the ways in which Diana’s emotional expressivity and ‘being in the public world’ helped ‘hail’ a male expressivity routinely elided in hegemonic masculinist discourse, providing an alternative to male social identities more routinely premised on ‘intellectual muscularity’ (Redman and Mac an Ghaill, 1997), sportised masculinity and/or industrial graft (Connell, 1995). This message presented here, therefore, approximates the comments of Jonathan Grimshaw, the founder of the Landmark Centre in London, regarding the importance of ‘recognition’:

When society rejects you, the symbolic importance of having a member of
the Royal Family, a representative of the nation, talking to you and
saying ‘I want to hear what you have to say’, is enormous.

(Grimshaw, quoted in *Gay Times*, October 1997: 51, cited in Johnson,
1999: 32).

³⁷ The very *excess* in the style of public mourning for Princess Diana — oversized hand-made condolence cards, the lighting of candles and all-night vigil’s, the use of toys and teddy bears, of huge bouquets of flowers, of poetry, and the egregious splash of colour — is perhaps indicative of the fan following which Diana commanded and of the social identities ‘interpellated’ by her death. The high-camp influence of the gay community, for instance, can be seen in the queering of mourning practices which surrounded the Diana events. For discussion of the ‘queer calling’ (Kear and Steinberg, 1999: 7) of mourning signalled by Diana’s death and of Diana’s gay iconicity more generally, see Spurlin (1999), Benzie (1997).

Significantly, therefore, in this subjective recognition of the homosexual ‘other’, gay identities, as Johnson (1999: 36) suggests, were not simply ‘tolerated’ but affirmed. Diana’s position, moreover, as ‘a representative who sought out the hidden and tragic sides of those she represented, authenticating them to her own publics’ was that which, according to Johnson (1999) made Diana ‘subjectively available’ for ‘other kinds of relationship’ with her various publics, ‘real and imaginary’. It is these identifications which, according to Johnson, made Diana ‘available to a vast and differentiated public’, which I now turn to consider in this, the final section, of my chapter.

Subjective Identification and Transference

As we have seen from the messages I have presented throughout this chapter, a range of ‘Dianas’ were, in the years preceding and public mourning following her death, available for subjective identification. These were multifarious and reflect Diana’s unique position at the interstice of *icon* and *iconicity* which I discussed in chapter 3 of the thesis drawing on the work of Kear and Steinberg (1999a: 7–9). The Dianas most strongly represented in the condolence books I analysed related principally to her feminine strength. For instance, her motherhood, independence from (and resistance to) a hostile royal family, and ‘recovery’ both from a failed marriage and bulimia as well as her evident vulnerability (her eating disorder, attempts at self-harm, and failed attempts to find love). It is these, I have argued, which provided a source of identification and ‘recognition’ amongst a *female public* in particular. At the same time, and as I have begun to suggest in chapters 2 and 3 of the thesis, mourning typically involves a range of complex identifications and psychic transferences between self and other as the referent of loss. It is these which, following the

work of Johnson (1999), can be seen to obliterate ‘in-principal’ distinctions between ‘face-to-face’ and more ‘ethereal’ mourning which objectors to the public mourning, for Princess Diana, including myself at the time, found so galling (I will return to take up the inconsistencies and paradoxes in my own objections to the mourning for Diana in chapter 7). Nevertheless, in this way, as Johnson (1999: 31) again usefully points out, ‘Diana was clearly the object of many *transferred feelings*, feelings that had little to do with her life and death, and everything to do with the lives of members of her public’. Johnson points to the mutually reinforcing and simultaneous processes of *identification* and *transference*, which frequently operate quite independently and unconsciously of awareness of the individual experiencing them. Like many other people who at the time told media reporters of how they had cried for Diana but also at the same time for some other loss, unmourned at the time, Johnson (as we saw briefly in chapter 3) tells of how his own, quite unexpected, mourning for Princess Diana was inextricably bound-up with a range of personal losses encountered throughout his own life (for a fuller discussion of these issues, see Johnson, 1997a; 1999). These messages, then, are reflective of a series of complex identifications and transferences between Diana and her fans, involving shared biographical attributes and convergent biographical trajectories:

Like you I married in 1981 and had two sons (who I adore), before I divorced. You were part of my life — we had much in common. You were an inspiration and I looked to you for many reasons that I can’t explain right now. I’m 36 and my life has to go on without you. Your memories will be treasured in my heart forever. May God keep you safe.

(Marie)

I felt that I knew you. . . that we were somehow connected. We were the same age and had shared so many of life's saddest personal experiences. I watched your growing happiness recently and took great hope in the promise that life can turn around. So, despite the fact that I am grieving now, I will strive to look to your wonderful life with inspiration and love. In our own heads and hearts you will live on always.

(Danielle Duphuy)

To Diana, may your light shine on in your children, your good works and your children. I feel I have grown up with you. We are the same age, married in the same year and both have two lovely children. We will miss you.

(Tina Puttis, Rippon)

Besides these biographical convergences, other messages reflect upon Diana's qualities and evident vulnerabilities as the basis for subjective identifications. Here, following my discussions of fandom in chapter 3 of the thesis, these messages point in a tangible way to the sense in which fandom can be seen to enrich the emotional development of the self and may contribute significantly to an individual's sense of the interpersonal world:

As a mental health nurse I understand human frailties, vulnerabilities and strengths. You were strong and brave for showing what everyone feels at sometime or other. I so admired you for this. I actually went to my own baby's grave to pray — I have been unable to do this for a long time. We will always remember you and hope you may rest in peace.

(Helen)

Dearest Diana, thank you for helping me to accept the impossible (my parents divorce). You inspired me to more as a teacher (my profession). Thank you. May you always be an angel. Love forever.

(Caroline Sarah Middleton)

In summary therefore, and to reiterate, in this chapter I have sought to provide a glimpse into the condolence messages that people wrote in condolence books signed following the death of Princess Diana. These, I have suggested, are characterised by the popular feminine idiom or *form* through which they are expressed and are reflective of both the fan and speech communities which Diana, as mediated image, ‘hailed’ during life and in death. In this way, I have suggested that condolence books are a ‘producerly’ resource for fans/mourners to express, unprompted, what Diana meant to them; to participate in the meaning-making processes surrounding, and giving rise to, Diana’s feminist iconicity. Here, as Rosalind Brunt (1999) has suggested of the comments made by mourners in television *vox populi*, condolence books invited both immediate subjective identification with the Princess and wider social and cultural definition. It seemed, then, as Brunt puts it, that everyone ‘now felt quite competent and at home with forms of cultural and textual readings that had formerly been the province of academic and professional commentators’. Condolence books, moreover, can be seen as an aspect of the cultural public sphere in which people could engage in the key — especially affective — issues of the day.

At the same time, and whilst summoning a largely feminine speech community, condolence books provided an expansive space for the expression of masculine social identities routinely elided by dominant heteronormative discourse. This in part reflects Diana’s ability to call upon the support of disenfranchised social groups on the margins of society (racialised minority and ethnic groups, gay men, women etc.) whilst retaining the core support of constituencies of the centre (Nava, 1999). The popular feminine idiom through which messages are expressed, I have further suggested, can be read as an oppositional

form through which 'official' masculine language is itself challenged. The condolence books I analysed were rich in meaning, reflecting, amongst many other things, the circuitousness of cultural discourse and the ways in which narratives and themes already in-play within discourse were taken up and transformed in the messages people wrote. Finally, the messages I analysed can be seen as expressing locally inflected themes within what was a globally manifested event. This itself can be seen from the ubiquitous use of phrases, such as the 'People's Princess' and 'Queen of Hearts', each coined within the context of nation-as-local and reflective of local meaning-making. At the same, as I have earlier suggested, the messages I analysed reflect a certain ambivalence: at once mobilising Diana as a 'global' feminine icon whose 'universal' appeal amongst social groups the world over was a loss of global proportions, whilst expressing a desire to retain 'possession' of Diana as a totemic symbol of nation.

CHAPTER 7

MEMORY, NARRATIVE AND THE PRODUCTION OF SUBJECTIVITY:

MOURNING MASCULINITIES, DISAVOWING THE FEMININE

Saturday April 15, 1989

I was fifteen at the time, two days short of my sixteenth birthday. I was working on Saturday's for the electrical high street retailer Dixons as a way of earning myself some extra 'pocket money'. The shop was opposite the Town Hall in Sheffield and it was quite typical to see football fans of visiting teams milling around the town centre a couple of hours before kick-off on match-days. Bramall Lane was within walking distance and Hillsborough was only a short bus ride away. Residual fans of Wednesday or United would regularly come into the shop to check the half- and full-time football scores on television on Saturday afternoons during the football season.

This particular Saturday was F.A Cup Semi-Final day. Fans of both teams, Liverpool and Nottingham Forest, had passed the hours before kick-off in the town centre until it noticeably emptied of football supporters from around two o'clock onwards. People in Sheffield, I think, appeared to take a degree of satisfaction and pride from the fact that the city was once again hosting a match of this magnitude. Sheffield's two teams, Wednesday and United, had enjoyed precious little sporting success since the 1960s and 70s. The hosting of an FA Cup Semi-Final, however, provided an opportunity for recognition, as the city temporarily became the focus for national media attention. Given Wednesday's lack of success in recent years the next best thing to actually being involved in a major cup competition like this was, I suppose, to play host to one. Many Sheffielders, and Wednesdayites in particular, took pride in the Hillsborough stadium. It had been extensively modernised and had successfully hosted international matches played during the 1966 World Cup Finals. My grandfather, along with the stories he would tell of being amongst the record capacity crowd of almost 73,000 fans in 1934 (when his "feet barely touched the floor"), would often speak proudly of some its pioneering architectural features: especially the pointed central gable, clock and copper ball designed by Archibald Leitch in 1911 for the 'South Stand', and the 'cantilever' stand built in anticipation of the 1966 World Cup Finals. Others routinely spoke of

Hillsborough as the 'Wembley of the north'. More than this, I think that for many Sheffielders the hosting of FA Cup Semi-Final matches provided the city in general with the positive attention reserved for more fashionable metropolitan areas. Since the early 1980s the city had been chastened by the collapse of its manufacturing base in steel production and the staging of FA Cup Semi-Final's in the city seemed, if only temporarily, to lift the gloom that had enveloped the city throughout the decade.

I seem to recall that it felt like an unseasonably warm sunny day. Many supporters came into the shop to ask directions to the ground and we obliged where we could. I happened on this occasion to be working near the main entrance of the shop, nearby a large display of televisions. All were tuned to BBC 1's sports coverage. Soon after kick-off at three o'clock the television's showed images of what at first seemed to be a pitch invasion, followed by silent images of a seething mass of people. Even by this stage a number of shoppers had come into the store to inquire after the score. A couple of people, I remember, on the seeing the images had given out a groan and quickly turned to leave the shop, assuming that what they were witnessing were scenes of hooliganism. With memories of the Heysel stadium disaster and countless other incidents of 'crowd trouble' fresh in the mind it was perhaps hardly surprising that these should be among people's first thoughts. It soon became clear, however, as events unfolded, that this was not just another football hooligan horror story. Shoppers now began entering the store in ever greater numbers, curious to make sense of, and put words to, the pictures which appeared on televisions in the shop's windows. With the sound turned down on most of the televisions shoppers turned to us, the staff, for explanations. By half-past three we were relaying news of fatalities to shoppers who asked.

By six o'clock, the time we normally closed the store on Saturdays, the mood inside and outside of the shop had changed perceptibly. One of my job's on Saturday's was to pull down the shutters on the windows on the outside of the shop. As I did so. . . I noticed the headlines on the bill-board of a nearby news vendor's stall. It ran something along the lines of "TRAGEDY AT HILLSBOROUGH – 56 DEAD". Few people were laughing or joking as they left for home that day after a day of work or shopping. Those who were, I assumed, must not have heard of the terrible news of earlier that afternoon. On my way home, and as usual on Saturday's, I bought a copy of the local sports newspaper, the 'Green'Un'. On the bus journey home that evening I struggled to fully take in what had happened. I couldn't believe that such a thing could happen at Hillsborough, a place

where, save for the Saturday job which I'd recently taken up, I'd go and watch Wednesday every other Saturday when they were playing at home. It was a place where I'd stand with teenage friends, facing the end where people had, on this afternoon, met horrible deaths. I felt in some way personally responsible; as if I knew those terraces intimately, had sat or stood in all four corners of the ground, had grown up there amongst people who shared a passion for Wednesday. . . it was somewhere that felt like home. . .

When I arrived home that evening the death toll had grown larger still — was it already in the nineties by this stage? I can't remember. My mother and grandmother spoke of how, by early afternoon, they had wondered what had happened. We lived at the time by an arterial road that served as a direct route between Hillsborough and the largest general hospital in the city. They, my mother and grandmother, relived accounts of a seemingly endless stream (scream?) of emergency vehicles. Curious for explanation they turned to television, from where they watched the afternoon's events unfold. As the evening wore on I saw groups of bedraggled fans park their cars and head towards the nearby hospital.

Later that evening after dinner I sat transfixed in front of specially extended news bulletins, trying to process and make sense of the day's events. I became morbidly fixated with the news programmes: with 'expert' views as to the cause of the disaster; with eye witness accounts; police statements, hospital press conferences. Quite inexplicably I recorded news bulletins and replayed them over again. I felt genuine anguish and sorrow but also anger when journalists reported Hillsborough as 'antiquated'. Long after others had gone to bed I stayed awake watching news updates, until finally, worried by my behaviour, my mother left her bed to ask me to go to bed. When I finally did I could not fall asleep. Instead I relived images of a tangled mass of bodies, gasping for air, pressed tight against a parameter fence. . .

Beautiful Woman Dies

I can remember it all quite vividly. We, my wife, Lilach and I, had just returned from a Summer holiday in Paris. We'd booked into a bed and breakfast in Golders Green, from where we left to attend a wedding on the outskirts of London. It was Saturday 30 August 1997. The B&B had been 'recommended' to us by some Israeli friends of ours (principally because of its cheapness compared to London prices for overnight

accommodation). On checking-in to drop off our bags before leaving for the wedding we were both taken aback by the inquisitiveness of the landlady who ran the B&B. She insisted we both came and had tea and cake with her in the sitting room, from where she laid out the 'ground rules' governing our stay, before firing off a barrage of questions about our relationship: how long had we been married? How long had we known each other? How did we meet? Was I Jewish? What did we both do? I recall feeling quite uncomfortable by all this questioning and tried as best I could to deflect these questions and extricate myself from what felt like an increasingly awkward situation. She went on to gossip about the other guests who were staying in the B&B at the time as if she'd known them for years; about their fussy, "foreign" eating habits and their late return to the B&B each night. She insisted I had more cake as it would "only go to waste". I duly obliged. We made our excuses and left to get changed for the wedding.

Later that afternoon during the tube journey to the location where the wedding was due to take place we reflected comically on our 'ordeal' back at the B&B and on the peculiarly British institution of the Guest House with its inimitable tradition of landladies. . . We arrived back late to the B&B in the early hours of Sunday morning following the wedding reception. Turning the key the landlady had left us slowly in the door, we crept quietly upstairs and to bed.

Early next morning before breakfast — it was perhaps only six thirty/seven o'clock — we were woken by a slight tapping at our door. It was the landlady. Looking ashen faced she told us quite earnestly that "something terrible had happened". My thoughts turned immediately to Lilach's parents who too were staying in London for the weekend and who we were due to meet with for lunch later that same day. We had not left details of our whereabouts with close family or friends and so had no way of being contacted, making it impossible for bad news of this sort to be delivered. This of course — in the split-second in which this news was delivered — did not occur to me at the time. Instead, the landlady told us that Princess Diana had been killed in a car accident whilst in Paris. My immediate thoughts were of relief. Relief that this was not the bad news affecting us personally. I think we both tried to look sympathetic and concerned, the way one does on hearing of someone's misfortune or bereavement.

All of this was unexpected and sad; the death of beautiful woman in the prime of life. What I think both us found most peculiar, however, was being woken early Sunday morning by a woman who we had met only briefly the previous day to be told of the

death of a women who we had never met. I in no way felt “devastated” by the news in the way in which news broadcasts later reported some people as feeling. This, I did not feel at the time, was either a callous or cold response. It was just that I didn’t feel at all “moved” by the news.

Over breakfast later that morning in the B&B we sat and ate in an atmosphere of hushed calm. I seem to remember saying nothing in particular other than to agree with the landlady about “how terrible” the events of earlier that day had been. . . Later that day we met Lilach’s parents for lunch in central London. We spoke only in passing about the events in the Paris underpass. I remember glancing the headlines from newspaper hoardings which ran “Diana and Dodi Dead”, not really knowing who “Dodi” was. . . We later left London that same day, arriving home in Leicester by early mid-evening. I can’t recall what we did for the rest of that evening other than to strenuously avoid all ensuing news about Diana’s death. . .

These two auto/biographical stories which I present in this, the last substantive chapter, are central to some of the questions with which I began this thesis. They are central of course to some of the questions first mooted by Anthony Elliott (1999: 11) which I cited in the introduction to the thesis when he asks: for whom, exactly, is the mourning mourning? Are we mourning some aspects of ourselves? How might mourning of the self relate to cultural mourning? They are also central to the latency of meaning as imbricated and invoked in cultural and narrative practices of the self and are a useful resource for exploring the ways in which meaning can be become accrued in ‘things’ (in this case the two public mourning events which constitute my case-studies) seemingly unrelated to our own personal selves. They can also be seen as providing a resource for exploring the dynamics of mourning: of the ways in which cultural mourning of this sort can be seen to be bound-up with a range of psychic transferences between investments made at the inter-personal level and our

‘interpellation’ at the cultural level. In short, one of the central intentions of this chapter is, therefore, to explore, through my analysis of the stories produced using ‘memory work’, the ways in which personal losses (often unmourned at the time) encountered at the personal, social and/or cultural level might be reawakened in episodes of public mourning of the sort which this thesis considers.

In this way the two stories presented above provide an entry-point to wider discussions of my own situated social identity: to the ways in which it is narratively constructed and summoned; traceable to wider social, cultural and political processes; and central to the research process itself. This chapter, then, seeks to consolidate some of the major themes that run throughout this thesis. Principally, the ways in which social and personal identity are crucial to the meaning-making processes that underpin and are a precondition of mourning; the ways in which aspects of mourning and ‘not-mourning’ are related to previously forged dis/identifications and dis/investments in various subject-positions; and concomitantly, the ways in which these are brokered through through the masculine and feminine forms of identity made available within culture.

It is, here at the interstice of, and in the elision between, mourning and identity, that meaning-making operates. As Stephen Frosh (1991) has earlier reminded us, ‘for tragedy to be possible’ and ‘loss appreciated, there has to be something that can be identified with, something that can love as well as lose’ (Frosh, 1991: 19–20). It is these forms of meaning-making, which operate largely ‘behind the backs’ of our awareness of them and are often revealed only after the fact, that my analysis of the stories presented here seeks, amongst

other things, to tease out. Nevertheless, at the same time that it seeks to explore the twin processes of identity and mourning, this chapter casts doubt both upon the ‘essence’ of subjectivity itself and the ‘purity’ of memories through which a sense of self is constructed. My analysis also begins to suggest that narrative, as a principal *form* through which memory becomes congealed and is relayed to self and others, is itself central to the ways in which we, as subjects, achieve a sense of ‘coherence’; contributing to what Peter Redman (1999: 46) calls the ‘narrative architecture of the self’.

I begin, however, before turning to analyse and unpack each of the stories presented above, by attempting to both clarify and reiterate some of the epistemological premises underpinning my consideration of them. This is followed, first, by the analysis of my auto/biographical account of my mourning of the Hillsborough disaster and, secondly, by the analysis of my reaction and resistance to the mourning for Princess Diana. In each, I present excerpts from other stories written using memory work as a means to illustrate the subjective dis/investments of meaning through which my own sense of self was brokered and became accrued in my mourning and ‘not-mourning’ of these two events. In my analysis of the Hillsborough story I begin by exploring my reactions against the background of personal investments; of my inculcation within sportised masculinities surrounding football and of social identifications forged with a totemic sense of people and place. I continue by suggesting that the public mourning that followed the Hillsborough disaster can be seen as providing a legitimate masculine space in which to mourn a series of other losses central to my own social identity which the profound sense of loss occasioned by Hillsborough helped to unleash. In my analysis of the story describing my reaction to the

death of Princess Diana which follows, I begin by exploring my ‘not-mourning’ against the background of my own disinvestments in popular royalism; as the rejection of an alternative form of totemicity through which conservative views of nation are represented (Williamson, 1988: 76). I continue by suggesting that my disidentifications with Princess Diana can also be read as an attempt to maintain a masculine sense of self by a repudiation of the feminine. This can be seen both against the diminished availability of traditional masculine identities, and from an attempt to ‘negotiate’ an alternative masculine subject-position as I navigated my own biographical trajectory and movement through the ‘chain’ of discourse. In both cases I suggest that my own mourning/not-mourning can be seen simultaneously as both culturally mediated and bound-up with dis/identifications forged at the inter-personal level of human relationships. This is then followed by a brief discussion of the inconsistencies and paradoxes contained within my mourning of Hillsborough and disavowal of the mourning for Princess Diana, focusing in particular on photography as a mournful cultural practice. I conclude by reflecting upon shifts in my own social and intellectual identity experienced whilst undertaking this thesis.

Truth, Memory and Subjectivity

Before turning to discuss the two main stories presented in this chapter, a number of points underpinning and crucial to their analysis are worth bearing in mind. The first of these relates to a series of issues invoked in chapter 4 of the thesis. For here the stories I present do not provide access to some privileged or untapped realm of ‘truth’, but to discursive forms that circulate in society at any given historical period. Here, we might think again of Johnson’s (1986) notion of a ‘cultural circuit’. In this way, the stories I tell need to be

understood in relation to the cultural discourses, narratives and practices that surround them and from which they inevitably draw. This of course should remind us of my discussions in chapter 4; of the ways in which the individual as the subject-of-language (Redman et al, 2000) both *speaks* and is *spoken by* discourse. It is this which underpins both my analysis of condolence messages (chapters 5 and 6) and of my own stories produced using memory work (this chapter).

At the same time, whilst my stories can be seen to provide an opportunity to explore mourning and identity as experiences that are routinely inhabited or lived, they cannot provide ‘pure’ access to the events and experiences they describe, or to a life as it is routinely lived. In this way the experiences that we have are already altered by our attempts to language them (e.g. Linde, 1993)¹. There can in this way be no events or experiences that are not already discursive, for there can be no access to the past unmediated by memory and culture. My use of memory work, as discussed in chapter 4, should therefore be understood not as an attempt to rediscover a lost reality but as a ‘text’ to be deciphered (King, 1997: 62). It should also, following the highly influential work of Luisa Passerini (1983), be seen ‘as an active production of meanings and interpretations, strategic in character and capable of influencing the present’ (Passerini, 1983: 195). As Susannah Radstone (2000) puts it:

memory’s imbrication with cultural narratives and unconscious processes is held in tension with an understanding of memory’s relation, however, complex and mediated, with history, with

¹ Linde (1993: 121) suggests that there are ‘nonlinguistic’ and ‘nonrepresentable’ aspects of consciousness which cannot be language. These, she suggests, exist in addition, ‘or perhaps even prior to’, the self we present in narrative form. These aspects of consciousness are, Linde writes, ‘slippery, shifting from one sense modality to another, ungraspable when we try to touch it, unseeable when we try to swing around fast enough to see it. We experience flashes, textures, smells, pressures, and ghosts of emotion that cannot be language’.

happenings, or even and most problematically, perhaps from a postmodern perspective, with ‘events’.²

(Radstone, 2000: 10)

Thus, if the past is mediated by our memor(ies) of it, our memories too are mediated not only by culture but by the discursive and narrative form(s) through which it is (re)told. From this perspective personal memory is a form of cultural remembering, wherein culture intervenes to mediate the memories we have. At the same time, and as Christopher Lasch (1991: 82–3) has usefully reminded us, cultural or social memory treads a delicate line between ‘actual’ remembering and nostalgia as the circumvention of memory. Nevertheless, memory is always mediated: by life itself, by other people’s memories, by the personal artefacts of life (of, for example, photographs, letters, diaries), by cultural artefacts (films, books, television and so forth). It is in this way also, as Annette Kuhn (2000) has earlier reminded in chapter 4 of the thesis, that ‘once voiced, even in “inner speech”, memory is shaped by secondary vision’. It is, she suggests, a signifying system; an account, ‘always discursive, always already textual’ (Kuhn, 2000: 189).

Following this, if there can be no access to the past unmediated by our discursively mediated memories of it, so too there can be no ‘pure’ access to the self which, in this instance, I attempt to relate through the use of stories produced using memory work. From this perspective, two broadly constituted theoretical perspectives can be brought to bear on the stories I tell. The first, post structuralist views of language, directs our attention away from the individual as the source of meaning and towards the discursive forms through

² Radstone (2000: 20*n*) is referring here to Hayden White’s postmodern problematisation of the concept of ‘the event’. Radstone seeks to clarify White’s position by suggesting that White himself insists that his argument should ‘not be taken

which subjectivity itself is created and summoned.³ As in chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis, wherein I attempted to analyse the discursive forms giving rise to the performative utterances contained within condolence books, so too I attempt in this chapter to analyse the discursive narratives through which my own subjectivity is summoned and related to my own mourning and ‘not-mourning’ of the events that constitute my two case-studies. In this way, post-structuralist views of the individual, including Lacanian psychoanalytic versions, have challenged prevailing Cartesian assumptions about the self by proposing a de-centred, non-essentialist self. Lacanian psychoanalysis has thus extended Freudian accounts of the self, as fundamentally divided between the conscious self we present to others and the self of unconscious desire, by applying these insights to the symbolic operation of language itself (we saw this, for example, in my discussions of the work of Julia Kristeva at the end of chapter 3). In this way, whilst the stories I tell here allow for the elaboration of a discursive self through the subject-positions made available within language, they do not and cannot provide access to a ‘pure’ self unmediated by language. In this way, the discursive “I” of language is not the same either as the self as routinely experienced in consciousness or as the self of unconscious desire, for the “I” expressed in language is occupied not by the subject but by the signifier (Cohan and Shires, 1997: 162).

The second of these broad theoretical perspectives, what I am calling here Bakhtinian accounts of language, suggest that the stories we tell are always conceived with an audience in mind, whether actual or imagined (Dawson, 1994: 24). Significantly therefore, whilst

to imply in any way that such events never happened’ (White, 1996: 20, cited in Radstone, 2000: 20).

³ Whilst of course ‘subjectivity’, in the way I use it here, can be used in a methodological sense (to refer to the harnessing and inseparability of one’s own values and ‘prejudices’ from the object of one’s research, or at worse, as the wilful

memory work, as I elaborated in chapter 4 of the thesis, attempts to yield up aspects of the self ordinarily and deliberately glossed over and occluded within more carefully crafted versions of the self provided by the more traditional genre of auto/biography, it nevertheless remains a self-presentation. For in this way, as Catherine Kohler Riessman (1993) puts it:

In telling about an experience, I am also creating a self — how I want to be known by [others]. . . Like all social actors, I seek to persuade my self and others that I am a good person. My narrative is inevitably a self representation.

(Riessman, 1993: 11)

The stories which we tell about ourselves to others (and to ourselves through ‘inner speech’) are the principal means by which we create or ‘achieve’ our own sense of self; in essence our perceived sameness and difference from others. In a similar, yet theoretically unconnected way, several authors (e.g. Bruner, 1987, 1995; Johnson, 1986; Linde, 1993; Linden, 1993; Ricoeur, 1994) have suggested that narratively structured story-telling, of who we are, where we come from, and how we came to be where we are today, are central to the ways in which a sense of self is summoned and to the ways in which we achieve a sense of consistency and ‘coherence’ as subjects.

My focus, therefore, in this chapter, following the increased focus within sociology upon individual lives and social biography, as discussed in chapter 4, reverses the tradition, wherein ‘society’ or ‘ideology’ is taken as a starting point, thereby assuming a ‘top-down’ model of cultural transmission (Radstone, 2000: 11). Instead, the stories that I present in this chapter provide a resource from which to trace out the effects of social and cultural

manipulation of data as the opposite of ‘objectivity’), it can also be used to refer to our own sense of self as experienced as perceptibly different and separate from others.

processes upon subjectivity. In other words, the ways in which discourses permeate individual subjects and lives and are taken up in identities which are themselves routinely inhabited. My use of memory work attempts to avoid the uncritical use of textual resources as they have been traditionally used within sociology — as unproblematically referential of the individual lives that they index — by focusing upon such things as authorial voice and the evaluative function⁴ of story-telling itself. Whilst the stories I present can be seen to locate the attributes of individual subjectivity and expression within the wider social world (of language, culture and ‘institutions’), I attempt nevertheless to avoid the obvious antinomies of social and cultural constructionism, wherein the individual disappears as a ‘vanishing point’ that lies beyond explanation or specification (Rustin, 2000: 42).

Drawing upon these two stories as an *entrée* to wider discussions of my own social identity as summoned and given shape by the narrative practices of memory work employed in this project, they are a means by which I begin to disclose (to myself and others) and deconstruct the meaning-making involved in my own mourning of the Hillsborough disaster and ‘not-mourning’ following the death of Princess Diana. Crucially, what I want to suggest here, as central to some of the over-arching arguments I make in this thesis, and following the work of Richard Johnson (1999), is that ‘not-mourning’, unlike commonly assumed, is routinely not the absence of a *punctum*⁵ by which we are affectively ‘moved’, but the active

⁴ Narratologists, most notably, William Labov (1972) have problematised the reason and motives behind the telling of stories, and the favouring of one particular story over another, as that of ‘evaluation’. Labov (1972: 366–70) describes this as ‘the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its *raison d’être*, why it was told and what the narrator was getting at’. An alternative formulation of this ‘problematic’ would be for the receiver of a particular message simply to ask ‘why are you telling me this? Indeed, that which the story-teller fears most from his or her listener is the ‘withering rejoinder’ of ‘So what’ (Labov, 1972: 370–1).

⁵ The *punctum* is that which, according to Roland Barthes (1982) is the element contained within the photograph (as the focus of Barthes’ inquiry), which pierces, or rather, ‘interpellates’, its viewing subject by way of an affective poignancy.

and affective *disidentification* and disavowal of the referent of mourning as culturally resonant of something ‘other’ and alien. Indeed, ‘not-mourning’, like mourning itself, routinely involves the unconscious deployment of psychic energy; albeit in *opposite affective directions*, and especially in episodes of cultural or public mourning where culturally resonant figures or ‘objects’ (and the mourning they invite) provoke strong, yet equally contrasting, opinions and come to stand-in for something else (Pearce, cited in Williamson, 1988).⁶

The stories I present, moreover, are as I also suggested in chapter 4, and following the widespread inauguration of feminist epistemology, ethnomethodology, and reflexive ethnographies of the self within social science in recent years, the means by which I attempt to ‘write myself into’ the project; placing myself on the same critical plane (Roseneil, 1993) as those people who are the more obvious focus of my research: the people who signed books of condolence during the public mourning of Princess Diana and the victims of the Hillsborough disaster. Nevertheless, and at the same time, such a notion; of ‘writing myself into the research’, is slightly misleading. For as my comments on the motivation for my interest in this topic in the introduction to this thesis illustrate; and as my wider reflections upon my own social identity in this chapter further demonstrate, I did not simply arrive at my research a *tabula rasa*, nor become personally ‘involved’, *post-hoc*, during the writing and research of this project, but was already implicated, *ab initio*, in these two public mourning events. The analysis of these stories (and the biographical trajectories which foreground them and in which they are embedded), are therefore an attempt to shed light on

⁶ Williamson (1988: 89n) quotes C. S Pearce as defining the sign as ‘something which stands to somebody for something

my own dis/investments in particular subject-positions made available within cultural discourse; exposing my own ‘prejudgements’ to those of others.

Mourning Hillsborough: Investing in Football, Investing in Place

The story I tell here about my hearing the news of the Hillsborough disaster (*‘Saturday April 15, 1989’*) embodies a sense of *gravitas* otherwise lacking in the story I tell about hearing of the death of Princess Diana (*‘Beautiful Woman Dies’*). This is reflected in the titles which I have given each of them: one, carrying the date of the event, reflecting the lasting and impregnable impression that it left upon me; the other down-playing the personal significance of Princess Diana’s death by referring rather anonymously only to a ‘Beautiful Woman’. This difference between the two stories is reflected also in the length, detail and manifest tone of each of them. Whilst each of the stories I tell can be seen to struggle to articulate linguistically the emotions which I experienced during these two events, they nevertheless begin to provide a glimpse into my contrasting reactions and the dis/investments which underpin them.

That the story I tell about the Hillsborough disaster should provide a glimpse into a range of symbolic investments — albeit largely unrecognised at the time — central to my mourning of Hillsborough can be seen from its *metaphorical* function. Where, as I will later suggest, the story I tell upon hearing the news of Princess Diana’s death can be understood as a metonymic trope of *displacement*, so my Hillsborough story serves as a form of metaphorical *condensation*, wherein two or more ‘ideas’ seemingly unrelated to the main ‘idea’ in the story being told are condensed and compressed to form a composite whole.

else in some respect or capacity’.

Thus in Lacanian terms, where metonymy becomes equated with the psychic process of displacement: as the “veering off of signification” that primary processes utilize to evade the censor’, so metaphor represents the submersion of one term underneath another (Grosz, 1990: 100).

This particular story, and my analysis of it, is interesting because it begins to disclose my own totemic identifications in people and place; and to peel away at the socially constructed nature of identity more generally. In particular, the ways in which we are subjected to, and inserted with, a range of materially situated discourses of which we are largely unaware. This is presumably what Raymond Williams (1984: 64) means when he talks about a ‘local structure of feeling’ of being as firm and definite as ‘structure’ implies, yet which operates in and through the least tangible of our everyday, taken-for-granted social practices. Here too, Judith Butler’s (1990, 1993) more recent development of the concept of ‘performativity’ is useful in helping to elaborate the ways in which, through repeated social and cultural practices, we work ourselves into pre-existing social structures. Butler’s of course adds a psychic dimension to conceptual notions of the ‘discursive’ first elaborated by Foucault (1975, 1977), wherein his theorisation of the bodily regimes by which we become constituted as subjects is augmented by an understanding of iterative practices as both ‘voluntarily’ entered into and internalised deep within the psychic realm of interiority. It is in this way in particular, for Butler, that gender identity is effectively established, maintained and reproduced.⁷ What I want to suggest here in this case is that football comes to serve as a vector for a wide range of unconscious and symbolic identifications: in place,

people and past. Each of which in turn becomes inserted one within the other. Just as in my analysis of the condolence book messages signed for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster, where I suggested that something other besides, and in addition to, the 96 victims was being unconsciously mourned (namely the decline of Liverpool as a great maritime port, as Britain's 'Second City' and 'Gateway to Empire'), so I want to suggest that my own mourning for the victims of Hillsborough was bound-up with a series of losses central to my own personal and social identity.

The Totemic, the Nostalgic and the Homely

A first clue to the ways in which the story I write about the Hillsborough disaster serves to condense certain aspects of my own social identity is its frequent reference to people and places (my grandfather or the Town Hall in Sheffield) seemingly peripheral to the story yet central, upon closer inspection, to my own mourning of Hillsborough. For it is here, at the intersection of the social and the personal that meaning begins to emerge. It is also worthwhile noting that the meaning I ascribe to my mourning of the Hillsborough disaster, just as the telling itself, is retrospective. In this way, the stories I present can be seen, using Labov's (1972) definition of narrative, as 'recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually happened' (Labov, 1972: 359).

It is clear from what I have said so far in this chapter that both memory, as our core (Butler, 1989: 12), and our interpretation (and production) of meaning surrounding it, are

⁷ For a useful overview of these developments within (post-) structuralist theory, see Stuart Hall's introduction in Hall and Du Gay (1996).

themselves shaped by life-events which occur in the intervening space between the original event, as the source of memory, and our reflection upon it. Indeed, the narrative *form* through which memories are (re)told is central both to the ways in which they are given shape and made meaningful. For without a narrative structure, organised temporally and causally into discrete and meaningful episodes with a beginning, middle and end (Aristotle, 1973), it is likely that the stories we tell would remain ‘an unbearable sequence of sheer happenings’ (Arendt, 1968: 104). Clearly in this instance, the gap from my experiencing a profound sense of loss following the Hillsborough disaster aged fifteen, to my documenting this in words and subsequent analysis of it through memory work, spans some fourteen years. This is a period in my life, like any other, which has been subject to considerable movement, both geographically (involving leaving behind my home town and many of the inter-personal relationships in which I was daily engaged) and socially and intellectually (involving a degree of social mobility and the transition from a rather ‘parochial’ working-class childhood in Sheffield to an intellectual ‘habitus’ rooted in the placeless, middle-class aspirational world of the University). It is entirely possible therefore that my rememberings are inflected with a sense of nostalgic yearning, of *heimisch*, for a symbolic sense of home – as landscapes of predilection resonant of Freud’s comments about the maternal body — which never actually existed in the affective *sense* in which they are remembered but have since been built-up in cultural myth and the unconscious tropes of memory⁸ Nevertheless, as Radstone (2000: 11) suggests, and despite the widespread acknowledgement that memory’s tropes — of metaphor and metonymy — are similar to those of poetry and those

⁸ For more on the exilic condition and the dialectic between home and away, see Alsop (2002); Schlesinger (forthcoming, 2004); Robertson *et al* (1994).

found in dreams, this does not reduce memory to fiction. This can clearly be seen from my own memories, which, whilst inevitably mediated by cultural discourses, are ‘real’ enough to produce specific and detailed recollections of ‘actual occurrences’:

I can remember the sound of the heavy tilt-hammer as it beat out a continuous rhythm throughout the night when most other people were asleep. I remember this as a child from regular visits to see an aunt whose terraced house overlooked the Lower Don Valley. I can remember standing on tip-toes at the end of her yard, next to her brick privy, peering over the wall towards the site of Sheffield’s industrial heart-land. . . Clouds of smoke bellowed from the factories below and an orange flame in the distance lit up the night sky. . .

(from the story ‘Steeling Memories’)

Negotiating Football

My own mourning of Hillsborough is clearly related in some important ways to my own investments in football. Whilst this is somewhat obvious at a superficial level, as to be almost a truism (especially given that the Hillsborough disaster was clearly an event located firmly within the bounds of football fandom), it does not explain the ways and means by which I *came to be* invested in football. From this perspective, the multifarious stories I wrote using memory work provide useful insights into the degrees of voluntarism, ‘negotiation’ and unconscious insertion within a range of masculine discourses surrounding football. That is to say, the ways in which we are not only involuntary inserted within pre-existing social structures (or local structures of feeling in this context), but the ways in we negotiate and, *ipso facto*, voluntarily work ourselves into these structures, (re)producing our subjectivity and sense of self along the way.

In the stories I wrote, for instance, my earliest childhood memories of football typically involve being taken — at first rather unwillingly — to Hillsborough to watch Sheffield Wednesday by my father. Following my parents separation and divorce, Saturday was the one day each week in which I had the opportunity to spend time with my father. As a young boy with boundless levels of energy, and unable, at this age, to appreciate the finer points of the competitive, rule-bound spectator game of football, my ideal Saturday invariably involved *playing* football with my father in the nearby Hillsborough park. However, every other Saturday in between visits to see my father (especially during the Winter months of the English football league season) involved a difficult choice on my part: of sacrificing the opportunity to *play* football with my father for going to *watch* football with him. If indeed I did want to see my father when Wednesday were playing at home it was on these — *his* — terms and involved the trade-off of playing for watching football. Where I at this stage had shown the slightest of interest in football (albeit, as passing fancy), it had largely been concentrated upon the visual or scopic delight — via television — of the *speculum* offered by pleasurable sportscapes of the stadium (for which we can also read *studium*)⁹ centred around the more successful and fashionable English teams of the late 1970s early 1980s. It was these teams who I had seen on television competing, and winning, in Europe; in European stadiums as ‘cathedrals’ bathed in the bright glow of halogen floodlight. It was the posters of popular ‘stars’ of these teams who adorned my bedroom walls and who I aspired to be like, not the players of the unfashionable Sheffield Wednesday who at the time

⁹ Barthes (1982: 26) uses the Latin term *studium* to connote a general enthusiastic commitment to or taste for someone or something, especially as manifested in the photographic image.

languished in the lower divisions of the football league and who rarely made the national sports pages of my boyhood football magazines.

It was, however, my support of these teams that my father sought to discourage, taking me instead to Hillsborough. My first reactions on being taken to Hillsborough were at this time anything but topophilic but rather *topophobic*, inducing fear at being exposed to a noisy, masculinist, and above all, seemingly aggressive and hostile adult environment. Caring little about events on the pitch (unlike television there was no commentary and the action seemed much further away) I would find alternative ways of passing the hour and a half, yet came, without knowing it, to absorb the smells, sounds and sights of my surroundings¹⁰

. . . Dad stood behind me, hands on my shoulders, as he guided through the heavy and darkened turn-stile. . . once through I stood alone and waited for him on the other side. . . My Dad had bought seated tickets for this game — I think it was against Newcastle, Boxing Day? Once up the staircase at the Leppings Lane end at which we had tickets we emerged from the gang-way, into the bright light, of noise, the smell of cigarettes. . . people around us seemed hostile, shouting words which I knew to be obscenities. . . My Dad had mistakenly bought tickets for the ‘away’ end of the ground. . . Sensing my unease my Dad patted me on the knee and smiled. . . I felt threatened and scared. . .

(from the story ‘My First Match’)

It was not until the mid 1980s, when Wednesday began to achieve a degree of success and compete amongst the top English teams, that I actively and voluntarily became interested in going to Hillsborough under my own steam. My own burgeoning fandom of Wednesday was at this time encouraged not only by their relative degree of success (in winning promotion to the old First Division of the English league), but by the popular interest of

¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the visual, auditory and olfactory pleasures embodied by particular sportscapes, see Bale (1994), especially ch. 6.

friends my own age in supporting Sheffield Wednesday. In these few short impressionable years from the age of eleven to fifteen, going to football was a (sub-) cultural activity that carried with it a certain cachet among boys of my age, providing premature entry to an adult masculine world. Here, my fandom of football (and of Wednesday in particular), was exercised in the fortnightly performative ritual of ‘going to the match’: of donning my blue and white scarf; of hunting for the autographs of players as they entered the ground; of buying (and collecting) match-day programmes. In this period alone I took pride in seldom missing a home game (‘fair-weather’ fans were berated as ‘part-timers’): some 25 matches a season, 150 games over this five year period. In the same period I became an avid consumer of football merchandise, principally football programmes and memorabilia. As most football fans will testify, at least judging by recent plethora of football writing which Nick Hornby’s book *Fever Pitch* helped inaugurate, the intervening week-long period in between Saturdays invariably involves reliving the best moments (in conversation and in the imagination) from the previous Saturday’s game and of day-dreaming the hours away (whether at school or at work) in anticipation of the next. In this respect football fandom revolves around reliving the best ‘moments’ from a previous Saturday’s game whilst fantasising the possibilities embodied by the next. It is captured in Nick Hornby’s narrative account of football fandom and in the title of the football fanzine ‘*When Saturday Comes*’. Football in this way, also provides a parallel masculine speech community to the largely feminine speech community surrounding popular royalism and the fanship of Princess Diana of which I spoke last chapter. For it too is a popular topic of everyday conversation in school and workplace alike.

During these years of passionate, adolescent football fandom, I was inculcated by, and worked myself into — even if largely unwittingly — a very particular masculinist and working-class set of cultural values. Exposed to the regular performative practice of football fandom, I quickly learned what it meant and took to be a ‘proper’ man in this (sub-) cultural world (for accounts of the ways in which masculinity is negotiated within a variety of subcultural contexts, see Connell, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Willis, 1977). Aside from the unlicensed and deeply problematic racist and misogynistic chanting which was routine at football matches during the 1980s,¹¹ which I, like many others, learned to ignore, I learned ways of acting and being — bodily regimes if you will — central to forms of hegemonic ‘northern’ masculinity. Indeed, in the absence of workplace practices in which ‘northern’ regimes of working-class masculinity had been traditionally forged, the football stadium itself was asked to step into the breach left by the collapse of manufacturing and became a key site for the (re)production of a particular version of masculinity.¹² Robert Connell (1987) has argued in this regard that gender relations (and the relations between different categories of young people and adults) are always located in particular *spaces* or *places*.

That football — despite its putative origins in the English public school system — should be central to the local structures of feeling in predominantly masculine northern British towns and cities like Sheffield (Taylor *et al*, 1996) should perhaps come as little surprise

¹¹ Only in the post-Hillsborough environment of football spectatorship has racist chanting become a criminal offence (Hill, 2001: 135). The Taylor Inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster itself drew much needed attention to unattractive aspects of fan culture, such as the racist taunts directed towards black players, that had for decades been ignored by authorities within the game.

given its associations, both symbolic and real, with northern working-class culture (Sheffield itself is reported to be the birthplace of the English and world game as it is known today, boasting the ‘oldest league club in the world’, Sheffield F.C, which has enjoyed an unbroken existence since it was formed in 1857).¹³

In many ways the activities and practices within the football stadium on match-days reflected the local structures of feeling of which it too was an integral part, whilst simultaneously having a wider resonance within the ‘little cultural world’s’ (Redman, 1999) of the workplace and the school. Here two examples from my own use of memory work should suffice. The first relates to my own elementary level schooling and the ways in which academic achievement was encouraged in terms of football. I recall specifically, for instance, numerous occasions in which movement between ‘sets’ based on academic ability was compared to Sheffield Wednesday’s promotion from the old Second to the First Division. We were thus encouraged to aim for ‘promotion’ in the way in which they had done. Our deputy head teacher at the time was a close friend and former colleague of the then Wednesday manager Howard Wilkinson (himself a former school teacher), and Wednesday players of the time would be regular guests of the school to present awards to pupils.

Football was an aspirational pursuit, providing the hope of something better. Several lads at school had hoped to make ‘the grade’ and lived the dream — as most of us did — of being signed by a professional

¹² For discussion of sport as a site for the (re)production of masculinity, see Dunning (1999, chapter 9). For a discussion of the symbolic vilification, and by extension, symbolic violence towards women within the context of British football fandom, see Dunning (1999: 234–6).

¹³ Dunning (1999: 97) writes that occasional matches were reported in Sheffield as early as 1855. By 1857 Sheffield F. C had issued a constitution and set of rules (Young, 1968: 76–8), and by 1862 there were reported to be fifteen other clubs in the district. For a discussion of the origins of football in Sheffield, see also Renshaw (1993).

club, especially Wednesday. . . Elsewhere in school football loomed large, it was a topic of informal conversation between male teachers and male pupils and was used as a tangible metaphor for encouraging hard work even in those with low academic aspirations. . . I'd sometimes see Joe Dunn, our deputy head teacher at Hillsborough on matchdays. . .

(from the story 'Some early Recollections of Watching Wednesday')

The second relates to the mimetic acting-out of social and cultural values central to the local structures of feeling within Sheffield and South Yorkshire during the mid 1980s within the football stadium itself. Such an occasion, as recalled in one of my memory work stories, involved a key fixture between Wednesday and Nottingham Forest early on in the 1984–5 season. Although I was only aged eleven at the time, this was the first season I had been allowed to attend matches on my own with two other friends (each of us had season-tickets, where we sat together in the 'Cantilever stand' of the stadium). A quirk of the fixture list had drawn these two teams together at the height of the year-long miners strike, and within a matter of weeks of the infamous 'Battle of Orgreave' between striking miners of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and South Yorkshire Police.¹⁴ Tensions inevitably ran high between supporters of Wednesday, who drew large sections of their support from the nearby South Yorkshire coalfields on the outskirts of Sheffield, and supporters of Forest, who were identified by many fans of Wednesday that day as 'scabs' (unofficial strike-breakers) of the Nottinghamshire coalfields, who had joined the breakaway Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) and favoured, against the wishes of

¹⁴ The 'Battle of Orgreave' refers to a pivotal confrontation during the miners' strike of 1984–5 when a mass picket of several thousand striking miners tried to shut down British Steel's coking plant outside Sheffield. There were in fact several confrontations: on 29 and 30 May and 1 and 18 June 1984. Pitched battles ensued between miners and mounted police and ended in large-scale arrests. Many miners later claimed that undue force had been used against them and rumours were rife in South Yorkshire at the time that many police officers were in fact soldiers drafted from the army. Twelve months later the charges against fourteen miners arrested for riot and unlawful assembly were dropped.

the NUM leadership led by Arthur Scargill, a return to work. Positioned at opposite ‘ends’ of the ground behind the two main goal areas, and separated by a heavy Police presence, Wednesday supporters at the ‘Kop’ end mimetically taunted Forest fans with finger-stabbing gestures and the piercing and repetitive chant of ‘scab’ before and throughout the game¹⁵

It took me a minute or two to work-out what exactly was going-on, and then it clicked. Forest fans were being goaded as ‘scabs’ because of the Nottinghamshire miners’ return to work. . . Police formed a long row behind the perimeter fence at each of the goal ends. . . and for a moment this was both frightening and exciting. . .

(From the story (from the story ‘Some early Recollections of Watching Wednesday’

Re-Investing in Football

My investments in football at this stage had been relatively unproblematic. However, following my ‘epiphany moment’ (Denzin, 1988) and ‘interpellation’ by a set of politically radical left-wing discourses whilst at sixth-form college, I found it increasingly difficult to reconcile these two aspects of my (new) self. One was ostensibly founded on an intellectual disavowal of football as a ‘Neanderthal’ and boorish pursuit; the other as a masculinist rejection of intellectualism as an effeminate or ‘unmanly’ pursuit which stood in sharp contrast to the dominant forms of northern working-class masculinity achieved principally through hard physical labour (‘graft’) and/or forms of sportised masculinism. My own negotiation of these seemingly contradictory identities — itself a symptom of my own movement through the ‘chain’ of discourse — was, however, given succour by a new wave

¹⁵ For discussion of football fandom as mimesis, especially as territorially played-out in the singing and chanting between rival ‘ends’ of the soccer stadium, see Dunning (1986, 1999). For a discussion of the development of territorial and mutually opposed ‘ends’ within the soccer stadium, see Dunning et al (1988). For discussion specifically of the soundscape of the soccer stadium, see Bale (1994: 139–41).

of urbane literary discourses surrounding football which were made newly available in the pre and post-Hillsborough atmosphere of football fandom¹⁶ By the early 1990s, and in part carried along on the popular euphoria of ‘Gazzamania’ which followed in the train of England’s relative success at the 1990 World Cup Finals in Italy (having been knocked-out at the semi-final stage by the then West Germany) football was being rehabilitated in the national psyche, in turn purportedly widening forms of spectator participation, especially among women (e.g. Giulianotti, 1999; Williams, 1997). ‘Gazza’s’ shedding of tears, although markedly different from the alternative forms of masculinity embodied today by David Beckham, can in part be seen in contrast to previously dominant forms of sportised masculinity in which men, whilst they may have expressed intimate emotions that were joyous (say, hugging following the celebration of a goal), did not cry publicly.¹⁷ It is during this post-Hillsborough period in particular that football had undergone both a dramatic renaissance in popular interest and commercial rebranding.¹⁸ Throughout the 1990s football began to lose its unfavourable working-class associations, as ‘a slum sport watched by slum people’ (*Sunday Times*, 19 May 1989, cited in Taylor, 1989: 100), undergoing a rapid process of ‘embourgeoisement’.

By the early part of the decade it was common place for public figures, including high-profile politicians, to declare their fanship of particular football teams and of football in

¹⁶ For discussion of this hitherto unprecedented form of football literacy, see Jary *et al*, (1991); King (1995); Haynes (1995).

¹⁷ For a discussion of the new forms of masculinity seemingly heralded by David Beckham, see Cashmore and Parker (2003, forthcoming). For a discussion of the ways in which the outward expression of emotion continues to be gendered, see Duncombe and Marsden (1993, 1995b).

¹⁸ Recent research in this area (e.g. Williams, 1997) reports a rise in the number of women attending English League football. However, because of a lack of data prior to the 1980s on the social composition of those attending English League football, some researchers (e.g. Waddington, *et al*, 1996) suggest that there is insufficient evidence to indicate a

particular. The then Prime Minister John Major and cabinet minister David Mellor were among the first to declare their support for Chelsea. By the end of the decade, with the football extravaganza in full swing, Tony Blair, in a carefully choreographed photo opportunity, was seen playing 'head tennis' with Kevin Keegan, whilst declaring in a speech to the Labour Party conference on the eve of New Labour's election victory that 'Labour's coming home'.¹⁹ Elsewhere, football was embraced by a seemingly more urbane assortment of celebrities, most notably, the Oxford University educated 'alternative' comedian David Baddiel, and moved centre stage in prime-time television programmes like 'Fantasy Football' and 'They Think its All Over'. These discourses in turn helped to validate my own social identity as a football fan, for as strange as this might sound, during my secondary schooling at a former grammar school where rugby union was the sport of choice, and where football was demonised in wider cultural narratives, I had struggled to find 'social recognition' of my own identity. Here, in this largely middle-class school, football was routinely derided as feminine. I recall one occasion in particular when, in a class-room conversation with a physics teacher, he suggested — quite unironically — that rugby, not football, was 'a real man's game' (presumably because of the increased level of physical contact). Nevertheless, these discourses are significant because, as Dawson (1994) suggests, forms of 'social recognition' are confirmed by an engagement with discourses upon which particular social relations depend and are structured. Such forms of subjective 'composure', by which we build-up a sense of self, exist therefore not only in the

rise in female football spectatorship. For a discussion of women's football spectatorship and football fandom, see also Crolley and Long (2001).

¹⁹ This was a play on the song, 'Three Lions' written and released to coincide with England's staging of the 1996 European championships. The song, whose main chorus was 'football's coming home', and was performed by David

imagination of the story-teller, 'but resonate with the experience of others, as shared, collective identities and realities' (Dawson, 1994: 23).

In this way, the narrativised sense of self we create, as 'imaginatively entered-into and inhabited', is dependent upon similar versions of the self already in circulation within wider discourse with which we can subjectively identify.²⁰ This said, the apparent 'progressiveness' of such identifications were, however, later recuperated by the forms of 'new laddism' which, whilst claiming an ironic take on gender relations (*Loaded* magazine was sub-titled 'for men who know better'), was as deeply misogynistic as earlier forms of traditional masculinity.²¹

At a more local level, the emergence of independently produced 'fanzines' by fans themselves helped to provide an alternative set of, 'cosmopolitan', more erudite and politically liberal, subject-positions with which fans like myself — having become increasingly 'uncomfortable' with certain aspects of football — could now identify. Such fanzines, as had once been the preserve of fans of the independent or 'indie' music scene — itself, according to Cohen (1991) a male preserve — now began to emerge on-sale alongside the official and often pedestrian match-day programmes produced by football club's themselves. For the first time, fanzines provided an opportunity to challenge much that was wrong with the national game, including: the appalling absence of what elsewhere

Baddiel and Frank Skinner, caught the public imagination during the summer of 1996 and was seized upon by Blair's speech writers.

²⁰ These arguments are echoed in the work of Sedgwick (1985) and Bristow (1995), who suggest that the identity of the 'homosexual male' only became available in popular culture towards the end of the nineteenth century with the emergence of new narratives of sexuality and new audiences willing to hear such stories.

²¹ For further discussion of the gender relations embodied by 'new-laddism', see Beynon (2002); Whannel (1999, 2000, 2002); Whelehan (2000).

in other sectors of the ‘entertainment industry’ would be regarded as decent facilities for paying fans,²² the ways in which club’s were autocratically governed; and the insidious racism (and sexism) that had plagued football throughout the 1970s and 80s. One particular fanzine at Leeds United had, for instance, been instrumental in helping to initiate attempts to eliminate the influence of the far-right National Front from home matches, whilst the fanzine *When Saturday Comes* had begun to organise a grass-roots attempt to ‘kick racism out’ campaign (this later became the basis for attempts by the Football Association (FA), the Professional Footballers Association (PFA), and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), to organise co-ordinated attempts at eliminating racism from English football).²³ Nevertheless, such fanzines, including the urbane humour contained in the fanzine *Just Another Wednesday*, which I now regularly made a point of buying *en route* to the match, provided an alternative range of identifications with football (and its fans) than had hitherto existed.²⁴ This ‘rough and ready’ fanzine, produced by no more than a handful of University educated Wednesday fans from leafy Wilmslow in Cheshire, regularly and reflexively sent-up Wednesday’s own players, the club’s arch-rivals Sheffield United, and the men who ran football more generally. It was this early fanzine movement which later spawned and gave rise to a plethora of more literate football writing than had previously been seen before (e.g. Edge, 1999; Hornby, 1992, 1993; Schindler, 1998; Varley, 1999; White, 1994).

Placeness and Proximity to the Hillsborough Disaster

²² Popular discourses in-play before, but increasingly, after the Hillsborough disaster routinely drew attention to sharply contrasting conditions and facilities between those available for British and North American fans of mass spectator sports.

²³ In 1993 co-ordinated attempts by the PFA and CRE to eliminate racism from British football terraces (but also discriminatory employment practices of some clubs and the racial abuse of players by fellow professional) culminated in the ‘Let’s Kick Racism Out of Football Campaign’.

²⁴ For discussion of the rise of fanzine culture with football see, for example Jary *et al* (1991); Haynes (1995);

Clearly, on one level, it is self-evident from my telling of the story about the Hillsborough disaster ('Saturday April 15, 1989') that my reaction to it was in part influenced by my own social and physical proximity to events: to, on the one hand, the fans of Liverpool F. C., with whom I could readily empathise as a football fan; as people who were like me, who stood on the self-same terraces as I had and who shared a common fandom of their team. Not only did I perceive them to be like me but more strikingly I quickly registered the fact that it *could have been me*.²⁵ On the other hand, my own physical proximity to the urban landscape in which the disaster occurred contributed in no small part to my mourning. For here, as human geographers have reminded us, urban physical landscapes — even the most humdrum and mundane — are routinely (and affectionately) internalised and become a characteristic feature of our own social and personal identities. In this way, place becomes more than simply the physical characteristics of space but is instead symbolic of people; of particular communities with their own distinct sense of history (e.g. Anderson, 1983). Such a distinct sense of 'placeness', as John Bale (1994) has earlier suggested, is apparent in the relationship between the self-image of the people who populate urban industrial landscapes in the North of England and the physical characteristics of such an environment. Such iconography (of the nineteenth century English football stadium as existing, cheek by jowl, against an urban-industrial backdrop of factories and Victorian terraced housing), as popularised and played out by cultural discourse and myth, is itself central to constitutions

²⁵ I was struck recently, upon a 'spring clean' of my collection of football fanzines and match-day programmes, by the similarity between my own comments here and those of a young Daniel Gordon, co-editor of the fanzine *Just Another Wednesday*, from April 1990. In this edition, Gordon, who must have been roughly the same age as me at the time of the Hillsborough disaster, writes an article entitled 'It could have been me', describing his own mourning and the sense of 'shock' and 'numbness' that such events could happen at the ground 'I had grown to love and think of as my own' (Gordon, *Just Another Wednesday*, April 1990: 14). Gordon also describes his visit to Anfield on the Thursday following the disaster, where he 'laid flowers on the Kop, along with a Wednesday T-shirt with a tribute written on it'.

of ‘northernness’. These self-referential constitutions of ‘northernness’ — as defined against, and helping to distinguish it from, the South of England and its sense of ‘southernness’ — themselves speak of sets of values seen as emblematic of ‘northernness’: for example, of collectivism and a sense of community, as well as hard physical labour, masculinism and insularity²⁶ (Taylor *et al*, 1996: 23). It is these, metaphorically condensed in the story I tell about my reaction to the Hillsborough disaster: through an affectionate sense of place(ness) and embodied in the figure of my grandfather (a life-long Labour voting trade-unionist and steel worker of whom I was enamoured), which, I suggest, were unconsciously triggered by the enormous sense of loss occasioned by the Hillsborough disaster. It is these themes, intriguingly, as seen from the excerpts I have presented here, which came most urgently to mind during memory work and are reflected throughout the wider series of stories I wrote.

Taken together, these various other stories that I wrote during memory work, can be seen to bespeak the internalisation of space and the affective bonds forged between particular places and people. They can be seen, as I have earlier suggested, as ‘condensations’ in which several images are unconsciously combined to form a composite image as invested with meaning. These stories summoned some of my earliest childhood memories: of feeding the ducks with my mother in the nearby Hillsborough park; of regular visits on Saturday’s to see my father who lived in the district of Hillsborough; of being taken, for the

²⁶ Patrick Renshaw (1993: 475) writes that the choice of Hillsborough as one of the grounds selected to host the 1966 World Cup Finals was ‘an event which — like the opening of the M1 motorway — older Sheffield residents believed helped end the city’s tendency towards isolation and introspection’.

first time, by my father to my first football match at Hillsborough; and later, when old enough, of going regularly to Hillsborough to watch Wednesday with friends my own age.

Whilst these stories help to explain my own topophilic sentiments: of Tuan's (1974) comments, that familiarity with place, when it does not breed contempt, breeds affection, or Relph's (1976: 65) definition of 'placeness' as that of being 'inside and belonging to *your* place' as an individual and 'member of a community, and to know this without reflecting on it'; they do not, in and of themselves, explain my mourning of Hillsborough. For there were many others, especially nearby residents and fans of Sheffield Wednesday, who did not share my sentiments. There was, and still is, a feeling of widespread antipathy among supporters of Sheffield Wednesday in particular, and residents of Sheffield more generally, towards fans of Liverpool F. C who themselves were perceived by some as to blame for the disaster (e.g. Nash and Johnstone, 1998, Liverpool University Football Research Unit).²⁷ This particular accusation is made on the basis of reports of attempts by ticket-less Liverpool fans to force entry into the Hillsborough stadium immediately prior to kick-off. It is a view lent some credence by the Liverpool born academic and fan of Liverpool F.C, John Williams, of the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research at the University of Leicester, who has suggested that this practice of 'bunking-in' at away matches was an established practice of Liverpool fans (Williams, 1989). Such a view, however, was added

²⁷ A recent survey conducted by the researchers at the Football Research Unit at Liverpool University (1998) suggests that areal divisions in perceptions of blame for the Hillsborough disaster continue to persist. Their report indicates that of 1,350 members of the public surveyed (many of whom were not necessarily football fans), 59 per cent of residents of Sheffield blame Liverpool F.C fans for the disaster, whilst 89 per cent of Liverpool residents blame South Yorkshire Police. When explored by club affiliation the attribution of blame becomes ever more pronounced. Thus, 97 per cent of Liverpool fans and 93 per cent of Evertonians blame South Yorkshire Police, whilst 78 per cent of Sheffield Wednesday fans and 61 per cent of Sheffield United fans blame Liverpool fans themselves. These figures, the researchers suggest, are indicative of regional and club loyalty.

support by nefarious tales of drunken Liverpool fans, apparently based on eye witness reports, which quickly became augmented in popular local mythology. Such a view can, no doubt, be in part explained by the disparaging historical discourses surrounding Liverpudlians — ‘as capricious Celts’ — that I traced out in chapter 5. Nevertheless, this view, of the late arrival of Liverpool fans themselves as a major contributory factor was not, however, borne out by the public inquiry into the disaster chaired by Lord Chief Justice Taylor.

Shadows of Steel: Mourning Masculinities

Following this, I want to suggest that my own mourning of Hillsborough — although largely unreflected upon at the time, and certainly not deconstructed in the way I do here — was a catalyst through which a series of previously unmourned losses central to the local structure of feeling in Sheffield (and South Yorkshire) during the 1980s could legitimately be mourned. Following Raymond Williams’ (1984) notion of a local structure of feeling and its use by Ian Taylor (1996) and colleagues in their sociological study of Sheffield and Manchester, it is fundamental that ‘lived experience’ — as intangible as this may be — should attempted to be grasped in terms of the economic and material realities in which people find themselves existing.²⁸ Central, therefore, to the local structure of feeling in Sheffield (and South Yorkshire) during the 1970s and 80s with which I — like many others — grew-up, was the place occupied by steel production in the local imagination (and configurations of local identity); and, moreover, the enormous sense of loss occasioned by

²⁸ Taylor *et al* (1996: 32) write that ‘the dominant forms of the local structure of feeling must in part be understood as a product of “the local class structure” (Urry, 1981: 467), which itself must be understood in terms of the particular

the dramatic collapse of the city's local labour markets based predominantly upon steel manufacture.

Craft and Graft: Sheffield's Local Structure of Feeling

Founded upon the twin-trades of cutlery and steel production (of 'craft and graft') Sheffield had — as the economic collapse of the late 1970s and early 1980s dramatically illustrated — become dangerously over-reliant upon these two industries as its major source of employment. As late as 1981 Sheffield, according to Patrick Seyd (1993: 152), 'had the third highest employment dependence of any urban area in Britain'. By 1971 some 45,000 people (16 per cent of the city's workforce from a total population of almost 500,000) were employed in steel production alone (Sheffield City Council Department of Employment and Economic Development Library, cited in Taylor *et al*, 1996: 64). Both Sheffield's class structure; as overwhelmingly proletarian in nature (Sidney Pollard describes Sheffield on the basis of data from the 1851 Census as 'the most proletarian city in England'),²⁹ and the historical legacy of steel production as central to its self-image, cannot be over-estimated.

Further, both its homogenous class structure and the historical legacy of steel and metal manufacture (as the single biggest contributory factor in Sheffield's evolution from a collection of small 'industrial' hamlets into a city whose name became known internationally throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as synonymous with steel)

"industrial history" of a locality; but that the contested and changing character of that local identity must also be understood'.

²⁹ Pollard (1993: 260), cited in Taylor *et al* (1996: 87). Figures cited by Pollard from the 1851 Census show that the proportion of people engaged in local industry in Sheffield was 187.6 per thousand people compared to 146.1 in Leeds. In contrast, those engaged in professional occupations in Sheffield amounted to only 41 per thousand compared to 89.4 per thousand in Bristol. By 1871, the dominant metal and engineering industries in Sheffield employed 264.2 per thousand people over 20 years of age (Pollard, 1993: 260).

contribute to a local structure of feeling and ‘lived experience’ of those within the city’s boundaries as remarkably consistent and cohesive. What this says about the experience of women (and non-hegemonic forms of masculinity) in a city like Sheffield (and other town’s and cities in the industrial north of England), as unmistakably masculine in character, is unclear. Nevertheless, this city-wide experience of the Sheffielder as predominantly working-class is borne out by figures which, as late as 1981, show 62.1 per cent of the city’s population as employed in skilled or unskilled manual labour. Remarkably, measured in terms of the Registrar-General and Census classifications, only 4.6 per cent of the city’s population at this time were classified as ‘professionals’ (Taylor *et al*, 1996: 88).³⁰

The sense of local pride, I want to suggest, that came from the city’s position as market leader and pioneer in the production of stainless steel (despite the deleterious consequences upon the health of the city’s inhabitants and those who worked in local industry),³¹ is fundamental to understanding the very fabric of *being* within, and hailing from, the city of Sheffield. Indeed, it is not difficult see why Sheffielders should take such pride in their achievements, for by the 1840s Sheffield was producing about 90 per cent of Britain’s steel output and about one-half of world steel output (Tweedale, 1993: 146). It was, as local historian Geoffrey Tweedale (1993: 146) puts it, every bit the metropolis of steel as Manchester was of cotton or Leeds was of woollens.

³⁰ Taylor *et al* (1996) also point out that the ‘structure of feeling’ in Sheffield as overwhelmingly working-class was reinforced in 1981 by the concentration of the professionals identified in the Census of that same year in just five electoral wards, all to the south-west of the city (Seyd, 1994: 206, cited in Taylor *et al*, 1996: 325*n*). This incidentally, is the strategic location historically chosen by professionals and industrialists as farthest away from the industrial east-end (from prevailing winds which would carry the pollution generated South-eastwards across of the Don Valley).

³¹ Industrial diseases resulting from exposure to noxious materials used and produced in steel manufacture are reflected in the high levels of respiratory problems in Sheffield. Known locally as ‘the Derbyshire lung’, this typically manifests in chronic bronchitis, lung cancer and emphysema (a disease with which my own grandfather was afflicted).

Beyond mere quantitative analysis of steel output, Sharon Zukin's (1991) discussion of transformations occurring in an American steel town (Weirton, West Virginia) following the world-wide demise of the industry, adds to our understanding of its mythical and symbolic significance within the popular imagination. Indeed, steel provides a romantic and deeply masculine metaphor, signifying strength and a hardness of character, contrasting sharply with less perceptibly masculine industries such as those based on textiles. Here Zukin writes that:

No industry has a more powerful image than steel. Its symbolic weight in the national economy reflects a host of material factors: the brute force required to make steel, the volume of capital investment in a mill, the size of the workforce engaged in smelting, pouring, casting, and shipping, and the omnipresence of steel in all modern structures, from rail trestles and bridge girders, to auto bodies, skyscrapers, airplanes, and ships. Steel has power because it has been the lifeline of industrial society.

(Zukin, 1991: 59–60)

The Collapse of Manufacturing and the Sense of Loss

Sheffield's historical position as world-leader in the production of steel, and its (over-) dependence upon steel for its life-blood, when added to the symbolic associations made with steel, which Zukin (1991) describes, served only to heighten the dramatic sense of loss hastened by the catastrophic and rapid decline of steel production in the city during the 1980s. Whilst the city had experienced various economic peaks and troughs during earlier periods of history (depressions in the 1890s, in the opening decade of the twentieth century, and during the 1920s and between 1930–3) none were as dramatic as the reversal of fortunes that the city experienced in the 1980s, when the city's manufacturing base was all but decimated. A culmination of factors, including: foreign competition and cheap imports

from the Far-East; the world-wide ‘over-production’ of steel; and the new Conservative government’s deflation of the economy (involving the imposition of a cash limit on British Steel), have all been cited as reasons for its collapse. Nevertheless, Margaret Thatcher’s position in the popular local vernacular is guaranteed; as someone who wreaked more damage on Sheffield’s steel industry than the German Luftwaffe had managed to do during the Second World War. (Sheffield suffered heavy German bombing raids during 1940 due to its strategic location as a producer of alloy steels, gun forgings and tank armour central to Britain’s war effort).

Throughout the post-war years until 1980 Sheffield’s rate of unemployment had remained relatively low and stable, continuously below the national average. Until the late 1960s the unemployed in the city numbered somewhere in the region of 2 per cent. Yet, as David Hey (1998: 243) points out, 1980 proved to be a turning point in the city’s history, with record numbers of job losses, which by 1987 had reached 47,500 (16.3 per cent) of the registered labour-force. Estimates vary according to the criteria used and some put the ‘real’ number of unemployed in the city closer to the 60,000 mark. The majority of these job losses came in the steel industry, with some 70,000 of the 70,863 redundancies reported in Sheffield in the seven years between 1979–1986 affecting those employed in ‘metal manufacture, metal goods and engineering’ (Pollard, 1993: 278). Pollard reports, moreover, quite astonishingly, that in the five years between 1979–83, redundancies were notified at 1,000 a month (Pollard, 1993: 278). As late as 1991 unemployment in Sheffield, according to official measures, was still running at 31,800 (24,500 of whom were men) (Pollard: 277). If we add in the economic fall-out of economic recession throughout the wider South Yorkshire

metropolitan area — in which during the period between 1985–1994 all 24 of its pits were closed with a loss of 10,311 jobs — then we begin to see that the entire employment structure of Sheffield and South Yorkshire underwent a ‘profound and very sudden transformation’ (Taylor, *et al*, 1996: 68). It is precisely this dramatic collapse of Sheffield’s heavy manufacturing base, and with it much of the local economic infrastructure, which provoked a widespread crisis of masculinity among Sheffield’s population of men. It is this of course which provides the back-drop to Peter Cattaneo’s 1997 award winning British film *The Full Monty*, in which a group of unemployed Sheffield steel workers turn to stripping to make ends meet (again, a further ‘recognition’ of masculine social identity within Sheffield. For no one had ever made feature length Hollywood films about Sheffield!)³² It is, moreover, this bitter-sweet comedy which captures the masculine trauma of becoming confined to domestic world of women.

It is the difficulty of men in adapting and re-directing their energies into any kind of domestic role which is the subject of Beatrix Campbell’s (1993) book *Goliath*. It is here that Campbell discusses the differential impact of unemployment upon men and women, arguing that whilst unemployment and poverty are widely acknowledged as producing a human and economic crisis for both men and women, it is typically ‘perceived as an *economic crisis for a woman and an identity crisis, a gender crisis, for a man*’ (Campbell, 1993: 20, my emphasis).³³ This purported crisis of masculinity and ‘fear of falling’ created

³² Similar themes, of the devastation wrought by unemployment upon communities heavily dependent upon a single industry, are also played out in the 1996 film *Brassed Off*, set in the fictional village of Grimely (although recognisably Grimethorpe), amongst the South Yorkshire coalfields which border Sheffield.

³³ Campbell’s analysis focuses upon the ways in which mass unemployment in the north of England was having a differential impact upon men and women. The masculine trauma of unemployment, according to Campbell, lies ‘not so much with poverty’ as with men’s ‘assignment to the world of women’ (Campbell, 1993: 20). Such a crisis, Campbell

by the collapse of manufacturing throughout older industrialised nations of Western Europe and North America has been the subject of several studies by feminist writers (e.g. Campbell, 1993; Ehrenreich, 1984, 1989; Faludi, 2000). This ‘fear of falling’ first coined by Ehrenreich (1989) refers principally to men’s fear of falling into unemployment, into casual and newly created service-sector jobs perceived as ‘unmanly’, and above all, into the domestic realm occupied by women.

Indeed, the reason I present the background to the de-industrialisation of Sheffield and its regions in such detail here is because of the dramatic impact it had upon the collective psyche of people within the city at the time, especially young people — and young men in particular like myself — in the throes of the primary processes of identity formation. The personal cost’s of economic recession: of house repossession’s, family break-down’s and nervous illness amongst men thrown literally on the ‘scrap-heap’ with little hope of re-employment were a common experience amongst friends my own age during the 1980s. This was a period in my own life when my father had temporarily lost his job in steel and where the personal cost’s were experienced in the shape of domestic ‘down-sizing’. These were pervasive themes that enveloped the city, wherein urban decay and loss became its overriding *leitmotif*. These were experiences which I had (un)consciously internalised, would dream about as a child, and later reproduce as stories that came most urgently to mind in the memory work practised in this thesis. They were stories seemingly unrelated to the Hillsborough disaster, yet are central, I argue, to the ways in which the Hillsborough

argues, and its difference from earlier historical periods characterised by high levels of male unemployment, was, in particular, fuelled by the ways in which young men who had never worked, and older men (who would never work again), were responding to the collapse of hitherto taken-for-granted labour markets.

disaster was invested with meaning, coming as it did at the end of the 1980s. Indeed, just as the Heysel stadium disaster was the ‘last thing’ that the city of Liverpool needed in 1985, so too, the last thing that Sheffield needed in 1989 was the Hillsborough disaster.

Photographing a Disappearing World

This psychic interiorisation of experience (as a collective social psychology) is most clearly evidenced from a story which I wrote recollecting my own attempts in the summer following the Hillsborough disaster to document a disappearing world through the use of photography. My burgeoning interest in amateur photography, where I would experiment with different kinds of photographic composition, with a variety of lenses and filters, and later with attempts to develop my own films, took me, somewhat inexplicably at the time, to Sheffield’s Lower Don Valley, the former site of the city’s steel production.

I combed the Don Valley looking for things of interest to photograph. .
. I stood beneath one edifice — presumably the ‘official’ entrance —
with marble steps leading to a huge set of oak panelled doors, encased
on either side by a set of marble pillars, and imagined it in its heyday. .
. I thought of my grandfather and tried to imagine him here. . . Most of
the windows were broken and those that were not were covered in a
thick coat of grime. It was a ghostly atmosphere, of buildings and
places once busy with people, now abandoned, forlorn, deathly quiet. .
.

(from the story ‘Steeling Memories’)

This, as Taylor *et al* write (1996: 65), was the visual signifier of Sheffield’s economic catastrophe: some 301 hectares of land, interspersed with thoroughfares which had ‘previously wound past high frontages of massive steel plants stretching out towards Rotherham and Doncaster’ but which now ‘cut across vast open stretches of wasteland’. All of this of course returns us to the ‘something that can be identified with’ as a precondition

for mourning (Frosh, 1991), with which I opened this chapter. It is, moreover, central, as Barthes (1992) reminds us, to the *spectrum*³⁴ of photography itself; for there is ‘no photograph without *something* or *someone*’ (Barthes, 1982: 6). In this way Barthes asks rhetorically: ‘why choose (why photograph) this object, this moment, rather than some other?’ Here Barthes responds to his own question by suggesting that in aspiring to become a sign which would afford it the dignity of a language, there must first be a mark. Clearly, that by which I, and many thousands of others within the city was *marked* (for Raymond Williams’ notion of a local structure of feeling is clearly a collective social psychology), was through the profound sense of loss occasioned by Sheffield’s rapid de-industrialisation. It is clearly no coincidence that years later I should discover that two friends who, like me, had grown-up in Sheffield; one a graphic designer now living in London, the other a multi-media programmer living in the North-west, should have engaged in similar attempts to photograph this disappearing world.

In my case in particular, this use of photography as mourning work; as simultaneously a refusal to let go, and an attempt to summon and resurrect that which has past, been and gone, can be traced both to the collective social psychology of loss within Sheffield and to my own personal experiences and memories, especially as bound-up in my relationship with my grandfather. For the loss of Sheffield’s steel industry also unconsciously signified the loss of traditional ‘respectable’ working-class values, of ‘honest graft’ and collective responsibility (for the ‘other’) which my grandfather came to embody. (As importantly, for me at the time, it further signified the loss of identity itself). These of course were

³⁴ The *Spectrum* for Barthes is the person or thing as the target of the photograph: ‘the referent, a kind of little

memories valorised in local collective mythology,³⁵ yet nevertheless rooted in my own personal memories of people and place: of my grandfather as a warm, genteel and principled man with whom I identified (here my grandfather offered a further inflection of the dominant hegemonic masculinities characteristic of the industrial north of England). So too, my memories remained memories (Radstone, 2000: 11) to the extent that in some of the stories I produced through memory work, I vividly recall being regularly taken as a child to collect my grandfather from his shift at the steelworks: of workers pouring forth at the end of a shift; of sulphurous smells, the sight of industrial landscape stretching away to the horizon; and the sound of the heavy pounding of a tilt-hammer used for forging steel.

This mournful vision of loss is further characterised by my refusal to reinvest in post-industrial visions of the future; chiefly attempts to transform the site of former steelworks into a vast ‘temple to consumerism’: the Meadowhall shopping complex. The pathos of my photography is here reflected in my attempts to frame a shot of Meadowhall under-construction, through the broken windows of what remained of the shell of a derelict steelworks. It is a yearning echoed in the empirical research of Taylor *et al* (1996: 247) who report the sense of nostalgia in Sheffield not so much for the ‘couplet of people and places’ as for ‘people in relationship to particular historical periods’. Thus, echoing through their discussions with local people ‘was a powerful sense of the world of industrial work and its associated sense of community, now lost to “progress”, often expressed as a ‘matter of

simulacrum, any *eidolon* emitted by the object’ (Barthes, 1982: 9).

³⁵ Totemic identification specific to local forms of hegemonic masculinities are a defining feature of old industrial cities and regions across the north of England. Taylor *et al* (1996: 320*n*) point for instance, in the North-east, to the image of ‘the big Hewer’, or in Liverpool to that of the docker. They argue that even in post-industrial cities of North America, the gendered imagery of the male worker (the steelmen of Pittsburgh or the lumberjacks around Vancouver) continue to exercise residual purchase upon local cultures.

bitter lament'.³⁶ This pathos of loss is also revealed in my attempts, that same summer, to document, through photography, the Hillsborough stadium itself, perhaps in unconscious anticipation that football itself was about to change irrevocably. Much talk at the time was of 'all-seater' stadia being a likely demand of the Taylor inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster. My photography can therefore perhaps be seen to reflect an ambivalence on my part towards the changes occurring within football: of, on the one hand, welcoming the rehabilitation of football and the new identifications made available with it, whilst on the other refusing to relinquish a residual and nostalgic (Lasch, 1991) investment in standing at football. For here 'progress' represented the commercial rebranding of the game, of corporate entertainment and executive boxes, the loss of 'atmosphere' and communal forms of being with others that standing at football appeared to embody.

Not-Mourning Diana: Disinvesting in the Feminine Popular

If the story I wrote about my reaction to the Hillsborough disaster ('*Saturday April 15, 1989*') can be seen as form of 'condensation', in which a variety of losses central to particular versions of masculinity are being mourned, then the story I write about my first reactions upon hearing the news of the death of Princess Diana ('*Beautiful Woman Dies*'), can be seen, drawing from insights offered by Lacanian psychoanalysis, as corresponding to the unconscious metonymy of linguistic signification. For here, as I will suggest, particular alternative versions of masculinity to those previously outlined were being defended by a repudiation of the feminine which Princess Diana and the public mourning for her came, metonymically, to embody. Princess Diana of course, as we saw last chapter, can be seen as

³⁶ Taylor *et al* (1996: 247) report the comments of an unemployed Sheffield steelworker who, when asked his view on the

metonym for a mass culture troped as feminine (Barcan, 1997: 38). Nevertheless, in this model, that is to say, Lacan's semiotic reading of Freud, the unconscious, as 'structured like a language', has limited means at its disposal with which to express (or rather distort and disguise) itself. A principal means by which the primary process of *displacement* (wherein mental energy is shifted from one object to another) is unconsciously and semiotically encoded within language is via the notion which Lacan calls *metonymy*. In this way, the significant unconscious wish or desire is subtly shifted, its intensity and meaning transferred to an indifferent object or term which then comes to stand-in for, and thereby disguise or encrypt, the original desire. Cohan and Shires (1997: 28–9) usefully describe metonymy as:

a rhetorical device in which one term, through actual proximity or widespread association, has become closely enough identified with another to signify it; 'Metro station' is a metonymy of Paris, just as 'tube' is a metonymy of London.

(Cohan and Shires, 1997: 28–9)³⁷

Seen in this light, the story which I tell about my first reaction upon hearing the news of Princess Diana's death can be interpreted as an unconscious linguistic device in which the strength of my hostility towards the public mourning for Diana is encrypted within the story itself. Much of this story, we will recall, is taken up by descriptions of the Bed and Breakfast accommodation in London (and the landlady running it), in which Lilach and I stayed. This in itself, and my difficulty in expressing the range of emotions I experienced following the death of Princess Diana, can be seen using the work of post-Lacanian

Meadowhall shopping mall, responded that: 'I think they ought to knock it down and build a steelworks'.

feminists such as Luce Irigaray (1985) and Julia Kristeva (1984) as a reflection of differences in sexual identity. For in this view, my failure to engage with the Diana events (other than to dismiss them out of hand), suggests the difficulty in speaking from a feminine position in a phallogentric symbolic order. From this perspective, it is only in relation to the paternal metaphor, or the Name of the Father, that the self acquires language by speaking a position in reference to something outside the self, to Oedipal law. Sexual identity, in this view, operates linguistically according to binary opposites. An identification with the masculine is therefore an identification with identity, language, the symbolic, whilst an identification with the feminine is an identification with the body, desire, sensuality; things which, as we saw last chapter, were embodied by Princess Diana. Indeed, my failure to engage with the 'Diana events' is, intriguingly, reflected in my inadvertent under-writing of memory work stories connected with them in comparison to the number of stories connected in some way to the Hillsborough disaster.

Nevertheless, my use of the landlady as a narrative prop can be seen to belie not only my political or 'class' *disinvestedness* in the mourning for Diana but my *disidentification* with Diana herself and those people who mourned her. In this interpretation (for that, in essence, is what is: a proposal which I can present to others (Bal, 1985: 10)), the landlady comes to stand-in for, and represent — as *signifier* — a particular version of totemic Englishness with which I could not identify and had sought elsewhere to strenuously disavow since my political 'epiphany'. It is alluded to in the story by reference to the landlady's

³⁷ For psychoanalytic discussion of Lacanian notions of metonymy (and metaphor) see Grosz (1990), especially chapter 4. For cultural, linguistic and narrative explications and applications of metonymy (and metaphor), see Cohan and Shires (1997); Culler (1975).

‘inquisitiveness’ and in the scene in which she ‘insists’ we join her for ‘tea and cake’ (itself perhaps a metonymic allusion to hegemonic notions of Englishness). In this way too, ‘inquisitiveness’ can be read as ‘nosy’ or meddlesome; bound-up with particular conceptions of Englishness as embodied in ‘mythical’ notions of the English Guest House landlady available within cultural discourse. My own mild sense of amusement at the landlady’s curious ways (her ground-rules and prying questions) is alluded to in the story in the passage in which Lilach and I, during a tube journey, later comically reflect on our ‘ordeal’ at the Bed and Breakfast. In my own mind’s eye, then, the landlady of this story comes to stand-in for and represent a version of the ‘little Englander’ so opposed in the left-wing political discourses, premised on internationalism (not parochialism!), in which I had become invested. It is these versions of totemic Englishness which, as Judith Williamson (1988) has argued, are embodied in popular royalism. In this view, the royal family provide a reflection not of aristocratic values, but of the values of traditional upper working-class/lower middle-class family life. These disinvestments in totemic versions of ‘Englishness’ stand in sharp contrast to my investments in particular totemic identifications with a local sense of place which were reawakened during the Hillsborough disaster; as symbolic of something altogether different from that which, in my mind, Princess Diana came to signify. The detail in this story (some of which I have edited for brevity), can also be read as digression; a substitute for much stronger feelings, of anger, alienation and disgust, which I later experienced as the week of mourning for Diana wore on. For it is here, in the other story fragments which I wrote about the week of mourning for Diana, culminating in her quasi-state funeral, that the full weight of feeling is brought to bear. In

these stories, I wrote of the ways in which I was both perplexed and vexed that people could (and should) be moved to action by the death of a princess, a woman of enormous wealth and privilege, at a time when there were so many other ('more important') things in the world for one to be moved to action by, and to 'get angry about'.

I was baffled and infuriated by the expenditure of emotional energy by people on a women with whom most had never met. I had canvassed door-to-door for the Labour Party during the early 1990s and was dispirited by people's apathy and dis-interest in politics. Yet here were people camping out on the streets of the capital for a women of enormous wealth and privilege. . . I felt mildly depressed by the whole affair, for it confirmed to me that the British were socially conservative in nature; that we would remain forever wedded to the anachronism of a royal family.

(From the story 'The Week Following Diana's Death')

This metonymic transference of feeling and meaning is itself, then, revealing of the political discourses (of internationalism and modernity) underpinning the left-wing, 'politically radical' subject-position in which I had become invested since leaving school aged sixteen and starting sixth-form college in 1990. In this way, the landlady herself and all that she appeared to represent: namely, conservative, anachronistic and petit-bourgeois articulations of nation rooted in tradition and the inequities of class privilege, were things which I had sought to disavow in my own construction of self as political subject. These values can themselves be culturally located in the 'monstrous' female other as represented in aspects of popular narrative discourse. It is thus in the stories which I wrote about my own 'epiphany moment' (Denzin, 1988), in which I became 'political', cognisant of the social and political

world which I inhabited, that I also came to disavow a range of subject-positions which appeared to stand in binary opposition to my own (new) sense of *being* and *becoming*.³⁸

Having felt divorced from the ‘traditional’ subjects I studied at school, and from the ethos of the school itself, at sixth-form college I rapidly became animated by the alternative intellectual habitus it offered (mainly left-wing) and by the new ways of seeing the world which the ‘A’ level subjects I had chosen to study, especially sociology now offered me. . . I was galvanised by the radicalism of my sociology teacher, who spoke of ‘class struggle’ and made no apologies for the Marxist sociology he taught. . . I read *Bad News* by the Glasgow University Media Group on his recommendation. . . followed later by Marx and Engel’s *Communist Manifesto*. . . feeling ‘alive’ and emboldened I now understood for the first time why the world was the way it was and what was needed to change it.

(from the story on ‘Spiritual and Political Enlightenment’)

These stories are, as Peter Redman (1999) usefully reminds us, highly conventional, drawing as they do upon a Joycean ‘epiphany’, or sense of ‘Damascan conversion’ which are central to forms of autobiographical narrative that first became available during the Christian enlightenment.³⁹

Investing in Politics and a Return of the Repressed

Thus, upon leaving school and starting sixth-form college I had become exposed to ‘new ideas’; of new and exciting ways of thinking, and had forged new friendships with people who were radically different from friends I had ‘hung around with’ at school. In studying for ‘A’ levels (in British Government and Politics, Sociology and History) and positively identifying with liberal and left-wing subject-positions made available and embodied by my

³⁸ In philosophical terms this sense of *becoming* is expressed as transcending *pure being* and to attain instead a state of *being for self and others*.

³⁹ For a fuller discussion of the ‘trope of conversion’ as one particular genre of narrative, see Bristow (1995). This, according to Bristow, can be traced as far back as the narrative tradition of Christian enlightenment begun by the seventeenth century preacher, poet and author, John Bunyon.

teachers (from whom I received my first real sense of intellectual recognition and who, at some level, I aspired *to be* like).⁴⁰ I came to conceive of my new found political identity (as ‘politico’) in terms consistent with Marx’s philosophically derived ideas of political consciousness; of a working-class — of whom I was inextricably a part, using either Marxist or the ‘official’ Registrar General’s classification — ‘arising from their slumbers’, ‘throwing off their shackles’ and attaining ‘class consciousness’.⁴¹ The primacy of this world-view based on class-struggle and ‘consciousness-raising’ also in part helps explain my attempts to convince others (including my closet family) of the rightness of my views and the wrongness of theirs.

Significantly, for the purposes of this discussion, it is perhaps Judith Butler’s (1993: 234–5) theorisation of the melancholic structuring of identity that is most instructive. In this way, identity is achieved through repudiation; through a disavowal or foreclosure of identifications that enable the self to come into being. Following the post-structuralist theory underpinning Derridean philosophy (e.g. Derrida, 1972), it is through the *contrastive* function provided by binary oppositions — of *alterity* — that meaning becomes established. In this way, as we have seen in the work of Irigaray (1985) and Kristeva (1984) the meaning of male is established in contrast to female. So too, east is defined in opposition to west, gay to straight, true to false, right to left, high to low, and so on and so forth *ad infinitum*. Derrida’s use of the contrastive function in language is a fundamental tenet of Saussurian structural linguistics. It is derived, as Redman (1999: 56) reminds us, from Saussurian

⁴⁰ For an illuminating discussion and illustration of ‘interpellation’ and of being ‘sutured’ to a particular subject-positions(s) — as routinely experienced and ‘lived’ — as made available within discourse, see Redman (1997b; 1999, especially the introduction).

notions of difference between two or more terms: wherein meaning is *relational* and is defined in terms of what it is not (e.g. Culler, 1975).⁴²

Renouncing the Popular Feminine

We can thus also begin to see from what I have said hitherto the ways in which my own, new-found, ‘political’ identity was forged out of, and in opposition to, a range of previously apolitical identifications and investments in popular pleasures. My new identity, founded on an insertion within political discourses, themselves premised upon versions of ‘intellectualism’, was, marked by a renunciation of things which this new identity was not: principally, of ‘trivia’ and the popular, including everyday talk about Princess Diana and the royal family. These renunciations were made all the more pertinent by the fact that I had grown up accustomed, not to the political or intellectual dinner table discussions of the ‘chattering classes’ (which I sometimes longed for), but amongst my mother’s and grandmother’s ‘unquestioning and sentimental’ talk of the royal family, of Diana’s dresses, and the ‘tittle-tattle’ (not politics!) surrounding the Windsors. Crucially, therefore, my investments in a ‘political’ identity founded upon ‘intellectual seriousness’ and a repudiation of the ‘trivial’ can also be seen as a repudiation of a particular version of femininity. My later attempts during the mourning for Princess Diana to ‘close-down’ psychic space by a refusal to entertain the potentially democratic underside of Diana’s

⁴¹ Marx’s vision of historical materialism envisioned a point at which proletarians would transcend the ‘false class consciousness’ of bourgeois ideology to become not merely a *class in themselves* but a *class for themselves*.

⁴² It is in Saussurian notions of language, in which meaning is *generated by opposition*, that underpin Derrida’s original use of the concept of *différance*. In this way, Derrida’s concept of *différance* serves to unsettle and disrupt distinctions between writing and speech (which in Derrida’s view are unsustainable), whilst retaining a (post-) Saussurian notion of language’s fundamental capacity to *mean*.

politics (Johnson, 1999), can itself be seen as an attempt to ward off the anxiety generated by my own masculine ‘fear of falling’.

Standing in the newsagents in the week following Princess Diana’s death I tried hard to avoid even glancing the headlines of newspapers devoted to coverage of it. I tried to avoid overhearing conversations about Diana in the shops, and avoided all news coverage on television and radio. Desperate to avoid news of a ‘nation in mourning’, of which I felt no part, I sought refuge in long runs in the countryside nearby our home. . .

(from the story ‘The Week Following Diana’s Death’)

This ‘fear of falling’ can perhaps be seen as a form of anxiety relating to an unconscious feeling that by being exposed to this ‘irruption’ of the “popular feminine” into the masculinised public sphere’ (Barcan, 1999: 37) following Diana’s death, that my attempts to extricate myself from a world of the popular feminine in which I had grown up might be undone. For my own ‘fear of falling’, as we have seen, had become writ-large in my own adolescence following the dramatic collapse of Sheffield’s manufacturing base. It was further thrown into sharp relief by my grandfather’s death, where upon my teenage family home life became centred around the feminine world represented by my mother and grandmother. Indeed, the picture I have sketched out here, of my investments in a form of left-wing intellectualism founded upon a belief in the popular feminine as an ideological ruse, can further be explored by drawing upon the work of object-relations psychoanalytic feminists such as Nancy Chodorow (1989) and Jessica Benjamin (1990). In this view, following the Oedipal transition, the boy’s separation from the mother is achieved *only* at the cost of his taking up an instrumental attitude towards the social world. In this way, the adoption of an abstract and instrumental relation to the self and others operates to filter out

emotional contact with mother love. In this way, then, although the left-wing political discourses in which I had become invested were premised upon sexual equality, they explicitly rejected the forms of emotional expressivity seemingly embodied by the popular feminine. Think of Elizabeth Wilson's (1997) comments on the 'Diana events', considered in chapter 3 of the thesis: as a 'vacuous' ectoplasm of emotion enveloping the nation. My investments can, in this light, be seen as a screening of the feminine, of the expression of care and intimacy.

An important point to bear in mind here is that the maintenance of identity — which I had achieved at the cost of the feminine — has to be continually policed. As we have seen previously in chapter 2 of the thesis, psychoanalytic theory posits a view of identity as a work: something to be established, negotiated, and maintained. In this view, there is always the fear and danger of losing ones new-found self to that which one had previously renounced. This fear of the 'other', in particular, my own 'fear of falling', can, as I have suggested be used to explain my own *disidentifications* with Diana and the public mourning following her death. For the *disinvestments* (in royalty and the popular feminine more generally) that preceded my not-mourning of Diana, whilst couched in largely political-intellectual terms, can be seen also as the renunciation (and denunciation) of that which was in fact in some ways closest to home.

Tony Walter (1991), in his discussion of the mourning after Hillsborough alludes to this point without fully elaborating the concepts behind it. Walter (as I discussed in chapter 5 of the thesis) suggests that the expressivist and Celtic-inflected public mourning on

Merseyside following the Hillsborough disaster was received by white U.K culture with hostility because it threatened to overwhelm English values; of stoicism and reserve. Such a threat, Walter contends, was likely to be experienced more sharply and palpably the closer to home it was. This ‘overt Celtic expression’ of grief, Walter writes (1991: 608), although ‘abhorrent to most English people’ was more threatening to ‘a Mancunian than to a Bathonian, more dangerous to a middle-class lass from the Wirral than to one in Kent’. Whilst Walter, does not elaborate fully upon what ‘closer to home’ means in this context, he is presumably referring to physical proximity. It is here again where semiotic psychoanalytic theory is most useful, helping to extend Walter’s observations by adding to proximity notions of repudiation (and *difference*) by which the identity of subject is summoned and given shape.

Specifically, in my own regard, this struggle to ward off a perceived return of the popular (read also repressed); of being eaten by the Other (e.g. Kear, 1997; 1999; 2001),⁴³ can be evidenced less from the story about my ‘not-mourning’ of Princess Diana which I use to open this chapter, than from what I do (and do not say) in my wider use of memory work with which to narrate my own political becoming. This political becoming was, nevertheless, achieved not only at the cost of the feminine but of repudiating friendships associated with my ‘old’ self and further involved the active — for this was not a passive

⁴³ Kear (1999: 183n17) writes of the melancholic structuring of identity in a way in which in order for the ego to maintain subjective consistency and illusory integrity, it has to repudiate or foreclose identifications that enabled it to come into being. Kear distinguishes between *introjection* and *incorporation* by suggesting that the former compensates by introducing the desire associated with it into the ego. Introjection therefore enables the subject to come to terms with loss through a work of mourning. The *fantasy of incorporation*, however, functions to deny loss by attempting to preserve the other within the unconscious ‘crypt’ (Abraham and Torok, 1994: 110–15) of the *melancholic* self. In this way, the ‘crypt’ is the phantasmatic site of burial in which the desires excluded from introjection within the ego are interned. The secret, as Kear puts it, cannot be spoken of, but, in order to be a secret must to some extent be shared and may even be metonymically *shown*’.

process! — resistance to many things considered crass or popular. It involved the deliberate avoidance of certain popular pleasures, even inadvertent, with which I had grown up, such as listening to Radio 1, substituting instead the sombre and earnest tones of BBC Radio 4, especially its arts and political and current affairs programmes. It also involved the gentle (and sometimes vociferous) mocking by some of my friends at the time of my attempts at ‘self-betterment’ (of my preference now for reading the *Guardian* and *Marxism Today* over the tabloids); and foreboding of my grandmother lest I was ‘getting above my station’. In this way, as we have seen, subjectivity is not fixed but is a site of constant negotiation and conflict, for as Stuart Hall (1996: 5–6) puts it, ‘identities are points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us’; they are the ‘result of a successful articulation or “chaining” of the subject into the flow of discourse’.

My new-found political identity involved an intolerance towards all things royal, including as a teenager, challenging my mother’s and grandmother’s choice of television viewing, especially programmes and news reports about the royal family. This would invariably lead to arguments about the need for constitutional monarchy, in which I would express a view of the royals as parasitic and anachronistic; a popular strategic and ideological diversion from the ‘real issues’ facing ordinary people. This intolerance towards ‘saccharine’ news features about the royals led to my own screening of news reports, wherein I would filter out and avoid such news stories (by flicking channels or leaving the room). This explains my own ‘blissful’ ignorance of royal affairs, with which, in undertaking this doctoral

research, I was forced to bring myself up to speed, post-haste.⁴⁴ It is indeed an ironic twist of fate that I came to undertake my doctoral research on the public mourning that surrounding the death Princess Diana given my past renunciations of popular royalism.

Intellectual Snobbery and the Academic Response

This wilful ignorance of popular royalism is it seems, as Walter points out (1999: 39–40), a point of pride amongst some academic scholars within academia in particular, and amongst a broadly liberal-leftist intelligentsia more generally in Britain (McGuigan, 2000). In sociology this is reflected in the dearth of research interest in popular royalism. Walter explains this by virtue of the ‘probably disproportionate number of social scientists are who republican’ (in comparison to the U.K population at large), and — besides the fact that popular royalism has never been viewed as a social problem by sociologists — because they perhaps see ‘it as too embarrassing’ a topic to research (Walter, 1999: 40). Yet this is contradicted by the fact that many feminist academics invested in the mourning for Diana were also republicans (e.g. Campbell, 1998). Nevertheless, I was not alone in experiencing the Diana events as I did, for others too within the academy, as Walter (1999: 40) reports, were ‘appalled and/or intrigued’ by the public mourning for Diana. In Britain at least, antipathy towards the public mourning for Diana within sections of the academy can be explained by its associations with popular royalism (although, judging by its global appeal, the Diana events were self-evidently much more than this).⁴⁵ These associations (between Diana and popular royalism) nevertheless help to explain my own *disidentification* with

⁴⁴ Walter too (1999: 40) concedes that the widespread public response to Diana’s death caused him — like many other academics at the time — to inform himself in short order about popular royalism.

Diana as ‘just another member of the royal family’. This, of course, was not necessarily an unreasonable assumption to make, given that Diana had undergone her own ‘epiphany moment’ of sorts, beginning her public life following her marriage to his HRH the Prince of Wales as the seeming epitome of conservative femininity (Simmonds, 1984) and ending it as a kind of feminist icon (Paglia, 1992).

Typically, as Walter also points out, the immediate response of some academics was to conceive the Diana events as a form of ‘a sociology or a psychology of error (long discredited in the philosophy of social science)’, wherein attempts are made to explain where people ‘went wrong’. It is along these lines that I (perhaps somewhat unreflexively at the time), became both angered *and* curiously interested in the Diana events. Two years on from Diana’s death I was still sufficiently ‘interested’ in the public mourning for Diana to consider it worthy of doctoral social research. Underlying this interest (although not expressed in the research proposal which I put to the ESRC in a bid for funding), was perhaps a residual view of the public mourning for Diana as, on the one hand, a curious form of social pathology, and on the other, as an ideological ruse, wherein hegemonic consent was manufactured in what was an essentially conservative popular movement; of the people as ‘cultural dupes’ of a social system over which they had little or no control. This rather crude, and perhaps unreflexive and under-considered view was, however, in the interests of ‘objectivity’ and detachment (and following a schooling in a sociology in which the subjectivity of the researcher should be seen to be systematically occluded from research), ‘written out’ of the proposal. For in this view subjectivity is seen as akin to

⁴⁵ For an attempt to explain the popular appeal of Diana amongst a global audience, including feminists (especially

political tendentiousness, wherein the researcher seeks ‘merely’⁴⁶ to ‘empirically prove’ his or her views adumbrated as a hypothesis-testing. Resistance within ‘malestream’ academia towards subjectivist methodologies that favour a passionate engagement with the topic of research rather than a ‘cool headed’ and emotionally detached (Williamson, 1988: 12) position of ‘value-neutrality’, can itself be read as a repudiation of the feminine along the lines which I have attempted to theorise here. What, then, is particularly interesting about the textual or narrative representation of the story that I wrote about my reaction upon hearing the news of Diana’s death, including its title (*‘Beautiful Woman Dies’*), is the way in which my reaction is neutered; rendered neutral and dispassionate. This is a routine device employed in various kinds of writing (academic, journalistic, fictional), in which the writer is able to distance him or herself not only from the social world existing around them but from their own emotions. For this authorial voice is of reason not emotion! It is also a strategy which belies the motivation — sometimes unconscious — behind one’s interest in a particular topic. Whilst ‘I just didn’t feel at all “moved” by the news of Diana’s death’, is in itself a fair reflection of my response, it is also a means by which my reaction is both naturalised and rendered unworthy of further exploration. In this way, my response ‘was what it was’, nothing more nothing less; a neutralising device absolving the author as a source of meaning and motive. This is presumably what Foucault (1979) means when he

American), and academics working within the arena of cultural studies, see Walter (1999: 38–43).

⁴⁶ R. D. Laing (1990a: 24–5) writes in this regard that, ‘it is unfortunate that “personal” and “subjective” are words so abused as to have no power to convey any genuine act of seeing the other as person (if we mean this we have to revert to “objective”) but imply immediately that one is merging one’s own feelings and attitudes into one’s study of the other in such a way as to distort our perception of him. In contrast to the reputable “objective” or “scientific”, we have the disreputable “subjective”, “intuitive”, or, worst of all, “mystical”.’ It is interesting, Laing writes, ‘that one frequently encounters “merely” before subjective, whereas it is almost inconceivable to speak of anyone being “merely” objective’.

says that writing is the creation of ‘a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears’ (Foucault, 1979: 102).⁴⁷

Yielding-Up Inconsistencies and Contradictions in Mourning and Not Mourning

What my analysis of these stories produced using memory work yield, amongst other things, is the inconsistency and contradictions in the self which we create for ourselves and others in and through language. My own morbid fascination with the televisual (and photographic) images surrounding Hillsborough sit rather oddly with my own comments (made elsewhere in stories I wrote about the day of Princess Diana’s funeral), relating my sense of perplexity at attempts to photograph Diana’s funeral cortège as it made its way through the streets of central London. Others too have reflected, disparagingly, upon the mourning for Princess Diana, especially the use of flash photography to record the event. Take, for example, the comments of BBC journalist Jeremy Paxman when he writes:

And then, when the funeral came, the public lined the route of the cortège for mile after mile, throwing flowers at the coffin and, most bizarrely of all, popping the flashbulbs of their cameras for a photo for the family album.

(Paxman, 1999: 241)

Yet upon closer inspection, photography, as an attempt to authenticate personal experience by empirically documenting it, protecting memory from the ravages of time (from where it can be summoned through recourse to the image), is absolutely central to the cultural practices of mourning. For if, as Barthes suggests, cameras were first conceived as ‘clocks

⁴⁷ Writing, as Foucault famously reminds us, is concerned with the effacement of the writing subject’s individual characteristics: ‘using all the contrivances that he sets up between himself and what he writes, the writing subject cancels out the signs of his particular individuality’ (Foucault, 1979: 102). Such attempts at authorial objectivity can, in this light, be seen as nothing more than the transposition of ‘the empirical characteristics of the author into a transcendental anonymity’ (Foucault, 1979: 104).

for seeing'; making significant the objects which they record — 'as the sophisticated acme of value' (Barthes, 1982: 34) — then they were also central to the 'eventness' of the public mourning for Princess Diana. The photograph's *noeme*, as Barthes puts it, as was the case in my own photography of the industrial east-end of Sheffield, and the photographs taken by members of the public of Princess Diana's funeral cortege, lies in its attempt to formally document the 'that-has-been'. In other words, as Barthes (1982: 77) puts it, 'what I see has been here, in this place which extends between infinity and the subject. . . it has been here. . . absolutely, irrefutably present'.

What is also interesting in my story is the way in which in-principle distinctions, of the sort of which Richard Johnson (1999: 18) writes; between 'face-to-face' and more 'mediated' mourning, are routinely invoked. These distinctions, alluded to in the passage in which I speak of being woken by a woman I had met only hours before to be told 'of the death of a women who we had *never* met', quickly breaks-down when one considers (in my case at any rate), my mourning for the deaths of 96 Liverpool football fans, none of whom I had ever met. Nevertheless, the key point to which I want to return here is my own disinvestment(s) in the 'Diana events' and the ways in which these can, through the use of memory work as I discuss in this chapter, be quarried to reveal a range of personal investments interred within the weight of 'academic' or 'political' discourse. That which is strange (and ostensibly contradictory) about the ways in which I was able, in carving out a coherent identity for myself (as 'political radical' and 'intellectual'), was my disavowal of certain aspects of the popular (popular royalism, for instance), whilst negotiating a retention of aspects of popular culture, namely my interest in football. This itself can be explored,

and explained, by reference to the gendering of popular culture and the gender specific subject-positions made available within cultural discourse. For clearly, as multifarious accounts from sociology have shown (e.g. Dunning, 1986; 1999b; Kidd, 1987; Parker, 1996; Sheard and Dunning, 1973) sport in general, and football in particular, allows the elaboration and articulation of a variety of muscular *sportised* masculine identities. These have been shown, for example, to cluster around a particular dominant form of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (Epstein, 1997), as socially and historically traceable to sports associated with white, middle-class, heterosexual males (Parker, 1996: 129). At the same time, much of the interest in popular royalism (and the fandom associated with Diana), was clearly bound-up and articulated in a way which spoke more resolutely to women, allowing a variety of feminine and, indeed, feminist identifications.

As I have earlier suggested, it was as the week of public mourning (and the media coverage of it) wore on that my vitriol reached its apogee. It was principally this, the hegemonic, round-the-clock, media reporting of the Diana events which claimed to speak on behalf of the nation (a nation-in-mourning), from which I felt most estranged. It was against the backdrop of my own ‘political’ and ‘intellectual’ identity which I had drafted for myself; forged against the kinds of popular pleasures which I perceived as most threatening and likely to disfigure it, that I viewed the Diana events. This return of the popular, which I had to sought to disavow in my own biographical trajectory, reappeared, much like the *Quem Queritas* trope of which Kear and Steinberg (1999: 3) write, stronger and more pervasive than ever before. As we have seen from the extract I earlier presented, unable to escape ubiquitous talk of Diana that pervaded public space (from corner-shop conversation to changes in

television schedules) and areas usually off-limits to popular royalism (or at least usually avoidable within these spaces, namely, BBC Radio 4 and *The Guardian*), I took to long runs in the country-side. If indeed I had been ‘hailed’ into position as political subject by discourses in which I could fully recognise my own sense of self, then the ‘Diana events’ were its absolute other; a form of ‘alienation’ and an absence of belonging which threatened (at least within the realm of the imaginary) to negate my hard fought gains.

Muscular Intellectualism and the Voice of Reason

Such discourses as were readily available and in-play following Diana’s death: of the popular and the emotionally expressivist, can therefore be seen in direct opposition to the left-wing, ‘muscular intellectual’ discourses (e.g. Connell, 1987, 1995; Redman and Mac an Ghail, 1997) in which I was invested. For in refashioning a new identity for myself upon leaving school at the turn of the 1990s I had substituted one masculinist subject-position for another. This former masculine identity, founded, amongst other things, upon being good at sport, of being ‘one of lads’, and of not taking school work seriously — itself resonant of Willis’ (1997) theorisation of the working-class experience of the school) — was substituted by investments in a particular left-wing and intellectual subject-position where disputes were not resolved by fists but by the power of argument and (impassioned) reason.

It became clear from my involvement and associations with a variety of left-wing political parties at meetings and demonstrations that if reasoned argument could not win out then one could resort to haranguing ones political opponent(s). This of course depended largely upon ones ability to shout the loudest. It relied upon a strong belief in one’s ability to change the other’s the mind, combining a sense ‘muscular intellectualness’ with a gritty

sense of working-class social realism, save ‘middle-class’ members of ‘the Party’ be perceived by the workers they/we were trying to ‘win over’ as bourgeois and unlike them. I of course had undergone an ‘epiphany moment’, a ‘Damascan conversion’ of sorts, and believed that others too could, and should, experience this emancipatory moment. The world which I inhabited (and all that happened within it) became readily concrete, explicable by reference to class, capitalism and History. In other words, via an understanding of Marxist versions of dialectical materialism. It explains my naive attempts as a teenager to foist the *Communist Manifesto* upon my grandmother when what she really preferred were Catherine Cookson novels, which, interestingly, also focus on class but told through women’s experiences in narrativised emotive and generic form. That Cookson’s novels should be seen as characteristic of the romance genre, in the way I had, rather than social and historical novels, is itself perhaps a reflection of the ways in which the popular feminine is routinely trivialised. Nevertheless, such attempts to persuade others of the rightness of my views (and to ‘close down’ all others) as I have discussed in the emergence of my own political-intellectual identity, can be seen as a form of acute narcissism. Such narcissism, as Ian Craib (1998) explains, has long been central to the identity politics of both far left and right. Craib for instance suggests that our attempts to identify ourselves with something, to assimilate a social identity within our personal identity, can be seen as an unconscious effort to stave off anxiety. In other words, we seek to identify with a social identity because it provides comfort from the ‘internal complexities and contradictions’ of the self; from the anxiety which the self cannot tolerate. This state of living beyond one’s psychological means (a concept derived from Freud, 1918), of attempting to fool oneself by

‘trying to be what one is not and cannot be’ can, Craib suggests, be understood in psychoanalytic, or in existential terms, using Sartre’s (1957) phrase in *Being and Nothingness*, as ‘bad faith’. Such ‘bad faith’, in this context, Craib suggests, involves relieving oneself of those parts of the self of which one does not approve (or which one finds uncomfortable) and replacing them with attributes for which one will receive praise, ‘social recognition’ and validation by other members of the group with whom we have forged a (new) social identity. In this way, however, one’s sense of ambivalence and self-doubt is not addressed and subsequently worked-through, but glossed over. This, Craib suggests, is problematic both from an intra- and interpersonal perspective. It is problematic from an interpersonal perspective, according to Craib, because it leads to ‘parasitic’ forms of narcissistic attachment. Thus:

If a particular and limited experience of the world (my truth as man) is the basis of my identity, then it must be confirmed and shared at all times, yet no two people have the same experience of the world.

(Craib, 1998: 171)

Nevertheless, the point here is that such an identity as I was creating for myself depended both upon a degree of intellectual certitude and prowess; that one could win arguments, win new converts, and defeat opponents by the power of argument, by accumulating knowledge and using it strategically. In the views I held as an ‘angry young man’ of the political left, I genuinely (and dangerously) believed that the royal family were incapable of forming affective relationships in a way in which ‘ordinary working people’ were; that the royals-as-soap provided an ideological smoke-screen from the ‘real’ issues of the day, and that they were only made to appear like ‘us’ by an ideologically-controlled and manipulative mass-

media. This distinction, between ‘us’ and ‘them’ was of course a means by which I could affectively distance myself from the royal family; in which the world is ‘dangerously concrete’, in which ‘there is nothing to think about because the facts always speak for themselves’ (Elliott, 1999: 25). This itself can be seen as the psychic operation of projection, wherein unwanted feelings are expelled from the self and put into another person or thing. This is a slippery strategy leading, in some notable and extreme cases, to a dehumanisation of the Other, whereupon terrible acts of cruelty can be performed without arousing the sense of pity or guilt central, in most cases, to constitutions of what it means to be human. These questions of morality and ethics have, as we have forcibly seen in the twin ideological poles of Nazism and Soviet Communism during the twentieth century (and as seen in my discussions in chapter 1 of the thesis), been routinely resolved into issues of racial science or class struggle, wherein moral or ethical issues become dissolved into purely technical issues (e.g. Bauman, 1989; Proctor, 1988); of ‘health’ and by extension the elimination of social groups perceived as threatening the survival of the ‘race’, ‘class’, and eventually, humanity in general.

Suffice it to say, therefore, at this point that my not-mourning of Diana was not simply a passive or equanimous response, but an equally passionate response — in an affectively opposite direction — to my mourning of Hillsborough. That which is most telling of my disinvestedness in the mourning for Diana in the story is its closing line in which ‘I can’t recall what we did for the rest of that evening other than to strenuously avoid’ all news about Diana’s death. For, as I have suggested, this kind of ‘not-mourning’ also involved practical activities (of avoidance) as well as the expenditure of psychic energy. In the

‘Diana events’ as I experienced them, the national (and global) structures of feeling became reconfigured, not as a ‘positive’ space for the articulation of local structures of feeling (as was the case in my mourning of Hillsborough), but as a threatening return of the repressed in which the local and the popular feminine were represented both as that which I had disavowed and which stood in diametric opposition to the left-wing ‘muscular intellectual’ subject-position with which I had been ‘interpellated’.

The Circulation of Cultural Narratives

It is possible, as I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, to view the stories with which I open this chapter using Richard Johnson’s (1986) notion of a ‘cultural circuit’. In this way, the stories I tell can be seen as related to different ‘moments’ within an overall circuit of cultural (re)production. For in ‘speaking’ a particular narrativised identity as I do here, is dependent upon and structured by, the production and circulation of that narrative as an available cultural resource whose meanings and subject-positions are generated within a wider system of signification. Each ‘moment’ — of production, representation, ‘reading’ and lived relations — is dependent upon an earlier, mutually interacting one. As Redman (1999: 30) puts it, the concept of a cultural circuit suggests a complex and uneven process of ‘exchange, appropriation, and re-presentation’ made between ‘texts’ and ‘lived cultures and identities’. The particular stories (and wider narrativisations) I tell in this chapter can be seen therefore to draw — if largely unconsciously — upon ‘readings’ of various ‘texts’ already in circulation elsewhere, each themselves dependent upon earlier circuits in the wider flow of cultural (re)production. The lived identity that I have attempted to narrate in this chapter can itself be seen as one particular ‘moment’ in an on-going and endlessly

incomplete cultural process. My stories (which both are and not my own), are simultaneously dependent upon and incorporated within a particular lived identity, itself structured by my 'reading' of narratives already in-play within cultural discourse. In this way, following Johnson's (1986) comments proposing a Marx-influenced cultural studies in which we sustain and reproduce ourselves subjectively, both the *form* and content of my narrativisations can be located and 'realised' with a variety of other narratives and 'texts'. They can be seen to draw, for instance, from the narratives of a burgeoning soccer literati (e.g. Hornby, 1992); from local oral histories and folklore (for example, my grandfather's tales about Hillsborough); from a 'new wave' of British social realism in film and television based around industrial decline, the break-up of working-class communities and a crisis of masculinity in the north of England (for instance, the film *The Full Monty*) and from a wider genre of 'epiphany' stories. Importantly, therefore, it is not just that we are positioned as subjects by discourses already in-play but that we position ourselves within discourse 'by our constant internal narrations' (Johnson, 1986: 300).⁴⁸

Biographical Journeys and New Intellectual Directions

It should no doubt be apparent from what I have said hitherto in this chapter and throughout the thesis, that my interest in the events which I chose as the topic of doctoral research are born out of series of social, political and intellectual journeys. Nevertheless, in undertaking this research I have undergone another journey of sorts. As we saw from the outline of the history of this project in chapter 4 of the thesis, this research began its life in very different

⁴⁸ Plummer (1995) draws attention to the social and political functions that the stories we tell provide; and to ways in which the telling (and reception) of certain stories are only made possible in particular historical, and under certain social, conditions. Plummer's concern in this context is of course with the telling and receiving of sexual stories.

shape from which it ended it. Initially premised upon assumptions of authorial objectivity and detachment, the intellectual journey I have undertaken here has seen me engage with topics once considered marginal within mainstream sociology, principally areas of popular culture and the ‘sociological private’ (Bailey, 2000). It has seen me, moreover, pursue these topics in no less a radical fashion, through the use of innovative and subjectivist methodologies, namely memory work. So too, it has involved the shift away from a single disciplinary approach, which as Craib (1995) has elsewhere suggested, can be seen in some ways as a kind of ‘academic imperialism’; drawing instead upon work from outside the conventional parameters of sociology, namely psychoanalysis and cultural studies.

Perhaps most significantly, this journey has involved a realisation and acknowledgement of my socially situated position as researcher; as an active producer of knowledge and meaning. This, as I have intimated in chapter 4 of the thesis, provided its own challenges, not least because an expression and elaboration of ones own self within much ‘malestream’ academic writing is a relatively new and untrod venture. It is in this light, against the protracted silence on these issues within much academic writing, as I have elsewhere suggested (Brennan, 2001), that attempts to engage with, rather than suppress, ones own subjective dis/investments appears so refreshing.

Nevertheless, my differential relationship to the two events considered in this thesis has, continued to be reflected in my relationship to the data which they generated and can be seen, for instance, in my under-writing of memory work stories connected with the mourning for Princess Diana. Whilst residual dis/investments in my relationship to these

events remained, my relationship to the Diana events changed perceptibly as I came both to reflect upon the social and political complexities involved in mourning Diana and to think more reflexively upon my own disinvestments in these events.

This intellectual journey, then, has seen me move from a position premised, if only implicitly, on the 'intellectual seriousness' of politics and theory, towards culture and the popular; towards more affectively engaging topics routinely elided by more conventional aspects of social and political thought. It is a journey which has left me unconvinced by the merits of a single disciplinary approach to aspects of social life which are complex and messy, which are political as well as social, mediated by culture, constituted and transformed within the realm of psychic interiority and which are affectively and unconsciously mobilised as much as they are governed by cognition. It is a journey which, moreover, has left me better placed from which to explore the multi-dimensional nature of mourning, more self-reflexively and from a variety of theoretical perspectives. In this way, the journey I have undertaken has pointed towards the loosening of academic boundaries between disciplines which have long been positioned as mutually opposed.

In this chapter, then, I began by presenting two autobiographical stories (on my contrasting reactions to the Hillsborough disaster and following the death of Princess Diana), using them to work backwards through a life, and as a means of yielding-up dis/investments and forms of meaning-making, especially as narratively represented through the use of memory work. My differing reactions to these two events can, I suggest, be explained in large part by gendered and 'classed' subject-positions made available discursively within culture. My

own mourning of the Hillsborough disaster, although ostensibly enabled by the widespread scenes of public mourning on Merseyside (by the sight of professional footballers — sporting heroes of their day — openly weeping), and by the fact that the disaster itself occurred within a sportised masculine domain, was, I have argued, mobilised as a personal reaction to a wider sense of loss characteristic of local structures of feeling in Sheffield and South Yorkshire in the late 1980s.

It was principally this: the dramatic and quite sudden collapse of Sheffield's manufacturing base, as central to the dominant configuration of local identity; symbolic of wider losses — of people and place — as well as the sense of foreboding for what might follow, which was being mourned here. Indeed, as we have earlier seen, psychoanalysts, from Freud through Kristeva, have argued that the individual establishes a sense of self through loss; that we create ourselves through remembering and forgetting our losses (Elliott, 1999: 46).

The loss occasioned by the Hillsborough disaster therefore — in addition to the 'connexity'⁴⁹ made between the lives of those lost at Hillsborough and my own — enabled, at first, an opportunity for other losses to come into the open, and provided a legitimate occasion in which to mourn not only the loss of life at Hillsborough by a series of previously unmourned losses which I encountered at both a personal and wider cultural level. These, I have also suggested, routinely become inserted one within the other, to such an extent that we routinely struggle to identify the point(s) at which one ends and the other begins.

My own *disinvestments* in the mourning of Princess Diana (as symbolic, *inter alia*, of class privilege) can, I have argued, be understood by reference to my own earlier investments in a politically situated left-wing social identity. This, I have argued, itself involved the disavowal and repudiation of things perceived as threatening to overwhelm and disfigure it. It involved the closing-down of psychic space, of feminine and popular cultural forms which appeared to present a challenge to the political project to which I had been ‘sutured’.

In turn, the intellectual journey undertaken here begins to point to re-investments in a quite different intellectual project premised on challenging the very epistemological premises upon which I had carved out a social and intellectual identity for myself. Perhaps this, unlike conventional Western thinking ordinarily allows (for it permits of only one ‘epiphany moment’ during a lifetime) can be seen as a further Damsacan epiphany.

⁴⁹ My own emotional ‘connexity’ with victims of the Hillsborough disaster stems principally from a perceived sense of social and physical proximity rooted in the place of death and upon shared social characteristics (of age, class, fandom and so forth). For a discussion of mass-mediated forms of (emotional) ‘connexity’, see Mulgan (1997).

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this thesis I began by posing a series of research questions. These can chiefly be summarised and formulated in the following way. Firstly, and following the questions asked by Anthony Elliott (1999: 11), for whom, in cases of public mourning like those explored in this thesis, is the mourner mourning? Might the mourner be mourning some aspect of themselves? How is a mourning of the self culturally mediated and mobilised by public mourning? How does contemporary culture itself mourn? Concomitantly, how is the social identity of the mourner mobilised and/or metonymically encrypted in narrative and epistolary practices of the self? Secondly, what are the similarities and differences between the two public mourning events — those following the Hillsborough stadium disaster and the death of Princess Diana — selected here for analysis? What distinguishes the historical specificity of these two public mourning events? In what ways can notions of ‘public’ and ‘private’ invoked by these events be seen as false dichotomies? Thirdly, and finally, what is the adequacy of existing theoretical and empirical approaches for comprehending the sorts of issues invoked by this thesis and the contemporary public mourning events it considers?

Whilst these are questions which I have sought to explore throughout this thesis, it is here, in the conclusion, that I seek to draw my analysis together; to consolidate, underline and clarify the arguments made at various points during this thesis. Besides and following this, I use this chapter to do a number of other things, principally: to outline the future directions

and possibilities which this research has opened up as well as to conclude my own intellectual journey which I began in undertaking this thesis.

Taking the first of these series of questions cited above as a starting point, I have endeavoured to demonstrate, both through the analysis of empirical data generated by this research, and through the consideration of ‘secondary’ theoretical and empirical material, the complex ways in which public mourning of the sort considered here is routinely inscribed within an oscillating nexus linking public and private; of the ways in which aspects of culture and society encountered and experienced as ‘exterior’ are taken-in and transformed within the unconscious realm of interiority. Here, chapters 5 and 7 have pointed towards various other things besides the obvious referents of mourning, that were being mourned following the Hillsborough disaster. Chapter 5 has pointed to the wider symbolic investments of meaning in a totemic sense of place. Specifically, the discursively mobilised pathos of loss and yearning for a Liverpool of yesteryear, whether that be for the halcyon days of the 1960s in which Liverpool was at the forefront of a cultural revolution in popular music, or for Liverpool’s former glory as an international trading port and ‘second city’ of the empire. Both, I have argued, have long since become sedimented in discursive constitutions of local identity and were reawakened in the city-wide sense of loss triggered by the Hillsborough disaster. At the same time, chapter 5 has argued that specifically local forms of identity, as reflective of local structures of feeling on Merseyside, comprising strongly Celtic and working-class forms of communitarianism, and articulated in a local idiom, were discursively summoned and represented in the condolence books signed for the victims of the Hillsborough disaster. By comparison, chapter 6 has illustrated the abject

social identities ‘hailed’ by the public mourning surrounding the death of Princess Diana. Specifically, the yearning for an affective space or connexity (Mulgan, 1997) enabling the articulation of forms of emotional expressivity and femininity routinely elided by hegemonic masculine discourse. In this way, I have argued that the epistolary practice of condolence book signing, as arguably the most feminine of the series of ‘moments’ comprising the Diana events, can be seen as an aspect of the cultural public sphere (McGuigan, 2000).

Chapter 7 has pointed to my own symbolic investments of meaning — as well as to meaning-making processes themselves — that were being mourned in my own mourning of the Hillsborough disaster. In particular, I have pointed to the ways in which the Hillsborough disaster can be seen to have unleashed a series of previously unmourned losses in my own life encountered both at the inter-personal and wider local cultural level. These, I have suggested, in the analysis of the autobiographical stories I produced using the method known as memory work, can be seen specifically as unconscious attempts to mourn the perceived loss of traditional forms of masculinity seemingly heralded both by the collapse of Sheffield’s manufacturing base in the production of steel and by my own grandfather’s death some years earlier. The two, I have suggested, are intertwined, for particular values characteristic of local structures of feeling in Sheffield were themselves embodied in, and projected onto, the figure of my grandfather. In this way, following Richard Johnson’s (1986) comments regarding a ‘Marx-influenced cultural studies’, local identities can be seen to be not only materially situated and produced, but sustained and reproduced both discursively and through performative praxis by the people who routinely

inhabit them. Following the insights provided by psychoanalytic theory outlined in chapter 2, it is against these losses, I have argued, that my own selfhood was drafted, for as Elliott (1994: 14) has argued, selfhood is formed under the sign of loss. In this way, as Elliott (1999: 67) has also suggested, and as I have attempted to elaborate in chapter 3, the loss of cultural ideals both influences and is influenced by losses encountered at the inter-personal level. To this extent the distinctions underpinning and employed in this project as a form of 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak, 1996); of public and private, culture and self, masculine and feminine, can be seen to be reified distinctions whose use-value lies in elaborating the ways in which they are ruthlessly undone by the concept of mourning employed here as psycho-social process. The deployment of the terms masculine and feminine, especially as they are employed in chapter 5, is, following the work of Judith Butler (1993), politically necessary for understanding the ways in which they are routinely lived as performative identities and for understanding the ways in which they 'lay their claims on us prior to our full knowing' (Butler, 1993: 229).

It is these themes which are further pulled-through and consolidated in chapter 7, where I have suggested that my own 'not-mourning' of Princess Diana, herself an embodiment of popular culture troped as feminine (Barcan, 1997: 38), can be seen to be bound-up with a series of repudiations central to particular versions of masculine identity. For as I have suggested, drawing upon the work of feminist psychoanalytic theorists (e.g. Benjamin, 1990; Chodorow, 1989), masculinity itself can be seen as coming into being through a disavowal of the feminine. Where in chapter 7 I have sought to explore my own not-mourning for Princess Diana as related to a series of investments made in particular subject-

positions and versions of masculinity, especially as metonymically encrypted within the stories I wrote using memory work, so too I have pointed in chapter 3 to various other examples of the ways in which contemporary culture mourns. Specifically, I have pointed, drawing upon the work of Richard Johnson (1999), to various aspects of writing, of both political left and right, couched in terms of ‘intellectual seriousness’, that sought to ‘denounce’ the public mourning for Princess Diana as symbolic either of the triviality of popular culture as the antithesis of ‘real’ politics or as the ‘sentimentalisation’ and self-indulgence of contemporary society. Each, I have suggested, can be seen as forms of mourning for the perceived loss of cultural ideals; as the fading of politics expressed in terms of rationality and certitude. More generally, chapter 3 has pointed to (post-) Lacanian psychoanalytic theory (e.g. Kristeva, 1984, 1989) as a means of helping to elaborate the ways in which mourning and loss can be perceived as central both to the creative imagination and to signifying practices themselves. For there is, we will recall from my discussions, ‘no writing’ and ‘no imagination that is not, overtly or secretly, melancholy’ (Kristeva, 1989: 6).

Elsewhere I have endeavoured to provide answers to the second series of questions that this thesis can be seen as asking — specifically, of comparisons between the two events chosen as case studies and of the historical specificity of each — by pointing in chapter 3 to the playful ‘irreverence’ of these events as the ‘carnivalisation’ of death. Here I have suggested that each of these public mourning events was marked not only by their dramatic and unprecedented mediatisation, as postmodern media events *par excellence*, but by a sense of *excess* in their economies of scale that appeared to outstrip the obvious referents of

mourning themselves. Each event, I have suggested drawing upon earlier discussions in chapter 1, can be seen in sharp contrast to the putatively reported forms of death-denial (e.g. Becker, 1973; Stannard, 1975) characteristic of Western societies during a period stretching from the mid nineteenth to the mid twentieth century. The ludic ‘irreverence’ of the Hillsborough and Diana events can be seen to stand in further contrast to the more demure customs and social practices characteristic of traditional funerality in these societies. Both, I have suggested in chapter 3, were characterised by forms of fandom that summoned and made available a range of totemic and iconic identifications. These in turn, I have suggested, serve to blur distinctions between ‘face-to-face’ and more ‘mediated’ forms of mourning (Johnson, 1999: 18).

Notwithstanding these similarities, the Hillsborough disaster, I have argued, remained to all intents and purposes a *locally* constituted and inflected form of public mourning, whilst the Diana events were characterised both by their overwhelming sense of *globality* and local inflections that varied according to the cultural context in which they were articulated. The Diana events as they were expressed in the specifically British, or rather English, context, as considered in chapter 6 of the thesis through the analysis of condolence books signed following Princess Diana’s death, were themselves temporally configured in a politically congenial atmosphere of post-Thatcherism. Indeed, further and future possibilities opened up by this research might include the exploration of condolence books sent to Althorp from other locations around the world which, in turn, would need to be culturally situated within local political and historical configurations of power, as well as within locally constituted mourning rituals and practices; of local structures of feeling and socio-linguistic vernaculars

and performative practices as they are routinely inhabited within the context in which the books selected for analysis were signed.

The third series of questions posed in my introduction to this thesis and for which I have subsequently sought answers relate to the theoretical adequacy of existing literatures and their ability to comprehend the meaning of the two public mourning events considered herein. Specifically, the limitations of existing ‘cognitive’ sociological approaches to the study of mourning outlined in chapter 1, with their emphasis on exploring the social rituals and funerary practices from a perceived position of value-neutrality and critical detachment, are thrown into sharp relief by the types of iconic and totemic public mourning that this thesis considers. It is in part this inadequacy of existing sociological approaches to the study of death and dying that precipitated the need to look beyond its parameters, to psychoanalysis and cultural studies. For in contrast to existing empirical approaches contained within the sociology of death and dying, I have suggested that mourning, as a subjective psycho-social process premised upon precursory investments, might more fruitfully be explored by adopting a commensurate set of research tools suited to exploring the meaning-making processes by which objects are invested with meaning. In particular, I have suggested, especially in chapter 4, that the claims which the researcher or scholar makes might be strengthened by disclosing ones own dis/investments in the topic being theorised and/or researched.

Finally, this thesis, as I began to sketch out in the introduction, has involved a series of epistemological shifts and intellectual turns, each involving a degree of personal risk, each

involving making breaks with intellectual and political projects in which I had hitherto been invested. It has involved making difficult choices, abandoning or thinking critically about positions on which I staked my reputation and from which I drew a sense of social and political identity. It has involved the risk of exposing aspects of my self hitherto concealed, glossed over or conveniently obviated in conventional academic thinking. My shift in theoretical and disciplinary orientation has involved the risk of been perceived as an apostate, abandoning a commitment to forms of social and political thought premised more firmly upon a rejection of popular culture as of negligible political or intellectual significance. My own use of autobiography involved navigating previously uncharted terrain. More significantly, it has involved exposing and probing my own investments to a point at which they hit critical mass. For it is here, in testing and pushing the limits of intellectual endeavour, of the self and one's own investments, that the rewards are greatest. Such an intellectual journey as I have travelled since beginning this project has left me at something of a cross-roads. Too soon to mourn the losses involved in the intellectual ruptures that this thesis had involved, too soon to reinvest in visions of a new and expanding corpus of work calling itself the sociological private, I am caught by a feeling of ambivalence. No bad thing surely? For as Zygmunt Bauman (1991) suggests of the postmodern condition, learning to live with the ambivalence and contingency generated by uncertain times is, in contrast to the modern mindset's fear of uncertainty, of modernity's horror at the fear of indetermination, a productive resource from which forms of knowledge and inquiry begin.

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Table 1.1 Hillsborough Books of Condolences, Final Tally

Total Number of Signatures	6,999
Male	1,527 (21.8%)
Female	2,277 (32.5%)
Couples/Multiple Signature	431 (6.15%)
No Indication of Gender	2,764 (39.49%)
Children	72 (1%)
Signature Only	2,195 (31.36%)
Signature and Message	4,800 (68.58%)
<i>Types/Occurrences of Message:</i>	
1). Religious Content (e.g. 'God bless', 'Our prayers are with you at this time')	1,458 (20.83%)
2). After Life Message (e.g. 'we'll meet again in a better place'; 'Shanks will take care of you in heaven')	96 (1.37%)
3). Place (e.g. 'from a scouser in exile' or 'I am proud of the people of Liverpool and the way they have come together')	98 (1.4%)
4). Conventional Secular Message (e.g. In deepest sympathy')	735 (10.5%)
5). Football Message (e.g. 'from an Evertonian')	176 (2.51%)
6). Addressed Personally to Deceased	222 (3.17%)
7). Addressed to Famil(ies) of Deceased	142 (2.02%)
8). Not Forgetting (e.g. 'In remembrance' or 'we will never forget you')	248 (3.54%)
9). Messages Ostensibly from Friends and/or Family	214 (3.05%)
10). Never Again Messages/Terribleness of Disaster (e.g. 'this should never be allowed to happen again')	16 (0.2%)
11). Bodily/Corporeal Messages (e.g. 'always in our hearts')	82 (1.17%)
12). Thoughts (e.g. 'our thoughts are with you/with the families at this time')	81 (1.16%)
13). RIP/Eternal Peace	846 (12%)
14). 'You'll Never Walk Alone'	247 (3.52%)

Table 1.2 Diana, Princess of Wales Books of Condolence, Final Tally

Total Number of Signatures	3,321
Male	325 (9.78%)
Female	1,496 (45%)
Couples/Multiple entries	429 (12.91%)
No Indication of Gender	1,022 (30.47%)
Children	49 (1.47%)
Signature Only	0
Signature and Message	3,321
<i>Types/Occurances of Message:</i>	
1). Religious Content (e.g. 'God bless', 'Our prayers are with you at this time')	735 (22.13%)
2). After Life Message (e.g. 'we'll meet again in a better place')	194 (5.84%)
3). Conventional Secular Message (e.g. In deepest sympathy')	65 (1.95%)
4). On Diana's New-Found Happiness/Dodi etc.	97 (2.92%)
5). On Diana as a Compassionate/Caring Person (and charitable work etc).	266 (8.00%)
6).On Diana as 'Shining Star/Light that has been snuffed out' etc.	147 (4.42%)
7). On Beatification of Diana (as Saint etc)	4
8). On Blame:	
a). Royal Family	7
b). Press	7
9). As Good Mother	11
10). Reference to Two Sons (but not addressed directly to them)	161 (4.84%)
11). As Ordinary but Special	4
12). On her Glamour/Beauty	74 (2.22%)
13). Messages expressing Emotion/Affect (very sad, words not enough etc)	64 (1.922%)
14). Diana I/We Love You	88 (2.6%)

15). On the 'People's Princess'/'Queen of Hearts'	163 (4.9%)
16). On her Suitability as Future Queen on England	4
17). Never Forgotten/Always Remembered	415 (12.49%)
18). Sadly Missed etc.	539 (16.23%)
19). Bodily/Corporeal Messages (e.g. 'always in our hearts')	79 (2.37%)
20). On Diana's Vulnerability	7
21). As Irreplaceable	17
22). RIP	652 (18.63%)
23). Addressed to Sons	13
24). Addressed to Spencer Family	2
25). Addressed to Diana	3,253 (97.95%)
26). Addressed Generally (e.g. sincere sympathy)	10
27). Addressed to Charles/Royal Family	1

**Table 2.1 Hillsborough Books of Condolences
From *in vivo* Codes to Thematic Categories**

<i>Types/Occurrences of Message:</i>	
1). Religious Content (e.g. ‘God bless’, ‘Our prayers are with you at this time’)	1,458 (20.83%)
2). After Life Message (e.g. ‘we’ll meet again in a better place’, ‘Shanks will take care of you in heaven’)	96 (1.37%)
3). Place (e.g. ‘from a scouser in exile’ or ‘I am proud of the people of Liverpool and the way they have come together’)	98 (1.4%)
4). Conventional Secular Message } ‘In deepest sympathy’. } ‘Not forgetting/in remembrance. } ‘Thoughts are with you/families of bereaved. } ‘RIP/Eternal Peace’	1,910 (27.2%)
5). Football Message } ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’ } ‘from an Evertonian’ etc.	423 (6.04%)
6). Addressed Personally to Deceased	222 (3.17%)
7). Addressed to Famil(ies) of Deceased	142 (2.02%)
8). Messages Ostensibly from Friends and/or Family	214 (3.05%)
9). Never Again Messages/Terribleness of Disaster (e.g. ‘this should never be allowed to happen again’)	16 (0.2%)

10). Bodily/Corporeal Messages (e.g. 'always in our hearts')	82 (1.17%)
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**Table 2.1 Diana, Princess of Wales Books of Condolence
From *in vivo* Codes to Thematic Categories**

<i>Types/Occurrences of Message:</i>	
1). Religious Content (e.g. ‘God bless’, ‘Our prayers are with you at this time’)	735 (22.13%)
2). After Life Message (e.g. ‘we’ll meet again in a better place’)	194 (5.84%)
3). Conventional Secular Message } ‘In deepest sympathy’ } ‘Never forgotten/always remembered’ } ‘Sadly missed’ etc. } ‘RIP’	1671 (50.31%)
4). Comments of Diana’s Life and Work } On Diana’s New-Found Happiness/Dodi etc. } As good mother } On Diana’s vulnerability	115 (3.46%)
5). Diana’s Life as Extraordinary/Virtuous } Diana as Compassionate/Caring/Charitable } As Ordinary but Special } As Irreplaceable	287 (8.64%)
6). Transcendental/Saintly Diana } Diana as ‘Shining Star/Light’ } Diana as Saint	151 (4.54%)
7). Apportioning Blame } Royal family = 7 } Press/Paparazzi = 7	14

8). Celebrity and Glamour	74 (2.22%)
9). Somatized Messages/Linguistic Insufficiencies	143 (4.305%)
10). Dialogue/In Communion with Diana} ‘Diana I/We Love You’ = 88 } Messages which Address Diana directly 3253	3,341(100. 60%)
11). Cultural Circuit } On the ‘People’s Princess/Queen of Hearts’	163 (4.9%)
12). Addressed to/reference to Two Sons} addressed to William and Harry = 13 } reference to William and Harry = 161	174 (5.23%)

Table 3.1 Break-down of Locations from Where U.K Condolence Books Signed for Princess Diana Were Sent

Armed forces	50
Business community	854
Churches and religious groups	1420
Embassies	1800
Hospitals	608

Individuals	283
Prisons	50
Schools	338
Scouts and girl guides	300
Town Halls and civic centres	417
Others	130
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	6250

Source: Althorp Visitor Centre.

Specimen 1.1.

Questions I Should be Asking When Coding Memory Work Data

- What genre/form does each story take?
- Do the stories meet the criteria of being narratives? If so, how?
- What are the main/substantive points being made in the story?
- How is the story organized? Does it contained the formal properties of a narrative?
- How does the story relate to/draw upon discourse? Which discourses and how? How do I speak, and am spoken through, these discourses?

- What is the function(s) of my story? What, even if unconsciously, does it set out achieve?
- Who are the main characters/objects?
- What is the manifest content of the story: main themes, regularly occurring words etc?
- What is the story's latent content? What is being said through not being said? What is implied in the story?
- Can the story be read *against* its intended meaning? (Against the grain)
- How are others constructed in the text?
- How is the self constructed within the text?
- What other questions can be asked of the text? About the actions of the narrator? About constructions of the self/others? About the language used?

Extract 1.1

That the Hillsborough disaster was a televisual event *par excellence* can be seen from a passage in Don DeLillo's (1991) book, *Mao II*. Here, DeLillo's narrative captures the moving power of the moving televisual image as an event which speaks *volumes* (even without the added sound of journalistic commentary). Interestingly too, DeLillo's narrative likens the death-event of Hillsborough as media spectacle (as dramatised by its colour, shapes, 'real time' images and overriding sense of suffering) to a religious painting; 'a fresco in a tourist church' (where presumably, we, the viewers, are tourists).

He put on pajamas and got into bed and she reached over and turned off the lamp. Then she picked up the remote control and lowered the volume on the TV, touch touch touch, until it was totally off. Scott's head was flat on the pillow and he was already halfway gone. She was watching the world news of the day. On any given day it was mainly the film footage she wanted to see and she didn't mind watching without sound. It was interesting how you could make up the news as you went along by sticking to picture only.

She sees men and boys at first, a swarming maleness, a thickness of pressed-together bodies. Then a crowd, thousands, filling the screen. It looks like slow motion but she knows it isn't it is real time with bodies pressed and heaving, like bodies rolling in a sea swell, several arms raised above the crowd. They show bodies at odd angles. They show men standing off to the side somewhere, watching sort of half interested. She sees a great straining knot of people pressed to a fence, forced massively forward. They show the metal fence and bodies crushed against it, arms upflung. They show the terrible slow straining and heaving. What is it called, writhing? The camera is just outside the fence shooting straight in through the heavy-gauge steel wire. She sees men far back actually climbing on top of the mass of bodies, two pushed toward the fence and people at the fence pressed together and terribly twisted. It is an agony of raised and twisted arms and suffering faces. They show men calmly watching. They show men in shorts and jerseys, soccer players wearing those high stockings they wear, standing in the grass. There are bodies packed solid, filling the screen, and people barely moving at the fence, pressed and forced into one twisted position. She sees a boy in a white cap with red peak and he has an expression on his face of what a nice day or here I am on my way home from school and they are dying all around him, they are writhing and twisted with open mouths and bloated tongues showing. Soccer is called football abroad. She sees the fence up close and they stop the film and it is like a religious painting, the scene could be a fresco in a tourist church, it is composed and balanced and filled with people suffering. She sees the faces of a woman behind them, the woman's wet tresses, her arm twisted against the steel strands of the fence, the girl crushed and buckled under someone's elbow, the boy in the white cap with red peak standing in the midst, in the crush, only now he senses, his eyes are shut, he senses he is trapped, his face is reading desperation. She sees people caught in strangleholds of no intent, arms upflung, faces popping out at her, hands trying to reach the fence but only floating in the air, a man's large hand, a long-haired boy in denim shirt with his back to the fence, the face of the

women with the tresses hidden behind her own twisted arm, nails painted glossy pink, a girl or woman with eyes closed and tongue showing, dying or dead. In people's faces she see the hopelessness of knowing. They show the fence from a distance, bodies piling up behind it, smothered, sometimes only fingers moving, and it is like a fresco in an old church, a crowded twisted vision of a rush to death as only a master of the age could paint it.

(Delillo, 1991: 32–34)