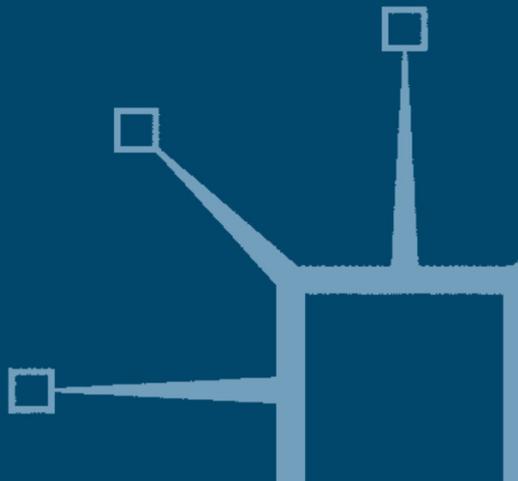


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Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture

Tobias Döring



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Performances of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture

Tobias Döring



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Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>A Note on Citation</i>	viii
Introduction	1
1 Politics of Mourning	24
1.1 Heavens hung with black: Elizabethan rituals of mourning	24
1.2 Remembrance of things past	39
1.3 Memory battles and stage laments	48
1.4 Facing the dead: theatricality and historiography	58
2 Pathologies of Mourning	70
2.1 Well-made partings and the problem of revenge	70
2.2 Translating tradition: <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> and <i>Titus Andronicus</i>	78
2.3 Foreign funerals and colonial mimesis: historical exchanges	89
2.4 <i>Hamlet</i> and the virtue of assumed custom	100
3 Physiologies of Mourning	110
3.1 Secrets and secretions	110
3.2 Tears and the uncertain signs of inwardness	118
3.3 Rhetoric and the techniques of emotional engineering	124
3.4 Women, widows and mimetic weeping	133
4 Parodies of Mourning	149
4.1 Mock laments: the play and peal of death	149
4.2 Round about her tomb they go: <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	157
4.3 <i>Ralph Roister Doister</i> and the anxiety of borrowed rites	166
4.4 Noting and ghosting: what stage parodies do	180
Conclusion	189
<i>Notes</i>	196
<i>Bibliography</i>	201
<i>Index</i>	216

List of Illustrations

- 1.1 Allegory of the Reformation: King Edward VI and the Pope (includes John Russell, 1st Earl of Bedford; Thomas Cranmer; King Edward VI; King Henry VIII; John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland; Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset) by unknown artist, c. 1570 © National Portrait Gallery, London. 40

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Public acts of memory, as I argue in this study, often follow from a personal agenda. My most personal and heartfelt thanks therefore go to Susanne Mühleisen for making all memories worthwhile.

A Note on Citation

All Shakespearean texts are cited according to *The Norton Shakespeare* (based on the Oxford Edition, eds Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, New York: Norton, 1997), with act, scene and line numbers given in parentheses in the text. All other references are given in the Bibliography at the end. In quoting from early modern material, I have generally retained the original spelling of the source consulted.

Introduction

When and how is mourning suitable? In *The Most Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus*, the answer to this question becomes an issue of debate. The titular hero and his brother face the height of horrors: his daughter mutilated, two sons murdered, another exiled, his hand cut off in vain. Marcus sums up the calamities:

See thy two sons' heads,
Thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here,
Thy other banished son with this dear sight
Struck pale and bloodless, and thy brother, I,
Even like a stony image, cold and numb. (3.1.253–7)

He goes on to give Titus detailed instructions how to respond to such inordinate suffering, so that the passion of paternal grief is best expressed:

Ah, now no more will I control thy griefs.
Rend off thy silver hair, thy other hand
Gnawing with thy teeth, and be this dismal sight
The closing up of our most wretched eyes.
Now is a time to storm. (3.1.258–62)

However, Titus does not follow these directions. As Marcus's puzzled question 'Why art thou still?' (262) shows, he does not storm but remains quite silent. Then, he behaves even more unsuitably and breaks into grim laughter: 'Ha, ha, ha!' (263). Marcus is scandalized and tries to censure this outrageous reaction:

Why dost thou laugh? It fits not with this hour. (3.1.264)

2 *Performances of Mourning*

Yet Titus is a well-experienced mourner. He no longer cares what may or may not fit with the occasion and so justifies his strange behaviour:

Why, I have not another tear to shed.
Besides, this sorrow is an enemy,
And would usurp upon my wat'ry eyes
And make them blind with tributary tears. (3.1.265–8)

The issue here debated concerns the body rhetoric of mourning. The brothers quarrel over the signifying power of the moves and gestures which are conventionally used to show one's sorrow, pain and woe: rending hair, gnawing teeth, shedding tears. Marcus favours this familiar repertoire. Although he says 'no more will I control thy griefs', he does precisely that: he tries to direct his brother towards a controlled and conventional performance of mourning, so as to indicate to all around what he must feel. Titus, by contrast, rejects the traditional model. When he says that he has 'not another tear to shed', he argues that to him, facing the extreme of suffering, the old repertoire is quite exhausted and conventional signifying practices break down. Instead of 'tributary tears', his laughter outbids crying. What are we to make of their dispute? Whose stance is more appropriate, whose behaviour problematic, and for whom?

The conflict can be viewed in various ways. Given the play's setting, we could see the scene in terms of classical rhetoric. According to Cicero's and Quintilian's teaching, for example, tears are among the strongest means of indicating as well as stirring the emotions. But the classic authorities teach that the deepest suffering lies beyond crying: the greatest mourners remain outwardly unmoved. With regard to its historical context, we could further see the scene in terms of early modern discourses of passion and their social function. Tragedy here is a family affair: death and terror have struck the Andronici. Thus, Marcus may be so concerned with proper grieving because he wishes to find symbolic compensation for the destruction of family values. Violent disruptions could be healed and social bonds eventually reconstructed with an adequate display of the appropriate passion. But rather than restoring his paternal role through mourning, Titus's indecorous behaviour disturbs it even more, adding to the sense of hopeless desolation.

With regard to its theatrical setting, however, we could also see this scene as a conflict between actors professionally debating the most effective ways to have grief performed on stage. They disagree as to

which forms of physical enactment best convince spectators that they are watching the real pains of personal bereavement. Marcus clearly recommends a well-trying method. He emphasizes sight and seeing and favours grand gestures, such as rending one's hair, so that the pathos of the moment becomes visibly manifest. And yet his own performance shows another image: though eloquent himself, he claims to stand 'like a stony image, cold and numb', a monument or an effigy for his brother to remember. But Titus acts differently. He resists traditional postures and will not be frozen in their mould. His response violates the conventions of acting and of eloquence, as if to tell the audience that they are witnessing something never seen before. What indeed might Shakespearean audiences in the 1590s have seen here? How would mourning have been suitably performed in early modern England? And how could such onstage debates relate to contemporary cultural debates and to the discourses that regulated mourning practices?

This book will pursue such questions. It argues that they lead us to explore Shakespearean theatre as a site of cultural signification where central issues of the time, such as the modes of mourning, are being negotiated, reiterated or resolved in stage performance. In this way, it takes a fresh look at a long-standing and controversial question: how do the ritual or religious acts suggested or performed in early modern drama relate to the ritual and religious practice of the world in which it was historically staged? What, in particular, do shows of mourning in the theatre suggest about the well-known conflicts over mourning practices in post-Reformation English culture? In recent years, a number of critical studies have investigated 'issues of death' (Neill, 1997), identity and mortality, or the changing rites of burial in early modern England. Drawing on this research field, my book aims to recast and rethink these issues in terms of the performativity involved in grieving and commemoration. For to explore the cultural strategies of Shakespearean theatre, I argue, concepts of performance studies are just as crucial as to explore performances of mourning in society.

Throughout, the term 'Shakespearean theatre' is used here in a metonymic sense. It refers to the professional theatres in early modern England, especially the London playhouses around 1600 and their cultural and social networks, in which plays like *Titus Andronicus* were first produced, performed and seen. Most plays to be considered and discussed in this book, like *Richard III*, *Much Ado About Nothing* or *Hamlet*, are indeed by William Shakespeare. Other plays to be discussed, such as *The First Part of Henry the Sixth*, were probably composed in some form of collaborative work between Shakespeare and one of his colleagues

such as, in this case, Thomas Nash. Again other plays which I will comment on, such as Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* or George Chapman's *The Widdowes Teares*, are clearly works by other playwrights of the period. But in the broader sense I have suggested, such plays can still be regarded as part of a Shakespearean theatre because they share central aspects of its social place. For, no matter who may have had a hand in writing them, the various playtexts for the English stage were all shaped by specific cultural intertexts which they, in turn, helped to reshape. Shakespearean theatre was both a product and a producer of early modern culture. When we investigate its legacy of texts and meanings, I argue, we should bear this double relationship in mind.

The conflict between Titus and Marcus, for instance, could prompt us to think about conflicting cultural norms in the performances of mourning. The issue *in* the play is also an issue *of* the play. In fact, this issue was of particular importance throughout early modern culture. The conflict about muted lamentation allegorizes a larger cultural predicament that Walter Benjamin has famously described as melancholy toiling with and against allegorical rhetoric which is felt to be divided from its referents.¹ But while Benjamin's study of the *Trauerspiel*, that is the early modern 'plays of mourning' (cf. Engel, 2002, p. 28), established their philosophical dimension and stressed their transcendental impulses, my study proceeds in a far more modest and a more immediate way. It sets out to establish the historical dimension in the rhetoric of mourning and its uses for the stage, aiming to highlight the social impulses which Shakespearean plays of mourning register, reinforce or generate. For whatever else the scene from *Titus Andronicus* may signify, first of all it simply marks a trace of trouble. At a fundamental level, the dispute about suitable behaviour reminds us that death and violence are ruptures of the social order which call for social responses. Grief and sadness may be personal emotions, but the persona of the mourner is a public figure who must manifest his – or her – affliction by means of public motions and publicly acknowledged gestures, such as the ones Marcus demands. As the Shakespearean protagonists therefore try to come to terms with the atrocities they suffer, these terms are at the same time tested in and for the public sphere, represented by the actual theatre audience.

The institution of the playhouse was well suited to explore this problem. A place for playing, entertainment, commercial spectacle and pleasure, it was nevertheless engaged in some of the most serious debates of its time, including debates on religion, as evident for instance in the furious attacks by Puritans or in the practices of censorship. Physically

situated at the margins of the early modern city and yet centrally concerned with the early modern politics of representation, the theatre held a place both inside and outside the ruling cultural topography. This is why a revenge tragedy set in a remote period of classic history could indeed have offered topical commentary. Roman costumes indicated just one level of its historical reception. As shown in Henry Peacham's 1594 sketch of *Titus Andronicus* – the earliest surviving visual document of a Shakespearean performance – the Roman costumes co-existed on stage with contemporary Elizabethan costumes, thus suggesting the different layers of signification on which the tragedy must have worked. This book aims to map such layers and discuss their functional interrelations as well as conflicts. Looking at performances of mourning in both historical and theatrical perspectives, the following chapters all address the question what and how Shakespearean drama signified. This is the question of cultural history.

* * *

In her study of early modern family values, Catherine Belsey has explained that cultural history is, above all, a history of meanings. However, 'meaning is never either single or static' (1999, p. xv). When we engage with texts as sites of cultural history, we must trace the various ways in which meanings move and change, multiply and proliferate, clash and quarrel with competing claims. Cultural history, as distinct from social history, is not so much concerned with the material conditions of a particular place and time as with the modes and media by which these conditions have come to be represented. Representations are generally limited and partial. But rather than seeing their partiality as a problem which obstructs the course of true historical investigation, cultural history sees it as a chance to identify some of the interests which have worked on these representations and to inquire what effects they have. The challenge lies in establishing what kinds of truth are made with meaningful distortions. In Belsey's words, cultural history 'records meanings and values, which is to say that its concern is not so much what individuals actually did, but more what people wanted to do, wished they had done, what they cared about and deplored' (1999, p. 6). It is in precisely this sense that I propose to study the performances of mourning in Shakespearean theatre as recording central aspects of what people cared about and what they deplored in early modern England.

Mourning is a special case for cultural history, because it marks a process by which people themselves try to put their cares on record.

Mourning ceremonies are symbolic and mimetic. Through them, mourners gain some form of valuation, perhaps compensation, for the losses they deplore. In this sense, mourning is a self-performance with a representational agenda. When, for example, at the end of Marlowe's *Edward II*, the young king succeeds his father, his first act is to arrange the funeral: 'Here comes the hearse, helpe me to moorne my lords' (Marlowe, 1994, p. 88). As Edward III takes care that the traitors receive punishment while their victim receives proper funerary honours, he proves himself a faithful son and rightful successor to the throne. The last lines of the play implicitly call on the audience to testify to his own innocence: 'And let these teares, distilling from mine eyes, / Be witnesse of my greefe and innocencie' (ibid.). The principal mourner so confirms his public standing. As in the scene from *Titus Andronicus*, the theatre audience here represents the wider social sphere in which and for which mourning principally proceeds. But unlike Titus's deviant performance, Edward sheds dutiful tears and even draws our attention to them as signs of his true mind. From the perspective of cultural history, we see here how the royal funeral is staged so as to secure and ritually manage the dynastic succession. Marlowe's history play thus ends in a performance of mourning that manifests the power of representation. What cultural signification is at work there?

This question points to an important cultural trace, taking us from the history of funeral rites to the history of representation. Historically, Edward II died in 1327. According to Carlo Ginzburg (1999, p. 98), his death was the first occasion when a wooden effigy was produced for a royal funeral in England. This carved image, specially produced in the likeness (*ad similitudinem*) of the late king, was publicly presented in the funeral procession and then placed with the coffin in his tomb in Gloucester Cathedral, that is the royal corpse was accompanied and, in some sense, substituted by his effigy. In the medieval world, this seems to have been the invention of a significant and long-lived funeral tradition.² In fact, this tradition came to replace an earlier custom according to which the dead monarch was represented by an empty bier or a coffin covered with a pall. Instead of displaying a symbolic substitute for the deceased, the old practice mimetically evoked his absence. The two customs employ two different modes of cultural representation. Ginzburg shows (1999, p. 97) that the difference between symbolic substitution and mimetic evocation was still registered in seventeenth-century dictionary definitions of the term *representation*. But – and this is crucial – both modes have a common point of origin: they both derive from practices in funeral culture. The cult of death

thus involves founding acts of representation, prompting symbolic or mimetic cultural work. It is for this reason, as Thomas Macho explains (2000, pp. 99–100), that care for the dead can be seen as the historical beginning of all cultural representation. The status of the deceased is paradoxical: the corpse embodies the presence of someone who is absent. Visibly different from the living person, the corpse remains and still presents this person's haunting likeness. Every corpse, in fact, is a double. It is such doubleness and troubling duplicity that is not just expressed in mourning, but also haunts theatrical performativity. As I shall argue in some detail through all my readings of Shakespearean theatre and early modern culture, performances of mourning thus always engage with the uncanny power of theatricality.

Among the mimetic and symbolic arts, the theatre is a practice in which the power of representation is at play. Especially English history drama, which flourished in the 1590s, staged many scenes where the actors seemed like doubles of historical protagonists long dead. In her study of the ritual management of royal funerals in Renaissance England, Jennifer Woodward observes that 'the royal theatre of death enacted the succession process and thus it functioned as a manifestation of political power' (1997, p. 2). As an example from the contemporary stage, Marlowe's *Edward II* could have helped to illustrate her point. The young prince's determination to manage the crisis of transition with such efficiency works towards reintegrating the damaged social fabric of the realm. In fact, Woodward opens with the claim that the 'theatre of death created by Shakespeare and his contemporaries was a stage-mirroring of the state funerals staged for members of the Tudor and early Stuart royal families' (1997, p. 1). To some extent, then, my book can be seen as a mirror-image of Woodward's *Theatre of Death*. While she has looked at sixteenth- and seventeenth-century funeral ceremonies with reference to some stage versions of them, I shall look at scenes of mourning in the theatre with reference to the wider cultural performances of which they form a part and in which they intervene. But, in contrast to Woodward, I shall argue that the process she calls 'stage-mirroring' was far more complex than this term implies. As the mortuary history of representation shows, we should learn to view the relationship between the stage and early modern culture not as a mere reflection but as a process of critical engagement, mutual appropriation and constant rivalry. Like other representations, the theatre of death was never either simple or static. My investigations into the politics, pathologies, physiologies and parodies of mourning all try to justify this basic claim: the acts and scenes we see on the Shakespearean stage do not just mirror

cultural responses to death but purposefully remake them as theatrical performances of meaning.

* * *

To many Tudor contemporaries, the very notion that the theatre had any part to play in solemn and ceremonial, let alone religious, occasions would surely have been quite offensive. It was a common argument that players had no sense of dignity and constantly indulged their audience with illicit pleasure. An early and particularly interesting example of this general complaint can be found in a letter to the Secretary of State, written by Stephen Gardyner, bishop of Winchester, in February 1547 after the death of King Henry VIII:

I sent unto you my servant yesterday, wherein by your advice I have had redress, and now I write unto you in another matter, somewhat greater, as it were, between game and earnest. Tomorrow the parishioners of this parish and I have agreed to have solemn *dirige* for our late sovereign lord and master, in earnest, as becometh us; and tomorrow certain players of my lord of Oxford's, as they say, intend on the other side within this borough of Southwark to have a solemn play, to try who shall have most resort, they in game or I in earnest; which me seemeth a marvellous contention, wherein some shall profess in the name of the commonwealth mirth and some sorrow at one time. (Wickham *et al.*, 2000, pp. 157–8)

This contention over the funeral obsequies for Henry VIII is interesting because theatrical and religious activities are here seen to rival one another in a 'marvellous contention'. The letter does not tell us what exactly these players were planning to perform. But they were evidently bold enough to announce their project as a 'solemn play' and stage it as a programmatic, though unauthorized and hence unwelcome, contribution to the current period of official mourning. The bishop was sufficiently alarmed to see them as a serious threat to the prevailing order. His sense of what is fitting to the hour thus corresponds to Shakespeare's Marcus Andronicus. To him, it is simply outrageous to have 'game' and 'earnest', 'mirth' and 'sorrow' mixed in such a way. His resentment is conventional enough and yet it also provokes several questions. We could ask, for instance, whether periods of mourning would not principally involve 'mirth' and 'sorrow' in equal measure, for all that lives must one day die and the bereaved must find a way to go on living. More to the point, we should think about the

'solemn *dirige*' which Gardyner says he was planning to celebrate with his parishioners for their late sovereign lord. The term refers to the traditional funeral mass. But as a direct consequence of England's reorientation in religion launched during Henry's reign, the form and meaning of this rite had been thoroughly transformed. In 1547 and for decades to come, many English subjects would have reason to be quite as alarmed as this bishop, not about play-actors but about the marvellous contentions *within* the church and in central areas of worship. Above all, in the long course of the Tudor Reformation, the solemn rites of death and mourning underwent dramatic change.

The crucial break is marked by a point laconically made in the twenty-second of the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563. Yet the doctrine formulated there was already established in the 1530s under Henry VIII as a theological innovation to which all clergy in the Church of England were required to subscribe. Henceforth this point set the premise to all practices of memory and mourning:

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God. (Cressy and Ferrell, 1996, p. 65)

In this list of Protestant injunctions, the abolition of purgatory is fundamental and most far-reaching. It has been described as a shift of enormous significance, severing the cultural continuities between the living and the dead.³ Previously, such continuities had justified a full spectrum of commemorative and intercessionary activities on the part of the bereaved, because their pious acts could help reduce the penitentiary period which souls must suffer after death.⁴ The notion of an intermediary realm of purgatory, placed as a third alternative between heaven and hell, had been developed in the medieval church as an interim solution, a place to purge souls of their sins before they could move toward salvation (Ariès, 1982, p. 197). Its brilliance lay, as Stephen Greenblatt says (2001, p. 102), in giving mourners 'something constructive to do with their feelings of grief' – motivating suffrages, masses, almsgiving, prayers and good deeds – and so keeping these feelings in the purview of church management. The crucial difference to post-Reformation practices therefore lies in the fact that all such activities of engaging with the fate of the dead were no longer permissible for Protestant mourners.

Thus, the process of reforming worship and religious doctrine crucially affected social performances of mourning, as Protestant theology formulated distinctly different ideas about heaven and the afterlife.⁵ According to the new eschatology in the English church, many of the old rites were suppressed, such as chantries and intercessions, by which Catholic communities traditionally strengthened their bonds between this world and the next.⁶ Deprived of such familiar ways for coming to terms with bereavement, mourners may well have experienced the consequences of these ritual changes as traumatic. But the reforms were not uniformly accepted nor fully enforced for quite some time. Many Tudor subjects remained 'habitual Catholics' (McCoy, 2002, p. 63) reluctant to forgo old ways of mourning, while some Tudor subjects defied the new church altogether and turned into recusants. It is important to acknowledge this variety in religious practices throughout Tudor England, because it was on this broad field of conflicting meanings that the theatre established itself, in the later Tudor decades, as a mimetic and symbolic cultural practice. As anticipated in Gardyner's letter, this was not seen by all as a welcome innovation. But the 'marvellous contention' which resulted was certainly a force, I argue, for the cultural reinvention of religious issues as well as for performances of mourning.

Against this background, what emerges are the potential merits of performance studies when looking at religious issues in the perspective of cultural history. In the playhouse, some spectators may have found the performances of mourning in Shakespearean drama especially appealing because the motions presented on the stage recalled some of the traditional ritual acts and so perhaps retrieved some of the emotions associated with the outlawed faith. Performance combines physical enactment with deniability; as such it offers intriguing possibilities for a society in the process of religious conflict and cultural translation, not least when this society is redefining its relationship to death.

It has been argued that death, or rather the awareness of mortality, is the prime generator of all human cultural endeavours (cf. Assmann, 2000b, p. 14). 'It is the fact of death', Jon Davies writes in *Ritual and Remembrance*, 'that creates the necessity for and the possibility of a basic human covenant which both transcends and envelops all other social bonds' (1994b, p. 14). His statement, like his book throughout (1994a), rests on the assumption of some 'basic human' features shared by all people at all times. Among these, transcendental notions belong to what he calls the 'basic anthropology' of religious culture by which humans everywhere and always seek to 'diminish' the 'naturalness' of death (1994c, pp. 28, 25). From the perspective of cultural history, however,

such a generalized argument is unhelpful. The emphasis on anthropological constants obscures the historically different variants that are of central interest here. What matters are the norms and meanings by which 'naturalness' can be established in the first place. Even though 'the fact of death' may be as close to nature as most of us come, the terms and forms by which this fact is signified are clearly cultural inventions and therefore subject to change and reinvention. To historicize, Belsey reminds us, means to denaturalize, for 'whatever is customary comes in due course to seem natural' (1999, p. xiv). Performances of mourning are always predicated on such customary and constructed images of death. In contrast to Davies's formulation, my argument therefore proceeds on the assumption that social bonds envelop what their members, at a certain place and time, would take to be the fact of death.⁷

For the same reason, my argument acknowledges the historicity of the emotions. Grief and woe may well seem to be basic human passions that occur universally. But it is crucial to see their significance and alterations in the specific historical circumstances where their effects are to be observed and studied. According to the 'historical psychology' initiated with the work of Lucien Febvre in the first half of the twentieth century (see Febvre, 1973), emotions can and should primarily be interpreted in terms of the social functions they serve. This does not just concern performances of mourning, but the whole spectrum of emotional states:⁸ they must all be questioned and researched as part of certain performative productions. As Manfred Pfister argues in this context, the history of emotions 'can only be the history of social discourses, representations, performances and practices' through which their cultural processing is generally accomplished, that is 'the history of the – often conflicting – norms circumscribing, and giving a social shape to, the anthropological impulse' (Pfister, 2002b, p. v). For this project, the Renaissance is particularly interesting. Among researchers in the history of emotions, there has long been a consensus that fundamental transformations in emotional standards took place during the early modern centuries (Stearns, 2000, p. 21). Like all other emotions, grief seems to have undergone significant historical alterations at that time. But – and this is crucial – more perhaps than any other emotion, the historical re-evaluation of grief was provoked and necessitated by cultural developments set in motion with the Reformation.

* * *

When and how is mourning suitable? Another look at this central question leads to some methodological reflections and helps to position

my study in the field of theory. The 'suits of woe' are famously debated in an early scene from *Hamlet*. The queen desires that the prince should cast his 'nightly colour off' and end the solemn mourning period for his father, joining herself and the court in their new merriment. But Hamlet is reluctant to comply with her and the king's command:

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good-mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief
That can denote me truly. These indeed 'seem',
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passeth show –
These but the trappings and the suits of woe. (1.2.77–86)

The issues of the new religious practices in Elizabethan England are subtly implicated in this scene. The conflict between Hamlet and his parents concerns the proprieties of grief; as Greenblatt observes, the king's words in the ensuing dialogue echo Protestant injunctions against persistent mourning (2001, p. 247).

But Hamlet does not simply defend his stance as a traditional mourner. On the contrary, he openly denounces all traditional signifiers. His response manages to reject conventional shows of grief and, at the same time, reaffirm his own true self in mourning. This strategy is quite remarkable: even as he questions the value of all visible signs, the speaker claims to hold something of greater value still 'within'. Katharine Maus cites Hamlet's effort to distinguish between external rituals of mourning and his inner anguish as a paradigmatic case of the hiatus between signs and what they signify: 'Substitutes for something imagined to be more real, more true, and more primary, the "trappings and suits of woe" derive their power from that reality, but ought never to be confused with it' (1995, p. 1). What is at stake here is the status of theatrical performance. On the one hand, theatre has long been seen as an 'exemplary instance of the devaluation of truth' (ibid.), evident in the way that Hamlet here dismisses everything which merely 'seems'. On the other hand, all this is only dismissed in order to revalue it, that is in order to reinvest the old 'suits' with new signifying power. As spectators we note that this mourner himself uses some of the same 'forms' of grief, like his black clothes, which he criticizes in others. Thus, he

demands that we see his own performance of mourning as a counter-performance against empty histrionics. The difference he maintains lies in the use value and truth value of performance. It is also a crucial difference for my project.

In his critical introduction to performance and performance studies, Marvin Carlson has cited Hamlet's response to his mother in the context of Richard Schechner's concept of 'restored behaviour'. This concept points to a quality of performance involved 'with a certain distance between "self" and behavior, analogous to that between an actor and the role the actor plays on stage. Even if an action on stage is identical to one in real life, on stage it is considered "performed" and off stage merely "done" '. But in many cases this distinction does not hold. Hamlet's response, Carlson continues (1996, p. 4), 'also indicates how a consciousness of "performance" can move from the stage, from ritual, or from other special and clearly defined cultural situations into everyday life' – and, as we should add, into the opposite direction. *Performance* is a threshold term: it traces and crosses boundaries between factual and fictional domains, between rehearsed and restored behaviour, between ritual and improvised roles, sometimes drawing such distinctions, often blurring them, but always producing what Carlson calls 'a consciousness of doubleness' (1996, p. 5). Such a consciousness has shaped the critical focus for my own discussion. Drawing on recent theoretical debates in cultural and literary studies, I aim to employ the philosophical notion of 'performative' utterances for a reading of Shakespearean theatre and its cultural work.

Since its formulation, or perhaps rediscovery (cf. Fischer-Lichte, 2002), in the 1950s as a productive concept for issues in the arts, in literature, ethnography, linguistics and language philosophy, *performative* has become an extremely powerful and permeable term. But its prolific use has never blunted its main purpose: the term challenges us to think about how, and when, saying something interrelates with doing something. Accounts of its astonishing career begin with J. L. Austin's Harvard lectures *How to Do Things with Words* (1955), then lead through the vagaries of debate between communication theory, semiotics and poststructuralist philosophy, before culminating in the critical adoption of the term by gender theories and cultural studies in the 1990s. The wide spectrum in which *performative* seems to have proved invaluable has led to a broadening of its signification. Yet the crucial point remains the same. It always shifts our attention from texts to acts, from products to processes, and from codes and structures to modes and dynamic strategies.

This does not mean that textual and literary models should no longer have a place in performance studies. On the contrary, the focus on performative acts has always worked together with a focus on the conventional models by which they proceed. Beginning with Austin's inquiry into utterances like 'I take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife' – to cite a ceremony traditionally under full ecclesiastical control – research into performance has emphasized the constitutive function of convention, some formula or prescribed model that must be cited for the performed act to succeed. It is this notion of citationality, or in the closely allied Derridaen term, the iterability at the core of all performance which has attracted much attention in critical discussions. For the constant interplay between script and performance, norm and realization, or model and parody also introduces possibilities for difference and transgression into cultural practices. Because of their recourse to institutionalized forms, however, such practices never operate outside the political arena. In his commentary on the Declaration of Independence, for example, Derrida argues (2002, p. 121) that institutions such as modern states in whose name directives and declaratives are performed must themselves be subject to an inaugurating act of violence.

At the same time, as my earlier examples indicate, the concept of citationality quite simply describes what goes on in any stage production whenever an actor delivers a performance based on lines an author wrote before him. In this way, the concept offers a conjunction of reclusive theories of illocution with immediate observations on theatrical performance that has certainly helped to establish so many current uses for this particular approach. This also helps to explain my own approach to performances of mourning. In 1959, the American ethnographer Milton Singer introduced the key term 'cultural performance' (1959, p. xiii) to describe what he called 'particular instances of cultural organization', such as weddings, temple festivals, recitations or plays. Following his usage, the term refers not just to theatrical activities but, more inclusively and incisively, to all occasions and events by which a community enacts or reiterates the tenets on which it has been founded. This defines the sense in which I use the term *performance* in the title of this book: as an organized and structured event in which something takes place that affects all involved – performers, producers, presenters, participants, spectators, bystanders – even though in different ways and different measure; in the process, social energies are circulated, forces developed, actions initiated (cf. Fischer-Lichte and Roselt, 2001, p. 239–40).

Related but not fully cognate with it, the term *performative* is used in the sense derived from Austin: to describe the social dimension of verbal

behaviour, that is to explore utterances which change the way things are. Performative language, Austin argued, derives its force entirely from the collective understanding and general acceptance that the conventions which it activates are valid. For this reason, the social context is 'a vital constituent of any attempt to apprehend an utterance's performative strength' (Petrey, 1990, p. 9). But for the same reason, I suspect, historical periods in which vital conventions – such as the articles of faith – are being reformulated, rejected or reformed put the performative strength of many utterances to the test. Here is not the place to retell the complex history of speech-act theory nor the proliferation of its terms.⁹ The following parts of this introduction comment rather on three points: why this focus has been adopted for my inquiry into rituals of mourning; how the relation between issues of performance and the literary texts I discuss should be understood; and in what way this opens a promising perspective on early modern culture. For each of these points I can just reiterate what Parker and Kosofsky Sedgwick (1995, p. 8) said when introducing the first volume about literary uses of the concept: the focus on performance and performativity should never be an end in itself but always emerge as an active question.

* * *

The fifth act of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* opens with the painter and the poet deliberating about speech acts:

Promising is the very air o' th' time; it opens the eyes of expectation. Performance is ever the duller for his act, and but in the plainer and simpler kind of people the deed of saying is quite out of use. To promise is most courtly and fashionable. Performance is a kind of will or testament which argues a great sickness in his judgement that makes it. (5.1.23–8)

What the painter here explains concerns the very issues and distinctions which later led John Austin to single out performatives, such as the act of promising, as a special type of utterance. The Shakespearean example is comic, critical and parodistic; therefore, all the rules which constitute a speech act are here highlighted by their inversion or negation. In actual fact, we know that the act of promising is worth nothing unless it is indeed followed by performance. At the very least, a promise must be uttered with the speaker's sincere will to do as he has said – otherwise the speech act would not just be unfashionable, it simply would not

work. What the painter calls 'the deed of saying' can only be of any use when all who say 'I promise' also intend to perform accordingly.

Performatives are utterances of a special kind, as Austin argues, because ordinary tests of truth value do not apply to them.¹⁰ Performatives can go wrong, but they cannot be either true or false, as constative utterances always are. Unlike statements, performatives do not use words to *refer* to things; they *do* things with words. Interestingly, most of Austin's original examples illustrate this act with utterances from the field of religious practice, such as weddings, baptisms or some other ceremonial use of language. Closely involved with such ritual activities, all performatives thus undermine the difference between words and things and so question the common notion of language as an 'instrument' of communication. Performative language foregrounds its own mediality and materiality. As ceremonial speech, it is impersonal, citational and ritual. In a sense, speech acts like the ones used in a marriage ceremony are less directed to their immediate addressees as to the wider public who are called upon to witness and to verify the ceremony and what it does. The binding force of the religious rite, which reinforces the community that observes it, derives from keeping and reiterating the fixed formulation. No paraphrase will do, even if it 'means' the same; what matters is the verbal form. In this way, the focus on performance and performativity opens a promising perspective to investigate performances of mourning in early modern theatre and culture. Since speech-act theory and drama are both coterminous with *performance*, the medium of the stage has generally been amenable to such analyses (cf. Petrey, 1990, p. 109). In the theatre, all language is embodied and all utterances are necessarily performative. Like the ceremonial utterances studied by Austin, they are never either true or false because they never just describe but help to constitute the way things are. On the stage, all eloquence is action (cf. Bevington, 1984).

But there are more specific and, I think, compelling ways to read Shakespearean drama in the context of what actors or spectators do with words and what words in performance do to them. The notion of *catharsis*, which early modern culture took from Aristotle, captures some of the effects and consequences by which theatre interacts with the world. As Stephen Orgel argues (1995), many Renaissance commentators may have been sceptical about the *purging* of human passions in the playhouse, but many of them surely thought of plays as psychologically effective and socially productive. As Philip Massinger's *The Roman Actor* shows, spectators' passions can be strengthened, shaped or even kindled when seeing them performed on stage. When it comes to staging acts of

memory and mourning, then, the playhouse could provide a space in which contested ritual models for shaping personal emotions are put to a social test. Austin explained that all speech acts work through audience uptake. So when we look at early modern theatre audiences whose religious sympathies were divided or, to say the least, quite mixed, the stage performances they watched must have been taken up in many different ways. For some, the acts of memory and mourning in Shakespearean drama may just have been theatrical entertainment, while others may have taken them as a cultural performance, relating to their social world. Not least, we should see the need for censorship, which centrally concerned religious matters, as hard evidence that the authorities were well aware of such effects and took the impact of the playhouse seriously.

Besides, Shakespearean theatre is itself highly aware of its performativity and mediality. As in the cited passages from *Hamlet*, *Timon of Athens* or *Titus Andronicus*, early modern English drama frequently subjects the terms and strategies it uses to critical investigation and reflection on the stage. Throughout the following chapters therefore, I have chosen my examples so as to discuss such metadramatic moments, aiming to show how Shakespearean plays themselves explore the meanings they reiterate. My aim, then, is not to study particular performances in the stage history of any drama, but to study the performative potential in and through theatrical texts.

* * *

In early modern debates, religious ceremonies were often associated with the theatre and stage performance. Most of the time, this association was made polemically or pejoratively, as when Protestant reformers railed against the Mass. But the charismatic power shared by ritual and theatrical performance was not easily denied. The affinities, as Louis Montrose remarks (1980, p. 62), ‘between the theatrical playing space, the ecclesiastical sacred space, and the charmed circle’ are indeed suggestive and far-reaching. But to identify such convergences between church and stage is, in itself, not really saying very much. At the very least we should be able to specify, as Andreas Höfele points out (1991, p. 51), in which direction the process of exchange and borrowing goes on: did theatre feed on religious charisma or did, conversely, forms of worship employ elements of theatrical performance?

I want to argue – and discuss some cultural evidence for the idea – that the English theatres took over where the English church seems to have left people alone. For at least a generation after the Elizabethan settlement,

Protestant injunctions against rites of mourning kept alive the need for cultural substitutes by which memories of the dead would find an appropriate place. The Shakespearean stage, I suggest, could address such memories and answer to this need. Theatrical performances of mourning offered symbolic or mimetic modes for spectators to come to terms with cultural losses not otherwise acknowledged. In this way, the ambiguous alliance, or mutual 'cooptation' (Knapp, 2002, p. 175), of church and theatre thus became culturally productive. Theatre could reiterate the incarnational meaning that was traditionally realized in the liturgy because, as Michael O'Connell says (2000, p. 20), 'theatrical presence is not mere sign but a use of corporeality to "body forth" the fiction it portrays'. With the transformation of church ritual into stage drama (cf. Muir, 1997, p. 69), but before its integration into more secular domains, the conjunction of religious with theatrical performance was particularly powerful. However, as a consequence of their different views on corporeality and real presence, the Protestant reformers took particular issue with this aspect of religion, intent on purifying the church from all associations with pomp and pageantry. Polemicists like Phillip Stubbes routinely railed against the histrionics of the Mass:

euen then, is there such censeng, and singing, such masking and rynging, such chaunting and roaryng, in the quyre, wyth Orgayns playing, and musicke soundyng, that thou wouldest rather thynke it a Satyricall stage playe of fooles consecrated to the Diuel, than a sober seruice of wise men instituted to God. (Stubbes, 1584, p. E)

But for all their studious polemics, worshippers in the reformed church were just as much engaged in performance as their opponents: 'At the center of Protestant worship stands an essentially dramatic performance, the sermon' (O'Connell, 2000, p. 90). With its central function to show the way towards salvation, homiletic delivery mobilized the full repertoire of rhetorical and theatrical devices. Masters in the art of suspense (cf. Collinson, 1997, p. 32), preachers captivated their audience for hours on end and used special ingenuity in the command and physical show of emotions, such as weeping and crying, which otherwise are the domain, as Hamlet observes (2.2.528–37), of first-rate orators and players. 'The voyce of a preacher ought to be the voice of a cryer', an Elizabethan doctor of divinity told his congregation in Easter week, 'which shoulde not pipe to make the people daunce, but mourne to make them weepe', for 'weeping is more pearcing, & more forcible to perswade God, and euen to wound his hart, then all the

eloquence, & all the rethoricke in the world' (Playfere, 1597, pp. 14, 18). But even while this preacher is rejecting rhetoric and theatre as profane or secular pursuits, his own preaching demonstrates how strongly he himself draws on them for his own purpose.

This is an example of what is known as the 'performative contradiction', that is an evident discrepancy between saying and doing something, which has been of special interest for students of performativity. The example illustrates my interest in reflexive gestures in the texts. Throughout, I shall pay special attention to such contradictory turns, physical inflections or features of orality as integral parts of many written sources. That is to say, my focus on performance is *not* confined to theatre and drama. As some of my examples later show, performance and performativity are also central issues when analysing texts not meant for stage production. There are several strategies by which printed texts engage performative powers: apostrophes, appellative moves, perlocutionary effects, dialogical orientation towards an implied audience, foregrounding the speaking persona, simulating physical presence, corporeality and voice, showing self-awareness and self-consciousness. Drama, sermons, pamphlets, tracts, elegies and epitaphs and various other textual genres are all involved in forms of social interaction and exchange. Thus, my discussion will acknowledge the acts done *with* texts, the acts committed *to* texts and the acts which were performed *through* them.

With regard to the performances of mourning, however, this involves a special problem. In religious language, traces of performance were often deliberately concealed. As illustrated in the above quotation from the Easter week sermon, the performative power of rhetorical devices was thought to embarrass, even compromise, the religious purpose they should serve. Rhetoric is the oldest theory of how to do things with words, but using rhetoric is rarely openly admitted, especially in matters of religion. In the English Renaissance, Debora Shuger explains in her study of this problem (1988, p. 3), religious 'rhetoric is a polemical issue, possibly even a heresy' because, according to its own practitioners, it was not supposed to exist. On the other hand, in the English Renaissance, as a period of intense religious controversy, rhetoric was also used to establish the performative domain of texts precisely to avoid control by the authorities.

The playhouse was not the only site where this took place. In his reading of the cultural dynamics in Spenser's *Four Hymnes*, for example, Jonathan Sawday (1996, pp. 85–6) argues that the self-concealing strategy of 'deniability' was often used in early modern elite culture.

This strategy combined words and acts in such a way that the author did not have to commit himself to any of their consequences, should these turn out to be undesirable. It served Elizabethan courtiers, and even the queen herself, to guard against changes in political fortune. To this effect, precarious texts like Spenser's hymns employed a rhetoric of doubleness and vacillation which implicated their audience, but not their author, in political consequences. 'In political terms', Sawday concludes (1996, p. 90), 'they might appear as extraordinary fortuitous performances', precisely because their doctrinal or ideological position remained elusive. But if the fortuity of performance thus lies in deniability, how can performance ever become allied to matters of religion and belief?

'Performance kills belief; or rather acknowledging theatricality kills the credibility of the supernatural.' Greenblatt's pronouncement (1988, p. 109), in the context of his study of exorcism, gives further reason to question the relation between acts of faith and acts of stage. But his observations on demonic possession and the 'performance test' should not perhaps be generalized. In my view, religious belief is not always and not necessarily the precondition of religious practice. The common and open participation in performances of mourning may in fact have generated, not just killed, belief. At least it could be so in England, where the established church 'could not control the worshippers' internal focus on the service' (Targoff, 2001, p. 39) and so emphasized external conformity rather than conviction. In this way, going through the motions of the service might well have produced the appropriate emotions of the new religion. Theatre performances, however, are best regarded as ambiguous and principally sceptical projects when it comes to questions of belief. As Sawday's argument shows, performance is such a useful strategy because it is always deniable. It proceeds with a calculated consciousness of its own contingent nature. In the event, a performer can always either reaffirm or disown what has been performed.

For this reason, even though I shall follow several Catholic memory traces through some Shakespearean texts, my readings are entirely unconcerned with the notorious question whether or not Shakespeare 'was' a Catholic and, if so, what this might have meant. In a recent study of this question, Richard Wilson (2004) argues that the playwright actively resisted the Catholic allegiances expected of him – and perhaps initially accepted by him – in his presumed Lancastrian milieu. By contrast, the performative approach I intend to employ leads to a more sceptical and cautious view: as a performative arena, the Shakespearean playhouse is a place of hinting at, and playing at, religious matters but it only ever *stages*, never *states*, points of doctrine or belief. With its

performances, it embraces rather than shuns meaningful ambiguities, moving along the uncertain boundaries of belief and make-believe.

* * *

Trying to work through this agenda, the following chapters are organized according to a series of thematic questions: what political and cultural functions are realized in performances of mourning (Chapter 1)? What happens when such functions, under specific historical conditions, fail to work (Chapter 2)? What physical signs indicate the functioning or failures of the work of mourning (Chapter 3)? And what happens when the signs and rites of mourning are used in displaced, transformed or disingenuous performances (Chapter 4)? Each chapter is thus focussed on one particular aspect: the politics, pathologies, physiologies and parodies of mourning, and each concentrates mainly, though not exclusively, on one dramatic genre: histories (Chapter 1), revenge tragedies (Chapter 2), and comedies (Chapters 3 and 4). Most of the playtexts centrally discussed are from the Shakespearean canon, because they offer the more compelling and self-conscious explorations of the questions I pursue, but all chapters also contain some discussion of contemporary and, for the cultural issues at stake, equally relevant playtexts, which historically precede the Shakespearean examples, like *Ralph Roister Doister* or *The Spanish Tragedy*, or which follow them, like *The Fair Maid of the West* or *The Widdowes Teares*. The sequence of the four chapters is designed so that their readings and results complement one another: Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 each investigate a pattern that is critically questioned and reframed with the issues and examples discussed, in turn, in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4. In this sense, the politics of mourning in the history plays (Chapter 1) are revisited and in crucial ways reviewed through the pathologies of mourning in revenge tragedies (Chapter 2), whereas the social use of tears and crying evident in the physiologies of mourning (Chapter 3) is newly scrutinized with the comic and insincere employment of these signs of grief in the parodies of mourning (Chapter 4).

Chapter 1 offers a closer look at English history plays and their politics of mourning, that is at acts of grief and commemoration presented on the historical stage. The Shakespearean York tetralogy in particular includes several important scenes where ceremonial rites are openly and sometimes ostentatiously performed at moments of dynastic and dramatic crisis. These scenes are crucial for the 'battle of memories' (Aleida Assmann) which is fought in and with the plays. For post-Reformation

spectators they stage remembrance of things past and thereby perhaps furnish performative substitutes for discontinued rituals. The chapter looks at these scenes against the background of contemporary discourses and practices, by which cultural memory was reconstructed in Elizabethan England. Questioning the religious rhetoric used to disseminate Protestant doctrine, my reading also traces performance issues in two scenes from *Richard II*, where the politics of mourning are self-consciously explored so as to test the worldly power of theatrical enactment.

Chapter 2 raises the question of what happens when the work of mourning fails. Elizabethan revenge tragedies like *The Spanish Tragedy* or *Titus Andronicus* focus on desperate fathers who are denied the proper form and social acknowledgement for their grief, so that their passion turns into a rage for violence. Such pathologies of mourning, I argue, should not be seen in terms of character psychology; rather, they reflect social predicaments, depriving the bereaved of cultural validations and symbolizations of their loss. In this sense, revenge plays reconsider the central problem that the English histories pose. But the chapter further shows that they also work on problems raised, for example, in the arena of New World encounters and the ensuing crisis of signification, because revenge tragedies share with colonial travelogues the suspicion that modes of conventional communication fail. A look at *Hamlet* finally suggests a different approach to issues of memory, revenge and praying, an approach by which adopted custom may lead to new and meaningful consolations.

Chapter 3 explores the salient physiological manifestations as well as gender differences in early modern performances of mourning. According to the rhetorical tradition, human passions are articulated and validated through body motions like tears and crying. But their signification is uncertain and contested because, as shown in many classical and Renaissance examples, they are frequently employed by women, crocodiles and other simulators for purposes of emotional engineering. This misogynist discourse, analysed through Chapman's *The Widdowes Teares*, is caught in serious contradictions when it registers the social power of such female body rhetoric. With reference to *Richard III* and to a range of contemporary writers like Montaigne, Joubert, Bright, Southwell or Burton, the chapter asks how to do things with tears and what to do with them in the theatre. Mimetic weeping here emerges as a strategy which produces and legitimates new forms of communal bonding.

Finally, Chapter 4 holds up the mirror to the nature of performance when it investigates the paradox of censorship and memory in

mock-performances of funerals. Parody is an ambiguous strategy of re-signification, giving new life to old models and thereby revealing how all stage versions of mourning work. Such effects are explored with a reading of two comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing* and Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister*, and placed into the context of Reformation debates about the issue of rejecting or retaining Catholic ritual. With a look at the Protestant anxieties of borrowed rites and at seductions of rhyme in ceremonial language, the discussion shows that counterfeit funerals could have been a way of emphasizing continuities in the religious discontinuities of the period. Parodies of mourning thus explore the efficacy of their own theatrical devices while they remind their audience of what has passed away.

The whole study is not encyclopedic nor is my treatment comprehensive. My readings, rather, attempt case studies of select but crucial issues in the field. As I hope to have established with the introductory survey, this project is located at an intersection of theoretical and historical concerns. This is not an easy contact zone to work in. But it is, I believe, just such a combination and, sometimes, tension between theoretical and historical concerns which can do justice to the specific nature of cultural history as well as to the current interests that motivate our own efforts to engage with this history. My choice of themes and texts reflects this tension. In each case, my discussion tries to *look at* sixteenth- or seventeenth-century works in the context of their cultural field, but it certainly *looks from* a present-day position shaped by very different contexts. This difference is constitutive and, I hope, productive for critical appreciation. All texts, but especially playtexts, partly become what they are through the history of their readings and rereadings. So while I cannot claim to treat them from a historical point of view, I hope that my views on Shakespearean theatre in early modern culture provide relevant insights into the cultural history of meanings that have been made with them.

1

Politics of Mourning English History Plays

1.1 Heavens hung with black: Elizabethan rituals of mourning

'Hung be the heavens with black!' (1.1.1): *The First Part of Henry the Sixth* opens with the delivery of solemn funeral orations. Before even these first words have been uttered, non-verbal sounds and sights mark the occasion. The 'dead march', the burial procession and the black draperies hung from the theatre's roof or 'heavens' all establish the ceremonial performance of official mourning. In the beginning is the funeral: with this opening of what is possibly Shakespeare's first history play,¹ the dramatized War of the Roses begins by invoking the dead hero whose stage appearance, almost a decade and several plays later, will eventually conclude the history cycle. Commemorating King Henry V and gathering around his hearse, the historical actors here invite the audience to join them in a spectacle of grief. The performance thus takes place on two levels at once. To use Robert Weimann's terms (1967, p. 381), the *locus* is Westminster Abbey, where the historical scene is located; but the *platea* of mourning is the wooden stage, the playhouse, whose properties and conventions Bedford's opening words evoke. The relationship – and potential tension – between these two levels determine the performances of memory and the politics of mourning which this chapter sets out to explore.

State funerals in England, then as now, are almost exclusively reserved for royalty (Garlick, 1999, p. 71). When seeing such a ceremony in this opening, any audience would feel an overpowering sense of ending, as if witnessing the conclusion, rather than the beginning, of a historical development. This has the effect, as Michael Neill remarks (1997, p. 289), 'of plunging the audience into a world whose significant history is already

past'. The play begins by establishing the centrality of loss, so that active commemoration is given priority over memorable action: words and reviews of the past serve to recall what has gone before. 'As we in the audience "look back" at the historical figures onstage', Robert Jones suggests (1991, p. ix), they in turn look back at the lost hero 'and our perspective on them deepens through their own recollection'. A closer look at their funeral speeches, however, reveals that the dynamics of recollection are more complex. The historical perspectives cross one another, because the historical figures onstage rather seem to look forward to our looking back. The rhetorical delivery and hyperbolic imagery of their speeches serve to monumentalize Henry V, while over his dead body his greatness is declaimed. And so we can witness, proleptically, how historical remembrance is being formed and regulated – just as the king here buried will, in a later play, announce at Crispin's Day: 'Then shall our names, / Familiar in his mouth as household words – / Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter, / Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester – / Be in their flowering cups freshly remembered' (*Henry V*, 4.3.51–5). The same nobles he later names and consigns to collective memory here act as self-interested administrators of public commemoration through mourning.

Each speaker uses the occasion to promote his view of Henry V but, for all the reiterated vows of grief, the various views do not agree. As the ensuing argument between Winchester and Gloucester shows (1.1.34–43), public recollection follows a political agenda. Their funeral orations all attempt to establish a particular and partial story of the past and so exert control over the present, so that we observe how words and modes of mourning enter into a power struggle. This is what this chapter refers to as the *politics* of mourning. The relation to the dead principally concerns power relations among the living. Personal emotions of grief and sorrow are not just framed but formed by demands in the public sphere – just as the public sphere, in turn, can be re-framed and re-formed through them. In this perspective, mourning is a matter *of* the *polis* as well as a matter *for* the *polis* (cf. Loraux, 1990, p. 27), hence, a matter of essentially political dimensions. A political performance at the interface between commemorative and imperative behaviour, mourning draws on available forms of expression in religious and material culture while trying to bridge the gap between bereavement and belonging. All performances of mourning then address both the history and the actuality of the social lives to whom the deceased has mattered. The ceremonial opening scene from *1 Henry VI* stages this political reality.

For the mourners here do not just try to come to terms with what has happened, they also try to dictate those terms to others. Gloucester's

pun on 'prayed' and 'preyed' (1.1.33) reveals this aspect clearly and so comments on the function of conventional pieties: whoever 'prays' for the dead often also 'preys' on their heritage. Many scenes of mourning bear this out. Throughout the Shakespearean histories, expressions of grief are staged in such a way that they reveal claims of allegiance and control. Who mourns when and for whom and, even more importantly, who mourns *with* whom: these are key questions, especially in the York tetralogy, to make and mark political alliances and rivalries. This, I suggest, must have consequences also on the actual level where the performance was historically situated and where prayers for the dead or other modes of ritual commemoration were among the most contested issues of the time. When the opening scene, as noted, resolutely mobilizes public memory, what it must first of all have recalled to spectators in the 1590s is the extent to which their rites of memory had changed. On the level of their historical reference, these English history plays look back to a religious culture whose doctrinal foundations no longer held and whose ritual practices were, in many cases, subject to prohibition in Elizabethan England. To the extent, therefore, that the onstage mourners here imply and invite the congregated theatre audience into the scene, the historical divisions they present also comment on the topical divides in the management of grief. Therefore, before I return to the plays to analyse their politics of memory and mourning, contemporary attitudes to death and burial practices must be surveyed.

Numerous studies have described the long and protracted, often hesitant, piecemeal and inconsistent process that we refer to as the English Reformation. Patrick Collinson (2000, p. 27) even suggests that we would do better to conceive of it as a pluralized, repeated and in no way coherent project. Both the force and the extent of its impact on everyday life in English towns and villages should be assessed with caution and in view of the considerable range of deviating local practices that co-existed with the official forms of worship throughout the Elizabethan period. And yet most historians agree that the one field of religious life that was profoundly affected and in many salient ways restructured by reform is the field of death rites, burial and the practices of mourning. Retrospectively, it is not easy to gain a clear sense of what these changes must have meant. But two descriptions of two different funeral ceremonies in London in 1559, the threshold year after Elizabeth's succession and her abandonment of Mary's Counter-Reformation, may suggest how public performances of mourning were perceived and represented by contemporaries.

The first of these is a report from the diary of Henry Machyn, April 1559, less than five months since the sumptuous burial of Elizabeth's Catholic predecessor. This is what he observed:

The vij day of Aprell wa browth [brought] unto [saint Thomas] of Acurs in Chepe from lytyll sant Barthellmuw [in] Lothbere masteres ... and ther was a gret compene of pepull, ij and ij together, and nodur [neither] prest nor clarke, the nuw prychers in ther gowne lyke ley[-men], nodur syngyng nor sayhyng tyll they cam [to the grave], and a-for she was pute into the grayff a [collect] in Englys, and then put in-to the grayff, and after [took some] heythe [earth] and caste yt on the corse, and red a thyng ... for the sam, and contentent [incontinently] cast the heth [earth] in-to the [grave], and contentent [incontinently] red the pystyll of sant Poll to the Stesselonyans the (blank) chapter, and after thay song pater-noster in Englys, boyth prychers and odur, and [women,] of a nuw fassyon, and after on of them went in-to the pulpytt and mad a sermon. (Machyn, 1848, p. 193, brackets and emendations in the published source)

The diarist was a London citizen working as a furnisher of funeral trappings. This is why, apart from personal inclination to the old religion, he took a professional interest in elaborate forms of worship and all sorts of holiday-making in the city as the best incentive to his trade. So the diary he kept throughout the 1550s and into the early years of Elizabeth's reign contains many standard accounts of aristocratic funerals, describing their pageantry, the number and sequence of mourners, their order and ritual conduct. Against this background, the occasion described here is most notable for its austerity. The text presents a series of negations ('neither priest nor clerk', 'neither singing nor saying') to point to the conspicuous absences: traditional attributes are gone, the language and the gowns in church have changed, many familiar elements in the experience of worship are missing. Instead, the Protestant funeral culminates in a sermon and so emphasizes the new centrality of the word and of biblical interpretation. For all its eloquent silences, therefore, the diary suggests an acute sense of loss and bereavement.

The example illustrates what historians have called the 'profoundly traumatic' effects (Cressy, 1997, p. 477) that the Reformation had for many old believers. Protestantism was experienced by them as a taking away of personal certainties and communal consolations. Urban burial practices, as rites of passage in moments of social realignment, were

strongly affected by the moves towards reform. But they were by no means all abolished. In fact, as Machyn's record indicates, their most noticeable feature, namely the procession with the cortège through the city to and from the church, went on. Its significance rather increased while liturgical features were reduced. As with her famous coronation procession, Elizabeth strategically favoured such performances of public ceremonies over church solmenities in order to challenge clerical monopoly (cf. McCoy, 1989, p. 240). And since the transportation of the dead was principally a civil rather than ecclesiastical affair, it continued to be exercised and used as an occasion to reaffirm the estate of the deceased in relation to the living. Tudor elite funerals, several of them described in Machyn's diary, were large-scale events of the kind presented at the opening of *1 Henry VI*. Doctrinal reservations notwithstanding, their pageantry was staged and sponsored to manifest 'the continuity of the social body' (Llewellyn, 1991, p. 60), that had been shaken or disrupted by the power of death. As spectacular demonstrations of power, funerals were designed to attract nobles as well as crowds and present them in a grand train of distinguished mourners and dependants. Participants regularly found themselves in the position of both spectators and performers, among 'all the trappings of an elaborate linear theatre, a social ballet choreographed with mourners and marchers, biers and hearses, escutcheons, banners, and palls' (Cressy, 1997, p. 451). Under the authority of the College of Arms, such processions signified what station the deceased had held in life. Their appeal and plausibility for the 'dramatized' society in Elizabethan England (cf. Sales, 1991) can hardly be overestimated. So what an adherent to the Roman Catholic liturgies like Machyn describes as the sense of loss or deprivation that he experienced in the maimed rites of Elizabethan funerals, could still offer an occasion for more overt political uses of mourning. This, indeed, is what my second example of a 1559 London funeral ceremony shows.

When King Henri II of France died in the first year of her reign, Elizabeth 'according to the custom of Princes in shewing honour to each other even at their deaths, appointed his obsequies to be solemnly observed in the chief Church of her Realm' (Nichols, 1823, I, p. 76). She ordered a magnificent funeral ceremony that was performed with great pomp over two days in September and, according to a contemporary reporter, fully paid for by herself (ibid.). Apart from the diplomatic signal sent abroad, the commemoration also sent a message home. It set the stage for the young queen's grand appearance in a reformed burial service, although one which was conducted for a Catholic king long

buried elsewhere and with traditional rites. Such ironies did not go unnoticed. When the hearse was solemnly brought into church, traditionally a herald would have called the congregation to pray for the soul. But here occurred the first of several crucial alterations in the ritual: 'For York Herald standing at the upper choir door, bad the prayer (as it used to be called, but now more properly the praise) first in English, and after in French' (Nichols, 1823, I, p. 77). Another extremely precarious moment came with the funeral sermon, preached by the Elect of Hereford instead of the Elect of London, who was – interestingly – reported sick. According to a contemporary source, the preacher openly addressed religious conflicts and made liturgical reform the issue of his sermon:

And farther he endeavoured to pacify both parties of the people; that it seems now freely uttered their minds according as they stood affected to Religion; the one party thinking, and saying, how the Ceremonies used for Burial were too many; yea rather, that none at all ought to be used for the dead; the other thinking them to be too few. Hence he took occasion to shew, out of divers ancient authors, the order of the Burial of the Dead in the Primitive Church, and how the service at the same was to give praise to God for taking away their brother in the faith of Christ. Which selfsame order they had now observed, and were about to fulfil and observe. As for the rest of the Ceremonies there used, which were but few, seeing they were not contrary to the faith of Christ, nor yet contrary to brotherly and Christian charity, but for the maintenance thereof, the rather to continue amity betwixt both Princes, which charity Christ especially doth command; therefore ought to be observed, and not gainsaid. But for the other Ceremonies, for that they were neither beneficial to those which were alive, nor yet to the parties deceased, nor yet according to the order of the old fathers and Primitive Church, they were therefore now taken away and abolished. After this, commending the Royal Person departed, for his worthy and noble chivalry, and valiant heart, as well in prosperity as adversity; together with great commendation of his chaste life, keeping himself only to his own wife (being a rare thing, he said, in Princes), he made an end. (Nichols, 1823, I, pp. 78–9)

The example illustrates two points. It shows how ceremonies of mourning manifest political factions, and it shows how such manifestations take place in and through performance. Elizabeth's funeral service for King

Henri launched a process in which differences of religion were to be overruled by monarchical power instituting a shared ceremonial bond. Negotiating this problematic ceremony across different languages, doctrines, ritual practices and expectations, the funeral both created and addressed the demand for religious uniformity. The sermon preached by the Elect of Hereford is crucial here because its delivery, as reported above, offers a paradigm of a performative text. Standing in for his sick colleague, this preacher shows how to do things with words. Even as he talks about the need for reformed ceremonies he is already reforming them, turning the moment of honorable commemoration for a Catholic French monarch into a moment of general commitment for a unified English church. Perhaps even his final praise of King Henri's 'chaste life' has special resonances in this context, because it recalls the king's earlier English namesake whose unwillingness to keep himself to one wife first set the country on the way to Protestantism. Thus offering allusive hints to 'both parties' and their interests, the preacher endeavours to satisfy them.

His repeated reference to 'the Primitive Church' further illustrates the degree to which the new religious practice was promoted as a return to the ancient, true beginnings of Christianity. Protestant reformers routinely appealed to the models established in antiquity and especially in the Bible and often argued that they suggested 'few' ceremonies for burials. Again, liturgical reduction in official rites of mourning, following the abolishment of purgatory in the twenty-second article, was justified as a purer form of worship, without later histrionic features and thus closer to the simple ceremonial conduct and original foundation of the church. The theological debates on this issue need not be repeated here, but in view of later theatrical enactments it is relevant to think about the ways in which the new demands of faith were mediated in the religious discourses of Elizabethan culture. For the attempted replacement of liturgical with social ritual and the shift of prayer to praise, as observed in the ceremony for Henri II, had far-reaching consequences which were not easily negotiated nor explained to the believers. A brief look at two treatises from these early years of Elizabeth's reign will show how Reformation rhetoric nevertheless tried to construct plausibility for the new modes of mourning.

The Sick Mans Salve by Thomas Beacon, a homilist and prolific writer, is a long dialogic treatise first published in 1560, which soon became one of the most popular and most frequently reprinted books of the whole era (cf. Pigman, 1985, p. 31). Like the traditional *ars moriendi*, but in a Protestant reformulation, it offers spiritual guidance for the hour of

death and the conduct among the bereaved, calling for strict limitations to lamentation and general restrictions in all matters of mourning. Epaphroditus, the model figure among the group of interlocutors, asks to be buried 'simply, not sumptuously, honestly, not honorably' (Beacon, 1585, pp. 97f), and so opposes the contemporary notion that burial must give material expression to social degree. The conflicting argument between social and religious expectations is illustrated in the following exchange with the dying man:

CHRISTOPHER: SYT concerning the costes at your buriall, what order wil it please you to take in this behalfe?

EPAPHRODITUS: Let the ministers with the other Officers of the Church haue their dueties according vnto the custome.

EVSEBIVS: How many mourning gownes syr, will ye giue.

EPAPHRODITUS: Of what moruning gownes speake ye?

EVSEBIVS: The manner is (as you know) that when a man of honest reputation departeth, and is brought to be buried, there should follow him certein in fine blacke gownes, and certeine poore men and women in courser cloth.

EPAPHRODITUS: Unequally handled, that the poore should haue the worst, and the rich and welthiest the best. And call ye these mourners?

EVSEBIVS: So are they called.

EPAPHRODITUS: For whom shoulde they mourne?

EVSEBIVS: For you.

EPAPHRODITUS: Why for me? Because good things haue chaunced vnto me? Because I haue passed ouer the daungerous sea, and am come vnto the hauen of quietnesse? Or because I am deliuered from all euil, and set in a blessed and ioyful state? I thinke that at the burials of the faithful there should rather be ioy and gladnesse, then mourning and sadnesse, rather pleasant songes of thankesgiuing, then lamentable and dolefull Diriges. Let the infidels mourne for their dead: the Christians ought to reioyce when any of the faithfull bee called from this vale of miserie vnto the glorious kingdom of God.

(Beacon, 1585, pp. 67f)

At which point in their dialogue, all participants break into a rush of citing pertinent examples and retelling familiar stories against grief for the blissful state to which believers are promoted after death. The argument formed a *topos*. As Feste's quip to Olivia in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1.5.57–62) a generation later illustrates, all public shows of

mourning can truly be called foolish if we believe that the soul of the deceased has gone to heaven.

The interesting point in the cultural dissemination of this Protestant doctrine concerns the rhetorical appeal to ‘infidels’ and unbelievers. Epaphroditus’s argument begins by setting up a contrast (‘Let the infidels mourne for their dead’). But the clear sense of Christian superiority is undermined when the dialogue goes on to cite pagan manners as models for restraint in mourning. Eusebius remembers that the Thracians ‘reioyce and are mery’ whenever anyone ‘goeth out the world’ because ‘they know that an end of all sorow and care of all payne and trauail is come’. And Philemon even claims that ‘plentye of Historyes’ declare that heathens took the death of their friends patiently, while some who profess Christianity are known to have ‘wept, wayled, mourned, wrung their handes, tare their heare, rent theyre clothes and in a manner killed them selues with sorrow and thought taking’ (Beacon, 1585, p. 124). Directed against Catholics, the speech places all extrovert performances of grief – in voice, body, gesture and behaviour – under suspicion of disbelief. As with the attacks on saints, relics, images, miracles and the mass, traditional performances of mourning are here rejected for their superstitious histrionics. Protestant restraint and emotional control in mourning, by contrast, are declared to show full trust in God and so confirm true Christian faith by accepting His superior wisdom. But the reformers’ polemics undermine themselves when Protestant conduct thus becomes almost indistinguishable from pagan custom.² The strong determination to propagate the new faith as the purged and proper version of the old, while denouncing papistry as corruption, leads to precarious alliances. Evidently, the injunction against traditional performances of mourning opens a wide space for cultural practices and for their various interpretations.

This space is surveyed in another dialogic treatise almost contemporary with Beacon’s. In Jean Veron’s *The Hvntyng of Purgatorye to death* (1561), a character named ‘Albion’ enquires of his learned friends why praying for the dead – a time-honoured custom previously encouraged with reference even to the Bible – should no longer be allowed. The answer is readily forthcoming: ‘Ye shall finde no where in all the Canonick scriptures’, he is told, ‘that we ought to pray for the dead’. Whatever scriptural authority has been cited for this custom is now revealed as untrustworthy and apocryphal. Therefore, ‘both kinge Henrye the eight, and also kinge Edward the sixte’ and all subsequent reformers ‘did most Catholically and christianlike’ when they pressed for ‘abolishinge or putting downe the massing sacrifices for the dead’

(Veron, 1561, p. v). The instructions on these matters, all for Albion's spiritual benefit, extend over four hundred pages and cover the complete range of doctrinal and liturgical issues. Thoroughly Protestant and polemically directed against Romish superstition, they demand utter simplicity in funeral customs: no plot of ground was sacred; no special place should be blessed for burial; pomp simply served to gratify greedy priests and indicated lack of faith; all laments and shows of grief must go against God's will. And yet the eloquent reformers also acknowledge the need for strategic compromise. Pure doctrine, they explain, is never easily enforced as common people invariably cling to their old ways. Certain aspects of tradition may therefore be tolerated to give congregations time to adjust. Here a historical parallel is constructed between contemporary predicaments in England and the early battles of the church against heathen ignorance – so that the boundary between Christianity and paganism is both reconstructed and transgressed. The ancient bishops and first ministers of the Christian church, we learn, already

dyd see that it was an hard thing to pluck those old and inuerterate customes from the hartes of them, that had bene nouselled in them from their youth. They did forsee that if they had buried their dead without som honest ceremonies, as the worlde did then take them, it had bene yet more harde to put away those olde rotten errors from them, that wer altogether wedded vnto them. [...] Therefore, it is not to be thought, but that the auncient byshops and pastors, considering the infirmity and obstinacy of the people in such thinges, and the affection that men do commonlye beare to theyr parents, frends and kinsfolks, when they be deade: did putte in vse and alow such kinde of singinge, as we haue alredy mentioned of [...] for to abolish such inordinate mournings, lamentings and bewailings [...] and also for to turn them into the laud and praise of God, and into thankes geuing. (Veron, 1561, pp. 45–6)

What here emerges is an ambiguous concession to the old ways. The speaker argues for embracing rather than banning ritual variety and, instead of rejecting former practices, trying to redirect their energies. Though passionate displays of mourning are prohibited, they can still be used and turned 'into the laud and praise of God'. The argument draws on the ambiguity of performative procedures, hence their potential for re-interpretation. Despite principal objections, the early bishops granted the popular demand for songs at funerals but declared that the singing

now served different ends. The pagan utterance may have been the same, but its pragmatic use and meaning were officially relabelled. This point of early Christian compromise from Veron's dialogue is so interesting, just like Elizabeth's funeral service for Henri II, because its appeal cannot easily be determined. The contrast set up by Veron between official and unofficial ways of mourning allows for resolution in more than one way and suggests intriguing possibilities for Elizabethan practices, too. On the one hand, the bishops' tolerance towards traditional performances seems to ensure emotional release while simultaneously recruiting the performers into the new religion. On the other hand, the continuation of an outlawed social practice, now licensed by authority, might also help perpetuate traditions that could not otherwise survive. In this way, the uncertain containment strategy championed in the Protestant treatise may also work in the contemporary cultural arena – above all in the playhouse, where acts of grief are equally ambiguous. The politics of mourning in the Shakespearean histories, I shall argue, explore such ambiguities in their pragmatic force.

All these examples from early Elizabethan discourses of mourning therefore illustrate what David Cressy calls 'a hybrid religious culture' (1997, p. 401) acknowledging the considerable variety of ritual across local, regional and social differences. Despite the uncompromising position taken in the twenty-second article, actual religious practices in Elizabethan England were never quite so uniform. Though purgatory was officially abolished and all intercessionary prayers banned, memories of them surely lingered and were not easily eliminated in congregations of the English church. Whether or not rhetorically sanctioned, as in Veron's dialogue, compromise in these matters seems to have been the rule rather than an exception for decades after the settlement. Despite strong moves towards conformity – at least in public and daily social conduct – reformed and unreformed elements intermingled until well into the 1580s, and even longer in some areas of the English north. So what happened to the devalued cultural practices and the now discarded ways of dealing with the dead? This question, pertinent to our reading of the histories, has been raised in Elizabeth Mazzola's study about sacred remains in Protestant culture. She argues that 'abandoned symbols or practices do not simply disappear from the mental landscapes' but instead may take on different, perhaps greater significance in other social spaces where 'outworn symbols can find their power increased by occupying the margins of accepted ideas, shadowing the background of the imagination' (1998, p. 1). The point is relevant, not just for the London playhouses occupying the margins of accepted society, but also

for the central monuments that continued to structure the newly organized urban space. The hybridization of religion during the Elizabethan period thus opened ways for later reinterpretations of material memorials.

In the iconoclastic raids during the early Reformation, burial monuments and church statues had routinely been defaced. But they were usually left standing with their damage visible, as if to commemorate the desire for violent erasure. In the late Tudor years and beyond, significantly, these stone remains of a prohibited religion continued to attract attention and became focal points for renewed cultural evaluation. The antiquarian John Stow, for instance, used his *Survey of London* (1598–1603/1971) not just for a description of the parish churches and their monuments, but also for denouncing all iconoclastic acts as barbarism. On the occasion of the second and enlarged edition of his book in 1603, he is reported to have said that his disdain for Tudor monuments was justified ‘because those men have bin the defacers of the monuments of others’ and so are ‘worthy to be deprived of that memory whereof they have injuriously robbed others’ (Manningham, 1868, p. 103). Stow’s frequent descriptions of surviving monuments, his transcriptions of epitaphs and careful reminders of the lives they commemorate all serve as a functional substitute for what has been suppressed. The surveyor’s routes through the city retrace historical memories and restore respectful attitudes towards the dead and their remains.

The second volume of his book culminates with the description of Westminster Abbey. Here the Plantagenet kings, heroes also of the English history plays, lie buried, many of them in defaced shrines, whose history is reconstructed for the readers’ benefit (cf. Stow, 1971, pp. 104ff). The same effort to commemorate the dead and so perhaps replace the traditional work of mourning is made in John Weever’s 1631 work on *Ancient Funerall Monuments*. ‘Here lieth buried in one of the stateliest Monuments of Europe,’ he writes about the Royal Chapel, ‘the body of *Henry* the seuenth, King of England, the first begotten Sonne of *Edmund*, Earle of Richmond,’ and goes on to praise the founding father of the Tudor dynasty. The author cites a stanza of Henry’s epitaph by John Skelton and eventually concludes: ‘Whosoeuer would know further of this king, let him reade his History, wherein hee is delineated to the life, by the matchlesse and neuer enough admired penne of that famous, learned, and eloquent knight, Sir *Francis Bacon*, not long since deceased.’ (1979, p. 476) But even as he recommends Bacon’s work, Weever also recommends his own, for he is himself committed to furnishing readers with an awareness of the past, encouraging more respectful attitudes

towards the dead. A truly monumental project, Weever's account of funeral monuments in the united monarchy not only maps the places of historic memory, but itself produces and performs such acts of communal memory as it calls for:

Hauing seene [...] how carefully in other Kingdomes, the Monuments of the dead are preserued, and their Inscriptions or Epitaphs registred in their Church-Bookes [...] and also knowing withall how barbarously within these his Maiesties Dominions, they are (to the shame of our time) broken downe, and vtterly almost all ruinated, their brasen Inscriptions erazed, torne away, and pilfered, by which inhumane, deformidable act, the honourable memory of many vertuous and noble persons deceased, is extinguished [...]: grieuing at this vnsufferable iniurie offered as well to the liuing, as the dead, out of the respect I bore to venerable Antiquity, and the due regard to continue the remembrance of the defunct to future posteritie; I determined with my selfe to collect such memorials of the deceased, as were remaining as yet vndefaced; as also to reuiue the memories of eminent worthy persons entombed or interred, either in Parish, or in Abbey Churches. (Weever, 1979, 'The Avthor to the Reader', unpaginated)

As Weever here explains in the opening of his address to the reader, he has taken up his antiquarian mission in response to the effects of iconoclasm, public neglect and oblivion. Almost a century after the campaigns of the Tudor Reformation and in conscious defence against their destructive energies, this historian reviews the change in funeral culture and returns to the historic graves as if to compensate loss by long-term politics of mourning. His book is to provide a substitute for faded memories, because his own writing stands in for epitaphs erased or missing. Whenever he found nameless monuments, he says, he interviewed church officers and local residents so that communal knowledge and oral tradition were to make up for any lack of written and official evidence. Weever authorizes this procedure with reference to his personal encounters and even recruits readers for the oral history project: 'let me intreate thy furtherance in the same thus farre, that, in thy neighbouring Churches, if thou shalt finde any ancient funerall Inscriptions, or antique obliterated Monuments, thou wouldst be pleased to copie out the one, and take so much relation of the other as tradition can deliuer' (ibid.). Instead of praying for the dead, post-Reformation Englishmen are still encouraged to revive their memory through personal encounters with visible remains.

Significantly, this project includes practices of spectatorship. In his chapter on the sanctity 'ascribed sometimes to funeral monuments' Weever writes at length about the general desire to visit the remains of heroes and see the tombs of great personages. Such forms of early modern 'necro-tourism' (cf. Döring, 2002), however, are especially interesting when current views of the religious monuments include reviews of their recent reinterpretation. 'What concourse of people come daily to view the liuely Statues and stately Monuments in Westminster Abbey?' Weever asks with calculated enthusiasm, 'wherein the sacred ashes of so many of the Lords anointed, beside other great Potentates are entombed. A sight which brings delight and admiration, and strikes a religious apprehension into the mindes of the beholders' (Weever, 1979, p. 41). We note how the antiquarian's rhetoric here makes a religious experience contingent on 'delight and admiration', that is on feelings otherwise located in the playhouse, just as his emphasis on the sights and views that people come for seems more appropriate for popular spectacles than for churches. But this may rather be the point. In Weever's reinterpretation of the central memorial space for the Plantagenets, royal tombs are no more sites for religious practice; they rather become sights for aesthetic contemplation. As in their reappearances as 'liuely statues' on the Shakespearean history stage a generation earlier, the sacred medieval English monarchs have turned into figures of popular commemoration.

In his comprehensive study of the English Reformation, Eamon Duffy has identified the urge to destroy old monuments as its driving force. With purgatory abolished, tombs, effigies, relics and all other mementos of the dead could no longer be sacralized or tolerated as remnants or even as mere witnesses of discarded beliefs. Especially the Edwardian campaigns of violent destruction were launched to consign all such manifestations of the popish church to oblivion, so that the doctrines they embodied might also be forgotten. For Duffy therefore, 'iconoclasm was the central sacrament of the reform' (1992, p. 480). My foregoing discussion of funeral practices and commemorative sites in post-Reformation England has given some illustration as well as some qualification for this argument. Duffy's comment certainly captures the importance of iconoclastic acts in enforcing Protestantism, but it does not sufficiently address the possibilities for transformed and displaced forms of commemoration, in the sense suggested by Mazzola, which other cultural practices may have opened up. Perhaps destructive acts against material memorials could even be regarded as gestures paying an implicit tribute to their value. For as Mazzola speculates,

'iconoclasm's loathing of sacred images imagines their power more forcefully' (1998, p. 106).

Some aspect of this power seems, in fact, to have been realized in the theatres as places of performative commemoration. As I argue below in more detail, this aspect concerns, above all, the Shakespearean history plays and their scenarios of mourning. Determinately facing the past and engaging their spectators with contemporary memories of the dead, the English stage histories of the 1590s powerfully address issues of memory a generation after the Elizabethan settlement. But they do so – and this is crucial – in full view of *both* pre-Reformation *and* post-Reformation cultural practices. As indicated with the opening of *1 Henry VI*, the histories explore the politics of mourning in a constant interplay between their historicized *locus* – firmly settled in the old religion – and their historical *platea* – clearly situated in the new. Their commitment to acts of public memory can perhaps best be appreciated in the sense of Stow's or Weever's agenda, offering an oral history project as cultural substitute for the acts of violent oblivion committed against monuments in the recent past.

O peers of England, shameful is this league,
 Fatal this marriage, cancelling your fame,
 Blotting your names from books of memory,
 Razing the characters of your renown,
 Defacing monuments [...].

(*First Part of the Contention / 2 Henry VI*, 1.1.94–8)

What Shakespeare's Duke of Gloucester laments here is King Henry's marriage to Margaret of Anjou, a prospective union which threatens to undo 'all, as all had never been' (1.1.99). But the vocabulary which Gloucester uses to describe this 'common grief of all the land' (1.1.73) recalls the shameful effects of iconoclasm as if to recall Reformation violence. Conversely, Margaret later uses the Protestant vocabulary of idolatry when she accuses Henry of wrongly worshipping Gloucester's 'statue' in mourning the Duke's violent death (3.2.80). Proleptically, the early history play thus foregrounds issues of sixteenth-century religious campaigns whose consequences came to be reviewed, in late Tudor and in Stuart culture, with some criticism and concern. As illustrated with the antiquarian projects at the end of Elizabeth's reign, these conflicts of memory and oblivion left scars that attracted renewed cultural attention. Defaced monuments and razed characters were programmatically compensated for with historical surveys and new books of memory – not

unlike the historical characters who appeared on stage and whose names were newly given faces by the actors.

The Church of England, Cressy has explained (1997, p. 477), ‘was never a monolith and spoke with multiple voices’ – just as the theatre is never univocal but constitutes itself by staging many different views and voices. But precisely because the English church embraced such a wide spectrum of beliefs and practices, all religious ceremonies in Elizabethan England were essentially politicized: customary performances of rites and worship turned into tests of conformity and discipline. What does this mean for Elizabethan theatre? How may stage performances of memory and their politics of mourning perform tests of social discipline? Do they present a variety of voices in order to acknowledge historical difference or to promote public conformity? What authority governs their shows of mourning? And does Shakespearean theatre respect or redirect it? These are key questions for my reading of some central scenes from the York and Lancaster tetralogies in the framework of changing memory rites. Before returning to the playtexts, however, I shall look at one other medium of cultural representation in which the issues of Tudor memory that concern us here are powerfully negotiated.

1.2 Remembrance of things past

Among the Tudor paintings in the National Portrait Gallery, there is a rather small and modest picture by an unknown artist entitled ‘Allegory of the Reformation’ (see Figure 1.1). It is a group portrait showing thirteen figures arranged in three distinct scenes: a deathbed; a young king on the throne with councillors sitting round a table at his side; the Pope with two mendicant friars trying to escape. Somewhat awkwardly combined into the larger and not quite coherent whole, the scenes are so presented side by side as if to tell a story. Its plot unfolds, once the principal protagonists have been identified. The central figure is young King Edward VI. To his right, his father Henry VIII lies dying and, pointing with his left hand to the son, he evidently passes on the regal powers to his heir. To Edward’s left, a standing Knight of the Garter represents the Protector Somerset, with the seated group of other nobles at his side, while the Pope beneath Edward’s throne is crushed under the impact of an English book which falls on him so powerfully that it seems to break his neck. As the given title indicates, this painting allegorically tells the familiar story of the English Reformation with its gathering momentum in 1547 when the infant Tudor prince, on whom all hopes of the reformers concentrated, succeeded to the throne.



Figure 1.1 Allegory of the Reformation: King Edward VI and the Pope (includes John Russell, 1st Earl of Bedford; Thomas Cranmer; King Edward VI; King Henry VIII; John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland; Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset) by unknown artist, c. 1570 © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Two decades earlier, Henry VIII and his quarrels with Rome had set the country on the way towards Protestantism. But his later years were marked by some indeterminacy and religious irresolution. This is why the precarious point of royal death and dynastic succession, an 'alteration of state' (McCoy, 2002) often beset with anxieties, was now eagerly anticipated by reformers as the inaugurating moment of the first truly Protestant reign in England,³ according to the Protestant court party around Somerset who took control after Henry's death. This moment is depicted in the painting, celebrating the dynastic transition, not as a rupture, but as a promise of fulfilment. Rather than the ending of a glorious period, a time for grief and mourning, the old king's death is shown to herald the beginning of an even better future with his heir finally completing the great work of reform: with Edward VI, Protestantism will reign triumphant.

The painting tells this hopeful story of the-ending-as-beginning in an interesting combination of visual and verbal signs. The panel includes several biblical inscriptions (more of which were evidently planned for the four remaining white squares). Some of the figures portrayed bear explanatory labels indicating their essential quality – predictably, the Pope is labelled 'idolatry' – rather as in John Bale's near-contemporary play *King Johan*, whose characters appear both in historical and typological shape. Given the painting's engagement with religious issues, the double use of word and image is remarkable because it concerns a famous difference between the old religion and the new (cf. Klarer, 2001, p. 36). In this view, the centrally located English Bible appears to be so powerful in defeating idolatrous Catholicism because of its reliance on the written word. As the verse depicted reads, 'The word of the Lord endureth for ever.' Conversely, the Protestant campaigns against superstitious images are represented in the upper right-hand corner of the painting. Here, placed in an inset or a window frame, we see a group of soldiers tearing down a statue of the Virgin against a background of bizarre architectural ruins. In his classic reading of the picture, Roy Strong (1960, pp. 311–13) explained this scene as showing the widespread destruction of church imagery which began shortly after Edward's succession and was followed in February 1548 by the order for the complete removal of all images. That is to say, Strong interpreted the framed scene as a window opening our view to contemporaneous developments that take place outside the council chamber and as a result of the religious policy decided there. Accordingly, Strong dated the picture in this early Edwardian context before the fall of the Protector Somerset in October 1549.

In a more recent reading, however, and on a broad basis of iconographic evidence, Margaret Aston (1993) has conclusively established that 'The Allegory of the Reformation' is at least two decades younger than Strong assumed. Instead of the late 1540s, the painting must have been produced around 1570 under a later Tudor monarch, probably coinciding with Elizabeth's excommunication by the Pope, hence, with the resurgence of anti-Catholic fervour in England. What follows from this later date? Consequences are potentially far-reaching. For instance, Aston's analysis makes clear that the act of iconoclasm in the upper right-hand corner is not seen through a window, but depicted as a picture-in-the-picture. Like several other elements in the collage, it was derived from an identifiable printed source and shows a specific event in the past. Ironically, the Protestant destruction of imagery is here itself represented as an image, self-consciously placed in a frame as if to emphasize that it is transferred from the earlier context. In Aston's phrase (1993, p. 214), it is a 'borrowed scene'. Such borrowings and transfers structure the religious rhetoric of the whole work. Like the iconoclastic campaign in the margin, the central scene of death and succession is not contemporaneous with the moment when the painting was produced. The regal transition lies almost a generation in the past and is two monarchs removed. The 'Allegory of the Reformation', then, does not tell a contemporary but a historical story. What difference does this make?

With all the figures it shows having passed away, the painting explores how to remember them and how to appreciate their legacy in later times. As a piece of Protestant propaganda, according to Aston, the painting was commissioned in order to urge its original beholder to renew the iconoclastic zeal of Edward's reign. For this purpose, it shows a series of reformers from biblical to Tudor times. The intended narrative was meant to include the beholders and to conclude only with their own reformation. Among the addressees of this imperative, Aston considers Queen Elizabeth a likely choice because her notoriously compromising attitude in matters of religion was so often criticized. But for my argument, the addressee is less important than the combination of commemorative and imperative gestures which are performed here. All the historical figures represented in the painting – Henry VIII and Edward VI, Protector Somerset and, seated among the councillors, Bishop Cranmer – were long dead when it was first seen. But their memory survived and the picture was produced to make this point: painting preserves memory. As Gerlach Fricke, the artist who painted the 1546 portrait of Bishop Cranmer, wrote at the top of his own self-portrait in a Latin inscription: 'This he himself painted from a looking-glass for his

dear friends. That they might have something by which to remember him after his death' (Smith, 2000, p. 37). In the same hope, 'The Allegory of the Reformation' seems to have served both as a memento of the dead and as a looking-glass for the living.

However, Fricke made his programmatic self-inscription in 1554, at a time when England under Mary Tudor had returned to Catholic rule. Here, the painter's portrait could easily assist his friends in mourning and remembering the deceased and even praying for him, because all this was part of the ruling religion. But with Elizabeth's accession, the politics of memory in English culture changed. As we have seen, the new dispensation no longer allowed quite the same modes of active commemoration previously encouraged by intercessions, prayers, rituals and other forms of communing with the dead. In an Elizabethan context, the 'Allegory of the Reformation' operates in a contested cultural territory and with conflicting strategies. As a representation of past events and persons, it places the dead English dignitaries safely in a historical perspective. But as a purposeful engagement with their topical relevance and present power, the painting also communicates a sense by which the dead, like the scriptural verses quoted, still speak to the living and call on them to follow their example. In this sense, the Protestant painting exemplifies the same irony suggested with its borrowed image of image-breaking. Demanding progress towards more resolute reforms, the painting as a whole still borrows or retains aspects from pre-Reformation practices of memory, commanding attention to the dead and what they tell us.

This marks the central issue for the politics of mourning in the Shakespearean histories, too, raised with their double level of performance – between *locus* and *platea* – in the cultural function of the stage. Like them, the painting operates on one level as a historical depiction: it reconstructs some scenes from the past in a synoptic view of previous developments in England. On the allegorical level, however, these scenes in the painting are released from a contingent place in time and invested with a typological meaning so as to promote cultural developments in England. Our sense of topicality arises to the extent that the represented characters change from figures of remembrance into figures of commitment, so that the dead return as models for the living. Arguably, this also holds true for the history plays. Like the 'Allegory of the Reformation', they work with well-known characters from the past whose relevance for the present audience they establish and explore. According to the old school of their critical reception, the providential reading best exemplified by Tillyard (1962), the history plays

all subscribe to a particular vision of history, which they propagate just as emphatically as the painting propagates religious reform. But even if we follow the more recent 'Machiavellian' readings of the histories (Rackin, 1990, p. 43), there are still several aspects which they share with this painting. As theatre projects they are part of social interactions with a strong sense of topical address. Like the painting, they combine visual with verbal elements to make their point, sometimes emphasizing visual symbols, as in the Temple Garden scene (*1 Henry VI*, 2.4), to schematize political factions. They form composite works of loosely integrated parts. Their frequent metadramatic reflections correspond to the picture-in-the-picture, challenging beholders to think about the power of representation. And the history plays – like the painting – all engage with memory and the precarious issue of how to face the dead.

Above all, the deathbed scene is crucial in this context. With the dying monarch's hand stretched out in a gesture of farewell and prophecy, the king's pose in the painting is modelled on a well-known figure in the *ars moriendi* tradition, the dying elder who communicates his last will as he leaves this world.⁴ With the model of a pious, peaceful and ritually managed death, the *ars moriendi* reassures the bereaved that the deceased will pass into a better state. In a similar way, the Shakespearean history plays operate against a background of established meanings, reassuring cultural typologies, religious figurations and allegorical constructions in familiar texts and images from which they freely borrow and, at times, freely deviate. True, the plays were written and performed in the 1590s in very different circumstances and surely gained far greater popular attention than the exclusive painting some twenty years before. But with their constant exploration of transitional moments, alterations of state, dynastic ruptures and the legitimacy of royal succession, they stage many scenes which recall the constellation in the picture.

Moments like the deathbed scene when remembrance of things past is summoned with anticipations of the future recur throughout the history cycle. Many of them combine a genealogical narrative with a prophecy whose utterance is authorized by imminent death, and most of them occur when historical continuities are at stake. 'Methinks I am a prophet new-inspired, / And thus, expiring, do foretell of him' (*Richard II*, 2.1.31–2). John of Gaunt's deathbed exhortation, for example, is prefaced with an explicit reference to the conventional wisdom that 'the tongues of dying men / Enforce attention' (2.1.5–6), and it is not delivered before its intended audience has arrived. Significantly though, this scene evokes the traditional piety of respectful and attentive care for the dying

only to mark a contrast to the current situation where the younger generation, far from mourning the impending loss, can hardly wait to take control. The same happens in the deathbed scene at the dynastic transition from Henry IV to Henry V, with its conflict between the desire for power and the dutiful expression of mourning. Here, Prince Hal first contemplates his sleeping father and soberly reckons up what each must give and take: emotional display for royal power. 'Thy due from me / Is tears and heavy sorrows', while 'My due from thee is this imperial crown' (*2 Henry IV*, 4.3.167–71). All gestures and signs of mourning are thus part of an exchange of 'dues' and fully integrated into the performance of a social obligation. But rather than taking Hal to task and scolding him for apparent callousness, we should take this as a paradigm for the politics of mourning. The claim for power is made by showing grief – 'tears and heavy sorrows' – and by making sure the show will be observed in public: mourning becomes succession.

Such political imperatives generally concern dynastic transitions when the divine royal persona is transferred to a new mortal body, a complex problem classically described, since Kantorowicz (1957), with the formula of the 'king's two bodies'. In the dialogue between Henry IV and the Prince, the dying king alludes to it when he rebukes his son for seeking to 'invest' himself 'with my honours' (4.3.223). Hal has trespassed in taking up the insignia of kingship without the required performance of mourning, that is without acknowledging the status of his predecessor's 'body'. *This* is the core of his terrible act 'to mock at form' (4.3.246), and this is why his due expression of 'tears' and 'grief' that follows can immediately restore the formal balance (4.3.266–9). Hal's tearful apology and his re-staging of the neglected mourning scene immediately repair his breach. We see here how the politics of mourning serve to regulate a crisis of authority and continuity. When the dying king goes on to remember conflicts of the past, we witness yet another deathbed speech that combines a historical record with hopes towards a better future. Besides, we note the king's reminder of the 'crook'd ways' by which he gained his title and of the bitter 'argument' which troubled him throughout his reign (4.3.312–26) and which will be resolved with the succession. In all these ways, the deathbed scene from *2 Henry IV* converges with the deathbed scene represented in the 'Allegory of the Reformation'. In both cases, the new generation promises to solve the conflicts of the old. Even the terms used in Shakespeare's dialogue are fitting (cf. 4.3.327, 314, 326, 315–16, 327, 328). The title as head of the English church, which Henry VIII 'purchased' through his 'troublesome' break with a sacred authority and which came to form the central

'argument' of his reign, shall now in 1547 'descend with better quiet, / Better opinion, better confirmation' onto his son and successor. The old king's death 'changes the mood', so that Edward VI – just like Henry V – will have the chance to deal with opposition and silence all dissatisfaction 'in a more fairer sort'.

My point is not to suggest any influence on Shakespearean drama derived from this specific painting, nor any dramatic reference to it. The point rather lies in acknowledging their shared concern with historical transitions and with the cultural modes of managing them. The threshold scenario of deathbed situations is not just richly implicated in providential patterns of memory and prophecy; it also offers powerful opportunities for the living to behold themselves as in a looking-glass. The historical painting as well as the history plays draw on this power as they explore the politics of mourning in performance. In fact, the plays frequently show a concern for images and image-making that suggests some commentary on the image-breaking campaigns of the Reformation. As Henry IV lies dying, he refers to his son and heir as 'the noble image of my youth' (*2 Henry IV*, 4.3.55). Yet the current value of this 'image' stands in question as long as the Prince is wont to spend his time in ignoble company. His father therefore sees his own hopeful 'image' in danger and fears that his paternal 'grief / Stretches itself beyond the hour of death' (4.3.56–7). But with Hal's reformation at the king's deathbed, we witness how old Henry's young image is indeed ennobled and soon becomes again the radiant figure of the model monarch we have known him to be all along. The notion of 'image' is so re-invested with some of the charismatic power it once held in the old religion.

For this reason it is relevant to recall the corresponding scene in the anonymous and earlier history play entitled *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (c. 1580s). It stages this same redemptive moment with a verbal echo of Christ's words on the cross, when the dying king says: 'Oh my sonne, my sonne, what cause hath ever bene, / That thou shouldst forsake me?' (Griffin, 2001, p. 60), thus framing their encounter in biblical vocabulary but reversing the father-son relationship. Benjamin Griffin has interpreted this point in the earlier play when Harry mournfully repents his conduct and is 'born new again' as an allusion to the festive cycle, hence, as evidence for the 'recovery' of English historical drama from a cultural shock: 'A dramatic tradition, the celebratory-historical fracas, had been choked off by the Reformation; but it, and the festive principles which it embodied, were incorporated into the nascent permanent-theater repertoire' (2001, p. 62). Against the cultural

background established in the first part of this chapter, I would like to suggest that Shakespeare's deathbed scene with the Prince's reformation stages a historical 'recovery' process whereby the status of the 'image' violated in the Reformation is being re-evaluated and re-incorporated into the repertoires of Elizabethan cultural memory. What in the scene from *Famous Victories* appeared as a reversal of filial and paternal roles is now set right as soon as the son, instead of the father, performs his grief in dutiful conformance. The citational character of Hal's mourning can thus be understood as the recovery of a model previously discarded, a strategy which might have bearings on Elizabethan funeral reforms. As illustrated earlier with Beacon's *Sicke Mans Salve*, Protestant propaganda generally reversed the occasion for mourning and declared death a moment for the bereaved to 'reioyce' and be 'mery'. When, *before* showing any grief, Hal takes the crown and rejoices at his father's death, we find him still in an unreformed state. His true image can only be recovered through a reformulated version of the traditional pieties of grief. Thus, the performance of mourning in this crucial history scene alludes to pre-Reformation practices even as it has reversed their cultural function: whatever 'religious apprehension' they may strike into the minds of beholders, mourning gestures now become, in Weever's phrase cited above, a popular sight for 'delight and admiration'.

In this way, a contextual reading of the Shakespearean histories and their politics of mourning can serve to trace the cultural dynamics set in motion through their constant acts of commemoration. Aleida Assmann has argued (1994, p. 45) that memory plays the central role throughout this dramatic cycle. Historical memories are always evoked here to motivate, legitimate or interpret current decisions and political acts. Since memory is always partial and selective, its pragmatic uses on the stage emerge as key techniques in making and potentially remaking claims of identity and social power. These English history plays are centrally concerned, then, not with staging a series of military battles, but with a 'battle of memories', in Assmann's phrase, whose victories and victims they chronicle in performance. Following this analysis, I would like to argue that such conflicts take centre stage in the performances of mourning. The battle of memories is fought out in the deathbed scenes, as we have seen, just as in the scenes of lament and sorrow, of violent death and passionate grieving, of funeral practices and memorial rites, which recur throughout the two tetralogies.

However, the politics of memory and mourning are not just prominently performed *in* these plays; they are also performed *with* these plays. In the public playhouses, in front of a mixed audience whose active

participation they invite, the Shakespearean histories summon up remembrance of things past whose status in Elizabethan culture and religion, according to our earlier survey, was known to be contested. The dying speech of Henry IV denouncing the current mockery of 'form' therefore held topical relevance, just like Gaunt's dire deathbed prophecy about England's fate, when performed for late Elizabethan spectators. Their relevance arises from the interplay of historicity and topicality that lies at the heart of the histories. That contemporaries viewed them in these terms is well documented, not just in the need for censorship but also, for example, with the re-staging of *Richard II* in 1601, on the eve of an attempted coup. But when the historical is thus programmatically allied to the topical, the Shakespearean performances of mourning are intriguingly suggestive in staging memories of the traditional rites which, after the religious settlement, could not be practised any more. In analysing these theatrical uses of the past, my subsequent readings aim to show how such battles of memory turn the playhouse into an arena so as to explore – and possibly deplore – contemporary politics of mourning.

1.3 Memory battles and stage laments

Throughout the York plays, we find scenes of onstage dying where the passage from life to death mobilizes genealogical narratives and heroic monumentalization. For the first time this occurs before the walls of Orléans (*1 Henry VI*, 1.6). During the English siege of the city, we see how Salisbury and Gargrave are shot and killed, each with a cry for mercy on his lips. Their fall is witnessed with intense dismay by Talbot, who has just returned from French captivity. His mournful speech over Salisbury's mutilated body (1.6.50–77) includes a verbal rendering of the dying man's last will, which Salisbury communicates in non-verbal gesturing. According to Talbot's translation, he calls on him to retaliate against Orléans, a call immediately answered by Talbot's solemn vow to take revenge. Mourning here translates into prompt action as the chief mourner claims to assume the name and military spirit of the deceased.

'Frenchmen, I'll be a Salisbury to you' (1.6.84): with this metaphoric transformation and revengeful cry, Talbot is indeed victorious. As soon as he enters the defeated city, his first deed is to have Salisbury's body brought into the market place and to announce the building of a funerary monument, so that

hereafter ages may behold
 What ruin happened in revenge of him,

Within their chiefest temple I'll erect
A tomb, wherein his corpse shall be interred –
Upon the which, that everyone may read,
Shall be engraved the sack of Orléans,
The treacherous manner of his mournful death,
And what a terror he had been to France. (2.2.10–16)

In these early war scenes, then, the play establishes a model of the politics of mourning. Salisbury is the first prominent casualty and he is used to show how violent death is compensated for. Talbot's quick retaliation and the monumental tomb by which he plans to publish Salisbury's heroic story provide both military and symbolic substitution for the loss suffered among the English nobles. The model seems to work so effectively because its chief executor, Talbot, has largely instrumentalized himself to this single purpose and, since he witnessed Salisbury's death, has devoted his ambition to achieving this one end. From interpreting the last words of the dying man, Talbot moves on to assume his parting spirit and, as if reviving Salisbury's vengeful soul, then carries out his final will. The imperative to 'remember' the dead (1.6.72) is emphatically followed through to the point of personal identification. When, in Salisbury's epitaph, Talbot writes about the 'terror he had been to France', he employs the same epithet by which he will eventually himself be remembered after his own death (4.7.78). At that point, Sir William Lucy takes on the duty of public commemoration and with such vigour that the French say he is 'Talbot's ghost' because 'he speaks with such a proud commanding spirit' (4.7.87–8). As in the earlier constellation between Salisbury and Talbot, we see again how the heroic mourner appears like a revenant, in voice and spirit, of the one who is mourned.

However, the model so established is immediately called into doubt. As a closer look reveals, the processes of substitution work in more than one way and so suggest rather different motivations for the work of mourning. The ambiguities emerge with Talbot's public tribute. Significantly, the same place where he commands Salisbury's corpse to be brought, the market place of Orléans, was previously the scene where Talbot himself suffered humiliation. 'With scoffs and scorns and contumelious taunts', he was earlier placed there as a prisoner of war 'to be a public spectacle to all' (1.6.17, 19). So he was forced to occupy in shame the very spot where he now places the bier and plans to erect the noble tomb: the 'middle centre of this cursed town' (2.2.6) to which he returns in victory has already seen him as victim. Then, he could do nothing

else but pick up stones and throw them at the taunting French spectators in order to defend himself against their gaze. Now, he intends to have a grand monument built of stone in order to attract the citizens' eyes to the perpetual manifestation of their city's shame. But his own story, as suggested in the earlier scene, contains a trauma of unresolved personal suffering. Thus, Talbot's memorial for Salisbury seems to function as a screen memory for his own wound, and the Shakespearean history drama shows how the model of monumental public mourning is employed to cover – perhaps even to heal – recent scars. In view of the social scars left by the English Reformation, the ambiguity here established seems to be relevant for the memorial project of the Shakespearean histories as a whole.

In *1 Henry VI*, the next instance of onstage dying shows a version of the deathbed scenario, where the passage from life to death is staged as a power transfer from the old generation to the young. The scene appears complete with a long genealogical narrative (2.5.63–96) and the prophetic vision of a better future to which the heir pledges allegiance by taking responsibility for the funeral. In this respect, the bond between Mortimer and Richard Plantagenet recalls the bond between Salisbury and Talbot, because in each case the living symbolically inherits and eventually fulfils the claim of the dying man. Again, performances of mourning manifest obligation and empowerment and so manage the transitional phase in personal as in political domains. Throughout the histories, this pattern is employed. Its relevance grows with the growing devastation of the country as the violence increases in the course of the tetralogy. But the more our sense of mindless slaughter deepens, the more powerful the rituals of mourning emerge as attempted affirmations of what has been lost: a meaningful social order.

In fact, this sense of loss has been present all along. Already the opening scene briefly discussed at the outset (cf. section 1.1) with its grand pageantry of mourners is haunted by their dark awareness that the forms of grieving they employ lack cultural efficacy. The point is made with Exeter's speech, third in the sequence, shifting attention to the situation in the playhouse: 'We mourn in black; why mourn we not in blood?' (1.1.17) His paronomasia is directed against the passive peers, but its rhetorical force questions current funerary performances in general. He goes on to criticize the props and means of make-believe, the scaffold where the mourners all attend to a 'wooden coffin' instead of engaging with the situation more effectively. And again, such criticism bears on the ambiguities of manifesting grief. Always working with theatricality and always haunted by its discontents, monumental funerals with all

their pomp may well be seen as futile. They are material reassertions of social status in the face of death, but their symbolic efforts also undermine themselves. As Exeter insists, the whole spectacle does not so much commemorate King Henry's victories as King Death's. To him, the mourners are mere players of an authority which controls them all and whose 'stately presence' they must 'glorify, / Like captives bound to a triumphant car' (*1 Henry VI*, 1.1.21–2). His trope turns the royal hearse into a triumphal chariot and the theatre of mourning into a Triumph of Death. Exeter's imagery thus recalls the figure familiar from medieval tradition that continued to shape early modern notions of mortality.⁵ Death enthroned as a mighty prince and tyrant, conquering and enslaving all: the image evoked here challenges heraldic funerals and suggests a reinterpretation of their message. Instead of symbolic substitution for what has been lost, their ceremonious order falls prey to a greater power. 'Thus', as Neill (1997, p. 91) says, 'death appropriates and burlesques the very ceremonies of distinction by which society reckons to keep his levelling wildness in check'.

This image recurs at key moments in the history plays, most prominently in Warwick's final speech: 'Lo now my glory smeared in dust and blood' (*Richard Duke of York / 3 Henry VI*, 5.2.23). With this citation of the *sic transit gloria* topos, the dying kingmaker challenges the audience to question not just his own achievements, but principally the effects of all worldly powers: 'Why, what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust?' (5.2.27). What indeed? Warwick's question is rhetorical and yet it reveals the troubling ambivalence of funeral pomp. On the one hand, the investments made in ceremonies, monuments and processions are material markers of distinction and so help reproduce the social order that death has disrupted. Against the levelling power of King Death, funeral performances mobilize the distinctive power of cultural devices to signify degree. On the other hand, these signifiers also allow different interpretations because, as material markers, they are themselves subject to transience. Funeral monuments, too, will eventually turn into 'earth and dust' and so serve as a *memento mori*.

All this goes to show that the forms and signs of mourning are not easily controlled. In fact, several Elizabethan writers turned to this problem and discussed the precarious politics of public funeral processions. Chief among these, William Segar, had his comprehensive treatise *Honor Military and Ciuill* (1602) culminate in two chapters about burial honours where he lists the full scale of semiotic means to mark social distinction. His account exemplifies the conservative doctrine of the 'dignities and honourable degrees' which are to be observed in all activities of life and

which, he says, apply with equal or with greater force when public life has ended: 'As man (aboue other creatures) is honoured in life, so ought his buriall be decent and honourable: Wherein we are to follow the example of our Sauior Christ being both God and man. For albeit he subiected himselfe to worldly contumelies, and death ignominious, yet was his Funerall notable and glorious' (Segar, 1602, p. 251).⁶ His protocol for funeral processions, rhetorically buttressed by biblical example, illustrates what I described as the politics of mourning (cf. section 1.1) staged also in the Shakespearean plays. But at the same time it suggests the precarious dynamics and dangerous interactions which occur at public funerals with their meeting of 'diuers degrees' and which the strict regime of rank and heraldry must try to contain. Similarly, the whole project of Segar's book to explain and justify the strategies of civil honour shows that these were no longer followed without question. In fact, his constant appeals to the existing order may rather indicate this order's gradual erosion in a threshold period of religious re-orientation, social mobility and constant need for political realignment.

In this context, the battle of memories in and through the English history plays take on renewed significance as they involve anxieties of loss in Elizabethan England. Such anxieties are, I would like to suggest, cultural consequences of Protestant reform in the ritual order which are reworked and in some cases perhaps compensated for through the *ersatz* rituals performed on the stage. Above all, we may find such cases in the great tableaux and choric threnodies of female lament in *Richard III*. In this tragedy, where the providential promise for a better social order is the only hope remaining, dynastic transfers are frequently cited to console the suffering. 'Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward's grave', Earl Rivers tells his grieving sister in the Folio text (2.2.88/11–88/12), 'And plant your joys in living Edward's throne'. The juxtaposition of 'grave' and 'throne' works to normalize the power of death by suggesting that filial succession will offer substitution. But before long, this play will show how 'living Edward' must join 'dead Edward' in his grave so as to yield the throne to Richard. Normal sequences and orderly procedures cannot be trusted any longer under Richard Gloucester's rule. The only consolation for the living lies in constantly remembering the dead. Their acts of memory and mourning, though, are also haunted by uncertainties.

In Act III, a curious little dialogue (for which no precedent in Shakespeare's sources has been found) emphasizes this double aspect: it raises hopes for the power of collective memory while also reminding us of the vagaries of commemoration. 'Death made no conquest of this

conqueror,' young Prince Edward says of Julius Caesar, because 'he lives in fame though not in life' (3.1.87–8). That is to say, memory survives over many generations in some cultural shape. The prince is speaking of the Tower, where he is being taken by his uncle and protector. Edward does not like this building, as he says (3.1.68), but he takes interest in its history, which reportedly began with Caesar. As Buckingham explains, the emperor did indeed 'begin that place, / Which since succeeding ages have re-edified' (3.1.70–1). This piece of information, however, rather questions than confirms the prince's hope for true succession in the work of memory. With every age 're-edifying' the material construction, the monument is subject to continuous transformations according to each age's needs. In this sceptical perspective, the Tower does not so much manifest Caesar's undying fame as the imperative, for each new generation, to reconstruct the past so as to appropriate its legacy for present uses. The point involves a comment from a self-confident playwright, as Tillyard said (1962, p. 203), that his dramatized version of the past continues and transforms traditional historical records, like the ones by Polydore or Hall. But, more importantly, the point involves the politics of memory which is explored in *Richard III* and throughout the history plays in their performances of mourning. In some of its most memorable scenes, this final York play highlights how the past is reconstructed in acts of political commemoration, even as the play itself mobilizes their edifying and transforming power.

Richmond's final speech, for instance, so central for providential readings according to the so-called 'Tudor Myth', begins with the arrangements for a decorous funeral: all fallen soldiers, he commands, are to be interred 'as becomes their births' (5.8.15). Richmond then continues with strategic reminders of the divisive past now superseded by a glorious and peaceful future. But for all his promise of 'this fair conjunction' and the 'fair prosperous days' ahead (5.8.20, 34), the audience is likely to remember still another 'final' speech delivered earlier in the play, when the dying king already tried to stage a general reconciliation between the divided parties. With 'peace' and 'love' and 'unity' (2.1.6, 21, 31) Edward IV had already used the same vocabulary which at the end is used to perform a new historical beginning. The victory speech at Bosworth is, in some ways, just an echo of what we heard before. Hence, the parallel we sense between these two points of programmatic reconciliation questions the finality of providential schemes. Throughout, this history play is intensely aware of its violent prehistory. Determined to leave the political divisions behind, *Richard III* contains many reminders of the need to remember and, at the same time, safely inter

the past. Like Caesar's monument, the Tower, memories survive here only in transformed, if not disfigured, shape – disfigurements which we see embodied in the title figure. In this view, Richard's ability to reshape memories according to his own purpose is paradigmatic for the general strategy by which the past has been subjected to the present. While Prince Edward is delivering his precocious speech about 'the truth' that 'should live from age to age, [...] / Even to the general all-ending day' (3.1.76–8), Richard intervenes with an aside characteristic of his improvised gestures, disturbing ceremonial deliveries and upsetting the performance of determined memories.

The same happens in Act I when Richard confronts Lady Anne and turns her ceremony of lament into a scene of violent seduction (1.2). And this is also what he does in his famous devastating move, when he reverses Margaret's curse so that it turns against herself, comically deflating its grand performative pathos (1.3.231–7). These confrontations are all instances of the larger battle of memories that is fought in *Richard III*, for which the female characters eventually combine against his power. It has often been noted that the women's curses and ritualized laments are a prominent feature of the play. They come to embody the country's memories of suffering and so establish a counter-memory against the record of monumental acts and military honours. The women's performances of mourning thus set a different political agenda than the male heroics of remembrance that we previously saw in Talbot. Margaret's first appearance and her aside 'I remember them too well' (1.3.118) set the theme. Hers is a mode of remembrance that is not readily received in the official domain and initially has no stage of its own. But with her insistence that her task is 'repetition' (1.3.165), that is recital and narration of the past, the banished woman's voice demands attention and gradually gains resonance. Before long, she is joined by the other women, until the former enemies unite in shared grief against Richard. In two grand scenes of stylized wailing (2.2. and 4.4.), the widows, victims and bereaved mothers combine their lamenting voices in a chorus of commemoration. The iterative rhetoric of their speeches, which have been interpreted as giving new coherence to England's national identity (Scholz, 1999, p. 108), is powerful and certainly suggests a strong sense of shared fate:

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Ah, for my husband, for my dear Lord Edward!

CHILDREN: Ah, for our father, for our dear Lord Clarence!

DUCHESS OF YORK: Alas, for both, both mine, Edward and Clarence!

QUEEN ELIZABETH: What stay had I but Edward, and he's gone?

CHILDREN: What stay had we but Clarence, and he's gone?
 DUCHESS OF YORK: What stays had I but they, and they are gone?
 QUEEN ELIZABETH: Was never widow had so dear a loss!
 CHILDREN: Were never orphans had so dear a loss!
 DUCHESS OF YORK: Was never mother had so dear a loss!
 Alas, I am the mother of these griefs.
 Their woes are parcelled, mine is general.

(2.2.71–81)

Like Margaret's 'repetition' (1.3.165), this performance is like a ritual of verbal incantation. The strict parallelism of the lines functions to bind the speakers together and make their voices – like their historical cases – indistinguishable, until their common cause of mourning supersedes all previous political divisions between them. This is especially relevant in Act IV where Margaret first questions 'if sorrow can admit society' (4.4.38) and then is indeed reminded of her own atrocities (4.4.44–5). But, again, the force of rhetorical iteration soon overrides all memories of former difference and instead produces a community of woe:

QUEEN MARGARET: I had an Edward, till a Richard killed him;
 I had a husband, till a Richard killed him.
 Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard killed him;
 Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him.
 DUCHESS OF YORK: I had a Richard too, and thou didst kill him;
 I had a Rutland too, thou holpst to kill him.
 QUEEN MARGARET: Thou hadst a Clarence too, and Richard killed him.
 (4.4.40–6)

The persistent utterances of grief derive their power from the memorial gestures they perform. Their laments have been described as paradigmatic of the ways in which female passions are principally articulated in excess of social regulation. In her essay on the politics of maternal mourning, Nicole Loraux cites these Shakespearean queens and widows as witnesses against the patriarchal management of grief. Ever since the culture of the Greek *polis*, she argues, public rituals have been established to contain, control or to subdue the powerful emotional release of women mourning (Loraux, 1990, p. 37). This argument also forms the basis for Scholz's reading (1999, p. 106) that the lamenting female bodies in *Richard III* address the body politic in crisis and provide a substitute for its loss of legitimation. She shows how female modes of

mourning here release subversive emotional energies and so oppose the regulations in state funerals and other official rituals of mourning that discipline and disembodiment human passions (1999, p. 101).

This reading acknowledges the sense of physical excess in the dramatic lamentations, but it does not acknowledge the equally strong sense of ritual conduct in which they are performed. In fact, the women's incantatory calls and cries, the verbal repetitions, formal symmetries and self-conscious histrionics all combine to create a performative pattern that resembles nothing so much as a public ritual. By contrast, it rather seems as if Richard's virtuoso entries and impromptu performances, especially in the first half of the play, are all the more subversive because they are set off against the women's litanies and play against their stiff delivery. I argue, then, that it is Shakespeare's male tyrant who subverts the ritual performance of Shakespeare's female mourners, not the other way round. Especially if we intend, as Scholz suggests, to read the women's elaborate expressions of grief as warrants of English national identity, we should stress the tightly formal character by which they offer ritual substitutes for the forms of communality destroyed under Richard's rule. 'An atmosphere of ritual lingers over much of *Richard III*,' Greenblatt has observed and added that this is best conveyed 'by the chorus of grief-crazed women' led by Margaret's curses (Shakespeare, 1997, pp. 509–10). So, if the power of the lamenting women is not subdued, as Loraux thought, but reinforced through the ritual pattern in which their 'act of tragic violence' is staged (2.2.39), the politics of female mourning rather functions as an *ersatz* for familiar ceremonies which otherwise have been usurped by Richard and abused. We can even specify this ritual function. Margaret's lament culminates in an elaboration of the *ubi sunt* topos calling for the valiant dead (4.4.92–6), Elizabeth invokes her murdered children whose souls 'hover about' her (4.4.13), and the Duchess of York declares to have cried for her enemies' woes like for her own in an exchange of guilt and grief (4.4.59–60). As illustrated in the lines just quoted, their mournful incantation of names binds them together against all odds. In fact, their chants are strongly redolent of Catholic memory rites like the *bede-roll* which used to be performed in English parishes (Duffy, 1992, pp. 334–6). A social map of the community, the *bede-roll* contained the names of the deceased from the local community and was regularly read out in collective commemoration of their fate, thus preserving and renewing a sense of communal identity through a shared sense of the past. Here, the Shakespearean stage echoes this particular ritual as it directs the women's counter-memories against official uses of the past.

The same holds true for Lady Anne, the first female mourner to cross Richard's way. Her obsequious 'lament' for Henry VI (1.2.3) is clearly an *ersatz* ritual. With the absence of all symbolic trappings, her personal performance must make up for the traditional funeral obsequies. In this sense, the scene appears like a reversal of the opening of *1 Henry VI*: instead of the official theatre of a public – and male-dominated – ceremony, we now witness an impoverished rite en route to the burial place. Anne's lament stands in for Henry's proper exequies; her curses on his murderer appear instead of panegyric speeches; the 'balm' of her eyes (1.2.13) compensates the lack of balm for the royal corpse. This shows how she physically counteracts the official prohibition by the ruling Yorkists against funeral honours for the Lancastrian king. Again, her individual lament soon widens to commemorate the suffering in the recent past. As in the later scenes of female mourning, the political significance of her acts lies in publicly insisting on the communal rights and rites of the deceased. To take up the traditionally female role of lamentation⁷ in *Richard III*, therefore, should not be seen as adopting a stance enforced by ruling law and in submission to political command. On the contrary, Anne openly rejects decorum and defies the command of the ruling power. She mourns *in spite* of prohibition and consciously challenges the law. Her question 'Be it lawful that I invoke thy ghost' (1.2.8) clearly raises this issue of the legality of mourning. It chimes in with the later invocations of the dead in the laments of the other female mourners, and it anticipates Henry's eventual re-appearance as a ghost in the night before the battle (5.5.78–84). But it also invites a reading not only on the level of what is historically represented but also on the historical level of representation. At this point, then, we can observe how the ambiguity between *locus* and *platea* becomes especially functional because Anne's question – paradigmatic of the politics of mourning throughout the history plays – has topical relevance for Elizabethan mourners, too. Her stopping of the hearse en route to the graveyard to bewail the deceased would have fallen under an injunction by the Church of England (Cressy, 1997, p. 400). Thus her insistent performances of mourning, just like the women's later incantations in the style of bederolls, recall specific rites and gestures associated with the old religion.

Thus, my reading of these scenes of memory and mourning from the York tetralogy should have served to give some evidence for my central claim, explained in the introduction. The precarious alliance between the English theatre and the English church could work to give people cultural substitutes for the prevailing sense of ritual loss, as suggested for example in Machyn's diary or as analysed by Duffy (cf. section 1.1), that

many of them must have felt when recalling the more elaborate liturgies of the past. In this sense, all such theatrical performances of mourning are politically productive because they invoke residues of traditional practices and rework them on the contemporary stage. But this should not be construed as an argument for cultural nostalgia nor for recusant resistance in Shakespearean drama. My view rather is to see the Elizabethan stage as a medium of both remembering and redressing what is past. As the earlier discussion of the deathbed scene in *2 Henry IV* has shown (cf. section 1.2), the plays also dramatize the process and conditions by which all remembrances of Catholic mourning rites are relocated in the Protestant present. The final section of this chapter now should serve to test and qualify this claim, mainly with reference to *Richard II*. Here, performances of mourning are staged and self-consciously explored for the poses of provisional identity they confer.

1.4 Facing the dead: theatricality and historiography

We have seen that the ‘battle of memories’ which Aleida Assmann identified in Shakespeare’s English histories in many ways concerned the cultural battles which went on in Shakespeare’s England. But these were not just battles *against* memorial practices fought out in Protestant society with prohibitions against old ways of mourning. These were also battles *of* and *within* the practices of memory cultivated among Protestants and widely disseminated through all social domains. For despite the earlier campaigns of iconoclasm as sacraments of oblivion in Duffy’s sense (s.a.), it would be wrong to assume that Elizabethan England was not steeped in memorial culture. Especially with the experience of Mary’s violent Catholic regime still in living memory, the Elizabethan cult of martyrs gained positively ritual scope.⁸

Not long after Elizabeth’s succession, a verse register was published, listing every month for every year of Mary’s reign and commemorating all the upright English Protestants who had suffered for their faith, with their names noted on their days of death. The entry for February 1555, for instance, begins:

When raging reign of tyrants stout,
Causeless, did cruelly conspire
To rend and root the Simple out,
With furious force of sword and fire;
When man and wife were put to death:
We wished for our Queen Elizabeth.

- 4 When Rogers ruefully was brent;
 8 When Saunders did the like sustain;
 When faithful Farrar forth was sent
 His life to lose, with grievous pain;
 22 When constant Hooper died the death:
 We wished for our Elizabeth.

(Brice's Registers, 1559, p. 270)

In this way, the last line of each stanza reiterates the general wish that has now been fulfilled, as the title says, with 'the entrance and beginning of the reign of our Sovereign and dearest Lady Elizabeth'. Her constantly repeated name so fittingly provides a rhyme on 'death' that she appears poetically as death's counterpart and conqueror. Itself a mnemonic device written for oral recitation, this register of martyrs attempts to condition and construct social memory in Protestant England. But in doing so, it appropriates old Catholic rituals like the *bede*-rolls with the commemorative utterance of names.

The verse sequence might be seen as a precursor to John Foxe's monumental book, first published in 1563 and widely distributed and reprinted throughout the period. It surely ranks as the most powerful project to recover historical memories and so reshape their programmatic force that they may serve the Protestant cause. In its fourth edition of 1583, *Actes and Monuments* opens with a calendar of names: for each day of the year, someone is identified to be remembered in his or her suffering and dying for the true religion. The calendrical pattern not only continues the effort of the earlier Protestant register, it also borrows the mnemonic pattern from Catholic calendars of saints, with their ritual observance of anniversaries and name days. As the martyr's dying dates are so recalled, new names and place holders are grafted onto the old structures.

In the 'Epistle Dedicatory to the Queenes Maiestie' of the fourth edition, Foxe himself looks back to the first publication of his book and dramatically dwells on the hostile reactions it received among Catholic sympathizers who would not suffer these memories of godly martyrs to live after death. The Protestant martyrologist here announces his agenda as a defence of public memory and explains that for this reason, and against personal inclination, he has composed the book in English: to make biblical as well as secular history known to everyone throughout the realm. Already in his 1570 preface on 'The vtilitie of this Story' Foxe declared that he 'thought it not to be neglected, that so precious Monumentes of so many matters, meet to be recorded and registred in

books, should lie buried by my default vnder darkenes of obliuion' (Foxe, 1583, preface unpaginated). His own work of recovery thus figures as an excavation, restoring exemplary lives and deeds to living memory. This is all the more remarkable because Foxe in his 'Summary collection of the errors, heresies, and absurdities conteyned in the popes doctrine' singles out purgatory and the attendant rites as 'paradoxes' and monstrous 'phantasies of the latter Church of Rome' (Foxe, 1583, p. 29). But his subsequent account proceeds untroubled by the apparent paradox of cultivating memories of the dead even as traditional forms of mourning and remembrance are denounced. What seems like a performative contradiction – saying one thing while doing the other – ought rather to be seen as yet another instance of the general interest, prominent in the religious culture of Elizabethan England, in how to do things with memories. Like the painted 'Allegory of the Reformation' discussed earlier (cf. section 1.2), the Protestant response to sacred anniversaries and festivals also bears this out. Despite early Reformation policies to reduce saints' days in the annual festive cycle and despite continued pressure from Protestant radicals in Elizabethan England to enforce calendrical reform as an act of social discipline (cf. Muir, 1997, p. 77), central features of the old tradition evidently survived and were championed in culturally transformed shapes.

The activities of the emerging theatre companies can be seen in this perspective as offering their paying audiences licensed substitutes for the occasions in former civic and religious culture which were now banned or barely tolerated.⁹ But this 'festive' repertoire does not only pervade Shakespearean comedies (Barber, 1959) and tragedies (Liebler, 1995) and the ritual foundations of their genres. As I argue in this chapter, the Shakespearean histories, too, operate in such a way: their performances of mourning stage social conflicts over the rights of the dead and so trace earlier and repressed traditions in the communal rites of their commemoration. A short, but telling moment from the final act of *Richard III* further illustrates this point. As Buckingham is led to execution, he remembers that the day is All Souls' day and recalls his earlier speech (2.1.32–40) when he beguiled King Edward and his family with hypocrisy and falsehood:

This is the day wherein I wished to fall
 By the false faith of him whom most I trusted.
 This, this All-Souls' day to my fearful soul
 Is the determined respite of my wrongs.
 That high all-seer which I dallied with

Hath turned my feigned prayer on my head,
And given in earnest what I begged in jest.

(5.1.16–22)

Buckingham here reviews his own insincere promise and earlier prophecy. So he views his current fall as an act of retribution in the providential pattern that the ending of this play recalls. But he simultaneously recalls a prominent date from the old liturgical year, November 2, when requiem masses used to be celebrated and the living attended to the needs of souls in purgatory (cf. Muir, 1997, p. 71). This was also the traditional period when the dead revisited their former homes, as indeed the play soon shows with the appearance of the ghosts (5.5). We may doubt the value of this Catholic ‘memory trace’¹⁰ in Buckingham’s dying speech, because the opportunistic character of the protagonist cautions us. But clearly, this religiously charged moment in *Richard III* is important in the politics of mourning. Like the martyrs’ register, it shows that recollections of the Catholic calendar were readily available to late Elizabethan audiences and could be used to graft new providential meanings onto forbidden ritual structures.

Furthermore, this scene raises a central question for my entire book: how rites of memory and mourning function in the playhouse where they form part of the actors’ show. As Buckingham ponders on the uncertain difference between ‘feigned’ and ‘earnest’ praying, he also contemplates the same ambiguity in the theatrical performance of religious rituals that concerns all scenes of mourning on the stage. This issue, which recurs at several points in the argument below (especially in Chapter 4), will now be first explored through a reading of two scenes from *Richard II* where the politics of mourning are self-consciously staged in a performative procedure blurring the borderline between ‘feigned’ and ‘earnest’ ritual.

The histrionic attitudes and acts of Richard II, Shakespeare’s greatest player king, have often been discussed.¹¹ But nowhere does this quality emerge more strongly than in the attitudes of mourning he displays with dazzling ingenuity. After his return from Ireland, we constantly see Richard in various poses of lament and, what is more, in various poses drawn from the *theatrical* repertoire of acting and articulating mournful passions. The point where this becomes most prominent is the deposition scene with the confrontation between the antagonists. When Richard has shattered the glass, Bolingbroke tries to suggest the emptiness of this theatrical coup, calling it a gesture devoid of any real sorrow: ‘The

shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed / The shadow of your face' (4.1.282–3). The key term 'shadow' is a heavily freighted word throughout the play, but the conventional association with theatre and acting is dominant in Bolingbroke's charge (cf. Forker, 2002, p. 409). In his response, however, Richard seizes upon this interpretation of his own act and, with a brilliant twist of its pragmatic force, appropriates the conventional meaning to suggest the breakdown of all convention under the power of emotion:

Say that again:
 'The shadow of my sorrow' – ha, let's see.
 'Tis very true: my grief lies all within,
 And these external manner of laments
 Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
 That swells with silence in the tortured soul.

(4.1.283–8)

These lines bear witness to the process of performance: the speaker begins by quoting, then looks for further words, and eventually improvises a conclusion that purports to confirm Bolingbroke's statement but in fact turns it around. With his own performative procedure so foregrounded, Richard both asserts the impossibility of externalizing grief and reasserts the power of the theatre to do so: 'merely shadows' can be taken either way. In his speech-act analysis of the play, Joseph Porter remarked that Richard here 'has not so much expressed as paraded his sorrow' (1979, p. 29) and critically implied that such parades somehow subvert the credible expression of emotion, if not of all illocutionary acts. Similarly, Scott McMillin has read these lines as saying that 'the theatre cannot penetrate his [i.e. Richard's] loss, cannot show his grief to spectators' (1984, p. 46). I rather think that his open disavowal of familiar 'manners' together with the marked performativity of the passage instead reinforce the way in which the art of theatre is here adopted for spectacles of mourning which must otherwise remain silent and unseen. In the same manner as Cordelia in the opening scene of *King Lear* employs the rhetoric of negation to intensify self-expression by refusing it (cf. Valesio, 1980, pp. 44–59), Richard's claim of loss results in gain. His reaction shows self-conscious uses of play-acting as a defence against Bolingbroke's attempt to suppress all public shows of grief. With regard to the precarious role of public mourning in Elizabethan culture, such acts of the theatre are certainly significant.

In the context of the play, Richard's self-fashioning in the pose of mourner is persistent. It begins at the Welsh coast with his citational resort to narratives and gestures of lament – 'let us sit upon the ground, / And tell sad stories of the death of kings' (3.2.151–2) – and only ends in Pomfret castle where his 'sighs, and tears and groans, / Show minutes, hours, and times' (5.5.57–8). It culminates in the deposition scene, where Richard figures as his own chief mourner. Christopher Pye sees Richard's theatricalizing here as diversionary, 'a desperate antic set against a larger political drama over which he has no command' (1990, p. 86). But it must be said that the power of his histrionics succeeds in drawing Bolingbroke and all the other adversaries into his own performance, manipulating, if no longer commanding, all their moves. Even as 'unking'd' Richard claims the loss of personal identity – 'I have no name, no title' (4.1.245) – he continues to improvise a performative persona. Interestingly, this moment is again marked by a ritual allusion and so contains another memory trace which leads us to traditional sacramental practice. When he speaks of 'that name was given me at the font' (4.1.246), he evokes the mystical ceremony of baptism, 'the archetypal Christian rite of passage' (Muir, 1997, p. 27). He associates this rite of name-giving and of establishing a social identity with his own anointment as a king. However, the memory of this moment is negated because the holy name has been 'usurped'. While in the religious context baptism, like exorcism, was the traditional rite for expelling evil, Richard implies that the quasi-magical efficacy of his royal identity has been superseded by some usurping force – just as in Reformation culture, though baptism remained a sacrament, controversies flared over its efficacy (cf. Cressy and Ferrell, 1996, p. 48). Without name or title, Richard is left to reinvent himself in these theatrical tropes of mourning. Their performance compensates for what the dominant political power denies.

There is an earlier passage in the play where the use and value of such insubstantial 'shadows' are explored. Before Richard's return from Ireland, Queen Isabella receives news of Bolingbroke's invasion, which is figured as 'delivering' her of woes and sorrows (2.2.62–6). The metaphor of mothering the excess of female lamentation in *Richard III* discussed earlier (cf. section 1.3) where the Duchess of York called herself 'the mother of these griefs' (2.2.80). But it also helps substantiate Isabella's previous and apparently unfounded sense of woe with which the scene began. Her 'unborn sorrow, ripe in fortune's womb' (2.2.10) are here the subject of a dialogue with Bushy, who tries to console the queen. His speech offers the most spectacular contemplation on the

politics of mediating grief in the Shakespearean histories:

Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows
 Which shows like grief itself but is not so.
 For sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,
 Divides one thing entire to many objects –
 Like perspectives, which, rightly gazed upon,
 Show nothing but confusion; eyed awry,
 Distinguish form. So your sweet majesty,
 Looking awry upon your lord's departure,
 Find shapes of grief more than himself to wail,
 Which, looked on as it is, is naught but shadows
 Of what it is not. Then, thrice-gracious Queen,
 More than your lord's departure weep not: more is not seen,
 Or if it be, 'tis with false sorrow's eye,
 Which for things true weeps things imaginary.

(2.2.14–27)

On a simple level, Bushy is saying that the queen's expression of grief is exaggerated and unfounded. When seen with a tearful eye, he argues, the 'substance' of the sad occasion appears to be more grievous than in fact 'it is'. Grief, in this sense, is self-generated and self-generating. The occasion for mourning is magnified if not produced by the – female – mourner, because her gaze 'divides one thing entire to many objects'. 'Looked on as it is', grief merits no tears and mourning should rather be subdued. This reading of Bushy's speech comes to the same conclusion as the reformers' rhetoric against Catholic rites of remembrance. But the final line provokes another reading. To weep imaginary things 'for' true things does not only mean to bewail one thing *instead of* the other; it could also mean to mourn for imaginary things that *represent* true things, like actors on the stage who *stand in for* historical figures, shadows in whom more is to be seen. Isabella sheds her tears as if she compensated a theatrical occasion for a historical case of mourning. In this sense, her passionate performance is not criticized but validated.

The speech has attracted much attention. In a psychoanalytic framework, the scene suggests a standard constellation. According to Bushy's account, the queen's behaviour is hysterical and he employs familiar terms to control her performative productions. Just as female hysterics have been observed to combine the psychosomatic language of bodily enactments with the melancholic gestures of lamenting (Bronfen, 1999, p. 33) while they weep things imaginary 'for' things true, so the queen

is told here that her 'life-harming heaviness' (2.2.3) produces shapes of grief without sufficient cause. But as the scene goes on we come to see that her vague anticipations turn out to be justified, so that soon there are real grounds for woe indeed. Thus, as mourning becomes hysteria, the hysteric's work draws her interlocutors more and more into her performance until her case is validated.¹² But there is more to it. Most readings of this passage have focussed on the elaborate conceit about 'perspectives' that structures Bushy's speech, suggesting that vision is a function of difference while sight is crossed and coupled by desire (Pye, 1990, p. 92). The conceit refers to the kind of trick painting popular in sixteenth-century art which can only be viewed 'rightly' when the beholder looks on them 'awry'. An anamorphic portrait of Edward VI, painted in 1546 by Gwillim Scrots and now in the National Portrait Gallery, has often been invoked here (MacLeod, 1996, pp. 20–1). The best-known example of such a 'perspective', possibly available to Shakespearean audiences as a reference, is Hans Holbein's painting 'The Ambassadors' (1533).¹³ This canvas is especially relevant to Bushy's speech because it superimposes two images that can only be seen properly from two different points of view. At the same time, its anamorphosis of a skull intrudes into the painting like a shadow that counters the magnificent double portrait with a *memento mori*, an uncanny doubling that has prompted further psychoanalytic interpretations.¹⁴ In this sense, the puzzling duplicities of 'looking awry' versus 'gazing rightly' that vex our view of Holbein's painting no less than of Isabella's mourning scene have been analysed to effect a 'hystericization' of Shakespeare's king (Zizek, 1991, p. 9).

But for the historical question that concerns me here it is more productive to acknowledge how the excessive and theatricalized forms of mourning are here set right. In actual fact, two different optical devices are at play in Bushy's conceit (Forker, 2002, p. 490): one produces distorted images, the other produces multiplied images, but both are employed to interrogate and interpret the 'visualization of grief' in the particular perspective offered by the stage (Guillén, 1968, p. 43). With the theatre, as with anamorphic paintings, no single point of view can unquestionably and exclusively be taken as the right one, because the bodily images produced on stage always appear multiplied and variously distorted. This is what *Richard II* identifies as theatre's specific power. Against the Lacanian readings, therefore, we must argue with James Siemon that this play above all reflects the contested social status of the stage. Its vocabulary of behavioural theatricality derives from a theatre professional's 'struggles for positional recognition' rather than from

psychic turmoil (Siemon, 2000, p. 38). It draws attention to the *performative* rather than the *representational* effects and so explores how to do things with shadows: 'The outbursts of Shakespeare's Richard *do* something – something at once political, social, and theatrical – for the playwright' (2000, p. 39, emphasis in the original). To which I would simply like to add that what they 'do' is grief and mourning – at once politically, socially and theatrically. If we follow the advice to read this passage as engaging with the playwright's medium and profession, then Bushy's and Isabella's debate on grief turns into a debate on theatre and its specular power to turn 'nothing' into the begetter of emotion. It highlights the actor's power to perform passions such as sorrow, passions which may be 'imaginary' and yet fore-'shadow' actualities. In the spectators' eyes, these emotions are looked on from a multiplicity of viewpoints and so become 'things true'. With *Richard II*, the politics of grief thus emerges as a process by which performances of mourning are communally substantiated.

Mourning on the stage is always meta-theatrical because it always involves reflections of the actors' art. But against the background of my foregoing discussion, the politics of onstage mourning can be seen to involve yet another claim: they assert uses of the theatre in the public sphere. They may not mimetically *reflect* historical performances so much as *produce* – in provisional, perhaps paradoxical form – what the reformed society has sanctioned: powerful shades and shapes of grief. The history plays are especially productive here because they face the dead and give them voice and publicly replay their stories. Ernest Gilman has, in fact, interpreted the anamorphic 'perspectives' in *Richard II* as the playwright's general 'conceptual model for seeing the chronicle of English history' (1976, p. 92). This offers a pertinent perspective, finally, to review a brief but crucial scene from the York tetralogy where, in an anamorphic view, a corpse is faced and read for signs of history.

The scene in question is from *The First Part of the Contention / 2 Henry VI* and concerns the sudden death of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. Two different responses to his corpse are staged. First, King Henry weeps for him and frames his passionate lamentation in the tradition of a *memento mori*: 'For seeing him I see my life in death' (3.2.152). But all judgement as to *how* Humphrey met his death is explicitly denied and reserved to divine authority (3.2.131) because, as Henry says, 'to survey his dead and earthy image, / What were it but to make my sorrow greater?' (3.2.147–8). However, just such a survey is then undertaken by Warwick, giving us a detailed medical analysis of the corpse. He proceeds from quite a different position and so views the dead man in an alternative

perspective to the king's:

See how the blood is settled in his face.
Oft have I seen a timely-parted ghost
Of ashy semblance, meagre, pale, and bloodless [...].
But see, his face is black and full of blood;
His eyeballs further out than when he lived,
Staring full ghastly like a strangled man;
His hair upreared; his nostrils stretched with struggling;
His hands abroad displayed, as one that grasped
And tugged for life and was by strength subdued.
Look on the sheets. His hair, you see, is sticking;
His well-proportioned beard made rough and rugged,
Like to the summer's corn by tempest lodged.
It cannot be but he was murdered here.
The least of all these signs were probable.

(3.2.160–78)

As Warwick puts the signs and clues together, he reconstructs a story and infers the crime that must have happened here. In this way, he exemplifies a conjectural mode of reasoning, based on observation, particular experience, probability and the logic of abduction. This happens to be the mode by which, principally, the facts of history are established and plotted in a narrative. As Carlo Ginzburg has explained in an important essay, 'history always remains a science of a very particular kind, irremediably based in the concrete. [...] In this way history is like medicine [...]. And the historian's knowledge, like the doctor's, is indirect, based on signs and scraps of evidence, conjectural' (Ginzburg, 1983, pp. 92–3; see also Ginzburg, 2001). Ginzburg's words precisely describe what happens in Warwick's postmortem. His resort to experience and observation just as his constant appeals to onlookers combine medical and criminological semiotics to establish the central paradigm for historiography. Incidentally, his conjectures are all confirmed in the next scene (3.3) with Cardinal Beaufort's death-bed confession to the crime. But even without such a reminder of providential patterns, we see in Warwick's reading of the corpse a powerful and programmatic demonstration of the ways in which the dead are made to yield their stories to the living.

The point does not concern the rites of burial but, as with the examples discussed earlier, it challenges us to consider the functions of the stage and its historical performance. In the context of this early history play,

the scene is no less emblematic than the later scene of mourning between Isabella and Bushy: both scenes offer metadramatic and programmatic reflections about uses of the theatre. As Warwick turns the playhouse momentarily into an anatomy theatre, he again asserts the constitutive power of the spectators' eyes. For his repeated imperative to 'see' is equally directed to us in the theatre audience and commands us, as we see the signs and clues of historical events, to join in the conjectural reconstruction of the past. The chronicles of English history are represented to our eyes in various perspectives, but they all converge on moments of commemoration where the dead take centre stage.

At least one Elizabethan contemporary, himself associated with the writing of the early Shakespearean histories, singled out such moments for special praise and so defended the theatre against criticism. In *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil* (1592), Thomas Nash argued that history plays are an 'exercise of virtue':

First, for the subject of them: for the most part it is borrowed out of our English chronicles, wherein our forefathers's valiant acts, that have lien long buried in rusty brass and wormeaten books, are revived, and they themselves raised from the grave of oblivion and brought to plead their aged honours in open presence, than which what can be a sharper reproof to these degenerate effeminate days of ours? How would it have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French, to think that after he had lien two hundred years in his tomb he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new-embalmed with the tears of then thousand spectators at least, at several times, who in the tragedian that represents his person imagine they behold him fresh bleeding! (Nash, 1964, pp. 64–5)

This may be a propaganda, but it is nonetheless suggestive for the poetics and politics of historical enactments.¹⁵ These claims about the necromantic powers of the stage and about the physiological effects of mourning in the theatre anticipate some issues that I shall follow up in Chapters 2 and 3. At this point, Nash's apology for historical actors should simply serve to summarize my argument so far.

The claim that history plays can raise the valiant dead 'from the grave of oblivion' employs the same figure of exhumation and commemoration that Foxe used to announce his *Actes and Monuments* and that equally describes the project of antiquarians like Stow or Weever. I have thus read Shakespearean English history plays as acts of public memory whose performance counteracts some of the recent and dramatic

changes in the religious practice of the period. Their powerful and frequent scenes of mourning engage with politics of grief a generation after the Elizabethan settlement and, quite possibly, provide some cultural substitutes for the injunctions against the rites of active commemoration. As several of my examples have shown, their memory traces lead to ritual elements in Catholic beliefs which they recall through historical representation and which, to some extent, they revive in performance. Therefore, although the stage offers 'merely shadows', these can, in Richard's conceit, turn out to be 'very true': they are substantiated by spectators in multiple and communal views. Like Talbot's monument to Salisbury, which he erects to shield his earlier traumatic injury, the history plays provide performative monuments to the dead. They dress and address social wounds.

The English Reformation, Duffy argues (1992, p. 8), was an act of exorcism, launching violent campaigns to limit the claims of the past on the people of the present. English history plays, by contrast, renegotiate such claims. Turning their spectators' gaze 'from calamity to continuity' in history (Griffin, 2001, p. 146), they also work historically towards new, though transformed, continuities between the living and the dead. As they revive past people and re-enact past conflicts, the politics of mourning *in* these plays produce the politics of memory *of* these plays: a searching and persistent and increasingly reflexive exploration of how the dead can triumph again on the social stage.

2

Pathologies of Mourning Elizabethan Revenge Tragedies

2.1 Well-made partings and the problem of revenge

Since the Homeric scene of Hector's farewell to Andromache, Western literature has often been concerned with moments of departure. Such acts of valediction and farewell form part of the intense moments of mourning which structure human life and which are often framed or formed in literary shape in an attempt to give them cultural validation, thereby managing the role of grief. One of the most helpful ways in which the experience of leave-taking has thus been rendered in a familiar and, possibly, comforting poetic figure is to place it in a pattern of some larger repetition, so that the parting moment is not final but superseded by a moment of return. As an example, we can take the parting between Cassius and Brutus before the battle of Philippi in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Here we witness how the literal repetition of last words reiterates the fact of separation even as it articulates new hope:

BRUTUS: For ever and for ever farewell, Cassius.
If we do meet again, why, we shall smile.
If not, why then, this parting was well made.
CASSIUS: For ever and for ever farewell, Brutus.
If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed.
If not, 'tis true, this parting was well made.

(5.1.117–22)

Despite their clear awareness of the desperate situation and the anticipation of their deaths, their verbal echoes suggest a poetic reunion with – hence a symbolic restitution of – the friend they now must leave behind. Their parting is 'well made' because it achieves a pattern of

linguistic consonance and moves in the structures of fictional consummation.

In the context of his philosophical study of this problem entitled *Der Abschied*, Karl Heinz Bohrer (1996, p. 14) has cited this Shakespearean scene as a paradigmatic case to illustrate how poetic mourning may transcend historical mourning. Pressures of departure are generally accompanied, he argues, by expectations of return, that is hopes for compensation or symbolic consolation which suggest some second coming and thus a recovery of what has been lost. Beyond historical and real-life experience, this is what literary phantasms of farewell can provide. According to Bohrer, they have their own temporality and semantics and thereby produce imaginative textures that redress the finality of loss. In a related argument, we can account for this in terms provided by Frank Kermode. In *The Sense of an Ending* he once showed that our efforts to make sense of life and to arrange a 'reunion with reality' (1966, p. 41) always work with the provision of an ending, a point of meaningful conclusion that confers organization on the here and now in relating it to the expectation of closure and eventual rounding. This is how poetic form and 'well-made' fictions become functional: 'Men, like poets, rush "into the midst," *in medias res*, when they are born; they also die *in mediis rebus*, and to make sense of their span they need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems.' In this sense, the End is not only a 'figure for their own deaths' (Kermode, 1966, p. 7), but also a figuration of fulfilment.

Such reflections are important because they concern the conjunctions of poetic with political performances of mourning which I set out to explore. The previous chapter argued that the Shakespearean history plays pursue a project in which historical and poetic modes of mourning interrelate in crucial ways. With their popular dramatization of historiographical material the Elizabethan plays of the 1590s provided dramatic figures for historical referents and so presented live acts and voices for the benefit of later generations. In the view of theatre apologists like Thomas Nash (cf. section 1.4), it is the historical that authorized the poetic, providing a defence for the new medium and institution of the playhouse. But in the view developed in Chapter 1, we can also see how the poetic at the same time authorizes the work of memory and public mourning which is contested, if not actually suppressed, in the political arena. Theatrical acts like Henry's Crispin's Day speech are productive because with them the incipient moment of collective memories is grafted onto the traditional calendar of saints (cf. Assmann, 1994, p. 61) and staged with reference to their perpetual renewal: 'And Crispin

Crispian shall ne'er go by / From this day to the ending of the world / But we in it shall be remembered' (4.3.57–9). The king's proleptic vision of future generations is here proclaimed and simultaneously reconfirmed in their own retrospective vision by the actual spectators. For the theatrical reality of Henry as a stage figure is such that his promise of remembrance fulfils itself with its utterance. The same kind of anticipation and simultaneous retrospection on the theatre occurs in *Julius Caesar* when the conspirators, smearing their hands with Caesar's blood, wonder 'how many ages hence' their scene will 'be acted over / In states unborn and accents yet unknown' (3.1.112–14). The fictional re-enactment of a historic act here frames itself by the reflections of theatre's mnemonic power. As Weimann (1994, p. 90) says, such plays that publicly stimulate memories are themselves agencies of memory.

The politics of mourning are richly involved in this cultural interplay of grave and stage. It was a topos of Elizabethan religious debates to champion traditional pieties with the argument that intercessionary practices must enliven the otherwise cold stones which mark burial places. 'All the noble monuments, not only in our commonwealth, but through Christ's Church, do bear sufficient testimony of our first faith herein', Cardinal Allen wrote in 1565 in *Souls Departed*, his passionate defence of the old faith. 'Take away the prayers and practice for the dead, either all these monuments must fall, or else they must stand against the first founders' will and meaning.' (Allen, 1886, p. 296) He went on to exhort his readers to 'look at the statues' and effigies in churches as material figurations which clearly command mourners' attention and ritual activity (*ibid.*). In this sense, artistic figures and architectural artefacts can neither contain nor perform memorial functions by themselves. They must become focal points of social practices that address the images and animate the statues – not unlike, we might add, the actors' and spectators' collaboration in the theatre when historical figures, in Nash's phrase, are 'raised from the grave of oblivion' and their honourable deeds become manifest 'in open presence' (see the quotation in section 1.4). Memory, to become effective, operates both in material and social forms. To recall the key terms from John Foxe's title, 'monuments' always need 'acts' to do any work, especially the work of mourning.

The issues in the present chapter, however, show the other side of this relation: acts of mourning, to become effective, need monuments and mementoes. This is a central point we learn from Bohrer's argument: the need for figuration. Individual responses to loss and bereavement, let alone communal efforts to come to terms with death, must resort to

familiar forms in linguistic or poetic or some other conventionalized shape as focal points and agents of affective mediation. Whenever these are not available or not accessible in any given situation, mourning fails. As a personal and social performance, it can instead become pathological or turn into retributive action. Its pressures lead the so afflicted mourner to revenge or melancholy. 'Cardan professeth he writ his book *De Consolatione* after his son's death', Robert Burton tells us in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1923, I, p. 19), 'to comfort himself.' When the cruelly bereaved parents in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* bear their murdered son away, Hieronimo delivers a long Latin speech, a pastiche of classical poetry concluding: '*At tamen abstinam proferato cedere letho, / Ne mortem vindicta tuam tum nulla sequatur*' (2.5.79–80).¹ In the tragedy's further progress we see how this ominous poetic vision is realized as the mournful father can only comfort himself by turning from poetic lament to bloody revenge, that is from literary enactment to literal action. For, in the words of his antagonist, 'where words prevail not, violence prevails' (2.1.108).

My present chapter maps out the territory between these two options. Looking at examples from the popular genre of Elizabethan revenge tragedies, it charts the process by which the need for consolations that do not find a culturally accepted form drive the bereaved to seek alternative performances of mourning. It is their destructive and also self-destructive effects that I refer to as 'pathologies of mourning'. In plays like *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet*, such pathologies arise when the acute grief is denied social acknowledgement and public expression or when the available symbolic means are found insufficient to express it. The problem goes beyond the modes of memory discussed in Chapter 1, because successful mourning also enables and entails the possibility to continue living. This is why the work of mourning does not only lie in commemoration. It also lies in taking leave and parting from the loved one who has gone, that is in finding ways like Brutus and Cassius to say farewell forever. Such ways are prepared by cultural and literary figures. In the terms of speech-act theory, these are part of the felicity conditions of lamentation. Where they are disturbed or denied, acts of mourning can go wrong and the mourner, like Kyd's Hieronimo or Shakespeare's Titus, turn into mad revengers.

The problem here at stake has also been described by Peter Sacks (1985, p. 7): 'The movement from loss to consolation requires a deflection of desire, with the creation of a trope both for the lost object and for the original character of the desire itself.' His illustrations derive from classical mythology and its Ovidian rendering in the *Metamorphoses* where

Apollo and Pan as mourners overcome the grief for their dead loved ones when they manage to deflect their desire in the symbols of the laurel and the pipe. With the transference to these mementoes or *ersatz* objects, the reattachment of affective energies helps to mark the loss and at the same time mark it off. But this process, crucially, depends on workable forms of figuration to which the mourner can resort. No work of mourning, Sacks shows, can ever be successfully completed without positive recourse to such mediation. Where this process fails, mourning cannot be effectively performed. This is what revenge plays dramatize. Their central protagonists are pathological mourners or, as he puts it (1985, p. 65), 'elegists *manqués*', whose grievance cannot be mediated and expressed in socially accepted figuration. Hence their resort to violent action.

As his terminology reveals, Sacks's framework is Freudian. So before turning to the revenge plays and their historical inflections let me recall some basic points from Freud's own account of mourning and revenge. In his 1916 essay 'Mourning and Melancholy' (1999, X, pp. 427–46), Freud distinguishes the 'normal' processes of grieving in response to personal loss from the pathological afflictions of melancholy. Both show the same symptoms but they are different in their duration: mourning is limited to a certain period, melancholy continues and persists even without evident cause. The work that mourning performs lies in overcoming the resistance against withdrawing affective energies from the beloved and, with a great expense of time and effort, redirecting them to other objects. This is what melancholics, in narcissist identification and with their regressive tendency, fail to achieve as they are no longer conscious of what object they were initially mourning. Instead, they turn upon themselves with constant self-accusation and endless criticism. Some of their criticism, Freud concedes, may indeed be accurate and truthfully observed, and he cites Hamlet as a case in point (cf. 2.2.508–9). But in actual fact, all such self-directed pleas, vengeful charges and laments are addressed to another person whom the melancholic loves or has loved and now lost. According to Freud, this is the key to treating pathological mourners: their endless laments are indictments. In his 1917 introductory lectures to psychoanalysis (1999, XI, p. 443) he explains further that the desire for revenge derives from sexual desires thwarted or suppressed. The melancholic person acts out and also suffers this aggression. And the ambivalence between affective and aggressive impulses is unconsciously addressed to the same person.

Successful performances of mourning, then, result from the displacement of aggressive by symbolic means. As in the Oedipal resolution with

the child's entry into the symbolic order, the mourner must submit his primary desire 'to the mediating fabric of language, a tissue of substitutions that may cover a preceding lack' (Sacks, 1985, p. 18). Pathological reversals or breakdowns of this development are dramatized in the revenge tragedies of Elizabethan England. As to the reasons for this failure, Sacks maintains (1985, p. 64) that 'toward the end of the sixteenth century, the question of "what should be said" in the face of suffering and death had become particularly vexing'. At the time 'principles of divine, human, and natural order were increasingly suspected of being no more than man's figural impositions on an essentially intractable reality', so that he sees 'the traditional means of consolation' increasingly 'robbed of their protective charm'. All this is plausible enough, but as an account of the *historical* conditions in Elizabethan England his view is unconvincing. He does not acknowledge the fact, even more devastating in its consequences, that the 'traditional means of consolation' were censored by authority and their 'protective charm' simply prohibited in the Church of England. If we therefore try to historicize the Freudian reading, we must begin by saying that many mourners in later sixteenth-century England confronted a 'reality' not so much 'intractable' as intolerant of what they would otherwise be glad to say and do in the face of death. In the post-Reformation context, the 'ambivalence' identified through psychoanalytic probing reflects a political rather than a personal predicament, and the substitute action of revenge drama inflects the pathologies of mourning arising from an unresolved social crisis.

Historically speaking, then, the question when and how the parting of the living from the dead was 'well made' – in the sense of Brutus' and Cassius' farewell – remained an issue of debate. The discourse of revenge sets in with a direct displacement, or disavowal, of conventional 'well-made' mourning practices whose effectiveness revenge denies. Paradigmatically we find this moment enacted in an apocryphal Shakespearean history play, *King Edward III*. Towards the ending, when the death of the Black Prince on the French battlefield has been reported, the queen breaks into tearful lamentation. The king, by contrast, tells her to stop crying and goes on to announce his own response to his son's death as a campaign of bloody retribution:

Content thee, Philippe: 'tis not tears will serve
 To call him back, if he be taken hence.
 Comfort thyself, as I do, gentle queen,
 With hope of sharp, unheard of, dire revenge.

He bids me to provide his funeral!
 And so I will; but all the peers in France
 Shall mourners be, and weep out bloody tears
 Until their empty veins be dry and sere.
 The pillars of his hearse shall be their bones,
 The mould that covers him, their city ashes,
 His knell, the groaning cries of dying men,
 And in the stead of tapers on his tomb
 A hundred fifty towers shall burning blaze,
 While we bewail our valiant son's decease.

(5.1.162–75, Melchiori 1998, p. 167)

The speech is not just relevant for establishing the gendered contrast, by which 'masculine' retaliation is opposed to 'female' crying for the dead, a contrast to be explored in Chapter 3. With Edward's elaborate conceit, the speech also offers a striking example of how the performance of revenge draws upon and, at the same time, redraws regular rituals of mourning. The king's figurative language stages the projected military campaign in terms of a ceremonial public funeral: the slaughtered peers of France are cast as mourners, their blood as tears, their bones as pillars of the prince's hearse. All these substitutions are employed to reject the work of symbolism in favour of real action. We see here how the restorative power of mourning rituals is radicalised into the claims of retributive justice, a metaphorical exchange by which the actions of revenge become charged with mimetic power suggesting some grand theatrical potential that enables them to compensate a loss through re-enactment.

For this reason, revenge tragedies generally dramatize problems of symbolic mediation. Their economy of retribution, according to John Kerrigan (1996, p. 7), operates entirely through go-betweens and through the representatives appointed for this purpose. The transfer of justice as, for instance, from Old Hamlet to his son creates a structure of obligation which turns the executor of this task into a determined functionary. Ideally and most efficiently, revengers should be self-effacing and just act as the representative of another's will. Their performance is programmatically directed against conventional figures and social decorum, such as the pieties of mourning, and instead drives towards literal execution. This raises the two issues which my readings of the revenge plays will address: their exploration of religious and of figurative mediation. First, these plays rework the struggles in post-Reformation society between traditional and reformed modes of commemorating the dead and, according to Huston Diehl (1997), also rehearse some intricacies of

the eucharist debate. Negotiations with central elements of Catholic doctrine are evident, for example in the ghosts and vengeful spirits regularly included in their casts, which are deeply troubling to Protestant belief. For despite the classical Senecan models they emulate, stage apparitions can be seen in the context of the banned doctrine of purgatory and popular notions about unquiet souls that walk the night. The most prominent case here is the ghost of Hamlet, and this play's insistent testing of the links between the living and the restless dead offers many points of contention and convergence between mourning and revenge. But the uneasy 'shift of spectral obligation from vengeance to remembrance' that Greenblatt (2001, p. 207) has discussed is not confined to *Hamlet*. It also concerns predecessors on the stage, like *The Spanish Tragedy* or even, in a travesty of ghost authority, *Titus Andronicus*. In these Elizabethan revenge tragedies, the pathologies of mourning are deeply involved in the religious crisis of the period.

What is more, the practice of the theatre and its symbolic mediation are just as deeply involved here. This is the second issue raised by revengers and their critical stance towards figuration. The stage itself is an arena of mediation and the actor's own art functions as a go-between. Both are sceptically questioned in the course of revenge dramas. This is why their plots often contain plays-within-the-play or other metatheatrical devices so as to explore the use – or uselessness – of mimetic representation. Given my focus on performances of mourning, such explorations are especially relevant when they concern the status and efficacy of rituals and prayers when performed on stage. They mark the uncertain boundaries of the theatre and map its embattled relations to other institutions like the church or the monarchy, rivals in the manifestation and management of charisma (cf. Greenblatt, 1988, p. 96). Do rites of remembrance or of burial have any effect in the playhouse and, if so, on whom? Can onstage praying and intercessory practices move or reach or change anyone? And how do mimetic practices on stage relate to the religious mimesis observed elsewhere, most prominently in the encounters with the savages of the New World?

These questions, centrally negotiated in the performance of revenge plots, will guide my subsequent reading of the three plays and lead me to connect their failures of figurative mediation with the equally failing use of figuration in some Elizabethan travelogues. Turning from the politics to the pathologies of mourning, my argument in this chapter traverses much of the same ground as in the previous one but with a different focus. Not the culturally familiar acts and monuments of mourning are the issue this time, but marginal and problematic cases

associated with foreign, archaic or exotic settings. Looking at revengers for their desperate performances of grief, I would like to explore how theatrical mimesis works when the work of mourning as symbolic mediation fails.

2.2 Translating tradition: *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*

In the third act of *Hamlet* we observe the king going through the motions of prayer: 'O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven' (3.3.36–72). The scene shows us how a conscience-stricken, though hardly contrite murderer, tries out the conventional gestures of religious practice. He orders his limbs to assume the appropriate posture – 'Bow, stubborn knees' – declares his 'inclination', sharp 'will' and 'strong intent' for the required act of worship, and contemplates what in his predicament might be the most serviceable 'form of prayer'. And yet, he finally admits that all these exercises fail. His 'words', he says, 'fly up', but never reach their divine addressee because they are 'without thoughts' (96–7). The verbal utterance of prayer, we are told, remains an empty formula without salvational efficacy. The king's pious performance comes to nothing.

Earlier in the play, we saw Claudius in such a controlled performance of grief for his 'dear brother's death' (1.2.1) that suspicions of his devousness were provoked not just in Hamlet. Now, by contrast, we eavesdrop on a rare moment of apparent honesty in which the king reveals his inmost thoughts. This is why the scene raises acute questions about sincerity and theatricality, many of which Ramie Targoff (1997) has pursued in her discussion of the interplay between performance and the theology of prayer in the English church. But there is a more basic and immediate, though no less pressing question that has not been raised: how does Claudius actually *know* whether or not his words and thoughts arrive at their heavenly destination? What evidence might possibly give proof of their success or failure? Outwardly there is no sign to tell the difference between attempting and achieving traditional religious pieties. Observing Claudius's pose, Hamlet takes it for real prayer and therefore, once again, defers his execution of revenge (3.3.73–96). As spectators we have privileged access to the royal mind, but except for a proverbial commonplace – 'words without thoughts never to heaven go' (98) – we are given no indication as to the sources of the king's conviction: how can he be quite sure his verbal action failed?

In view of the debates in post-Reformation England this seems to me an urgent question because it centrally concerns the ways and terms of

prayer and religious communication. 'One of the greatest impediments that the seruants of God suffer in praier', wrote the English Jesuit and recusant patriot Thomas Wright in his 1596 treatise on *The Reall Presence*, 'is a certaine diffidence or doubting that they pray in vaine, that none heareth or attendeth what they say, whereupon followeth a tediousnesse and loathsomnesse in praier' (Wright, 1970, p. 33). The problem is pervasive. While murderers and believers can find out whether anything 'smells to heaven', no one is in a position to ascertain the best modes and channels to send up our thoughts. Whether or not the messages we want delivered to divine authority ever get there remains a matter of faith. This is why a go-between is rather helpful for this purpose, some trustworthy messenger to intercede on our behalf. Such intermediaries, like the saints or the Virgin Mary, however, are not available to believers in a Protestant society. All rituals and religious speech acts must principally be conducted here without recourse to supporting figures whose integrity lies beyond doubt. The English Prayer Book was therefore introduced, as Targoff (2001, p. 18) argues, to establish ways by which personal faith could be shaped through standardized and public forms of common prayer.

Against this background, the following call to common prayer gains resonance: 'I prithee request this good company to pray with me.' (3.6.84) This request comes from Pedringano, the subaltern killer at the court in *The Spanish Tragedy*, another impenitent murderer who uses a religious formula to no avail because, like the king's prayer in *Hamlet*, it is uttered without thought. The moment is from Pedringano's trial. The hangman, standing in attendance, appreciates his words as 'a good motion' (3.6.85), but the accused immediately makes clear that they would here have been no more than a mere performance of conventional piety. He does not really mean to pray because he knows his murder has been officially sanctioned and commissioned. Pedringano has acted on royal command and believes he has promptly received his pardon in a 'box', which promises deliverance and which he therefore points out with great confidence (3.6.78). But in a dramatic irony no less sharp than Hamlet's misreading of Claudius's pose, the audience has been alerted to the fact that he is fatally mistaken: the pageboy shows that the object in question is just a 'bare empty box' (3.5.6.). What seemed like a tabernacle, in fact, contains nothing.

These two scenes highlight moments where the emptiness of rituals and religious objects comments on the salient difficulties with funerals and mourning rites that trouble these two tragedies. At the same time, the two scenes mark points at which an executor and a target of revenge

come close to one another. The trial of Pedringano is conducted by Hieronimo, Knight Marshal of Spain, who even as he sends this petty criminal to the gallows is reminded of his true and major task: to seek retribution for Horatio's death: 'Despatch, and see his execution done: / This makes me to remember thee, my son.' (3.6.96–7) In the prayer scene in *Hamlet*, the close encounter between would-be revenger and would-be victim is more intimate and approaches a sense of doubling. As Claudius is bending his knees and Hamlet is raising his sword behind him, both are going through the initial motions of a decisive and possibly redemptive act without managing to go through with it. They rehearse but fail to perform the action that is expected of them. 'And like a man to double business bound / I stand in pause where I shall first begin' (3.3.41–2). These are the words, not of Prince Hamlet, but of King Claudius by which he explains his double bind position. But they may serve equally well to characterize his opponent's predicament: the commissioned revenger as well as his assigned victim both 'stand in pause' while they defer rather than perform the required action.

Pathologies of mourning occur in situations where the delivery of an appropriate act is somehow blocked in such a way that it cannot be taken to its destined end. If rituals generally license 'the expression of deep emotions, encouraging unfathomed psychological effects' (Muir, 1997, p. 16), their disturbance signals some disturbance in their wider social context; hence, their psychological effects can no longer be mediated by convention. What is at stake here is the functioning of cultural go-betweeners who normally perform such work of mediation. Like all functionaries who regulate a ritual performance – like, for example, priests – they do so not on grounds of personal authority but on behalf of the institutional power they represent. Thus acting in another's name, ideally serving interests other than their own, these mediators are 'figures of the third' (Breger and Döring, 1998). This, however, is a precarious position where they are constantly suspected of covert manipulation. Just as Freud (1999, VI, p. 33) reminds us that translators are jokingly called traitors, the work of go-betweeners can easily, and sometimes imperceptibly, serve self-interested ends. The go-betweeners, that is to say, can turn into 'get-betweeners' (Calderwood, 1983, p. 123), doubtful agents who abandon the interests of superior authority for their own.

The same holds true for the conventional company in which they make their stage appearance: the ghosts, travellers from the undiscovered country of the dead, who typically initiate and drive revenge plots. It is evident that they share crucial functions. Both the revenant and the

revenger serve as intermediaries and both are introduced, to begin with, for simply instrumental ends: to deliver messages from, or deliver lives into, the other world. But matters rarely remain quite so simple. Stage ghosts frequently arouse suspicion because they oscillate between a sense of presence and of absence, a lingering uncertainty that also affects their uncertain terms of reference. 'My name *was* Don Andrea', we are told by the figure who opens *The Spanish Tragedy* (1.1.5, emphasis added). The past tense used for this self-introduction raises the question of what the speaker's present identity might be and how exactly it relates to the former bearer of this name. Similarly, in *Hamlet* the ghost's use of personal pronouns is suspiciously ambiguous. In the long speech in which the apparition reveals itself, the first person reference 'I' initially denotes the present figure speaking ('I am thy father's spirit', 1.5.9), only to shift in the following narrative to denoting the one-time king and husband who is no more ('the vow / I made to her in marriage', 1.5.49–50) – a subtle but crucial difference which casts doubt on the familiar modes of identification. Who, then, commands remembrance here? From whom does the revenge order derive authority? And how can the revenger's urge be justified?

These questions are also dramatized in *The Spanish Tragedy* with the central character's change from mourner to revenger. The trial leading to Pedringano's execution is still conducted by Hieronimo in his professional capacity as judge 'to punish such as do transgress' (3.6.12). The legal principle on which he operates here is established when he says: 'For blood with blood shall, while I sit as judge, / Be satisfied, and the law discharg'd' (3.6.35–6). Significantly, the 'law' is declared to function by the same logic of substitution and compensation – to satisfy 'blood with blood' – which otherwise regulates revenge action but which, in legally constituted societies, is contained in the state's monopoly of violence. For this reason, lawful and revengeful acts rival one another. As Jonathan Bate has remarked, the formalization of revenge in performance is 'a substitution for the law, simultaneously revealing the law to be itself nothing other than a performance, replete with processions, costumes, symbolic geography, dialogues, epideictic utterances, and gestures' (Bate, 1995, pp. 26–7). Thus, the violence of bloody revenge action attains legitimacy when it is formalized and proceeds for some superior authority.

It is in view of such formalizations that René Girard (1992) has argued in his studies on religious anthropology that the state's monopoly on justice and the sacred is principally based on violence. Religious and legislative practices are just forms to control and channel a rampant spread

of vengeance. For Girard, retributive acts – blood for blood, death for death – always threaten to produce an endless chain of substitutions and lead to endless killing. The procedure of the law, by contrast, with its exclusive claim to justify and carry out violence, serves as an institutional ‘get-between’. An intervening power, it stands against competing claims of what Francis Bacon (1912, p. 19) in a famous phrase called ‘a kind of wild justice’, that is revenge. We should note that Hieronimo, before he rejects all forms of mediation, himself represents the law and respects it as the only power entitled to do justice. When he first learns who killed his son, he declares: ‘I will go plain me to my lord the king, / And cry aloud for justice through the court’ (3.7.69–70). Revenge, by contrast, does not defer to royal authority or legal arbitration. ‘They reck no laws that meditate revenge’, the Portugese Viceroy points out (1.3.48). Hieronimo’s own turn from public law towards private revenge is therefore of prime importance. It is, in fact, elaborately dramatized in a long soliloquy (3.13.1–44), whose textual and contextual shifts merit close attention. I will now discuss this speech in some detail to establish how the respected courtier, royal servant and grieving father turns into a pathological mourner and violent revenger.

As indicated in the stage directions, Hieronimo enters with a book in hand and begins with the biblical injunction ‘*Vindicta mihi!*’ (3.13.1). This is a stern reminder of the doctrinal truth, unquestionably accepted at the time, that divine authority reserves the final right to justice. In her classic study about theories of revenge in Renaissance England, Lily Campbell (1930, p. 282) in fact based her view that vengeance was universally condemned on this quotation from the epistle to the Romans. And yet, only a moment later Hieronimo abandons this Christian position and determines to take action himself: ‘I will revenge his death!’ (3.13.20) For this decisive turn, his readings from the book seem to provide the motivation. His speech is punctuated by three Senecan quotations in Latin, from *Agamemnon* (3.13.6), *Troades* (3.13.12–13) and *Oedipus* (3.13.35). In the metadramatic framework, these intertextual traces mark the way in which Kyd’s play seeks affiliation to classical sources. At the precise moment, then, when the internal stage drama eventually develops into the revenge plot which its framing characters – the ghost of Don Andrea and Revenge – declared from the beginning it would become, this monologue performs the acts of recollection, literary citation and hermeneutics which serve to build tradition. What is more, each of the three quotations concerns deaths and acts of burial and so comments on Hieronimo’s problem in performing adequate rites for his son Horatio. On closer scrutiny, however, it rather seems as

if the traditional textual models are radically appropriated and rewritten so that all sense of literary commemoration is being undercut.

Hieronimo literally takes on the role of a translator – a role which, following Freud's joking quibble, we should do well to question. In the context of his speech the Latin quotations appear to be familiar, almost proverbial phrases which provide arguments for his reasoning. But just how plausible are they here? In the opening soliloquy of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, to cite a parallel and roughly contemporary case, the biblical quotations turn out to be wilfully manipulated phrases (Marlowe, 1995, pp. 141, 433) subverting rather than supporting any notion of building on scriptural authority. The same strategy is at work, I think, in Hieronimo's use of Seneca. Clytaemnestra's famous line 'per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter' (Seneca, 1953, II, p. 10) derives from the early scenes of *Agamemnon*, where she resolves to add murder to adultery because, she argues, 'through crime ever is the safe way for crime' (p. 11). Seneca's play was the archetypal and, among Elizabethans, the most popular revenge tragedy (cf. Sowerby, 1994, p. 63). It is aptly recalled and acknowledged, therefore, as the generic model to which Kyd's play pledges allegiance. But the conclusion Hieronimo draws from this quotation – 'Strike, and strike home, where wrong is offer'd thee' (3.13.7) – does not follow from the classical precedent at all. Clytaemnestra is far from striking 'home' where 'wrong is offered' her, but simply realizes that she is already too enmeshed in guilt and crime to turn around.

Similarly, the line from *Oedipus*, 'Iners malorum remedium ignorantia est' (Seneca, 1953, I, p. 470), cited like a general and well-known maxim, contains a doubtful lesson for Hieronimo. He quotes it as a comment about the revenger's strategy of dissimulation. But in Seneca, the line 'An idle remedy for ills is ignorance' (p. 471) is given to King Oedipus when he orders Creon to report what Tiresias's necromantic questioning of late King Laios has revealed about the circumstances of his death. In ignorance of his own murderous deed, ironically, Oedipus still believes in the power of knowledge, a power that will soon turn against him. This sense, however, is completely turned around when Hieronimo decides to simulate ignorance so as to make the royal family believe his harmlessness while he is plotting against them. And yet his citation is appropriate because the theatrical version of revenge he finally chooses to perform in his murderous show (4.4.89ff) bears strong affinity to the necromantic ritual that takes place in Seneca when the murdered Laios, just like the murdered Horatio, is made to speak, by means of magic or of theatre, to tell his secrets to the restless living. In this way,

Hieronimo's translations both rehearse practices of cultural memory – in their recourse to canonical texts – and appropriate them for present purposes.

This double strategy is especially relevant for the central Senecan quotation from *Troades*, with its focus on the tomb: 'fata si miseros iuvant, / habes salutem; fata si vitam negant, / habes sepulchrum' (Seneca, 1953, I, p. 166). Again, the original context is completely different and could easily invalidate Hieronimo's argument. With the sigh 'if the fates befriend the wretched, thou hast a safe retreat; if the fates deny thee life, thou hast a tomb' (p. 167), Hector's widow Andromache sends their young son Astyanax into his father's tomb. He is to hide there from the Greeks who, roused by the return of Achilles's ghost, intend to kill him before their victorious departure from the Trojan battlefield. It soon turns out, however, that the mother's plan miscarries; Ulysses demolishes the tomb, discovers Hector's heir and proceeds to have him sacrificed as demanded by Pyrrhus, Achilles's son and vengeful heir. This chain of retributions illustrates Girard's thesis about the principally unending series of violent actions and counter-actions in revenge plots. The son whose father killed another's father and died for it must now himself be killed or else he poses a perennial threat as the potential revenger on succeeding generations.

However, in the context of Hieronimo's citation from Andromache's speech, the emphasis lies on the unquestioned value of a proper burial. It is the prospect of a tomb, a publicly acknowledged resting place, that can only provide comfort against injustices in life. For Hieronimo, if not for Astyanax, the anticipation of the regular performances of death rites in communal acts of mourning at a monument offers relief from present suffering. His argument at this point connects his grief for his murdered son with distinct memories of Horatio's generous deed when he provided Don Andrea, cunningly slaughtered on the battlefield, with a proper funeral. As we learn in the introductory dialogue between Andrea's ghost and Revenge, Andrea was initially denied passage to the underworld. Only after his friend Horatio performed the ritual obsequies and gave his corpse a final resting place (1.1.25–6) was ferryman Charon willing to perform his duties as a go-between and take his soul across. At the turning point from law to revenge and from mourning to violence, therefore, Hieronimo's quotation recalls not so much the old Senecan play as the framing scene of the present play and so reflects the bloody chain of substitutions and displacements – Balthazar for Horatio for Pedringano for Lorenzo for Andrea – that structure and propel the grand project of revenge. In the next two lines, however, Hieronimo even

forgoes the prospect of a proper tomb. As he seeks comfort in the thought that 'Heaven covereth him that hath no burial' (3.13.19), he reminds us of the fact that Horatio himself has not yet been interred and will only come to rest, as the grieving father swears, once his death has been revenged (2.2.54). Meanwhile, the revenger keeps the corpse as a bodily memento, not revealing it until the gruesome climax in the staging of his own revenge play at the court.

In the absence of a proper burial, then, when no communal and ritual acknowledgement of the deceased has taken place, the bloody spectacle of theatre performance stands in and offers some compensatory mode of memory. Such a move towards publicity may in fact be implied when Bacon, in a surprising turn of argument, concludes his essay 'On Revenge' with the claim that '*Publick Revenges* are for the most part fortunate ... but in *Private Revenges* it is not so' (Bacon, 1912, p. 21). In Hieronimo's revenge, this consummating moment comes with his epilogue to the literalized show of murder when he reveals Horatio's unburied corpse:

Behold the reason urging me to this: *Shows his dead son.*
 See here my show, look on this spectacle:
 Here lay my hope, and here my hope hath end:
 Here lay my heart, and here my heart was slain:
 Here lay my treasure, here my treasure lost:
 Here lay my bliss, and here my bliss bereft:
 But hope, heart, treasure, joy and bliss,
 All fled, fail'd, died, yea, all decay'd with this.

(4.4.88–95)

Here the onstage audience is finally confronted with the fact of death. But the sight serves less as a pious *memento mori* than as an angry charge against the murderers who have just been publicly killed in retribution. The urgent appeal to the spectator's eyes can be compared with Warwick's discovery of Gloucester's corpse, which I discussed earlier (cf. section 1.4). As in the scene from *2 Henry VI*, Kyd's climactic moment shows us 'wounds' and 'fatal marks' (4.4.96–7) as ocular proof of the terrible crime committed here. But in contrast to Warwick's medical reading of the criminal history behind the body of evidence, Kyd's revenger finally refuses to provide the complete story that led up to it. He first pays public homage to his murdered son with a series of tropes – 'my hope', 'my heart', 'my treasure' and 'my bliss' – that stand in for the rituals denied. But then he bites off his own tongue and uses the pen-knife

against himself rather than say any more. In a grotesque inversion of their function, the tools of language and communication are thus turned to death and silencing – the ultimate refusal, on the part of a pathological mourner, to engage with any forms of figurative mediation.

With his translation of tradition, the ‘author and actor in this tragedy’ (4.4.147), therefore, acts as a get-between. From the point of his long soliloquy in which the Senecan literary heritage is not so much remembered as *dismembered*, Hieronimo treats everything in terms of his own revenge. In the end, nothing else can satisfy him but a literal rather than a mimetic performance: *his* show is *not* ‘fabulously counterfeit’ (4.4.77). Unlike Claudius’s or Pedringano’s empty gestures in their prayer scenes, this revenger has made sure that the theatrical motions have real effects.

At this point I would like to complement my reading of *The Spanish Tragedy* with a look at *Titus Andronicus*, where many of the same issues occur. Shakespeare’s early spectacle of revenge shares with Kyd’s the strong awareness of the literary tradition and the equally strong discontent with any conventional figures for coming to terms with acute grief. When Titus and his family implore Lavinia to reveal what she has suffered, they resort to the classics where the current crime is scripted in the woeful story of Philomela raped by Tereus (4.1.30–81). But the Ovidian textual model is recalled not just in the detection of the violent act but already in its perpetration: as Marcus rightly conjectures (2.4.41), Lavinia’s rapist must have been ‘a craftier Tereus’ because he has cut off her hands and so prevented her from showing her fate, as Philomela did, by means of weaving it in pictures. The play could hardly offer a more striking image than her mute and mutilated body to suggest that the remembrance of tradition also involves, literally, dismemberment. Titus’s own response to traditional figures and beliefs is hardly less devastating. When Tamora disguises herself as Revenge to haunt him, he appropriates her plot and turns it against herself (cf. Bate, 1995, p. 22). Thus, he literalizes a masque-like show in much the same way as Hieronimo in his final performance. Titus’s murder of her sons and the act of feeding them remains to the unsuspecting mother in the final retributive banquet is, as Sacks observes (1985, p. 81), not only a reversal of ritual procedure ‘according to which offspring mourn by metaphorically ingesting their parents, but the metaphorical version gives way to the untroped horror of actual cannibalism’. Similarly, Sacks has read Lucius’s final prohibition against burial for Tamora (5.2.194–9) as yet another rejection of the traditional ceremonies, confirming ‘non-mourning’ to be the ‘essential note’ (1985, p. 82) of the whole play.

But instead of viewing everything from the perspective of this ending, we should acknowledge the long process by which it comes about and observe the gradual development that Titus undergoes. As noted in the Introduction the play is obsessed with gestures of grief and the pieties of mourning. And as in the case of Kyd's *Hieronimo*, the title hero only turns from mourner to revenger when he can no longer trust the mediating force of models and convention. The turning point is marked by Titus's indecorous outbreak of emotion – 'Ha, ha, ha' (3.1.263) – that so disturbs his brother. His is 'a pathological laughter' which, according to Pfister (2002c, p. 185), expresses 'utter helplessness and the most radical protest against the horrors of existence and the failure of language to express them discursively'. From this moment we find him on the course towards revenge, increasingly drawn to acts, like the arrows shot 'against the wind' (4.3.58), that parody or openly reject conventional forms of address and communication. These symptoms of pathological mourning result from the realization that his last attempt at discursive negotiation has been abused. Before receiving his sons' heads in exchange for his own hand, he still hoped to be able to defend the family name by all means available. It is crucial therefore to acknowledge the intensity of Titus's initial trust in social bonds and obligations. This point is powerfully established with the performances of mourning in the opening of the play and the disquieting critique they must immediately contend with.

The first scene is situated near the Andronici monument and serves to establish as well as question the paradigm of customary burial. When the victorious general returns to Rome, his first deed is to have the sons who fell in battle interred with due ceremony and traditional honours (1.1.148–56) in the family tomb, their 'sacred receptacle', 'cell of virtue and nobility' (1.1.92–3), a place of rest, communal memory and public tribute. Lavinia, Marcus and the other family members join him in these obsequies. But all sense of proper conduct vanishes when the scene urges us to view the ritual here observed from quite another perspective. The Roman burial demands the sacrifice of a prisoner. Tamora's protest against the killing of her son (1.1.104–20) is not just effective in highlighting the violence committed in this act; it also functions in more radical – almost Girardian – terms to reveal the bloody underside of sacred worship. Two points follow from this early crisis in the play. First, in Tamora's case we see how her desire for revenge is born out of burial rites whose performance substitutes one act of killing for another, replaying an earlier death and so launching the long chain of mimetic retributions. Second, we witness the ambivalence of what is generally taken to be dutiful religious practice. The legitimacy of the Roman's

mourning rite is undercut by the reminder of its slaughtered victim whose cause – ‘to fight for king and commonweal’ (1.1.114) – appears no less legitimate than the victor’s. As the Goths are given voice to articulate *their* grief, the opposition between civilization and its barbarous Other quickly crumbles away. Tamora’s forceful oxymoron ‘irreligious piety’ (1.1.130) drives home the disturbing realization that piety and religion are contingent upon social context. In short, the performances of mourning in the opening scene make clear that there is no ritual of civilization that is not at the same time a ritual also of barbarity.

The sense of crisis and confusion deepens as the scene goes on. Titus refuses to have his disobedient son interred in the family monument (1.1.346–51), while the Gothic queen comes to be ‘incorporate in Rome’ through marriage (1.1.459). In her anthropological reading of this festive tragedy, Naomi Liebler (1995, p. 144) identifies a ‘crisis of Roman cultural definition’ evident in ‘the pattern of ritual perversion’ by which, for the central protagonist, the stable sense of self and Other is shaken and, for the audience, the faith in doctrine is being undermined. If funeral rites normally function as means of cultural affirmation and markers of community, the critical awareness of their cruel and contingent nature here goes to the heart of the body politic. ‘Ritual becomes not the effective redress for which it is designed but the actual site of contestation (for which there is no redress) and a reminder of the consequences to the polity of ritual violation or neglect.’ (Liebler, 1995, p. 141) In this view, again, the pathologies of mourning explored in revenge tragedy derive less from individual than from social problems. As a final image of the failed attempt to reintegrate a fragmented culture and re-establish a shared site of sacred reference, Liebler points to the remains of Titus and Lavinia whom Lucius, the new emperor, buries in the family tomb (5.3.192–3). Both corpses are fragmented and, with their mutilated limbs, signify lasting devastation (cf. 1995, p. 148). Although lawfully interred, their violated bodies cannot be restored and so remind us of the violations in and against the traditional body of ritual.

However, for my historical argument it is even more significant to observe these bodies in religious motion, as when Titus cries in desperation:

O, here I lift this one hand up to heaven
 And bow this feeble ruin to the earth. [*He kneels*]
 If any power pities wretched tears,
 To that I call. [*To LAVINIA, who kneels*] What, wouldst thou kneel
 with me?

Do then, dear heart; for heaven shall hear our prayers.

(3.1.205–9)

Their hands cut off, her tongue cut out, father and daughter here unite in a grotesque performance of common prayer. All mutilations notwithstanding, they desperately try to stage the appropriate gesture to implore the heavens. For a last time, this drama thus displays the grand pathos of religious faith, just moments before Titus breaks into pathological laughter and so abandons all belief in the work of supreme justice. The scene foreshadows the abortive attempt by King Claudius to rehearse conventional pieties – with the crucial difference, though, that Titus's and Lavinia's physical mis-shape gives powerful *external* evidence of what Claudius's pose conceals. To the audience, the shocking sight of their maimed bodies bent on prayer suggests nothing so much as the maimed ritual practice which the tragedy presents throughout and which, I would like to conjecture, may also have been understood as a suggestive comment on ritual practices in Elizabethan England. At any rate, the self-inflicted stump of Titus's arm, just like Hieronimo's self-mutilated mouth, signifies that these revengers can and will no more engage with traditional ways of mediation, religious, literary or otherwise. The 'feeble ruin' of their bodies emblematically shows the ruined monuments of tradition which revenge tragedies remember, even as they translate – and dismember – its one-time powerful figurations.

2.3 Foreign funerals and colonial mimesis: historical exchanges

What devout believers need for prayer, Thomas Wright argued in his treatise on the real presence, is 'a perpetually sensible object' placed before their eyes, some 'liuely conceit of the presence of God' that gives focus to their ritual activity and helps to mediate their thoughts: 'for such is the imperfection of our meditations, that we cannot prosecute them, but by corporal imaginations the which wee prou to be so wauering & inconstant, that if we fix not our mindes fully upon some corporal & sensible object, our selues will be wandering in al the coasts of the world' (Wright, 1970, pp. 33–4). The Catholic writer here identifies a problem that the pathological mourners of revenge drama also face, as we have seen, when their trust in conceits falls victim to their rage for real action. Interestingly, Wright's own statement concludes with a conceit drawn from the lives of real explorers ('wandering in al the coasts of the world') whose strange encounters also bear on revenge plays and their

critique of figuration. But more than anything else, Wright is concerned with the contrast between empty and full forms of worship. At the end of his book he adds 'An aduise for protestants and puritanes', which reviews his argument in the perspective of religious opponents. In this epilogue for unbelievers he describes the fundamental contrast between 'our' and 'their' religious practice in terms which again suggest how pertinent the show of ruined rituals in the plays must have been for Elizabethan controversies. The reformed service is dubbed in theatrical language as a 'meere tipicall shadowe' of the true form of worship and rejected as a 'naked supper', a ghostly, evacuated performance 'deprived of vertue, spoiled of religion' and so robbed of all effective power (Wright, 1970, epilogue unpaginated). The example supports my earlier contention that the spectacle of revengers is of topical religious relevance. In the revengers' violent reactions against traditional consolations whose protective charms have been lost or censored, English audiences in the 1590s could find many reminders of contemporary debates about burial and worship.

The point is emphasized with a curious detail in the last act of *Titus Andronicus*. The Goth who comes upon the arch-villain Aaron finds him in a 'ruinous monastery' (5.1.21) upon which he says he was gazing: an anachronistic reference to the violence visited on traditionally sacred sites in England during the Henrician Reformation. The play here further modulates its initial view of the Goths as barbarians and instead suggests that their invasion helped to rid the realm of Roman power in politics no less than in religion – due to the twin associations of classical and Catholic that 'Romish' had for Elizabethans. On this basis, Bate (1995, pp. 19–20) argues that the play should be viewed as a Protestant *translatio imperii ad Teutonicos*, relating the mutilated body of Lavinia to the Foxian martyrs and Lucius's fighting to the cause of Protestant succession. But this view disregards the powerful moments outlined earlier when the audience is confronted with the ambiguity of ritual and the ruinous effects of all maimed rites. As a whole, the play is not consistent in championing a particular religious preference and does not offer stable grounds for either condemning or celebrating the Reformation. The same holds true for *The Spanish Tragedy*. In his study of Kyd's work, Lukas Erne (2001, p. 55) contemplates the 'intriguing possibility' of the playwright having been a Catholic. There certainly are indications in the play: the conspicuous absence of anti-Spanish propaganda; the thinly veiled portrait of the Earl of Leicester, champion of the Protestant cause, in Kyd's villain Lorenzo; the purgatorial 'middle path' in his depiction of the Virgilian underworld in the opening scene (1.1.72); and

the play-in-the-play which Hieronimo finally directs and which shares crucial features with the reformers' critique of the Mass, namely linguistic obscurity and 'real presence'. However, in her earlier study (to which Erne refers), Diehl has cited some of the same evidence to argue the opposite point. To her, the play-within-the-play incorporates so many elements of the Roman Mass as constructed by Protestant polemics in order to *reiterate* the polemical attacks. Hieronimo's emphasis on visual demonstration, as when he displays the corpse or the relic-like handkerchief with his son's blood, is staged to highlight the absurdities of Catholic belief. According to Diehl (1997, p. 112), Kyd features 'the excesses of Roman rituals' in an effort to critique and contain them.

Such divergences in critical opinion are instructive. They show the need, first of all, to go beyond the binaries of Catholic versus Protestant interpretations of the playtexts when trying to place them in the religious debates of the period and relate the performance of revenge productively to other discourses in Elizabethan culture. But what is more, the critical difference also illustrates a central issue characteristic of all performative projects. In the theatre, it cannot easily be decided whether anything is staged to set a positive or a negative example. The question of how an audience responds, for instance, to Hieronimo's use of relics and his faith in corporeal presence depends, to a large extent, on parameters of performance that go beyond the written text. In any case, whatever is to be criticized or ridiculed on stage must also be presented there and thereby given substance, shape and power which may well defeat any critical intention. The oft-described attraction of stage villains derives from this ambivalence: although a figure like Shakespeare's Richard Gloucester may initially be 'determined' to be a villain, his sheer performative presence is more powerful and attractive than prescribed moral judgements or providential patterns. Similarly, Kyd's play-within-the-play might indeed be designed, as Diehl says, to give substance to Protestant attacks against the Mass, and yet its performance gives substance also to the very features so attacked. Thus, as Erne says, it lends itself even to Catholic readings. The problem that emerges here relates to the pragmatic distinction between using and mentioning a sign or utterance.² To try and address these implications of the playtexts thus requires a different approach.

In the theatre we take it that actors conventionally just 'mention' what they utter and do not 'really' mean it. But still, they also do things with their words – for and with the spectators and their imagination. As the famous anecdote about the apparition of an extra devil in *Doctor Faustus* shows (cf. Cox, 2000, p. 125), actors' words and ritual gestures

were indeed suspected of genuine power even when performed on stage. The issue of efficacy was especially pressing with regard to the contested use of Catholic rites and the potential power of their verbal form.³ This was debated, for example, in Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) when he assured his readers that 'words, characters, images, and such other trinkets, which are thought so necessarie instruments' have no inherent power. By themselves, they cannot be used for anything because they 'are but bables, devised by couseners, to abuse the people withall' (Scot, 1964, p. 390). The argument he offers to support his view draws on ethnographic evidence: '*Turkes* and infidels, in their witchcraft, use both other words, and other characters than our witches doo and also such as are most contrarie. In so much as, if ours be bad, in reason theirs should be good. If their witches can doo anie thing, ours can do nothing.' (ibid.) The axis of otherness is here displaced. No longer denoting Protestants versus Catholics, the opposition between 'us' and 'them' now denotes Christians versus infidels and so points to a larger theatre of culture in which the same contrasts are played out. Whether or not foreign witches use the same verbal repertoire as domestic witches relates to the belief in ritual efficacy – *and* to an actor's onstage use of religious words and props, like prayers or a bloody handkerchief. Rather than continue critical conjectures about Catholic or Protestant sympathies in revenge tragedies, my subsequent discussion will therefore look at their exchanges with other fields of culture, relating the pathologies of grief to some contemporary accounts of foreign funerals and ghosts. The religious problems explored through revenge plots will so be placed into a larger arena of foreign encounters where forms of common worship are defined in contrast to outsiders.

With the exception of *The Arden of Faversham*, all popular revenge tragedies are set in some foreign, Mediterranean, exotic or otherwise strange place. True, these fantastic Spanish or Italian, Oriental or remotely classical localities just serve as settings where familiar issues from Elizabethan England are presented. But for a period so intensely concerned with emergent needs of national self-definition (cf. Helgerson, 1992) these theatrical engagements with 'the geography of difference', as John Gillies (1994) calls it, are highly significant as they are used to construct notions of the self. For Kyd's play, the 'Spanish' reference in the title appears to have been suggestive enough to excite the spectators' emotions. In Shakespeare's Roman play, the opening quickly establishes the barbarian background to the civilization here portrayed – even as it undermines our trust in the stability of such an opposition. And before the play concludes, even its most gruesome

stock-figure of the Moorish-Jewish Other, the villain Aaron, is surprisingly endowed with all-too familiar traits when he defends his little child with evident paternal love (cf. Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe, 1987, p. 89). Thus, the figures and localities of revenge plays map the geography of difference through troublesome performances of sameness.

This is why I suggest to see the pathologies of mourning in these plays as part of the discourses by which English culture sought to define and defend an understanding of itself against the cultural difference manifest in strangers. Chief among these, the contemporary encounters with savages in the New World served travel writers to maintain the distinguishing marks of a Christian people, even as the boundaries with the unfamiliar were at the same time critically redrawn. Though set in distant territories, Elizabethan discovery narratives, like Elizabethan revenge plays, concern matters at home. They reflect conflicts in the domestic sphere because, as Joan Pong Linton shows (1998, p. 2), the making of cultural identity frequently involved the reciprocal effects of colonial experience on the English imagination. As illustrated in the rhetoric of religious pamphleteers and preachers, the fundamental contrasts between the old religion and the new could be explored in terms suggested by the current voyages between the Old World and the New. The discursive connection was provided with the shared interest in signs and their contested status of symbolic versus literal interpretations, which was part of the eucharist debate and which, in another cultural field, prompted observations on cannibals and savages alike. If revenge tragedies, as we have seen (cf. section 2.1), dramatize a crisis of symbolic mediation, their central problem turns on signs and their interpretation. In this perspective we can also see how the routinely displayed differences *between* English and foreign mourners relate to differences *within* contemporary English responses to bereavement. How to find, define and maintain the 'mean in mourning' – to cite the title of a sermon by Thomas Playfere – was a question negotiated in religious treatises, travelogues and revenge tragedies alike, because each of these illustrates the deviations from this 'mean' with variously distorted or misguided forms of grief.

Playfere's own interpretation of Christ's words on the cross serves as a case in point. The consolations which this Cambridge Doctor of Divinity gave his London congregation in Easter week in 1595 evidently drew on the reports from remote countries: 'Those barbarous people called Cannibals which feed onelie vpon rawe fleshe, especially of men, if they happen to eate a peece of rosted meat, commonlie they surfette of it and die. Euen so the right Canniball, the onely deuourer of all man-kind,

Death I meane, tasting of Christes flesh, and finding it not to bee rawe (such as it was vsed to eate) but wholsome and heauenly meate indeede, presently tooke a surfet of it, and within three daies dyed.' (Playfere, 1597, pp. 29–30) The explanatory power of the conceit works only because the congregation must have been sufficiently informed about differences between the raw and the cooked in savage eating habits. In the contemporary literature on Christian conduct it was a common strategy to establish proper behaviour in comparison to other practices which were either historically or geographically far removed. The true way to perform death rites could so be distinguished from ancient or exotic ways. In fact, these two options were rhetorically combined because colonial travellers and readers shared the view that savage people exemplify an ancient stage in the cultural progress that Europeans have completed. With regard to the important question of how many days the dead should be lamented Playfere cites evidence from the 'ancient Italians', the 'Egiptians', the 'Ethiopiens', the 'auncient Germanes', the 'Lacedemonians', the 'Athenians' and the 'Romanes' – his sequence presenting an ever shorter and more cultured mourning period from ten months to a few days and finally to prohibitions against any 'exclamations or outcries' (Playfere, 1597, pp. 78–9). The two nations cited last are said to be the ones most advanced on the scale of culture because they observed special laws to regulate and reduce public displays of emotion. However, true religion and barbarity cannot always be so clearly measured and opposed.⁴

In John Veron's early Elizabethan dialogue on burial, afterlife and mourning, the reference to anthropophagy is introduced to illustrate a particularly bestial way of dealing with the dead, and yet it contains unacknowledged affinities to religious practices nearer home. Christians, we are told, should not be 'like vnto certain barbarous nations and peoples, whiche regarded their dead no more, than we regard dead swine: but ether cast them vn to the dogges and fouls of the air, or els hurled them into the riuers' (Veron, 1561, pp. xxxii f). Respect and proper care for corpses serves as an index of true culture and religion – even though this Protestant writer is otherwise at pains to propagate the utmost reduction of all mourning rites while rejecting traditional ceremonies for their excessive care. What lesson should his audience then draw from the following foreign model that he cites: 'Some [people] againe suffered them [the dead] to rot vpon the earthe as dounge, and some were so beaste like, that they dyd eate theyr deade friendes and kinnesfolkes, being mingled with other flesh, thinking that this was the best buryinge of them' (ibid). The abhorrence at these latter forms of

burial is undercut by their tacit reminder of the eucharist with its ritual mingling of commemoration and incorporation. The cannibalistic burials, in this view, appear as literal versions of the sacred figures at the core of Christian – or, in Protestant polemics, Popish – rites. As mentioned earlier, the revenger's banquet in *Titus Andronicus* also shows an untroped performance of the metaphorical understanding that mourning works through ingestion. For all their horror, therefore, it was not always easy to distinguish barbarous from religious practices. In order to defend proper against pathological performances of mourning, all monstrous deviations from the 'mean' must be rhetorically dismissed, and yet in many cases their familiar traits cannot be fended off.

The examples and excesses of funerary practices observed elsewhere thus hold suggestive, though conflicting, meanings for English audiences and congregations. Nowhere was this more apparent than in reports by travellers from the New World whence, in all likelihood, contemporary fantasies of anthropophagy derived (cf. Hulme *et al.*, 1998). In his conclusion to *The Discoverie of Guiana* (1596), Walter Raleigh described Guiana as 'a Countrey that hath yet her Madenheade, neuer sackt, turned, nor wrought, the face of the earth hath not bene ttorne, nor the vertue and salt of the soyle spent by manurance' (Raleigh, 1968, p. 96). In a conventionally gendered trope of promise, fertility and sexual attraction, the New World figures as a place of plenty, inviting the masculine colonist to enter and subdue it (cf. Schülting, 1997). However, Raleigh continues in the quoted sentence: 'the graues haue not bene opened for gold, the mines not broken with sledges, nor their Images puld down out of their temples.' The country is untouched and yet it contains graves and monuments: the virgin must have had a past. The contradictory implications of his figure reveal the double nature of colonial discourse driven by desire and anxiety. For Raleigh, the monumental remains of culture, especially the tombs, command interest only as a source of gold, that is of material profit. But the symbolic capital they manifest should not be underestimated. This emerges in accounts of other American travellers who took some care to research local burial customs.

Above all, *A Briefe and true Report of The New Found Land of Virginia* (first published in 1588) by Raleigh's servant, the scientist Thomas Harriot, takes keen interest in the cultural activity of Virginia's 'natural inhabitants' and is especially informative about their religion. Part three offers many observations on their transcendental beliefs, rites and burials which are equally useful for pragmatic purposes. The writer finds occasion to point up the 'special familiarity' he managed to establish with

the local priests, who taught him 'the summe of their religion' (1972, p. 26). Given Harriot's notorious reputation of atheism, Greenblatt argued (1988, p. 27) that his report in the American arena tests the Machiavellian hypothesis that religion is a ploy by crafty priests to keep simple folks in awe. Drawn by the 'irresistible analogy' between Indian and European social structure and displaced into the foreign context, according to Greenblatt, such treasonous claims could be articulated and examined. What has not been examined, however, is the complex mediation by which Harriot, according to his own account, obtains such privileged insights. His appreciative comments on the 'subtility' of priests and rulers conclude a narrative about native eschatology. It juxtaposes a place of 'perpetuall blisse and happinesse' to 'a great pitte or hole' called *Popogusso* where evil doers after death must burn, and so establishes a postmortal topography not unlike a familiar Christian version. 'For the confirmation of this opinion', Harriot goes on, the priests told him 'two stories of two men that had been lately dead and reuiued againe' (1972, p. 26). One of these revenants told the living about *Popogusso*, the other about the place of bliss; henceforth the simple people tried to lead virtuous lives so as to travel there themselves one day. Here, Harriot's report does not just offer suggestive analogies between *Popogusso* and purgatory as places of punishment, but also reveals the power politics behind religious ethics. At the same time, his embedded narratives – he tells us what the priests told him what the revenants told the people – reflect the nature of his own account. The trope of the returning travellers from the unknown country whose reports are designed to impress the living marks Harriot's own position, too. He himself has a narrative to offer that depicts a blissful and remote place, America, in order to attract people from home to go there. Whatever native priests may have told this Englishman about their management of death, his own project turns out to be managed by the same 'subtilty'. In discovering the pragmatics of foreign superstitions, the colonial traveller uncovers the credulity of his domestic audience. The go-between, while delivering his message, foregrounds the make-believe effects of his performance.

The point would not be so relevant were it not reiterated and, to some extent, reversed in a later episode. Harriot also had a message to bring to the Indians: he explained the Bible to them and the true doctrine of salvation. 'And although I told them the booke materially & of itself was not of anie such vertue, as I thought they did conceiue, but onely the doctrine therein contained, yet would manie be glad to touch it, to embrace it, to kisse it, to hold it to their brests and headdes, and stroke

ouer all their bodie with it, to shewe their hungrie desire of that knowledge which was spoken of' (1972, p. 27). This reported urge for physical contact and bodily instead of spiritual reception of the salvational word is a topos in colonial rhetoric which serves several functions. It proves the natives' failure to grasp symbolic meanings;⁵ it reflects on superstitious practices at home, in particular on Catholic beliefs in relics and the efficacy of the sacred touch; and it shows how a culture of the book might indeed be transformed into a cult of the book when simple believers or 'poor souls' are so enchanted. Just as his earlier report of the two revenants recalls the ghostly apparitions in revenge plays demonstrating the need, on the part of recipients, to treat their messages with caution, so the missionary report about literalized forms of faith recalls the revengers' cult of objects as mementoes and their distrust of figurative meanings. And when in a further episode we learn about performances of prayer in Virginia, we also find a colonial counterpart to the empty, physical imitation of real worship which is explored, for instance, in *Hamlet*: 'as we kneeled downe on our knees to make our prayers vnto god', Harriot tells us about the Indians, 'they went abowt to imitate vs, and when they saw we moued our lipps, they also dyd the like' (1972, p. 71). The natives engage in constant mimesis. Like true actors, they hold up a mirror to the performance of religion.

There are several ways, then, in which colonial encounters can be seen as counterparts of the religious conflicts played out on the Elizabethan stage. It was the shared awareness of their performative character – including actors and spectators, the consciousness of fiction and the potential of deceit – that unites the Machiavellian view of religion with the travellers' view of first-contact scenarios and their routine exchange of gifts as signs.⁶ Both set up mimetic spectacles to exercise political power. Theatrical performance, too, works with such a strategy but puts it also to the test. In the arena of the playhouse, the power of mimesis is not only used, it is also self-consciously questioned (cf. Weimann, 1988), thus opening critical perspectives on the mimesis in the colonial arena. In Harriot's scene of the praying Indians, for instance, it is not easy to decide who is performing for whose benefit: the English naturally serve as models watched and imitated by the natives who, in turn, are watched and represented by the English when they write home about them. Yet the mimetic activity is mutual, for on the colonial stage the missionaries' prayer also functions as a pose to demonstrate the true religion. Besides, the natives' alleged trust in outward gestures as signs of inner attitude is shared by the Europeans when they claim to be able to read the natives' minds (cf. Taussig, 1993). However, the most serious

complications arise with the discovery of American graves. The evidence of elaborate burials and native rituals of death is so troubling for the construction of the New World because it disturbs the central rite by which colonial authority performs itself: the act of baptism. Their naming of an untouched, virginal, pre-cultured place was the foundational act for the explorers to convert savagery into civilization. The unopened graves that Raleigh noted therefore pose a problem as well as a promise: they invite opening and penetration even as they warn of some buried cultural presence.

The New World was not the only place where English travellers in the sixteenth century encountered foreign prayers and religions. It is therefore instructive to briefly juxtapose the colonial reports with accounts from previous journeys in the older paradigm of pilgrimage. On the traditional tours to the Holy Land, believers were fully contained in a cultural space, rich with religious meanings they found everywhere confirmed. As the narratives of Gylforde's 1506 or Torkington's 1517 pilgrimages tell us (cf. Ellis, 1851; Loftie, 1884), they traversed a territory in which every mark and sight had already been interpreted by scriptural authority. Organized around the holy sepulchre as its central point, the whole journey dramatized degrees of bliss and hierarchies of sacred space and, with each grave visited along the way, gave new proof of the holy shrines' abiding power. And yet the English pilgrims also noted that their religious readings were not unrivalled in the Holy Land. The ancient shrines also attracted worship from other sides. 'Under the church of the sayd Syon is the sepulture or beryall of prophets and kyngs of Israell, as Dauyd and Salamon', the Chaplain to Sir Richard Gylforde wrote in his travel journal. And he continued: 'Into thysse sepulturs no cristen men be suffred to entre, for the Sarracyns kepe that place in greate reuerence, and worship it ryght moche thyr maner, and haue made thereof theyr Muskey, that is to saye, theyr Church or Chapell' (Ellis, 1851, p. 20).⁷ Although the Saracens are infidels and resent Christian intruders to these burial sites, their worship manifests a shared topography of sacred land. Thus, the pilgrims found more than one way to reconfirm the wondrous acts and monuments established in the Bible. By contrast, the wonders of the New World lay in the experience of difference and the traveller's sense of elation when entering uninterpreted spaces. With the transformation of these wonders into secure possessions, Christian imperialism eventually managed 'to bring together commodity conversion and spiritual conversion' (Greenblatt, 1991, p. 71), that is to extend European economic and symbolic systems so as to include America. For, unlike the Saracens encountered by the

pilgrims, the Indians were evidently *not* in a position to understand the powers of sacred symbolism. As in their naive response to Harriot's preaching, they are routinely cast as superstitious, literal believers unable to distinguish signifiers from the signified and therefore easily manipulated by means of colonial mimesis. Especially in Protestant texts, New World natives play the role of idolators unable to appreciate the subtleties of rhetorical figuration.

In fact, these subtleties were a problem also in Reformation debates and especially in Anglican eschatology. They concerned controversies over the true mode of scriptural interpretation, not least when establishing the nature of the dead. 'Should we not be fayne to confesse, that the dead do speake and talke emonge them selues, as the liuinge do, and that they doe euen the same workes that they didde, when they were yet alyue?', one of the characters asks in Veron's dialogue (1561, p. 229). The point debated is Isaiah's prophesy, apparently endowing the dead with the same attributes and faculties as the living. 'But, who doeth not see', the speaker says, 'that the Prophet doth vse a *figuratiue maner* of speaking' (emphasis added). His description of the dead and their activities should therefore not be taken literally, as believers in ghosts and spirits are inclined to do. Instead we learn that the rhetorical figure used here 'is of the Rethoricians called *Prosopoeia*, that is to say, a fiction or feigning of persons: because that by it learned men do many times introduce and bring in the dead speaking as though they wer alyue' (Veron, 1561, pp. 230f). Several other examples then discussed confirm that the scriptural text is prone to the same kind of misunderstandings that arise in colonial encounters. In either case, the rhetorical operation of 'fiction or feigning' must be appreciated and is, in either case, too often mistaken for the real thing. The argument is suggestive. It foregrounds the special mediating function performed by rhetorical figures for 'the wittes and capacitie of men' and so combines the hermeneutical efforts of Protestant propagandists with the colonial reports on foreign mourners and relates both to the ghosts in the theatre. For it is on the stage and, most of all, in revenge drama that we commonly encounter the effects of fictive persons as though they were alive.

Prosopoeia is the figure of personification, the making or feigning of a face and voice. Revealing its peculiar power and ridiculing those believers who failed to understand it was a routine strategy for Reformation writers. John Foxe used it when he mocked Thomas More and invited laughter at More's superstitious misreading of some poetic fiction called purgatory (cf. Greenblatt, 2001, p. 251). But the forces of this figure were not so easily dismissed. As 'the rhetorical device that lies

behind all haunting' (ibid.), prosopopeia determined not just the orator's but also the actor's performance, whose power was frequently felt to have surprising consequences. Although commonly disavowed, it allied itself to the activity of ghosts as manifested on the stage. This point is made by Meredith Ann Skura (1993, p. 52) with reference to Nash's praise for Talbot: the very vocabulary of the theatre lends itself to imagining the player as a revenant, a 'shape' or 'shadow' by which the dead achieve provisional presence. In Protestant treatises against witchcraft, such as the books by Lavater (1572) or Scot (1584), ghosts were routinely explained as the products of a melancholic mind, that is to say, as symptoms of pathological, excessive mourning. But it was in the playhouse that this was sceptically questioned and examined – as when Hamlet ponders that the devil in a pleasing shape may 'abuse' him in his 'melancholy' (2.2.576–80). More than any other plays, revenge tragedies scrutinize such uncanny figures. My foregoing discussion has explored some ways in which the revengers' obsession with unfigurative action interrelates with issues in contemporary colonial discourse. In the final part of this chapter, I will now relate these issues to some aspects in *Hamlet* and this play's performative engagement with the questions of belief.

2.4 *Hamlet* and the virtue of assumed custom

When Samuel Purchas reports from North Virginia 'when a Sagamo dyeth, they black themselves, and at the same time yerely renue their mourning with great howling' (Quinn and Quinn, 1983, pp. 350–1), he gives yet another piece of ethnographic information about foreign funerals. His observation invites us to reflect on parallel practices at home where the use of black in mourning and the ritual of annual commemoration was much debated. But what is more, the title of Purchas's travelogue, *Pilgrimage*, shows how the Elizabethan culture of discovery used and modernized traditional religious figurations. In pilgrimages, according to Johannes Fabian's distinction (1983, p. 6), 'travel had been *to* the centers of religion' whereas in the modern period 'secular travel was *from* the centers of learning and power'. The changed direction in the cultural notions about travelling indicates changes in the structures of knowledge and authority that initiate or regulate such ventures. So, even as the rhetoric of early modern explorations still drew on the old figure of Christian life as a pilgrimage or *peregrinatio*, its trajectory was redirected toward new destinations. This was not without effect on eschatological ideas. Hamlet's famous trope of death as 'the undiscovered

country from whose bourn / No traveller returns' (3.1.81–2) places the afterlife outside the reach of human knowledge and yet within the sphere of possible exploration. To identify a place as 'undiscovered' is the first decisive step towards discovering it and so extending the horizon of current knowledge. In this way, Hamlet's figure, like Purchas's title, looks back to old notions and simultaneously looks onward to recent New World explorations – just as the play on the whole looks back to old ways of revenge and mourning while, at the same time, exploring their conventions under new conditions.

Hamlet's precarious position at the interface of several, sometimes conflicting, cultural forces can account for the remarkably conflicting critical assessments it attracts. Among others, these concern the central practices of remembrance and revenge. Neill (1997, p. 244), for instance, opens his interpretation by pointing out how significantly *Hamlet* has reshaped the genre of revenge to which it belonged; to him, the 'great discovery of the play' lies in declaring that revenge tragedy 'is about murderous legacies of the past and the terrible power of memory'. The hero's new relation to mortality results from transforming and curbing this terrible power. Sacks (1985, pp. 88–9), by contrast, sees the play's greatest achievement in its move 'from vengeful to elegiac pursuits, from action to language' and from rejecting customary suits of woe to embracing commemorative narratives. To him, Horatio's final announcement that he will deliver the true story combines with Fortinbras's declaration of the 'rights of memory' to establish a 'stance of benedictory farewell' that overcomes the earlier gloom. Here, the power of memory is not rejected but employed. Similarly, the tragedy's religious subtext continues to be subject to divergent readings. Diehl (1997, p. 90) argues that Hamlet with his unrelenting self-analysis shows 'a distinctly Protestant habit of mind', just as his use of the theatre suggests reformed, specifically Calvinist beliefs. From her reading we learn how the whole play is shaped to affirm the power of representational drama as an alternative model to manifest a Protestant aesthetics on the stage (1997, p. 92). And yet, according to Greenblatt's reading (2001, p. 253), *Hamlet* achieves its characteristic theatrical effect through 'its proximity to certain experiences that had been organized and exploited by religious institutions and rituals', specifically in the old faith whose figurations, like his unquiet father, return to haunt the Wittenberg student. Though Greenblatt identifies what he calls a 'Protestant temperament' in Hamlet (2001, p. 240), the play shows its hero surrounded by Catholic ceremonies and their ghosts, while the language of Protestant doctrine in

mourning has been usurped by Claudius. In his view, then, the cultural work performed by *Hamlet* lies in appropriating and absorbing, even cannibalizing Catholic material for the theatre (2001, p. 254) rather than, as for Diehl, in reforming the stage.

As in the case of *The Spanish Tragedy* discussed earlier, my interest here is not to arbitrate between these critical positions. The following discussion focuses rather on the performative issue at the centre of the play's debate over adopting or expressing the emotional engagement demanded in specific situations, be they revenge or mourning, killing or praying. Against the background of the pathological mourners in earlier revenge tragedies *Hamlet* undertakes a succinct critique of the premises on which they proceed, offering reflections and experiments about performative procedures instead. These take shape, for instance, in the famous briefing by which the players are instructed how to do things with their words on stage, or rather, how *not* to do them. When Hamlet urges the actors to 'reform' their manners, his injunctions culminate in the censoring of clowns who improvise and so go beyond the script. Because their laughter induces the audience to do the same (3.2.34–40), their uncontrolled performance oversteps the symbolic barrier between actors and spectators that Hamlet is intent to maintain. Rather than see all united in the physical expression of their mirth, he insists on the techniques of mimetic representation which, to him, legitimate the spectacle (cf. Weimann, 2000b, p. 158). The stage as 'mirror' offers 'virtue her own feature' or 'scorn her own image' but does not encourage the contagious effects of real passion. And yet these aesthetic principles do not remain unquestioned. Beginning with the first player's passionate impersonation of ancient grief, there are several points in Hamlet's further encounters when he reconsiders his pronouncements. In their course, the wall of legitimation, as Weimann puts it (*ibid.*), is being shaken and begins to break open. At the latest, this happens in his encounter with the physical remains of Yorick (5.1.171–80), one of the most intense moments of mourning on the Elizabethan stage.⁸ Hamlet here laments the *loss* of jokes and laughter; this jester can no longer perform or tell jokes but his remembered presence still has power on the living.

In such ways, this play obliquely explores issues of revenge and mourning, 'by indirections find[ing] directions out', as Polonius advised his spy (2.1.65). *The Spanish Tragedy* shows how violence arises from deep grief that is denied public authority; *Titus Andronicus* confronts the violence that authorizes funeral ceremonies; *Hamlet* stages an extraordinary series of perturbed mourners and maimed funeral rites. But a key to

understanding the play's cultural performance lies in the simple observation that physical violence is never actually staged. Unlike the popular spectacles of blood and brutal onstage murders in earlier revenge tragedies – not to mention later Jacobean versions of the genre – *Hamlet* refrains from all bloody excess. The long-expected final fight (5.2), resulting in no less than four corpses, begins as a formal duel. Violence is here ritualized, hence tamed by rules (indicated by the repeated stage direction 'They play'), before it escalates in consequence of the king's breach of the rules. The only other moment of visible violence takes place in the queen's closet (3.4) and here, significantly, the victim is obscured behind the arras. My point is not to deny that *Hamlet* is a play involving many acts and forms of violence, but to acknowledge the particular form that violence here takes. Just as Hamlet stabs the hidden Polonius through the arras, naked violence is generally placed behind the scenes. Throughout, this play is more concerned with the cultural screens – or screen performances – that have displaced it.

When Hamlet discovers whom he has killed, his words try to reinvent the victim's identity and so give a specific meaning to his rash and bloody deed: 'I took thee for thy better' (3.4.31). We can read the remark as an attempt to endow the act of violence retrospectively with some symbolic value, that is clothe it in the justification it lacks. With the same strange combination of comfort, apology and aggression Hamlet then turns to his mother telling her: 'Leave wringing of your hands [...] / And let me wring your heart' (3.4.33–4). Gertrude's conduct, though appropriate for the occasion, is here censured, as Hamlet tries to stop her lamentation, denouncing it as 'damned custom' (3.4.36). In both cases, the expression of grief which might reasonably be expected is prevented. Acts of grief only occur later in excessive and pathological shapes with Ophelia's madness and Laertes's vengeful rage – reminding us of Kyd's couple Isabella and Hieronimo, or of Titus. But Shakespeare's tragedy is so disquieting because it does not just question the earlier plays' use of violence but also questions the power of custom in the performance of belief. *Hamlet* defamiliarizes mourning rites and gestures and so makes them as uncertain as the 'antic disposition' (1.5.173) the hero has put on. As just shown in my brief survey of critical debates about it, the play constantly recalls recognizable figurations from the cultural arena, even doctrines that for decades had been subjects of controversy in England, and incorporates them in the subject of the theatre. Again, the rites and rights of memory, identified by many readers as the central problem *in* the play, are equally the problem *of* the play.

Stanley Cavell has observed about Hamlet that ‘the father’s dictation of the way he wishes to be remembered – by having his revenge taken for him – exactly deprives the son, with his powers of mourning, of the right to mourn *him*, to let him pass’ (1987, p. 188, emphasis in the original). Hamlet’s problem in this sense arises from the obligation to violence that is thrust upon him, so that his powers of mourning cannot be used in more productive ways. Unlike Titus or Hieronimo, he does not turn of his own accord to revenge action, but is called to it by paternal command. Throughout the play, he is hard-pressed indeed by several figures who clearly offer themselves as models but whom he hesitates to follow. Surrounded by discarded iconography of grief (cf. Sacks, 1985, p. 83), faced with two other effective revengers, Fortinbras and Laertes, Hamlet is painfully aware of their power to anticipate his own determined course and yet they paralyze his power to go through with it. Shortly before the final duel he tells Horatio that he is sorry that ‘to Laertes I forgot myself; / For by the image of my cause I see / The portraiture of his’ (5.2.77–9). The mutual, though somewhat uncanny, reflections here acknowledged – to see another’s *portraiture* in an *image* of one’s own *cause* – set his project in a double relation to familiar precedents. The doubling continues from his earlier play production in ‘The Mousetrap’ when he announced the poisoner Luciano as ‘nephew to the King’ (3.2.223), thus ‘tropically’ combining past and future, committed and intended murder, regicide and retribution. But rather than having his own acts and words directed by such constantly remembered models of proper behaviour, Hamlet hesitates.

This means that Cavell’s comment should be reconsidered, because the functional relation between remembering and revenging a dead father may be different. ‘Certainly in taking *Revenge*’, Bacon wrote (1912, p. 19), ‘a man is but even with his Enemy’. This ‘evenness’, the loss of difference and distinctive marks between the enemies, corresponds to what Girard considered the condition of violent revenge, a view he finds confirmed in Hamlet’s self-acknowledged mimetic relation to Laertes. The reason why Hamlet nevertheless defers the performance of his father’s order, according to Girard, lies in the fact that he cannot see Claudius’s crime as being any different from the crime his father once committed when killing old Fortinbras and then conquering Norway: ‘The problem with Hamlet is that he cannot forget the context. As a result, the crime by Claudius looks to him like one more link in an already long chain, and his own revenge will look like still another link, perfectly identical to all the other links.’ (Girard, 1991, p. 273) ‘Bound’ to the ghost’s order, the revenger is part of this chain of prefigurations and finds himself linked to its continuance – but only when he forgets

'the context' and does *not* maintain his memory. What here emerges is the need to see the pathologies explored with Hamlet as arising from his inability to forget. That is to say, the double command given by the ghost – 'remember me!' and 'revenge me!' – must be interpreted as mutually conflicting instead of mutually supporting imperatives. This explains why Hamlet's initial impulse goes towards erasing rather than recalling past events. In his first response to the ghost's message he vows to 'wipe away all trivial fond records' from 'the table' of his memory (1.5.98–9), that is giving himself over to forgetfulness. His metaphor recalls the traditional *ars memoria* where the rhetorical loci are likened to 'the wax tablets which remain when what is written on them has been effaced and are ready to be written on again' (Yates, 1966, p. 7). In view of such an interplay between memory and erasure, the predicament dramatized with Hamlet seems to be that too much remains written on his mind to qualify him unquestioningly as revenger. His 'globe' is 'distracted' (1.5.97) as long as memory still holds a seat there.

For all we know, this point first appeared with the Shakespearean or, at any rate, the Elizabethan staging of the story. In its most often acknowledged textual source, Saxo Grammaticus's twelfth-century Danish history, there is no trace of doubt or hesitation over the question of how to respond adequately to the crime. Heroic Amleth is much praised for his 'wit' and 'bravery' in the 'strenuous revenge for his parent' (Bullough, 1973, p. 70). In a resounding victory speech he celebrates himself and tell us how, resenting 'the wrong done to father and to fatherland', he resolved to put an end to it (1973, p. 73). In this early medieval setting, vengeance and killing simply feature as manifestations of social bonds and filial obligation, quite removed from any moral probing, pathological excess or memory dilemma. In their Renaissance re-enactment, though, the inheritance is being questioned both in the hero's and his tragedy's ambivalent stance on traditional models. *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*, we saw, engage with their literary sources in open scenes of reading and citation that remember and dismember tradition. *Hamlet* takes the same approach but takes it even further, making its own dramatic predecessors part of the metatheatrical engagements by which the power of performance is put to the test. In Denmark, the classical heritage derived from Seneca's *Troades*, such as Priam's slaughter on the battlefield, is managed by a company of touring players whose 'memory', as Hamlet is quick to find out, may be the only place where the revenge campaign of Pyrrhus still lives on (cf. 2.2.428).

However, while an actor's passionate performance of this heritage may impress a philistine official and one-time dramatic amateur like Polonius, it is notoriously unreliable as a commemorative, let alone

historical, representation of the heroic past. Polonius's former enactment of Caesar's death (1.3.102–3) may have come close enough to the remembered version of events, but the updated version of 'The Murder of Gonzago' which Hamlet has the company perform is far from following even the sketchy outline of events leading to the late king's death that the ghost's tale has given. Nor would Hamlet use the theatre in the same literalized manner as Hieronimo. He mainly employs the play as an experimental instrument to probe into the human conscience, taking physical reactions as signs of inward motions. The most he allows the play to do with words is to anticipate the retributive act. As mentioned above, his doubling of Luciano shows a past murderer at the same time as a future one. 'Looking before and after' is the capacity that he later singles out to characterize men's 'god-like reason' (4.4.9/27–8). And although he denigrates 'bestial oblivion' here (4.4.9/30), his commentary on the play-in-the-play proves how the performance of revenge is less an act of memory than an action to displace remembrance of things past. Even as Polonius recalls how he was 'killed i'th' Capitol', we understand Hamlet's 'brute' response (3.2.93–5) as anticipating the actual, though mistaken, killing of this player not long after.

All these are signs of the way in which Shakespeare's tragedy of failed mourning compels its audience to think about the powers of convention and to question the relationship between conformity and performance. Hamlet's first extended speech against Elsinore's official show of grief (1.2.76–86) is often cited as evidence of his rejection of all 'customary suits' as 'actions that a man might play'.⁹ But it is crucial to acknowledge that this is not the play's nor the prince's last word on the matter. There are at least two more occasions where the modalities of social custom are foregrounded and framed in the language of theatre costume. When Hamlet welcomes Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, just after the arrival of the players has been announced, he shakes their hands saying: 'Th' appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony. Let me comply with you in the garb, lest my extent to the players – which, I tell you, must show fairly outward – should more appear like entertainment than yours' (2.2.354–7). In this greeting the conventional 'garb' is assumed and the appropriate gesture performed. But the added commentary renders it reluctant and contingent upon the welcome of the true actors whose coming is anticipated with much greater enthusiasm. Still, the 'fashion' here observed shows clearly that one can well conform to social obligation without necessarily erasing all marks of reservation and dissent. In view of the pressure to conformity in Elizabethan England and the persistent need, for some sectors of society, to maintain religious

difference in their rites for the dead, this brief moment in *Hamlet* has topical relevance.

The most interesting comment on this issue comes in Hamlet's exposition with his mother. Though the scene begins, as noted, with his condemnation of mere custom, at least one version of it ends with the following advice:

Assume a virtue if you have it not.
That monster custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devilish, is angel yet in this:
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery
That aptly is put on.

(3.4.151–151.5)

The passage is textually difficult (cf. Jenkins, 1982, pp. 520–1), but its overbearing sense is clear. Custom can and often does lead to the adoption of good ways – an old idea, going back at least to Aristotle, that is here given new urgency and a theatrical frame. The 'frock or livery' are clothes that belong to particular social institutions and show that the bearer belongs to them. But, as clothing, they are still detachable from his or her body (cf. Jones and Stallybrass, 2000, p. 5). Because of this and their strong association with ceremony or social memory, 'frock' and 'livery' offer many possibilities of disguise and dissimulation when they are worn without 'virtue'. And yet Hamlet claims here that such 'virtue', even when initially just 'put on', eventually has an effect that penetrates within. So he dismantles the familiar opposition between inward belief and outward show. Conviction and virtuous belief, he argues, are the consequences rather than the preconditions of 'actions fair and good'. Their use, although it may first simply be 'assumed', should not be described in terms of histrionic costume. Or rather, these terms must be revised to acknowledge that 'use almost can change the stamp of nature', that is the repeated, imitated action impacts on the actor. Assumed behaviour, then, or mimetic manners or simply customary repetition of conventional gestures gradually bring about the appropriate attitude.

This argument has important implications for the play as well as for the religious practices surrounding and suffusing it. It relates not only to Claudius's attempted use of prayer we saw on the stage a few moments before, but also to the praying Indians that were observed (and ridiculed) in Harriot's report – savages are surely the toughest test-case to

determine whether the 'stamp of nature' can be changed by cultivated habit and assumed religious acts. But most of all, the argument is suggestive for the curious way in which Hamlet eventually comes to perform his main task. With each deferment of the violent act, this tragedy seems to mark some hesitation over adopting the customary model of classical revenge drama. Instead, *Hamlet* stands in pause where, or as what, it should eventually end. When it does end and when revenge is finally performed, we are surprised to see that Hamlet manages to kill Claudius twice: first with the rapier, then with the poisoned cup. As Calderwood has argued (1983, p. 46), 'Hamlet stabs Claudius for himself, but poisons him for his father', because 'the second killing, given the deadly sufficiency of the first, is less a functional necessity than a symbolic formality'. But such a symbolic, formalized or, as we can also put it, *performative* realization may rather be the point here.

The felicitous utterance of mourning, we recall from Sacks (cf. section 2.1), demands the mourner's eventual submission to a symbolic order. In language he must substitute what has been lost in life, a cultural process which robs him of the fantasies of immediate and unmediated presence previously enjoyed. Revenge, accordingly, is a regressive reaction against the necessary symbolic substitutes that otherwise must govern social relations. However, if Hamlet's poisoning of Claudius must be seen as a 'formal' or 'symbolic' way of assuming a revenger's virtue and the role expected of him, then Hamlet's final act signifies how he has managed to realize and has simultaneously reversed these expectations. He performs his task in such a way that suspends all claims for immediacy and instead takes it into the order of symbolic enactment. Through its enforced routine of roles and the transfer of agency onto another actor, revenge is basically imitative. It demands the retributive repetition of a primal violence committed elsewhere and before. This may be a reason why, as illustrated in all the above examples, the revenger so often figures as a double of his enemy. However, as I showed, Hamlet's response to this imperative is a challenge to rethink the powers of mediation. In his case, performance turns out to be less imitative than productive.

The point would not have been lost on Elizabethan play-goers. If their stage encounters with revengers like Titus or Hieronimo involved painful questions about remembering the dead and about the violence in Christian ritual, their encounter with *Hamlet* may well have suggested ways in which pathologies of mourning could be brought back into the domain of symbolic and yet effective mediation. The opposition between genuine and adopted acts of worship is here superseded in

performance, just as the unfamiliar becomes accustomed through use and repetition. Religious belief is not always and not necessarily the precondition of religious practice. The common and open participation in ritual performances may also generate faith – or should, at any rate, suspend the distinction between believers and unbelievers. The 1559 Act of Uniformity required general church attendance and strict observance to the forms of worship. But with its emphasis on ‘common and open prayer’ – ‘that prayer which is for other to come unto or hear’ (Cressy and Ferrell, 1996, p. 58) – it demanded uniformity only when and where it could be witnessed. This was, according to Targoff (2001, p. 39), the rationale on which the whole Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer rested. Even though it may have failed to edify all congregations, it constructed a community of practitioners who learned the gestures of conformity. As to *Hamlet*, Cavell remarked (1987, p. 186), its ‘ending business is then the learning of mourning. But who is left to use the learning? Who, I mean, besides us?’

Who indeed? The question urges us to acknowledge that newly acquired fashions of mourning may yet change the stamp of nature and so produce the conditions of commemoration which a reformed society, by law, has chosen to forget.

3

Physiologies of Mourning

Tears and the Purgatory of Weeping

3.1 Secrets and secretions

In one of his most intriguing stories, Plutarch tells us about a ruthless tyrant widely feared for his own violence who, when he saw violent spectacles on stage, was noted to shed bitter tears. In his *Defence of Poesy*, Philip Sidney has retold this story in order to illustrate the moving power of theatrical performance and to establish what he famously calls ‘the sweet violence of tragedy’ (1989, p. 230). His point concerns the interrelation between life and theatre. But clearly, Plutarch’s ‘abominable tyrant’, from whose eyes ‘a tragedy, well made and represented, drew abundance of tears’ though he was known to have ‘murdered infinite numbers’, raises complications. On the one hand, Sidney leaves out that this tyrant, weeping at the miseries of Hecuba, apparently himself felt so ashamed at his response that Plutarch reports he left the theatre at once (cf. Sidney, 1989, p. 381). On the other hand, Sidney leaves open what exactly his account is meant to prove: is the ‘sweetened’ violence of tragedy so irresistible because it forces violent spectators to mend their bloody ways or because it offers them occasion to display compassion as an *ersatz* for real change? The latter is suggested in Terry Eagleton’s blunt comment that ‘the case is no different from someone shedding tears over images of the down-and-out while creating mass unemployment in his own company. There is nothing particularly puzzling about this: if the unemployed began to break his windows, he would stop weeping soon enough’ (Eagleton, 2002, p. 170). But in the present context window-smashing does not seem to be the answer. The uncertainties of represented pain and the effects of performed mourning demand more reflection: why should this tyrant weep for Hecuba? If his physical reaction to the spectacle is reported as remorse, what are his tears to signify? Was he truly crying and lamenting and, if so, for whom?

This chapter will pursue such questions about tears, passions and their questionable signifying power in public performances. As Sidney's remarks indicate, tears are generally seen as signs of an inward, secret movement, perhaps to do with moral reformation, perhaps with personal compassion. Yet how exactly these signs should be read and what constraints may govern them remains an issue. Certainly the theatre is relevant, in more than one way, as an arena where tears feature here. The weeping tyrant himself appears to be an actor as much as a spectator. We read that he leaves the theatre in a demonstrative gesture, as if he wanted to be seen not wanting to see the stirring play. His exit is telling, not only when compared with Claudius's reaction to 'The Mousetrap'; it could also suggest that the controlled staging of displeasure has a consolatory or placatory function. As with the puzzling tears for Hecuba shed by the First Player in *Hamlet*, we can take these cases as our cue to investigate the use of crying as the most common way to express grief.¹ But again, we need to frame such a discussion in the terms and concepts of performance. So before turning to the case of tears and the physiologies of mourning I would like to reiterate some claims about performativity in cultural analysis and review the main points argued in the previous chapter.

In the context of her *Hamlet* reading, Belsey (1999, pp. 166–72) has retold Freud's well-known story about the little boy playing a *fort-da* game with the cotton reel. This Freudian parable (Freud, 1999, XIII, pp. 11–15) has often been cited to interpret cultural performances of mourning. The boy's compulsion to repeat his game, moving between loss and retrieval, has some affinity with ritual ceremony, where structures of repetition are used to shape and channel the emotions of bereavement (Muir, 1997, p. 5). Repetition is just as prominent in literary forms like elegiac refrains which create 'a sense of continuity, of an unbroken pattern such as one may oppose to the extreme discontinuity of death' (Sacks, 1985, p. 23).² When the painful loss someone has suffered is inserted into a series of preceding losses, the present grief can be expressed, perhaps exorcised, and eventually resolved. But the point of Belsey's reading is that nothing is resolved in *Hamlet*. The play, she argues, does not take a stance on any of the issues it has raised – issues about the nature of ghosts, the question of religion or the legitimacy of revenge. All resolutions the play presents are simultaneously questioned, every step taken is also taken back and each position turned around, repeated and reversed. 'The ethical positions come and go. In the soliloquies Hamlet re-enacts at a symbolic level the seductive comings and goings of the Ghost, the spectre of the loved father whose commands

initiate his deliberations. In the end', she concludes (Belsey, 1999, p. 170), 'Hamlet relinquishes the desire for the closure of certainty and mastery over his own death'.

Hamlet even dies, we must add, in uncertain terms. According to one version of the text, he concludes his life with a well-formed epigram to silence all deliberations, according to another version with an inarticulate, non-verbal cry transcribed as 'O, O, O, O!' (5.2.301). Not even this tragic hero's final moment can resolve the uncertainties because his dying voice sounds double. The textual variants continue to seduce us into ambiguities that have been puzzling all along. In Belsey's phrase, *Hamlet's* triumphant indecisiveness could be captured in the movements of a dance, a Dance of Death, in which each step taken is also taken back because the point is not to advance to a particular position but to keep moving. Just as in the graveyard scene 'Hamlet is the active partner in the miniature Dance of Death' (1999, p. 166), so his play as a whole offers to dance with the audience, as it repeatedly announces and then withholds action: 'The text, meanwhile, promises and withholds explanation, the possibility of mastery by the audience, and constitutes itself in the process as an object not primarily of knowledge, but of desire, teasing, enigmatic, seductive' (1999, p. 171). In the terms of my discussion, the text's movements, between *fort* and *da*, between knowledge and desire, enigma and seduction, are manifestations of its performativity. What Belsey characterizes with the figure of the 'dance' in *Hamlet* fully corresponds to the figurations of performance that this play pursues not just in its staging but also with regard to ethical and doctrinal points. A self-consciously sceptical and reluctant revenge tragedy, it engages with key issues in the pathologies of memory and mourning. But the arguments it raises, though central in contemporary debates, are not so much resolved as performatively acted out, while alternatives and antitheses become, in Belsey's term, steps of a dance.

I wish to emphasize that the focus on performance and performativity applies to the reading of *all* the texts I discuss. But in the case of *Hamlet* we find that such a focus is already powerfully present in the play itself and often highlighted in special ways as if to explore its uses. The prince's advice to 'assume a virtue' even though we do not 'have' it is such a point where we are challenged to consider what difference it makes – if any – to play rather than produce a required act for public performance. But even the terms in which we phrase this alternative are doubtful. 'An act hath three branches: it is to act, to do, and to perform' (5.1.11–12). What the gravedigger here explains in a parody of legal argument anticipates what speech-act theorists more recently have

pointed out. We can do things with words – such as promise, bless, curse, lament, condole or pray – because we know certain conventions for these acts which we use and so perform. But the histrionic sense of his key terms reminds us that all such actions always inhabit a theatrical reality while, conversely, every verbal signification is also an act (cf. Pfister, 2000, p. 256). We do things by words only on the basis of prescribed rules and pre-scripted roles, rather like actors on a stage. As an actual version of the model enabling the potential act, each performance is both a realization and the repetition of a foregoing one.

Again, every stage production of any play would bear this out, but *Hamlet* is especially pertinent. Throughout, it struggles to contain the overbearing power of old models – of revenge, of memory or of filial duty – by which current acts are to be performed and measured. To some extent, the dramatic uncertainties and dance-like movements Belsey notes arise from the tragic hero's inability or unwillingness to follow plots laid out for him or to repeat the moves determined by convention. As in a *fort-da* game, these are repeatedly presented, rejected, recovered and removed only to be reinstated again. As a whole, Shakespeare's tragedy is modelled on several earlier texts such as Saxo Grammaticus's chronicle or Kyd's lost *Ur-Hamlet*, whose figurations it partly recalls and partly reshapes (cf. Höfele, 2000, p. 241). The pressing questions about parental authority and the legitimacy of its stand-ins – like ghosts, stepfathers or stepmothers – which are raised *in* the play thus also negotiate the position *of* the play. As Heather Dubrow (1999, p. 151) says in a different context, 'general anxieties about undertaking a major literary project and more specific concerns about literary imitation generate an image of a parent who often dubiously assumes the role of another'. But however anxiously positioned, Shakespeare's version of revenge and mourning soon became such a success on stage that it has itself turned into a model whose figures and phrases can be repeated, echoed and updated in other plays. We can therefore review these pathologies of mourning through a contemporary drama, step-parented perhaps in part by *Hamlet* but certainly by *The Spanish Tragedy* and the tradition of revenge.

'Our mourning we will turn into revenge' (Heywood, 1967, p. 71). This announcement is made by Bess, title figure of Thomas Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West* (Part I), at a turning point in her career that marks her resort to open violence. So far, she has endured all the blows of fortune with courage and great patience. On receiving news about her lover's death, she has decided to travel to his burial place overseas, recover his corpse and bring it home. His death among infidels and

Catholics was all the more disquieting because no proper burial rites could be performed. But when she learns that Spanish invaders have now destroyed his monument, she turns herself to destruction and vows terrible revenge. The impossibility, on the part of the bereaved, to locate a legitimate symbolic form by which to commemorate the dead drives her to violent compensation. This is just one example in which Heywood's play repeats key structures and familiar figures from the repertoire of revenge drama. Another example is Bess's later encounter with her lover, who turns out to be in fact alive but whose re-appearance she thinks must be his ghost intending to what her blunted purpose: 'Thou haunt'st me thus? Sweet ghost, thy rage forbear; / I will revenge thee on the next we seize.' (1967, p. 75)

Yet the clearest reminder of this theatrical tradition comes when Clem, her faithful servant, disguises himself as 'a fantastic Moor' and makes his entry at the Moorish court where Bess, after another bizarre twist in her fortune, is now being entertained. Here Clem actually quotes a scrap from *The Spanish Tragedy* and refers to the popular old play in no uncertain terms:

'It is not now as when Andrea liv'd,' – or rather Andrew,
our elder journeyman. What, drawers become courtiers?

Now may I speak with the old ghost in *Jeronimo*:

When this eternal substance of my soul
Did live imprisoned in this wanton flesh,
I was a courtier in the court of Fez.

(1967, p. 81)

The opening of Kyd's play is cited loosely, as if the lines are only recollected vaguely. But it is remarkable that Clem, the modest drawer-turned-courtier, should comment on his social transformation in terms borrowed from an old ghost. The spectral language is repeated here as part of an onstage performance: Clem merely acts the role of 'Moor' and so winks at the audience. This reminds us of the metadramatic character of Heywood's entire project and establishes a perspective from which to view its peculiar, perhaps parodistic re-engagement with the pathologies of mourning.

A late Elizabethan adventure play and maritime romance,³ *The Fair Maid of the West* offers a wild and sometimes incongruous combination of many features promising theatrical success: true love, evil intrigue, spectacular exploits, exotic splendour and barbaric customs. That among this mixture we also find scraps from traditional revenge tragedy

as well as topoi from the cultural controversies on burial and proper mourning proves their availability and their appeal as stock figures for popular entertainment. Such a recycling and, at points, sheer travesty of serious religious issues shows how stage history is repeated in the guise of farce. But it may also strengthen our sense of the cultural connections between revenge plots, foreign mourners and the domestic debates over death rites which my previous chapter charted. In this view, one of the most interesting and unusual aspects in Heywood's drama is its presentation of a *female* mourner as revenger. After the destruction of her lover's monument, Bess launches a campaign of retribution which would traditionally have been regarded as a *masculine* response to foreign death.⁴ Her earlier performance of public mourning, too, trespasses into a male domain because Bess, a cross-dresser, ventures on a voyage to retrieve her lover's corpse. In fact, we should note the special way in which she has her ship fitted out like a grand funeral ensign:

I'll have her pitch'd all o'er: no spot of white,
No color to be seen, no sail but black,
No flag but sable. [...]
She shall be call'd the *Negro*.

(Heywood, 1967, p. 65)

Principally, mourning becomes women. But this particular woman, to display her grief, makes use of doubtful methods: she employs signs from the sphere of maritime adventure, not generally thought to be a woman's sphere. Even more remarkably, she combines the colour of mourning with a signification of foreignness or otherness, the name *Negro*, as if to further question the familiar and domestic modes of mourning – not unlike Hamlet's questions about 'customary suits of solemn black' (1.2.78) and what they can denote truly. Should we regard her blackened ship as the devout sign of a faithful, grieving bride or rather as a monstrous monument, showing an extravagance of passion and moorish misbehaviour?

What is at stake here are the true signs of Christian, and especially Protestant, responses to bereavement. The issue concerns the means just as the 'meane' of mourning which Anglican priests like Thomas Playfere made the subject of their preaching. In contrast to the doubtful case of material manifestations, the most widely recommended, required and accepted signifier of a devout Christian heart was indeed the shedding of tears. As Playfere reminds his congregation, 'wee offend commonly in the want of weeping, seldome in the excesse' (1597, p. 10). The fair maid

of the West, however, denies herself all weeping and, contrary to the expected ways of womankind, advertises her bereavement not with tearful lamentation but in an excessive show of blackness.

With such an emphasis on cloth and colour, Bess re-asserts the materiality of memory by which funeral rites as well as pageants and processions work. In the playhouse, too, recollections of the dead are interwoven in the fabric of their garments. As Jones and Stallybrass have argued in the context of their *Hamlet* reading (2000, p. 248), 'material clothes, indeed, have the ability to conjure up the dead and to materialize them upon the stage'. This power of clothing, they say, is 'closely associated in the Renaissance with two almost contradictory aspects of its materiality: its ability to be permeated and transformed by maker and wearer alike; its ability to endure over time. As a result, clothing tended to be powerfully associated with memory' (2000, p. 249). Yet in the theatre, I would add, such associations are not simply put to use but also put to the test, as in scenes of cross-dressing and disguise where costumes are precisely questioned for the kind of transformation they effect. 'Methinks I have a manly spirit in me / In this man's habit', remarks Bess (Heywood, 1967, p. 33). Her play upon the difference or conjunction between 'spirit' and 'habit' is further emphasized with the physical presence of the boy actor who played this fair maid. Thus, the cultural memories materialized in outward clothing can be considered as either transmitting or transforming the inner reality they enclose.

In a period of sumptuary laws and regulated clothing, such ambiguities must surely have been troubling:

Extraordinary apparell of the bodie declareth well the apparell of the mind: for some you haue so inconstant in their attire, that the varietie of their garments pregnantly proueth the ficklenesse of their heads: for they are not much vnlike to Stage-players, who adorne themselves gloriously like Gentlemen, then like clownes, after, as women, then like fooles, because the fashion of their garments maketh them resemble these persons. (Wright, 1971, p. 136)

This is how Thomas Wright, in his much-read book *The Passions of the Minde* (first published in 1601), explains why people's apparell should indeed serve to 'discover' their passion. But his argument defeats itself with the reference to the 'ficklenesse' of stage-players: why should they not make up their minds to project a different image of themselves and dress in resemblance of constancy? The point is especially relevant for mourning attire and the question of what it may, or may not, show about the wearer's mind. That the signs of clothing give no reliable

inside information is argued, for instance, by the stage fool Feste when he reminds his lady: '*Cucullus non facit monachum* – that's as much to say as I wear not motley in my brain' (*Twelfth Night*, 1.5.48–50). By the same token, Olivia's visible mourning for her brother may signify great love and virtue or alternatively, as Feste proves, much greater foolishness (1.5.57–62). For all believers in sartorial surveillance, this comedy contains a cautionary tale as it demonstrates the need for scepticism whenever we try to establish anyone's true state or being by means of his or her apparel.

Still, the question of how to gain such insight and how to access inmost feelings was widely and very resolutely pursued. Katharine Maus (1995, p. 12) observes that authors 'so various as the Puritan Perkins, the Anglican Foxe, the Jesuit Wright, and the heterodox Raleigh all yearn for techniques of penetration, excavation, exposure', even though at the same time they all proclaim 'their mistrust of those techniques'. This was, in fact, a key issue in contemporary performances of mourning. My present chapter will therefore explore the uses and conditions of a key technique by which, according to common understanding, this elusive inward realm is generally exposed: tears and crying. Unlike clothing or other customary suits of solemn black, tears are secreted by a physical organ, that is they are actual products of the humoral body and are hence credited with genuine power to speak of its secret emotions. Gestures and the signs of body language were often seen as means of direct communication by which the limits of verbal expression could be overcome and universal understanding be achieved. As Scholz has shown with reference to Montaigne and Spenser, early modern concepts of corporeality encouraged belief in the body's ability to express itself through natural signs. Tears, too, are telling in this way as true physical expression – but only if the nature of the human body is discursively hedged in as a site beyond cultural determination and outside the constraints of history (cf. Scholz, 1999, p. 98). Both the promise and the problem of telling tears are evident when Playfere says that 'weeping is more piercing, & more forcible to perswade God, and euen to wound his hart, then all the eloquence, & all the rhetoricke in the world' (1597, p. 18). The preacher argues for the greater eloquence of weeping, and yet his emphasis on the arts of persuasion necessarily undermines our trust in the truthfulness of tears. With God as addressee, they surely cannot counterfeit. But other addressees might well see them as studied parts of a rhetorical performance.

This is the issue which the present chapter sets out to discuss. My exploration into physiologies of mourning does not aim to reconstruct early modern medical discourses that regulate contemporary notions of

the body;⁵ the discussion aims rather to trace the *social* uses to which these notions are put while questioning the effects they have in the performative space of the playhouse. As in the other chapters, my reading proceeds on the basic understanding that the early modern theatre is a place of play, of mimetic representation and of cultural production whose strategies and products also work within the wider political arena – not least in the fluid signs of mourning.

3.2 Tears and the uncertain signs of inwardness

There were points in early modern culture when the truth value of tears became a matter of legal argument, judicial inquiry and proof. This was the case in witch trials, because witches were identified and best convicted by their adverse relation to all kinds of water. As James VI observed in *Daemonologie* (1969, p. 81), ‘the water shal refuse to receiue them in her bosom, that haue shaken off them the sacred Water of Baptisme, and wilfullie refused the benefite thereof: No not so much as their eyes are able to shed teares (thretten and torture them as ye please)’. The conviction rested not only on principles of faith but on insights gained from long-standing experience in torture and trial methods – and yet it was not uncontested. In his earlier *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), against which James launched his attack, Reginald Scot had already described the ‘particular interogatories used by the inquisitors against witches’. But he also berated common superstition for putting so much trust in the fluid signs of weeping with regard to such grave consequences: ‘But alas that teares should be thought sufficient to excuse or condemn in so great a cause, and so weightie a triall! I am sure that the woorst sort of the children of Israel wept bitterlie: yea, if there were any witches at all in Isreal [*sic*], they wept. For it is written, that all the children of Israel wept.’ (1964, pp. 45–6) To the sceptic, tears cannot give sufficient proof to establish the presence of evil.

Whether or not witches weep, it is clear that physiological evidence is routinely sought for moral argument and so employed to construct social meaning. This emerges even from the few sentences quoted. Despite their fundamental difference, James and Scot agree on reading tears in terms of gender – women and their passions are the issue in each case – and in terms of religious truth: biblical precedent and sacramental practice serve as codes to interpret female tears. In fact, appeals to religious weeping are frequent and transcend the deep doctrinal divides. Both Protestant and Catholic writers claim that weeping must accompany, if not actually manifest, the devout performance of Christian duties. ‘Look

how religiously Abraham celebrated the rites of his wife's funeral, which the scripture calleth the office of the burial', Cardinal Allen argued in *Souls Departed* (1565), his defence of the old belief in purgatory and prayers for the dead, and he emphasized that Abraham already fulfilled this solemn office 'by weeping and lamentation' (1886, pp. 200–1), setting the model for true Christian practice. In a very different context, we read how the Puritan Richard Rogers noted in his diary in 1588 that his wife lay dying, without him showing any signs of weeping or lament (Knappen, 1933, p. 82). By contrast, a year earlier Rogers reports when and how tears came to him in religious study:

And so god made sweet to me this course of purposinge the practize of greater godlines more then lately had been in me, that, beinge comfortable all that day, my study the next for the sab[bath] folowinge was with delight exceedinge, and the frut the next day in sermon and medit[at]ion with many teares and relentinge, on exodus 19: 5, and the savour of that was not lost till it had brought foorth many good effectes. (Knappen, 1933, p. 66, brackets in the published source)

For the resolute Protestant, tears are not shed when in mourning but when meditating the Lord's covenant with his chosen people. The 'good effectes' of weeping which he feels give him 'delight exceedinge' because they are evidence that his prayers have been heard. 'To be able to shed tears, while preaching or in prayer,' the diary's editor explains (1933, p. 9), 'was a sensible proof of God's favor.'

But the Puritan's interest in emotional display raises more questions than it answers, just as the Catholic's argument for ceremonious weeping for the dead leaves crucial points unsettled. Though tears are widely claimed to work as signs, the message they deliver is encoded and remains subject to varying interpretations. 'Therefore the very Egyptians when they would describe Weeping, paynted those Pearles, which wee call *Margarites* or *Vniones*, whence *Suidas* saith [...] *Margarites Hieroglyphically* signify the shedding of Tears.' (Lesly, 1631, p. 62) This is how the Anglican Bishop John Lesly, four decades later, summed up contemporary views about tears and their signification. The semiotic connection he draws with reference to ancient authority leads him to postulate the rule that we should not weep in overflow but always regulate our acts of crying, lest any of the precious drops are wasted: 'For as those Pearles are called *Vniones* in *Latine*, because they are found one after another, and never more at once; So Teares must be shed successiue

one by one, & neuer powred out all at once' (1631, p. 62). Where tears are well-formed, pearl-like and controlled they must come from a virtuous character. It is the ability for self-control in passion, demonstrated through a finely governed flow, that best speaks for a noble nature.

But what, exactly, such noble natures might speak of remains uncertain. Weeping serves to indicate strong passion. And yet, the hieroglyphs of tears are difficult to decipher because they demand a double act of reading. In the first place, the image of the pearl stands for tears, but tears, in turn, stand for something that cannot visibly be shown because it belongs to an inaccessible reality which they signify. Lesly calls it 'inward Griefe', and at the outset of his treatise he declares with reference to Bonaventura: '*Fletus est signum interioris moeroris*, Weeping is a signe of inward Griefe' (1631, p. 22). But when we think about the relation between signifier and signified, we realize that the two acts of reading function differently. The first step – from pearl to tear – is plausible and motivated by visual similarity; in semiotic terms, it follows from an iconic relation. But the second step – from tears to grief and mourning – is precarious because the evidence is doubtful. Lesly postulates a material connection when he infers, on grounds of analogy: 'For as smoke a signe of fire, is immediatly produced by fire, so is Weeping by Griefe' (ibid.). Semiotically speaking, weeping would thus be an index. If tears are naturally and immediately produced by inner motion, they could indeed serve to prove the appropriate emotion and show its effect for all to see. The reasoning is straightforward: no smoke without fire, hence no tears without grief.

All such contemporary reflections on the physiologies of mourning and the material production of tears proceed in the framework of the Galenic theory of humours. True, with the steep rise of new body research in the seventeenth century this traditional approach was increasingly challenged, but it was still credited with classical authority and great explanatory power.⁶ Like most physiological treatises of the time, Lesly's *Epithrene* is placed in this paradigm, as his introductory remarks reveal:

Weeping being the Shedding of Teares, that water of the highest price, that shower which cometh from the heart pierced for the most parte with Griefe, and the Sweate, yea Blood of the Soule laboring in sorrow is then properly and commonly caused, when the Concavities of the Braine, filled with the smoakie perfume of Sorrow, doe vent their Moisture or liquid humor, through the eyes, as their proper channels, and distill it into Teares. (Lesly, 1631, pp. 15–16)

The economy of body fluids here described differs from later body concepts because the specific nature of the fluids was thought to be unstable and forever changing. Rhetorical figures such as the 'sweat' and 'blood' of the soul, by which tears are referred to, allow for a strictly literal reading. As Gail Kern Paster (1993, p. 9) explains in her study of early modern disciplines of shame, 'Galenic physiology proposed a body whose constituent fluids, all reducible to blood, were entirely fungible'. Together with blood and the three other humoral substances, all liquid excretions of the body – like urine, sweat, semen or tears – were understood to form a physical continuum of flows. According to temper or situation, each of these could transform into another. The continuum, however, was hierarchically structured and ranged from low, filthy and embarrassing body products up to high and noble ones. At the top end of this hierarchy, according to medical opinion and classically informed judgement, tears ranked as the only body fluids which could be socially displayed. Greenblatt remarks (1990, p. 70), 'eventually, all of the body's products, except tears, become simply unmentionable in decent society'.

This sets the stage and the challenge for Lesly's argument, for he investigates the meaning and use of weeping with regard to the tears shed by Christ when he came to the tomb of Lazarus. 'And Jesus wept' (John 11: 35), the Gospel reports and so raises a question that countless preachers and divines debated throughout Elizabethan and Jacobean times.⁷ In 1622 John Donne preached a Lent sermon, in 1612 Daniel Price preached at Prince Henry's funeral, as many others did before and after them, to address the same burning issue: why did our saviour weep? Even if we should understand his tears to express grief, as generally agreed, this does not fully interpret their message. 'But for what our Saviour grieved, and wept,' Lesly sums up the theological discussion (1631, p. 22), 'I find it not determinately defined by Interpreters'. The hermeneutic problem of these holy tears forms part of a broader debate at the time which we could call an argument of weeping. To try and reconstruct it here is crucial for my project because it centrally concerns the physiologies and social performances of mourning. In recent years, several studies of medieval and early modern culture have followed Mikhail Bakhtin's readings and focussed on performances of laughter.⁸ Tears and crying, though less often studied, belong to the same context because the medical texts of the time treat them as equivalent to laughing. For instance, Robert Burton argues in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1923, I, p. 486) that 'weeping, sighing, laughing, itching, trembling, sweating, blushing' and so on are all 'motions of the body, depending upon these precedent motions of the mind'. His curious catalogue of body language,

as Pfister writes (1996, p. 205), circumscribes a grotesque body that can neither be contained nor controlled and so exemplifies the powerful corporeality championed by Bakhtin.

But what is more, the argument of weeping also involves questions of ritual and religion and so offers insights into the social mediations that govern physical signals such as tears and their interpretation. In Burton's list just quoted we can see how certain observable body motions are read as indicating emotions, 'motions of the mind' in Burton's phrase. This shows how corporeal functions come to language. Although we often speak of 'body language', the body in fact never 'speaks'. As Alois Hahn (2000, p. 358) reminds us, a social system rather singles out some moves and physiological transformations from the virtually unlimited number of body motions and treats them as significant. Still, this leaves a wide spectrum of potential meanings. Even if the social system of early modern England singled out tears and credited them with signifying power, their precise meaning was better viewed with reservation.

We set us down an heavy couple in sight;
 And therewithal I set a sigh, such one
 As made the form shake which we both sat on.
 Whereupon she, without more words spoken,
 Fell in weeping as her heart should have broken;
 And I, in secret, laughing so heartily
 That from mine eyes came water plenteously.
 Anon I turned, with look sadly, that she
 My weeping as watery as hers might see;
 With done, these words anon to me she spake.
 'Alas! dear heart, what wight might undertake
 To show one so sad as you this morning,
 Being so merry as you last evening;
 I so far then the merrier for you,
 And without desert thus far the sadder now.'
 'The self thing,' quoth I, 'which made me then glad,
 The selfsame is thing that maketh me now sad'

(Heywood, 1966, I, p. 155)

This roguish narrative by a figure from John Heywood's *Play of Love* (1533) illustrates that 'the selfsame thing', eyes wet with tears, signifies opposite motions of the mind because it can be produced by secret laughter or by the sufferings of love. The same problem is staged with

the reverse outcome in the previously cited moment from *Titus Andronicus* (3.1.263–8; cf. Introduction and section 2.2), where the extreme of paternal suffering is marked not by tears but by laughter. In both cases, the signifier and the signified of conventional body language are dramatically divergent.

The religious and doctrinal meanings which tears were nonetheless invested with and which were treated in a wealth of poems, sermons and related writings have been discussed in Marjorie Lange's study (1996), without however treating drama. My discussion of this issue therefore tries to shift perspective and show that the argument of weeping is, at heart, an argument about theatricality. Even when tears are addressed in medical or theological terms that do not openly concern the playhouse, I argue that they operate in terms of performance. The stage is not just an arena where tears are prompted, produced and displayed; it also serves to problematize such productions and question their performative powers even as they are employed. As cultural medium and model, the theatre is principally present in physiologies of mourning. The scene from the Gospel quoted earlier is a case in point (John 11: 29–37). When we reread the Lazarus passage we notice that Christ's tears feature in a complex scenario of gestures, looks and moves, which suggests nothing so much as a dramatic performance (and which, in late medieval mystery plays, was indeed regularly performed). As soon as Mary, the mourning sister, meets Jesus at her brother's tomb, she falls down at his feet, weeping. Like her, the Jews around them also weep. Then we read that Jesus, seeing all these tears, 'groaned in the spirit and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!' His eyes are filled with tears at the very moment when they should have seen the tomb but, instead, reflect and physically answer the grievous feeling all around. Tears, in this scene, are body signs that circulate among the various participants and so connect them. At the same time, tears are signs which are, already *in* this scene, subject to observation and interpretation. That Jesus weeps indicates to the others what he must have felt for the dead.

This gives us another example of what Maus (1995, p. 15) has called the 'inwardness topos' and what I, for my present purposes, would rather call an inwardness *effect*: the performance of selfhood by means of critically reading its articulations. Maus argues that early modern theatre helps to construct an inward/outward distinction usually aiming to privilege whatever is classified as the 'interior' (1995, p. 3). My interest in physiologies of mourning lies in the opposite direction: what uses can

exterior signs like tears serve, what meanings are they invested with, and how are these socially authenticated in order to determine what goes on within? The difficulties with such questions emerge from the first example that Maus cites, Hamlet's familiar reservations against mourning apparel as 'actions that a man might play' (1.2.84). Perhaps we should understand Hamlet as saying here that his inmost feelings can never be communicated because they are subjected to the codes of a courtly language which forbid any articulation of true selfhood (cf. Reichert, 1998, p. 75). But in the answer to his mother, Hamlet is concerned with non-verbal social codes, and his sceptical remarks explicitly include corporeal signs like tears, 'the fruitful river in the eye' (1.2.80). The power of codification and, hence, the need to question such effects evidently go beyond verbal language and include physiological evidence. How then can performances of mourning become validated?

In the following parts of this chapter I shall argue that tears are so significant because they both provide and require validation for, and from, accompanying speech acts. Their flowing nature renders all attempts to arrest their fluid meanings difficult. Nevertheless, some cultural and political domains show telling ways of how to do things with tears, prominently in the framework of the theatre and especially in contemporary performances of mourning.

3.3 Rhetoric and the techniques of emotional engineering

When Lance, the clownish servant in Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, first introduces himself to the audience (2.3.1–28), he presents himself as a particularly tearful creature, son of a whole family of copious weepers. But when he tells us about his emotional farewell from home and even tries, with the help of his shoe and dog, to re-stage the scene, his live act fails because the dog refuses to join in: 'My mother weeping, my father wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity, yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed one tear.' The beast does not play the required role nor does it participate in the general outburst of passion. Such comic incongruities are played out to provoke the theatre audience into laughing, but in fact they also point to basic postulates in the contemporary anthropology of weeping.

In 1579 the French physician Laurent Joubert published a treatise about laughter, which was widely read in England too. In this learned book he makes the important claim that not only laughing – long said

to distinguish humanity – but also weeping should be regarded as an exclusively human mark because no other creature is capable of the inner motion that produces tears. Some animals may sometimes perhaps have runny eyes, but Joubert principally notes a difference to the special secretion motivated by a mental process:

For experience teaches us that there is no animal that weeps, none that blows his nose, that spits, or that picks wax from his ears. Man among all the animals, because he has a large brain, not only in proportion to his body, but also with respect to his weight (for a man has a brain twice the size of an ox's), abounds considerably in said excrements, which he releases from his eyes, nostrils, mouth, and ears. [...] To man alone, then, is weeping proper; it cannot be accorded to animals because they scarcely understand or conceive the things that lead to weeping. (Joubert, 1980, p. 98)

Joubert does suggest a material interpretation when he says that human bodies contain a larger amount of humoral fluids, but the real anthropological difference for him lies in the emotional capacities which 'other animals', as he puts it, do not have. Whenever we lament and weep, therefore, we confirm the powers of compassion that belong only to full members of human society. As Lance notes critically about his dog, 'a Jew would have wept to have seen our parting'.

Against this background we can understand why tears are regularly invoked to confirm or strengthen communicative acts. When in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, Lysander vows his love to Helena, he makes his point by drawing attention to his tears: 'Look when I vow, I weep; and vows so born, In their nativity all truth appears.' (3.2.124–5) Helena may well distrust her suitor who, only a moment earlier, proclaimed his love to Hermia. His tears, however, function to allay all doubts. Unlike pale complexion or love-sickness, they are not just part of the conventional *signa amoris*, but are claimed here to bear witness to the truth. In *Richard III*, too, we find a telling reference to such truthful appearances: 'It cannot be, for he bewept my fortune' (1.4.232), Clarence says about his brother. His statement has the structure of an argument, in which the tears he observed provide evidence for the conclusion he has drawn from them. In the terms of speech-act theory we might call this the perlocutionary force of tears, that is their impact on the addressee (cf. Levinson, 1983, pp. 236–7). Whenever someone weeps while saying something, his words gain credibility and emphasis or are, at any rate, received accordingly. In this way, tears help to establish

what John Searle called the 'sincerity conditions' on which the felicity of speech acts depends (cf. Levinson, 1983, pp. 239–40). Wet eyes are evidently seen to signal a speaker's honesty.

Such views of tears and their persuasive power go back a long way and can be found already in the classical books of rhetoric. In the eleventh part of his *Institutio Oratoria*, for instance, Quintilian tells us how a speech should be successfully delivered. For this purpose, he emphasizes the great effects of passion rendered visible for the spectators through the speaker's eyes:

But of the various elements that go to form the expression, the eyes are the most important, since they, more than anything else, reveal the temper of the mind, and without actual movement will twinkle with merriment or be clouded with grief. And further, nature has given them tears to serve as interpreters of our feelings, tears that will break forth for sorrow or stream for very joy. (Quintilian, 1953, IV, p. 285)

The rhetorical use of tears is further demonstrated with reference to one of Cicero's orations which he, rather effectively, ended by claiming that his pain was about to overpower him: 'But here I must make an end: I can no longer speak for tears' (Quintilian, 1953, IV, p. 341). It is this model by which Shakespeare's Mark Antony authenticates his own passion when he interrupts his famous mourning speech at Caesar's coffin, saying: 'Bear with me. / My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar, / And I must pause till it come back to me' (3.2.102–4).

Quintilian's lessons are based on a long tradition of practising and theorizing public eloquence. The first comprehensive treatment of these issues was Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*. In his second book, he discusses the emotions in view of their potential usefulness to induce conviction. Although he does not mention tears, he says a great deal about the feeling of pity, woe or compassion (*'eleos'*) which should be aroused in the audience, not just by tragedy but also by orations. To this end, Aristotle recommends the orator should present signs of pain and personal suffering as vividly as possible by means of physical performance:

For in general, here also we may conclude that all men fear in regard to themselves what excites their pity when others are the victims. And since sufferings are pitiable when they appear close at hand, while those that are past or future, then thousand years backwards or forwards, either do not excite pity at all or only in a less degree, because

men neither expect the one nor remember the other, it follows that those who contribute to the effect by gestures, voice, dress, and dramatic action generally are more pitiable. (Aristotle, 1947, pp. 228–9)

In Renaissance England, Aristotle's rhetoric was not as widely studied as his other works. Still, the text was known and read with great attention (cf. Green, 1994), not least for the useful insights it provides into human emotions, their mechanism and effects. When George Puttenham, for instance, in *The Art of English Poesie* (1589) comments on elegies and lamentations, he describes the poet in terms of a physician – 'making the very grief it selfe (in part) cure of the disease' (1968, p. 39) – which follows Aristotle's theory of purging the emotions.

However, precisely because of such suggestions about ways to work upon or engineer emotions, Aristotelian rhetoric was often viewed with reservation. The scruples raised against it are formulated in a lecture series by John Rainolds, delivered in the 1570s at Corpus Christi, Oxford. While appreciating Aristotle's fundamental understanding of emotions, the Protestant speaker demands that any practical engagement with them should be based on ethical, that is Christian principles: 'the passions must be excited, not for the harm they do but for the good, not so they twist the straight but that they straighten the crooked' (Green, 1986, pp. 150–3). And yet, even in formulating this maxim, Rainolds must concede that any rhetorical use of emotions learned from classical authority is principally multi-functional and open to whatever design one might have. For this reason he tries to play down its power and declare that, for any orator, the display of passions is just an 'ornament'; his real impact and success rest on the 'arguments' he offers (cf. Hunter, 1994, p. 114). But this is clearly a prescriptive postulate. Above all, the maxim formulated earlier makes us suspect that the emotional ornament is likely to outweigh the rational argument in rhetorical performance.

What Rainolds feared is diagnosed with uncompromising clarity in another rhetorical textbook of the time. In *Direccōns For Speech and Style* (c. 1599), John Hoskyns remarks: 'The pfect expressing of all qualities is learned out of *Aristotles* io. bookes of morrall *Philosophy*; but because (as *Machiavile* saith) pfect virtue, or pfect vice is not seene in our tyme, w^{ch} altogethether is humorous & spirting, therefore the vnderstanding of *Aristotles Rhetorique*, is the directest meanes of skill to describe, to moue, to appease, or to prevent any mocōn, whatsoeu^{er}.' (Hoskyns, 1937, p. 155) The repertoire of devices to stimulate and simulate emotions which is taught in the rhetorical tradition thus enables the successful orator to lead his audience in whatever way he will. Hoskyns's reference to

'Machiavile' is doubly significant, for no one is able to manipulate others more effectively by means of engineered emotions than the notorious figure of the Machiavellian villain (cf. Roe, 2002), and nowhere can we find clearer evidence for this than in the theatre. Rainolds is, in fact, best remembered for his grim diatribes against the playhouses, and it must be said that his polemic tracts, like *The Overthrow of Stage-Plays* (c. 1599), show what ominous and remarkably great power he considered these institutions of an incipient entertainment industry to hold. The social impact of the playhouse is clearly analysed by him: it is a place of emotional engineering where people respond to counterfeits of passion and so are weakened in their morals as in their abilities of rational argument (cf. Hunter, 1994, p. 114). The show of false emotion, he argues, must lead them to misjudgements.

This was surely well observed. There are moments even within certain plays which exemplify and foreground the very danger Rainolds notes. Clarence's judgement in *Richard III* which I quoted earlier is just such a fallacy based on the evidence of tears which, we now see, were counterfeit emotions. Facing his murderers, Clarence cannot believe that they have been sent to him by Richard 'for he bewept my fortune'. In the opening scene (1.1.142), when he was taken to the Tower, Clarence mistook Richard's tears as naturally flowing from his heart. He saw them as an index of inward grieving and a sign of sincere compassion, whereas they were calculated devices, part of a rhetorical strategy that made use of perlocutionary weeping. In this way, Richard Gloucester's tactics of persuasion serve to confirm not only Rainolds's and Hoskyns's observations but also Hamlet's scepticism about body signs and flows as 'shows of grief' (1.2.82). In fact, the show of artificial tears was on the list of personal qualifications for intrigue and ruthlessness by which Richard, with his first soliloquy in the York tetralogy, introduced himself to the audience: 'Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile, / And cry "Content!" to that which grieves my heart, / And wet my cheeks with artificial tears, / And frame my face to all occasions.' (3 *Henry VI*, 3.2.182–5) To play out purposeful discrepancies between inwardly felt and outwardly presented passion is here advertised as one of the most potent and important performative techniques of Machiavellian villainy. In contrast to his chameleon-like cunning in tearful simulation there are other scenes, as when he receives news about his father's death, where Richard denies himself the relief of tears because, he argues, crying could never be adequate to the intensity of true feeling: 'To weep is to make less the depth of grief' (3 *Henry VI*, 2.1.85). Here, he does not allow himself conventional grieving for his father.

Just as Richard tyrannizes others, then, we witness how he keeps his own body under a tyrannical regime which governs every motion and controls all physical expression for a calculated public image and its effects. With this extreme self-control he serves as a model figure for what Hahn (2000, p. 357) describes as the paradox of body language: the more our bodies are submitted to the mastery of our will, the less others can rely on them as 'telling' anything of relevance. Only involuntary stirrings are meaningful because they render visible what may otherwise have remained secret. In *Richard III*, Clarence is not the only victim who, with fatal consequence, mistakes Richard's body acts as involuntary and reliable signs. Just moments before his own downfall, Hastings remarks about Richard with naive credulity: 'by his face straight shall you know his heart' (3.4.53).

In the playhouse, such scenes are especially significant because they contain metatheatrical signals, or perhaps warnings, to the audience about the actors' show of passion. 'The purpose of playing, it turns out, is not only to hold the mirror up to nature', Skura sums up Elizabethan notions of the theatre (1993, p. 152). 'The play must not only make the audience see its reflection in the mirror but must make them feel. One could not take place without the other.' Richard Burbage's professional body performance, we must conclude, was meant to have the same emotional impact on the actual theatre audience as Richard Gloucester's had on his historical counterparts within the play. When we see tears on stage we should be made to feel like Clarence, and when he is killed we should also feel for him.

As a matter of fact, the true belief in tears as expressions of an honest body was based on at least one contemporary medical authority: Timothy Bright and his well-known *Treatise on Melancholie* (1586) where he devotes four long chapters to the physiology of tears. He describes in detail how the human brain 'is readie to voide, and forcing with spirit, & pressing with contracted substance, signifieth by shower of teares, what storme tosseth the afflicted hart, and ouercasteth the cheerfull countenance' (1969, p. 147). And he argues that weeping – unlike laughter – cannot as a rule be played nor simulated, 'for tears cannot be counter-fetted, because they rise not of any action or facultie voluntarie, but naturall' (1969, p. 148). The reason he provides lies in their natural connection to the economy of inner flows which can neither be mobilized nor fully regulated at will. For Bright, the humoral body lives a life of its own, so it is qualified to give largely reliable testimony on what happens within. His argument is all the more remarkable because he must have been aware of views to the contrary just as of popular beliefs which question these assumptions. For instance Laurent Joubert (1980, p. 98),

whom Bright at one point cites with clear approval,⁹ already draws attention to so-called ‘crocodile tears’ as signs of simulated grief which are coldly displayed in order to move others to false compassion. This topos, recently formed in the aftermath of New World exploration (cf. Lange 1996, p. 82), was already widely used throughout sixteenth-century debates. As many texts and scenes could testify, crocodile tears are known to be persuasive devices by morally corrupt agents, Machiavellians and other seducers who, driven by self-interest, employ them to increase their power over innocent others by inciting their most heart-felt passions.

One of the best examples, again, is Richard Gloucester. In his wooing act for Lady Anne he draws attention to his former stoically cultivated tearlessness so as to authenticate the tears he now sheds in token of his true desire (1.2.159). His point is the same as Lysander’s, but Richard’s strategy does not immediately succeed. Although, according to the contemporary argument of weeping, women are routinely claimed to be especially amenable to tears, his addressee is not impressed – perhaps because she has herself tears in her eyes. The dramatic encounter of the determined villain with the mourning widow could also be seen as a performative battle with the perlocutionary force of tears. As argued earlier (cf. section 1.3), Lady Anne’s persistent grief has a clear political dimension. The *ersatz* funeral she stages with her obsequial lament for the late king confronts the politics of mourning by means of the physiologies of mourning and so explores what social powers are at stake in their performance.

What is certainly at stake in all this is the actors’ power. Traditionally, artificial tears like Richard’s are part of the standard repertoire of the old Vice, the allegorical stage figure of seduction (cf. Spivack, 1958). At the same time, they set the standard for successful players who must also be prepared and able, when prompted by dramatic needs, to suit their body actions to their words and so produce tears on demand. Richard’s crocodile tactics, though used for all sorts of sinister purposes, simply show what is demanded from professionals in the mimetic arts and what Hamlet, in a famous speech, has therefore singled out in praise:

Is it not monstrous that this player here,
 But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
 Could force his soul so to his whole conceit
 That from her working all his visage wanned,
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in ‘s aspect,
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing.
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her?

(2.2.528–37)

Whereas Hamlet rejects the calculated use of stage laughter because clowns regularly overstep their limits and so distract spectators from the play (3.2.34–8), he praises stage tears for their power to transcend the framework of their fictional occasion. The body performance of the tragic actor is so impressive precisely because it shows him master over his interior body flows, which he mobilizes for an imagined scene of suffering. He can muster tears and let them flow at will and so confront us with the true show of passion. And yet the lexical choices in these lines are telling. The phrase '*force his soul*' establishes a sense of physical force or violence that must be at work when the body is so instrumentalized, just as the term '*monstrous*' evokes the corporeal monstrosity of Richard Gloucester. Provoking a compassionate response, the weeping actor rigorously uses his own body to gain power over other bodies – an effective but questionable engagement with the physiology of mourning.

The First Player's impromptu performance, nonetheless, follows from the precedents and recommendations of classical authorities. When Aristotle in his rhetoric establishes the purging effects of '*eleos*' (1947, pp. 228–9) or when Quintilian (1953, IV, pp. 244–5) describes the physical performance of the orator, they duly refer us to stage players and their well-rehearsed body acts as models to explain how emotions publicly presented cannot fail to influence spectators in their emotional reactions. In Elizabethan England, too, acting and oratory were referred to in these terms (cf. Gurr, 1970, p. 73). Thus we note a curious connection which might be called the paradox of orators. An orator is all the more credible and successful with his audience the more evidence he supplies for his words through physical signifiers of emotions, such as tears – which, however, he best produces by emulating actors and their professionally fabricated passions. As a consequence, all body strategies of rhetoric are suspect and could principally be criticized on grounds of insincerity. That doubts about their authenticity or even moral maxims, such as Rainolds's, are indeed plausible becomes clear when we consider the practice of religious oratory:

The Christian Orator (I meane the godly Preacher) perfectly vnderstanding the natures and properties of mens passions,

questionlesse may effectuate strange matters in the mindes of his Auditors. I remember a Preacher in *Italy*, who had such power ouer his Auditors affections, that when it pleased him he could cause them shedd abundance of teares, yea and with teares dropping downe their cheekes, presently turne their sorrow into laughter; and the reason was, because hee himselve being extremely passionate, knowing moreouer the Art of mouing the affections of those auditors, and besides that, the most part were women that heard him (whose passions are most vehement and mutable) therefore he might haue perswaded them what hee listed. (Wright, 1971, p. 3)

What Thomas Wright here reports about the art of Christian preaching is hardly less impressive than the routine of the First Player in *Hamlet*, nor less dangerous than Richard Gloucester's subtle cunning. But to appreciate the lesson from this anecdote we should note that Wright specifies the conditions of rhetorical success, both on the side of the speaker and his audience. The scene is set in Italy where not only the orator but people in general – and especially women, who form the majority in the congregation – are known to be 'extremely passionate'. The implications of this gendered argument will be considered in the next section, when I discuss how to do things with tears.

At this point I would like to conclude my survey of the rhetorical discourse on tears by way of a brief theoretical reflection. The Christian orator observed by Wright shares with a Machiavellian villain like Shakespeare's Richard the communicative competence which qualifies them for the calculated show and use of weeping. However, this does not disqualify tears as signs and carriers of meaning. Just as, according to Maus (1995, p. 53), the figure of the tearful Vice is always part of a larger providential order, so the possibility to deceive with tears is, in fact, an essential part of their pragmatics. The eventuality of feigned weeping does not deprive tears of perlocutionary force but is, on the contrary, its precondition. Following Umberto Eco's definition of semiotics that everything can serve as a sign provided it can serve for lying (cf. Culler, 1983, p. 114), we understand that the persuasiveness of weeping is predicated on its power of deception. We can only do things with tears because we can also use them, among others, to lie and to dissimulate. The point rests on an insight from the debate in the 1970s between Derrida and the speech-act theorists about the status of the sincerity condition and the issue of performative iterability.¹⁰ Both Austin and Searle wanted to confine their philosophical inquiry to what they saw as real utterances. For this reason they excluded all cases of what

they interpreted as fictional, imitative, empty or parasitical forms of communication, such as promises made by characters on stage. When, say, Marcello and Barnardo in Act I of *Hamlet* are sworn to silence, they utter the same words that speakers in the real world would utter in these circumstances but, as in all cases of stage swearing, they do not quite mean them the same way. Derrida took issue with this exclusion. He responded to the opposition, and implicit hierarchy, between real and pretended speaking by arguing that the possibility of promising depends on the availability of a conventional formula which we can employ and reiterate when performing this – or indeed any other – speech act. Above all, such an iterable model is to be found in the formula presented by players in their roles on stage. Likewise, I suggest, theatrical uses of the physiologies of mourning may also offer ways or prospects for reiterating social and political differences. These will now be explored with reference to an early Jacobean comedy, George Chapman's *The Widdowes Teares*.

3.4 Women, widows and mimetic weeping

In the early modern argument of weeping, it was a truth universally acknowledged that women constantly shed tears. This observation helped to identify many forms of womanish excess as unacceptable behaviour and could be readily explained in Galenic terms. The female body was known to contain rather too large an amount of liquids so that it cyclically came to overflow – proved by the fact of menstruation – and so transgressed the boundaries of propriety. In her study about shame and corporeal discipline, Paster (1993) has reconstructed this discourse on the basis of a wealth of medical, theatrical and other texts. As one of her most striking illustrations, she discusses an image from Geoffrey Whitney's *Book of Emblems* (1586), which shows Niobe in mourning and, next to her, a leaky vessel pouring forth from all its holes, thus emblemizing women and their notorious loquacity. The female body is here pathologized as a defective entity unable to contain nor control its constant physical and verbal flows. Moreover, female performances of mourning are diminished in their expressive power when weeping Niobe, the traditional figure of lament, is metonymically linked with a disfunctional barrel. More recently, Michael Schoenfeldt has taken issue with Paster's analysis of the 'leaky' female body and has instead argued 'that Galenic medicine renders the obstructed body the source of mortal pathogens' (Schoenfeldt, 1999, p. 15). But whether obstruction or leakage of its fluids is thought to be the cause of imbalance and disease, the point remains that humoral economy must never go unregulated.

Hence, the discursive connection between femininity and fluidity is well attested in early modern physiological knowledge by the most eminent authorities, who all diagnose women's propensity for tears.

Laurent Joubert sums up this consensus when he explains that 'weeping is easier for those who by their constitution and nature, or by reason of their age, sex, or culture, are weaker and moister, which is why we see phlegmatic people tear promptly, along with children, elderly people and women' (1980, p. 98). But while he so extends the group of typical and notorious weepers to include children and the elderly, he also indicates the social pattern by which these roles have been assigned. Marginal and subaltern figures are the prime suspects. Their personal inefficiency is evident from their inability to contain body liquids, an apparent moral weakness which demands they be disciplined by others and placed under supervision. If, in Galenic physiology, self-control authorizes individuality (cf. Schoenfeldt, 1999, p. 11), the apparent lack of self-control must authorize the legitimacy of outside government. Whoever shows signs of incontinence, therefore, can be relegated to the ranks of disempowered characters marked, in Paster's words (1993, p. 41), 'by bodily attributes of social deficiency such as immaturity, unproductiveness, passivity, and uncontrol'. The best way to deal with excessive female weeping was seen in placing women under marital control and so position them securely in the ruling norm. This orthodox wisdom is expressed, for example, by Robert Burton when he writes about the common ailments of virgins, nuns and widows: 'But the best and surest remedy of all, is to see them well placed, and married to good husbands in due time; *hinc illae lachrimae* [hence those tears], that's the primary cause, and this the ready cure, to give them content to their desires.' (Burton, 1923, I, p. 479) Thus, to diagnose a tearful temper serves to naturalize the hierarchies of social power.

In this perspective we can see why the holy tears I mentioned earlier present such a pressing hermeneutic problem because, apart from Mary Magdalene, the Bible records mainly men as weepers – Jesus, Saint Peter, King David – whose puzzling physiology must surely be addressed. Considering the discursive efforts to pathologize and feminize tears, however, we must also re-consider the question of their persuasive power which the rhetorical tradition emphasized. This leads us to confront a telling contradiction in early modern attitudes to female tears. If tearful eyes are, on the one hand, identified as the mark of women, children and phlegmatics and so serve to disempower all of them as subjects naturally placed under the mechanism of male control, how can the use of tears be, on the other hand, identified as one of the

best means of emotional engineering and, thus, a mechanism of power over others? In the passage cited above, Joubert continues: 'Why, there are women so prone to weeping that tears distill on their eyes if their brain contracts the slightest bit [...]. It is also said in jest that women have sponges full of water between their shoulders, and that from there a tube runs up the neck and to the eyes.' (1980, p. 98) From this report we must infer that the cunning crocodile acts performed by Machiavellian agents are an essentially *female* strategy. Hence, women are credited with such abilities of body control which flatly contradict their otherwise alleged incontinence. Doing things with tears is only possible for those who can produce or contain them at will. To stir others by feigned weeping and so move them to compassion demands a high degree of physiological mastery – which women, according to dominant discourses, were just as often suspected to be doing as they were diagnosed to be lacking. This point marks an interesting embarrassment, or impasse, in the cultural debates about tears. As far as I can see, it was never openly addressed in contemporary tracts. But it was dramatized, as I presently show, in Chapman's comedy. The joking explanation Joubert offers for women's calculated weeping, in any case, suggests an apparatus of theatrical trickery and liquid effects which could well have been employed in the playhouse – had women only been allowed to act there.

In early modern society, this problem was circumvented rather than resolved: female tears were claimed to have no perlocutionary power whatsoever. In Burton's words, 'as much pity is to be taken of a woman weeping, as of a goose going barefoot' (1923, III, p. 145). When regarded as a natural condition, weeping can have neither meaning nor pragmatic influence. Still, men are urged to exercise great caution because the show and shower of a woman's tears have deceived many. This was perpetuated even in proverbial wisdom: 'Trust not a woman when she weeps' (Tilley, quoted in Yamada, 1975, p. 86). The warning applied, most of all, to widowed women because among the group of cunning weepers widows were routinely singled out as the most dangerous crocodiles: 'their weeping is in truth but laughing under a Maske' (Chapman, 1998, p. 152).

The insight quoted last comes from the opening scene of George Chapman's *The Widdowes Teares*,¹¹ first performed around 1605 at the Blackfriars theatre, a satirical comedy whose title echoes the familiar topos: a widow's tears are popularly understood to be equated with feigned tears. The plot is driven by the fact that one of the male protagonists, to begin with, doubts the truth of this equation. Further

developments, however, are so designed as to convince him. In consequence, we witness in this play the long process of presenting him a chain of evidence – an utterly predictable demonstration which only deserves interest for my inquiry into physiologies of mourning because it must somehow negotiate the contradictory attitudes identified above, that is it must address the difference between calculated and empty female weeping, between the claims of self-control and lack of control for women. In the course of this experiment, the cunning physiological acts of weeping widows are countered and outplayed by even greater cunning and more powerful performances of passion. Thus, Chapman's comic play stages an exploration into the politics of performative conventions that are central for early modern funeral culture and its contested meanings.

The basic pattern is quite simple. Chapman uses an old fable told by Petronius in his *Satyricon*. A widow mourns so immoderately for her late husband that she refuses to part even with his corpse. But as she stays lamenting in his tomb, another suitor comes to woo her and he eventually wins her favour. (Further comic complications arise – another corpse goes missing and must be doubled by her late husband – which are irrelevant for the present context.) In Chapman's version, the classic story of the widow of Ephesus is not only transferred to Cyprus where Venus, instead of Diana, reigns as local goddess (cf. Juneja, 1988, p. 170); it is also given a more dramatic spin. First, Chapman duplicates the basic pattern: there are now two widows (Eudora and Cynthia), two seducers (the brothers Tharsalio and Lysander) and, hence, a twofold demasking of female mourning as hiding sexual desire. Second, his plot gains piquancy and metadramatic tension from the fact that the second woman, Cynthia, only *thinks* she is a widow because her husband, Lysander, has feigned death in order to try out her constancy in mourning. In actual fact, he approaches her himself in disguise as the new suitor – another traditional motif used here to great stage effect. This grand experiment of female passion is devised and stage-managed by Tharsalio, the central character, who has learned this kind of Machiavellian cunning, as he reveals, from his Italian travels.

Significantly, the whole play rather focusses on scenes of plotting rather than on showing us how his fiendish plans are actually carried out. As a result, we witness many dialogues where the male schemers ponder how to penetrate, test and regulate the fickle play of female passion. The subsequent execution of their schemes, however, is more often reported than mimetically staged. The special emphasis on questions of strategy and method is mainly motivated by the problem that

conventional devices of persuasion are found insufficient because they are already too familiar to their addressees. For instance, when Tharsalio begins his courtship for Eudora with a time-honoured rhetorical move: 'Only Madam, that the Aetna of my sighes, and Nilus of my teares, pour'd forth in your presence, might witness to your Honor the hot and moist affection of my hart' – he is at once dismissed by the lady saying: 'Pen and Inck-horne I thanke thee' (2.4.222–8). Clearly, the old Petrarchan clichés do not work when trying to impress a widow, let alone gain her favour, for such a woman is herself experienced in the use of passions. To assume the melancholy pose of a sighing, weeping suitor soon threatens to jeopardize all emotional engineering because of its conventionality.

Eventually Tharsalio manages to break the widow's will and wins her hand in marriage. More importantly, he also manages to break the will of the virtuous Cynthia and distract her from the act of intense mourning – which gives him the desired proof that all women's tears are counterfeit and meaningless. But to achieve this feat, he must first stage a grand masquerade of death and mourning in order to upstage the widow's show of grief and unmask her alleged lewdness. According to plan, Lysander goes on a journey and into hiding while a messenger returns with news of his death. Tharsalio then organizes an ostentatious funeral for him, with all ritual obsequies and pomp but, of course, with an empty coffin. To authenticate the show, he joins the family's lament and weeping. As he says, 'if I doe not doe the mourner, as lively as your Heire, and weepe as lustily as your Widdow, say there's no vertue in Onions' (3.1.202–4). His remark shows that the Machiavellian plotter has learned the arts of counterfeiting in the playhouse, where onions are said to be routinely used as a stimulant for artificial tears – for instance, in the theatrical framing of *The Taming of the Shrew*: 'And if the boy have not a woman's gift / To rain a shower of commanded tears / An onion will do well for such a shift / Which, in a napkin being close conveyed / Shall in despite enforce a watery eye.' (Induction 1, 120–4). At the same time, Tharsalio's false tears for Lysander's false funeral strive to imitate and outdo the 'lustily' weeping widow. That is to say, the pretence generically blamed on women – their calculated performance of the physiologies of mourning without true inward grief – presents such a formidable challenge that Tharsalio must meet it with even greater powers of pretending when he tries to 'doe the mourner'.

These challenges suggest a reason why Chapman's comedy obsessively pursues the question of inwardness effects: how can we read the human body and, from signs in physical complexion or visible behaviour, read

a person's mind to discover his or her secrets? In the opening soliloquy we see Tharsalio pondering his own reflection in a mirror and, while looking at the image of his face, asking himself whether 'piercing Judgements might discover / Thy inward weaknesse' (1.1.4–5). In the same way, bodies – and especially female bodies – are constantly subjected to a regime of observation. Throughout, the play explores what their particular looks or motions, like tears or blushing, might suggest about their true and inmost character. Many scenes and dialogues could be cited here: 'I can discover nothing in her lookes' (1.3.96); 'what can his eie observe / More then mine owne, or the most piercing sight / That ever viewed her?' (2.1.36–8); 'her bloud went and came of errands betwixt her face and her heart; and these changes I can tell you are shrewd tell-tales' (2.3.9–11). All such moments dramatize the desire to 'pierce' physical surfaces with our powers of 'sight' and so gain certainty or satisfaction from in-depth penetration.

In a stage play, performed for the benefit and pleasure of spectators and their sight, all such moments also offer metatheatrical comments on the 'shrewd tell-tales' of the actors' art and their effects. At the same time, though, this theatrical research into ways and means of body reading also raises issues in early modern culture, especially in the politics of religious conformity, equivocation and dissent.¹² This whole context is established by the fact that Chapman's comedy shares its central interest in the semiotics of human physiology with Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde*. Wright's treatise was widely read and in 1604 already republished in an extended edition. It not only investigates the rhetorical production and manipulation of the passions but, even more importantly, also teaches psychological diagnostics by means of physical observation. Beginning with Chapter XVIII 'How passions may be discovered', the second part is entirely devoted to this problem. Speech, voice, looks, gestures, behaviour, bearing, external action and even apparel are all analysed and discussed for what they tell us about a person's inwardness. But a crucial premise of this interpretive procedure is stated earlier when Wright explains that all such readings must take place within existing social hierarchies. As a case in point he cites Alexander the Great whose powers of observation have often been praised and who serves him to exemplify the following lesson:

By this example, superiours may learn to coniecture the affections of their subiects mindes, by a silent speech pronounced in their very countenances. And this poynt especially may be obserued in women, whose passions may easily be dicouered; [...]. By this wee may knowe

the cause, why children, and especially women, cannot abide to looke in their fathers, masters, or betters faces, because, euen nature it selfe seemeth to teach them, that thorow their eyes they see their heartes; neither doe we holde it for good manners, that the inferiour should fixe his eyes vpon his superiours countenance; and the reason is, because it were presumption for him to attempt the entrance or priuie passage into his superiors minde, as contrariwise it is lawfull for the superior to attempt the knowledge of his inferior. (Wright, 1971, p. 29)

Note the social asymmetry here: body readings should only proceed top down as in a one-way project, which suggests the disciplining power inherent in such acts of visual penetration. Subalterns like women are required to face the gaze of their superiors and so open themselves to analytic eyes. Yet at the same time we must note what Wright's remarks only imply: that the authority so maintained is continuously threatened by the very act of making itself known. The powerful gaze is itself a tell-tale sign potentially exposing the gazer to subaltern eyes, a process, as Homi Bhabha (1994, p. 89) argues in another context, 'by which the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined' so that 'the observer becomes the observed'. This is why Wright, in the same way as Rainolds in his response to Aristotle's rhetoric, appeals to social sanctioning in order to protect the assumed position of visual power. But as long as it depends on 'good manners' or 'lawfull' conduct, the position of authority is precarious and potentially undercut.

Wright's text is relevant in the context of recusant culture in early seventeenth-century England (cf. Sloan, 1971). But it is no less instructive when we read it in conjunction with the theatrical experiments conducted in *The Widdowes Teares*. In fact, the point just raised recurs in Chapman's play and forms the major obstacle for Tharsalio's initial plot. His courtship of Eudora, to begin with, fails because of his inferior social standing. He used to be a servant in her household and is now determined – rather like Malvolio – to approach his mistress as a suitor. His Machiavellian play and cunning use of others' passions are so precarious because the strictures of social hierarchy here stand against gender hierarchy. With their wedding in Act III, the hierarchy of male control is eventually re-established and Tharsalio achieves greatness. It is only from this secure social position that he can effectively penetrate and manipulate women's body acts at ease, as he then demonstrates with Cynthia. But up to this point in the play, all his attempts at interpreting or controlling female passion are acts of sheer presumption and lie

under constant threat of disclosure. This is another reason why Eudora, as cited earlier, immediately sees through his show of tears and so rejects his courtship as a false performance of a conventional ritual. Their mutual contest in the use of body rhetoric and the physiologies of mourning takes place in a political arena where – as in the contest between Richard and Lady Anne – the social power of performance is tried out.

Wright in fact advises readers to exercise ‘great prudence’ in the public expression of their own feelings, like ‘grave and great persons’ who are known never to ‘lay their passions open to the censure of the worlde’ (1971, p. 91). The point makes clear where the central problem lies in the social performances of passion. Each observer of another’s body must be wary of potential attempts at deception lest he misread calculated signs for true expression. Hahn (2000, p. 362) refers to the same issue when he notes, with regard to court society, that the most sophisticated strategies of social observation are usually accompanied – or even produced – by the most subtle modes of simulating and dissimulating signs of bodily communication. Whatever seems to offer strongest physiological evidence of inner motions must be viewed with utmost caution and discretion because it comes under suspicion of having been simulated in the first place. Above all, I add, this holds true for signs of mourning. ‘These Grieves that sound so lowd, prove alwaies light / True sorrow evermore keeps out of sight’ (4.2.97–8), thus Tharsalio speaks of Cynthia when she, grieving for her husband, refuses to leave the monument where she thinks his corpse lies buried. Tharsalio’s pronouncement follows a topos based on classical sources, frequently employed in early modern debates on funeral culture, death rites and the proprieties of mourning. Prominent lament and weeping are said to be appropriate only when the pains are not too great. The extreme pain of true and lasting grief can never be expressed. Tearless and inarticulate, it is to be marked with silence. The excess of woe, we are told, principally exceeds performance.

This topos of the ineffability of true grief is of central relevance to my whole inquiry into the cultural repertoires of mourning in early modern England. It is important therefore to establish its wide acceptance and acknowledge its discursive circulation throughout the writing of the period. We find the topos in John Lesly’s treatise (1631, p. 62) just as in George Puttenham’s poetics (1968, p. 243); Michel de Montaigne employs it in his essay on sadness (1998, pp. 11–12) as does Timothy Bright (1969, p. 140) in his treatise on melancholy where he, in turn, cites Aristotle’s rhetoric (1947, pp. 228–9) as a source of the same

insight. In the debate on weeping, then, the central authorities all agree that silence must be the climax of true lamentation because the intensity of grievous passion goes beyond the physical or physiological means by which the body can communicate. This claim is most often illustrated with a model narrative from Herodotus. The Greek historian tells us of the suffering and tribulations of the Egyptian king Psammenitus when his country had fallen to Persian rule under Cambyses. First Psammenitus had to witness how his daughter was humiliated, then he had to witness how his son was taken to be executed – and yet he remained impassive and never joined the loud laments of his fellow Egyptians. But eventually his bearing changed:

When these too had gone by, it chanced that there was one of his boon companions, a man past his prime, that had lost all his possessions, and had but what a poor man might have, and begged of the army; this man now passed before Psammenitus son of Amasis and the Egyptians who sat in the outer part of the city. When Psammenitus saw him, he broke into loud weeping, smiting his head and calling on his companion by name. (Herodotus, 1957, II, pp. 18–19)

Cambyses, who observed the scene, wondered about it and asked for an explanation. To which Psammenitus replied: ‘my private grief was too great for weeping; but the misfortune of my companion called for tears’ (1957, II, p. 21). The story shows the logic by which tears and weeping can only address distanced suffering, whereas personal and close pains remain dumb. By the same token, however, weeping signals distant afflictions or passing pain. The greatest constancy of character is seen in mute endurance of the greatest grief. According to this logic, then, the more someone cries, the less serious his or her grievances can be. As the critical observer notes in *The Widowers Teares*, ‘her officious ostentation of sorrow condemnes her sinceritie. When did ever woman mourne so unmeasurably, but shee did dissemble?’ (4.1.103–5). Cynthia’s tears are judged and found too strong: the lady doth protest too much. The intensity of physical expression renders her mourning a mere performance.

Tharsalio now aims to undo this performance by staging an even greater performance in its place. His counterfeit funeral to pre-empt her counterfeit tears offers such an interesting example for my study because it enacts all the regular moves of a proper ritual but divests them of their actual purpose. It simulates the burial ceremony with all the obligatory performative acts – without the sincerity condition and yet

not without perlocutionary force. This crucial difference is established in the dramatic text when Tharsalio later questions his henchman how Cynthia responded to the news of death:

THARSALIO: Forget not to describe her passion at thy discoverie of his slaughter: did shee performe it well for her husbands wager?

LYCUS: Performe it, call you it? you may jest; men hunt Hares for their sports, but the poore beasts die in earnest: you wager of her passions for your pleasure, but shee takes little pleasure in those earnest passions. I never saw such an extasie of sorrow, since I know the name of sorrow. Her hand flew up to her head like Furies, hid all her beauties in her dischevel'd haire, and wept as she would turne fountaine. (4.1.29–37)

When Lycus told Cynthia the fabricated story of her husband's violent death, he used an age-old rhetorical device, showing her his own wounds as evidence of the truth delivered by his words. However, looking back at the effects of his performance, he now rejects Tharsalio's suggestion that Cynthia merely played or simulated grief ('Performe it, call you it?'). To him, it is evident that her passionate outbreak was genuine, so powerful indeed that he was himself taken and physically affected by her tears: 'I was forc't to turne woman, and beare a part with her. Humanitie broke loose from my heart, and stream'd through mine eies.' (4.1.40–2) Here, one of the conspirators and actors of the plot admits he turned compassionate and shed tears even though he was fully aware of their fictitious cause. Still, the sight of her weeping compelled him to a physical response. This is one of the most intriguing perlocutionary acts performed with tears, an effect registered and discussed also in other texts, to be discussed later.

At this point in our inquiry into the physiologies of mourning, however, I need to qualify my account of the play in one important respect. The funeral scene just described, with its grand show of death, burial and communal lament, is never shown on stage. Situated between Acts III and IV, it is never presented to the theatre spectators and only retrospectively reported (as just quoted). Everything we know about it we learn from Lycus, who functions as a double messenger: as he reports to Tharsalio about the outcome of his mission he simultaneously reports how he reported earlier to Cynthia – everything is strictly diegetically mediated. Why does Chapman's play, then, precisely where the plot would prompt the greatest intensity of passion for theatrical enactment, dispense with the mimetic principle of theatre? And why does it never

show us the tears announced in its title? For even in Act IV, when Cynthia is in mourning for Lysander, we never actually see her weep. The physiologies of mourning are not exposed to our sight. They take place off-stage and are exclusively established by means of diegesis. This leads me towards more fundamental reflections about the social mediation of mourning, together with a new look at some old Shakespearean scenes.

In more than one way, Chapman's bitter comedy keeps an eye on Shakespeare's popular stage plays (cf. Yamada, 1975, p. xxxvii). Just as Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West* recycles motifs from revenge drama, *The Widdowes Teares* replays Shakespearean phrases or figures, partly perhaps in admiration, partly certainly in mockery. Among them, we find the figure of a woman who remarries soon after her first husband died, who is then blamed for putting on a show of tearful mourning and whose fickleness is scorned as female frailty. *Hamlet* is further relevant because this play, too, has frequently been noted for its obsession with the ways and means of body reading, always trying to 'censure' people's 'seeming' (3.2.79), i.e. trying to judge inward passion by their outward appearances.¹³ Somewhat further in the past, another Shakespeare scene Chapman recalls is Richard Gloucester's devious courtship of the weeping widow Lady Anne, on which I have commented already (cf. sections 1.3 and 3.1) and to which I now return. As if he had learned the arts of wooing from Richard's murderous persuasiveness, Chapman's Lysander offers his own sword to the mourning lady (4.2.109) and so breaks her resistance. The powerful gesture and its parallel to the earlier dramatic conflict strengthen our sense that female tears – even while they are target of constant ridicule and rancour – mark political realities that must be acknowledged and overcome by their antagonist. This also follows from my earlier reading of the politics of mourning enacted in Anne's 'obsequious lament'. In fact, her tears could be seen in a specific recusant context, perhaps even as heretical stage acts in the performances of mourning.

The funeral procession for Henry VI (*Richard III*, 1.2) presents the reverse scenario to the mock funeral in *The Widdowes Teares*: instead of an ostentatious ceremony without a corpse, here is a noble corpse who is denied a ceremonious burial. Anne's weeping stands in for the required ritual; she bewails him as the 'figure' of a 'holy king' and so extends the frame of reference. Her tears are not just meaningful as actions of a female body trying to change the situation but also meaningful in the religious references which are evoked through them. Some of these meanings become clear in a devotional treatise by Robert Southwell entitled *Mary Magdalens Funerall Teares*. First published in

1591, very close in time to Lady Anne's first stage appearance, it opens an interesting Catholic perspective from which to view her weeping. With Mary Magdalene, this text focusses on a female mourner like Anne determined to honour a late 'holy king' who is denied by wordly powers the ritual attention he deserves. But when Mary comes to Jesus's tomb she finds it empty. This passage (John 20: 11–18) is another *locus classicus* of biblical weeping, and Southwell takes it as a basis for a long, dialogic meditation. He is concerned not only with tears in their different modes of meaning but also, centrally and just like Shakespeare's Anne, with the pressing question of how to legitimate weeping and lament: 'but an offence it is not to weep for my selfe, for he would neuer commaund it, if it were not lawfull to doe it' (Southwell, 1975, p. 14). The text here continues the critical negotiations about tears which are recorded in the Bible, at the tomb of Lazarus just as at Jesus's sepulchre, where they are subject to doubts, interpretation and justification ('Women, why weepest thou?', as the two guardians ask Mary Magdalene). Several objections to Mary's tears are raised in Southwell's dialogue and several of them acknowledged for their apparent lack of faith. But ultimately, the treatise justifies the ways of weeping and argues that devout readers, too, should entrust themselves to the healing and holy power of tears: 'Thus preparing thee with diligence, comming with speede, standing with high lifted hopes, and stouping with inclined heart: if with Marie thou crauest no other solace of Jesus but Jesus himselfe, he will answere thy teares with his presence' (1975, pp. 68f). In response to true and dutiful Christian weeping, this seems to suggest, we may expect nothing less than the real presence of the redeemer.

As a Jesuit, Southwell had been active in recusant circles of Elizabethan England's restless underground. In 1592, a year after *Mary Magdalens Funerall Teares* was published and the same year that *Richard III* is likely to have been performed, he was arrested, tried for high treason and executed. But that his interpretation and endorsement of funeral tears might still live on is suggested on the Shakespearean stage. Anne's devoted death rites are so remarkable and potentially powerful because her intercessory tears evoke the contemporary debates on burial, memory and purgatorial beliefs which I have reconstructed at the outset (cf. section 1.1). These debates are relevant not just in the histories but also in other genres. When Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for instance, explains that their projected play 'will ask some tears in the true performing of it', he also gives warning that the audience should 'look to their eyes' (1.2.19–20). As O'Connell says (2000, p. 131), Bottom here gives indication of the 'over-real effects' of play acting. Yet in the

case of histories and their performances of mourning, such real effects concern politically embattled issues. Whether or not Anne's lamentation recalls Southwell's meditation, her true performing of it surely 'asked some tears' whose significance, in the real arena of early modern England, is open to conjecture. At least for some in the Shakespearean audience, the physiologies of mourning physically presented in the playhouse must have offered an occasion to explore their own relation to the religious passion so effected.

To understand the social use of performed tears, however, it is important to see that Anne's tears are mediated and, to some extent, themselves mimetic. Shed for the Lancastrian king, they flow also in memory of another case of mourning. Anne weeps for a dear relative but not for her own husband. She is a widow but not the widow of the man she now accompanies to his grave – even though this claim has crept into some learned books (cf. Iser, 1988, p. 66). The fact that she rather mourns for her father-in-law places her performance in an intermediate position. Situated between close and distant relations, between her present and her past experience, the deceased is bewailed by her not only for his own sake but also in memory of her husband who, as she recalls, also died by Richard's hand. Her present tears partly concern her previous and rather more painful loss, too. And so her act of mourning recalls the model narrative about the ineffability of truly painful grief which, as I showed earlier, was often retold in the argument of weeping.

According to Herodotus, the tortured king stays silent when witnessing his own calamity, but cries when witnessing how calamity strikes others. His tears therefore are signs not of his own suffering but of suffering with others, less of passion than of compassion. They flow for his friend and thus must flow *instead of* tears shed by the friend himself. If we take the model seriously, as I think we should, the friend cannot have expressed his own woe either, because he must, like Psammenitus, have been silenced by his excess of suffering. The story that so many classical and early modern authorities tell us about tears, then, illustrates that weeping functions in a triangular relation. Accordingly, the physiological sign should not be read with reference to one's own unmediated pain, but rather with reference to the pain endured by others, mediated to us and witnessed by its effects. Thus, the classic model story serves to introduce the figure of a weeping third, a social representative who is eye-witness to others in their suffering and, by means of shedding tears, testifies that their pain is being acknowledged. 'People pity things happening to others in so far as they fear for themselves', Aristotle said (1947, pp. 228–9). With these words (quoted earlier, cf. section 3.2) he

concludes his own retelling of the story about Psammenitus in the context of his rhetoric and relates it to the force of '*eleos*', a central category also of his theory of tragedy. Which brings my discussion of the physiologies of mourning back to the issues of the theatre.

The foregoing examples all suggest how the hieroglyphs of tears could be deciphered. For our context, at least, it may be more productive to see them as mimetically mediated signs rather than as direct or spontaneous responses to unmediated suffering. From this perspective some of the most intriguing questions about tears, like their infectious quality so often noted, can be clarified. That the sight of weeping should also reduce the observer to tears is hardly plausible as long as tears are regarded as expression of some personal pain. But if they operate, as here suggested, in a triangle of mimetic weeping, every weeper who is thus observed presents a stirring sight which calls for compassion and so moves the observer to a physiological response – even more so as he or she remains aware of its distanced, perhaps even fictional cause. 'I was forc't to turne woman, and beare a part with her', the messenger in *The Widdowes Teares* reports about the effect of Cynthia's tears. 'Humanitie broke loose from my heart, and stream'd through mine eies.' Tharsalio's answer shows what is implied: 'In prose, thou weptst. So have I seene many a moist Auditor doe at a play; when the storie was but a meere fiction' (4.1.39–44). The expert in emotional engineering explains the reaction on grounds which any theatre-goer is familiar with. The mimetic play of passion on the stage has such an impact on spectators that it stirs their bodies to respond in kind, even if and when they are aware of the entirely fictional framework. Thus, where professional actors weep *in* plays and moist spectators weep *at* plays, they conjoin to substantiate imaginative suffering through physiological evidence and so acknowledge its present reality.

From this perspective we may also see why Chapman's comedy of tears never really shows us weeping in mimetic presentation but only mediates it through messengers and other diegetic means. As a performance in the cultural theatre of laughter, this play does not make us witnesses of suffering. Instead of the spectators, the messenger observes the widow's pains he has himself induced and is duly overcome with tears for her. In the same way we can understand why the First Player weeps in *Hamlet*, for his commissioned performance at the court is not an enactment of Hecuba in mourning, it is 'a passionate *speech*' (2.2.414, emphasis added), namely Aeneas' tale to Dido, that is a diegetic mediation of Hecuba's tears. As Reichert remarks (1998, p. 74), the actor produces a

double illusion of, on the one hand, the messenger who is moved by the suffering he has seen and, on the other hand, the narrated scene itself which the audience must picture in their minds and in this way mobilize their own passion and compassion. The powers of imagined pain derive from the power of imagination stirred by the actors' art in the fictional space of the stage and yet moving the spectators to respond with real tears. Whether or not stimulated with the help of onions, whether considered genuine or artificial, tears shed on stage function as mimetic signs and so stand in for others and their suffering. The physiologies of mourning in the theatre thus regularly prefigure performances of mourning in the wider public sphere, with all the political – and potentially divisive – effects these may have.

Nowhere has this relation been identified with greater clarity than in the pamphlets by religious critics of the playhouse. Puritan anti-theatricalists are adamant that all such shows of tearful passion must be corrupting. For instance, in *Playes Confuted in fiue Actions* (1582) Stephen Gosson condemns especially the use of tears on stage because of their ill influence on male spectators, whom they move to weep and threaten to drive towards effeminacy: 'The beholding of troubles and miserable slaughters that are in Tragedies, driue vs to immoderate sorrow, heauines, womanish weeping and mourning, whereby we become louers of dumps, and lamentation, both enemies to fortitude.' (in Chambers, 1923, IV, p. 215) His argument inverts Thomas Nash's defence of the stage histories with Talbot's posthumous triumphs, quoted earlier (cf. section 1.4). But it is based upon the same observation. The real tears shed by spectators at the imagined suffering they behold serve to authenticate what is mimetically represented and so, despite their fictional cause, turn into signs of actual mourning. Not unlike Anne's embalming tears for Henry's corpse, they might work as substitutes and address grievings not otherwise sufficiently addressed. The public playhouse thus becomes a place where the performances of grief and death are physiologically acknowledged and, for the duration of the play, legitimated with a *communio* of weepers.

When a Protestant defender of the theatre like Philip Sidney tells us about tyrants shedding tears at suffering they see performed on stage, he hastens to add that stage writers never affirm anything and therefore cannot lie. But tears, as we have seen, can indeed be used for making affirmations as well as for lying. Tears are not 'affections', they are 'actions', Robert Burton writes (1923, I, p. 486). His words place the physiologies of mourning into a cultural arena which includes social interactions in the public sphere as well as an actor's interaction with his audience in the theatre. My foregoing discussion should have served to

show that both 'actions' are constitutively connected because the social impact and significance of tears are predicated on their status as signs of compassion in the body codes of simulation. Some part of their precarious power, finally, may also lie in their substantial relevance for religious practice. To cite John Lesly's *Epithrene, or Voice of Weeping* once again: 'Yet as there is no passage into *Paradise* but vnder a fiery Sword, so if ever wee look to enter into that heavenly *Paradise*, that place of everlasting blisse, where all Teares shall bee wiped from your eyes, wee must passe through the Purgatory of Weeping.' (1631, pp. 43–4)

The 'Purgatory of Weeping' is a curious and a telling phrase. Together with the implication of cathartic purging, this metaphor conveys suggestive echoes of the old religious practice no longer tolerated in Protestant England. Against the background I established, we might take Lesly's figurative phrase as another indication that, until the first half of the seventeenth century, commercial theatres still offered such an other place, a purging space where the reformed society in mimetic weeping could find some substitute for outlawed rituals of mourning.

4

Parodies of Mourning Corpseless Comedies

4.1 Mock laments: the play and peal of death

Tears and other signs of mourning, we have seen in the previous chapter, need not always indicate true grief. The same applies to the poetic forms of mourning. After Edmund Campion died at Tyburn in December 1581, Anthony Munday published an elegy for him which began:

Why doo I vse my paper, inke and pen,
and call my wits in counsell what to say?
Such memories were made for woorthy men,
And not for such as seeke their Realms decay.
An Angels trumpe, exalts the Subjects trueth:
When shame rings forth the Traitors fearful rueth.

Pardon my want, I offer naught but will,
To not downe those, at whome the Skies do skowle:
Campion, his treasons do exceed my skil,
The cause, his comming, and the deed too fowle:
Yet giue me leaue in base and homely verse:
His lewd attempts in England to rehearse.

(Munday, 1582b, n.p.)

It may take us a few lines – and perhaps a second reading – before we realize the specific nature of this tribute. The text employs topoi from the traditional repertoire of poetic mourning: the poet is apologetic and self-conscious and craves indulgence to present his ‘homely verse’. But all these topoi are not used here to mourn for the deceased, but to

condemn his deeds and to denounce his person. As it turns out, this elegy is a polemic slur on Campion published to defile rather than preserve his noble memory.

In view of the historical protagonists, this comes as no surprise. Campion, the charismatic English Jesuit, had been arrested in Lancashire in August.¹ Imprisoned and tortured in the Tower, he was tried for high treason and promptly sentenced to death. After he died on the gallows, the corpse was cut down, stripped and cut in quarters. The hangman was then ordered to throw the body parts into a cauldron of boiling water before they were eventually burned, together with all other remains. The whole affair was used by Munday, as one of the trial's chief propagandists, to show his mettle and qualify as a professional informer for Richard Topcliffe's secret service, before he later tried his hand at play-writing. So the rhetoric of the sneering elegy on Campion, which was appended to his *A breefe Aunswer made vnto two seditious Pamphlets*, deserves some attention. In fact, the poem was a response to an earlier poem by a Catholic priest who had witnessed the execution:

Why do I vse my paper inke, and penne,
and rise a body brighter then the sunne,
your blinded malice tortured him in vayne,
fr euery wrinch some glory hath him wonne,
and euery drop of blood which he did spend,
hath reapt a ioy which neuer shal haue end.

(Alfield, 1581, n.p.)

It is against such a glorious vision that Munday's version lashes out, reminding readers of the ruling hierarchies in this world no less than in the next. The language of mourning is taken from Alfield's elegy and used in a grim attack on its hopes for spiritual reward. As grief is turned into gloating over Campion's violent death, Munday's pamphlet turns the elegiac lament into a statement of patriotic power over Catholic traitors.

However, even if the stance is clear, the strategies of textual borrowing are ambiguous. The mock-elegy also contains passages which allow scope for different readings:

Let vs not feare a mortall Tirant then,
Seeing Faith & Trueth dooth elevate our hart:
God hath reserued one to conquer ten,
Let vs then learne to play true Christians parts.

The head of him that sought our Countries wo:
Dooth witness shame to all that seeke it so.

(Munday, 1582b, n.p.)

Read out of context, these lines could not be assigned to one side or the other, because their message could encourage both Campion's and Munday's party. As long as the identity of the 'mortal Tirant' is not established, the stanza might serve to denigrate the pope just as readily as it might be used, on the other hand, to denigrate the queen. Depending on who the pronoun 'we' includes, either side could base its hopes on the promise that God's power will help to subdue opposition; 'Faith & Trueth' are surely claimed by both. The example reminds us of a simple point: meaning is contextually produced. So it can be made, remade or unmade by imposing different contexts. Elegy always works by repetition because this 'creates a sense of continuity, of an unbroken pattern such as one may oppose to the extreme discontinuity of death' (Sacks, 1985, p. 35). But the significance of such a pattern can easily be redirected. Repetition is also a device of parody, which may create a sense of continuity in order to oppose it. This is one way to describe the strategy of Munday's text. His elegy uses paper, ink and pen to repeat and, simultaneously, refute the Catholic poems of martyrdom and mourning – Alfield's is just one example of a whole spate of such writings – with their continuing hope. Campion's memory is continued so as to break their pattern.

Perhaps all performances of mourning must own up to some effects where the line between homage and humiliation is sometimes difficult to draw. But the need to distinguish reverence from ridicule becomes pressing in such cases, as in Campion's public memory, where state security is at stake. For all its triumphant tone, Munday's poem runs the risk of actually helping to perpetuate what it seeks to end. Though trying to silence recusant voices, the poem's citations still contain some of their echoes. Again, this is a common problem: censorship is often compromised with the material it repudiates. As Judith Butler argues in her discussion of the politics of the performative, when language is compelled to repeat what it seeks to constrain, such language 'invariably reproduces and restages the very speech that it seeks to shut down' (1997, p. 129). Even in a polemic parody of mourning, then, some version of the martyr's memory lives on. The voice of authority, Butler suggests (1997, p. 131), 'will speak the part of the one censored as well as the censoring voice itself, assimilating the drama as one way to establish control over the utterance'. The problem bears on the historical example.

Campion's execution was preceded by a courtroom drama, subjecting his voice to the authorities and yet, evidently, not quite succeeding in this act. In September 1581, after a month of imprisonment and torture, he was summoned to a formal theological disputation in the Tower, staged to discuss the articles of faith. This was supposed to allay doubts among the public that the Anglican divines shunned debates with leading Catholics on religious matters. So the authorities were determined to use the occasion to prove Campion wrong and discredit his position. His body physically marked from the rack, he was cross-examined and yet he seems to have made this tightly controlled space his own so as to voice his views. This emerges from one of the patriotic records of this bizarre show (Daye and Nowell, 1583): though set up to rout Catholic opposition, the debate gave him a stage on which to perform final acts. The same occurred at Tyburn, where his final words and gestures redefined the scaffold as a grand theatre for a martyr's death. Once again, we can trace this even in one of Munday's pamphlets, reporting Campion's last confession:

First he began with a phrase or two in Lattin, when soone after hee fell into Englishe as thus. I am heere brought as a Spectacle, before the face of God, of Angelles and of men, satisfying my selfe to dye, as becommeth a true Christian and Catholique man. [...] Then was hee moued as concerning his Trayterous and haynous offence to the Queenes moste excellent Maiestie: whereto he aunswered: Shee is my lawfull Princesse and Queene, there somewhat he drew in his words to himselfe, whereby was gathered, that somewhat hee would haue gladly spoken, but the great timeritie and vnstable oppinion of his conscience, wherein he was all the time, euen to the death, would not suffer him to vtter it. (Munday, 1582a, n.p.)

In the understanding of early modern states, it was not just common practice, but a necessary condition to have executions carried out in public so as to ensure the legitimacy of criminal justice.² But the passage quoted shows how precarious such spectacles of power are. The reporter is at pains to render the events in patriotic terms and interpret Campion's final moments as bearing further witness of his treacherous mind. But the difficulty of this interpretation emerges from the simple fact that negative evidence must be construed: what Campion has *not* said is also held against him. Conversely, what he does say reinterprets the occasion, appealing to a divine audience to authorize his powerful performance as a martyr. Campion here borrows the exact words of

St Paul, '*Spectaculum facti sumus Deo, angelis et hominibus*', in order to establish what he claims are the true dimensions of the present moment. Thus, his citational strategy in this scene exemplifies the same paradox of performative reversal which Höfele (1999, p. 51) has identified in Mary Stuart's execution, six years after Campion's. The scaffold is a theatre whose public platform licenses ambivalent spectacles. Try as they might, the authorities cannot always control the social effects produced on this stage; condemnation or glorification lie in the beholders' eyes.

The case is mentioned here to further illustrate the problem of forgetting raised in my earlier discussion of Reformation campaigns (cf. section 1.1). Oblivion cannot simply be commanded or produced. If at all, it can only be effected by means of some slow, tentative and gradual process of cultural reinscription. This is a dangerous strategy which can easily backfire, as shown in Munday's management of Campion's afterlife. All acts against oppositional memories, such as executions, censorship or raids of iconoclasm, also partly reaffirm the power that they seek to curb. Official injunctions against mourning a heretic undermine the speaking position from which they proceed because they also partly speak against themselves. It has even been argued that social meanings may be so resilient that they can never be effectively erased from cultural memory, only temporarily removed from current circulation. In this sense, Renate Lachmann has described cultural semiotics as a constant interplay between remembering and forgetting as ways to include certain signs into public discourse or exclude them from it (1993, p. XVII).³ Oblivion, in this sense, can never mean erasure; it means that certain signs have just been transferred into the realm of latent meanings, a cultural limbo where they lie dormant but whence they can potentially be retrieved and re-semantized for active use. 'Vacant' signs therefore remain within a culture, as if in reserve for future use when new developments may initiate new moves to re-activate forgotten or repressed material.

This view opens a useful perspective to look at the Reformation and rethink the effects of supposed ruptures in the religious culture of Tudor England. Whenever socially active signs – such as church rites, paraphernalia, images or symbols of faith – are officially de-legitimated with the establishment of a new religious practice, this does not always terminate their social career. There are ways in which the old continues to live on in displaced cultural memories. A stripped altar may still bear witness to what it has been stripped of. That is to say, marked absence, too, can make latent meanings once more manifest. For in the processes of de- and re-semantizing active signs, a counter-culture can find other modes to communicate officially excluded meanings by re-signifying

the cultural practices and artifacts available. To use Campion's execution as a case in point, his corpse was so thoroughly annihilated in order to prevent Catholic mourners from obtaining relics. But the precautions were not fully successful. Handkerchiefs were dipped into his blood,⁴ fingers were chopped off and carried away, so that the martyr's afterlife in new cultural significations almost posed a greater danger to the Protestant authorities than his life. As the Oxford Regius Professor wrote to Leicester:

This I can say with truth, that the ghost of the dead Campion has given me more trouble than the *Rationes* of the living, – not only because he has left his poison behind him [...], but much more because his friends dig him up from his grave, defend his cause, and write his epitaph in English, French, and Latin. It used to be said, 'Dead men bite not;' and yet Campion dead bites with his friends' teeth – a notable miracle, according to all experience, and to the old proverb; for as fresh heads grow on the hydra when the old are cut off, as wave succeeds wave, as a harvest of new men rose from the seed of the dragon's teeth, so one labour of ours only begets another, and still another; and in the place of the single Campion, champions upon champions have swarmed to keep us engaged. (Quoted in Simpson, 1867, p. 327)

The letter speaks of the resilient and resistant cultural meanings manifest in these performances of mourning. But what is more, the letter frankly admits to the greater dangers from the dead whose 'ghosts' appear to bite with ever multiplying powers as long as their 'friends' find ways to keep their memory alive. I would like to reiterate that we might see the Elizabethan institution of the playhouse as a place where some such ghosts could go about. Displaced into the separate yet public sphere of playing, latent cultural meanings, in Lachmann's sense, are manifest and multiplied in stage performance. This is why the authorities were so wary of its political effects. The 'hydra' of uncontrollable memories, which threatened public order in the aftermath of Campion's death as noted in this letter, has much in common with the 'Hydra of *diuersly-enclined spectators*' which James VI identified in his *Basilikon Doron* (cf. McIlwain, 1918, p. 9). Acts of censorship are futile when the monster of the public spectator continually grows new heads.⁵

Throughout the previous chapters, I have looked at performances of mourning in Shakespearean theatre and early modern culture as rites of

re-signification. Among the many-headed crowd of playgoers, there must have been a broad spectrum of views and interpretations for the acts they saw on stage. In this final chapter I would like to explore how such processes of re-interpretation and re-signification work in comedies, that is in popular stage plays whose character is even further removed from the serious occasions to mourn. And yet I argue they offer insights into the cultural management of grief precisely because their mock performances reveal what basic issues are at stake. As shown with *The Widdowes Teares*, discussed above in Chapter 3, the corpseless funeral staged by Tharsalio was not just a test case for one female mourner; it also tested key points in the contemporary attitudes to death and mourning. Due to the conventions of the genre, comedies do not permit characters to die and to be buried in the play. But then, by virtue of general convention, no stage play – whether comedy, tragedy, history, tragical-historical or tragical-comical-historical-pastoral – ever permits real death. All corpses in the theatre are fakes. So the consciously faked stage corpses, like Falstaff's at Shrewsbury, offer the best way to discuss the performances of death and mourning. If tragedies shift acts of mourning from the social to the theatrical arena and there turn them into play, comedies shift acts of mourning even further and more resolutely into a sphere of carnivalesque spectacle where they are redefined as role-play. This is not to deny the real consequences of play-acting, for which the practices of censorship give the most powerful proof, but simply to draw attention to the fact that comic scenes of grieving and mock funerals show what always goes on when ritual elements are performed on stage. Their theatrical citation both draws on the familiar social act and, through the fictional framing, cancels its pragmatic action. When they become part of comedies, religious rituals appear as what they are assumed to be whenever they are shown on stage: as ceremonial motions without efficacy, that is words and empty gestures that do not really perform acts.

Mock funerals and mock resurrections from the dead were immensely popular, especially in Jacobean comedies, where they formed a stock feature of theatrical entertainment. Plays like Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* or *Michaelmas Term* are just the more prominent examples of a broad trend to mix tragic and comic elements on stage and balance acts of grief with laughter.⁶ The trend itself was considerably older and, in the 1590s, had already become subject to some debate on stage. 'Forbear this place, I humbly crave thee, hence; / And mix not

death 'mongst pleasing comedies': this is how Comedy entreats Envy in the induction to *Mucedorus*, an apocryphal Shakespearean play that belonged to his company. But Envy remains adamant and threatens to assert the grim realities of death:

forbearance shall be such
 As treble death shall cross thee with despite,
 And make thee mourn where most thou joyest;
 Turning thy mirth into a deadly dole,
 Whirling thy pleasures with a peal of death,
 And drench thy methods in a sea of blood.

(Winny, 1959, p. 107)

In *Mucedorus*, Comedy eventually wins the day. But its victory cannot dispel all echoes of the 'peal of death'. As the traditional iconography in the *Danse macabre* shows, the fool's cap has long been one of Death's favourite guises. So whatever 'pleasures' we might gain from comic spectacles, we should be wary lest they turn our mirth 'into a deadly dole'. The balance is precarious because, unlike Falstaff's carnivalesque presence, Death cannot be banished by a speech act. This is why I suggest taking comic stage rituals and popular mock funerals seriously. Their metadramatic view gives insights into the social debates of the period and its changing management of mortality. Parodies of mourning, therefore, offer a test case for my entire argument, because their purpose of playing was and is to hold the mirror up to such performances.

My following discussion will focus mainly on two scenes, one from a late-Tudor Shakespeare play, the other from a mid-Tudor comedy: Hero's so-called funeral scene in *Much Ado About Nothing* (c. 1598) and Merrygreek's mock-liturgy for the pretended death of Ralph Roister Doister in Nicholas Udall's interlude of that title (c. 1551–53). The two play texts are almost five decades apart. They each belong to different theatrical cultures and are clearly located in specific historical and religious fields. But their salient differences help us identify and analyse what they share: the mechanisms of purposefully playful mourning and their political effects. Parody works by exaggeration and distortion, so its functions like a magnifying glass which provides an enlarged and intensified view. What does it show, then, about the cultural work performed through allusive stage rites? What memories are engaged in mock laments which recite and at the same time ridicule features of established church rites? And how do the politics of parody relate to the politics of the English Reformation?

4.2 Round about her tomb they go: *Much Ado About Nothing*

In 1613, the Court of the Archdeaconry of Essex opened proceedings against a certain Thomas Milborne of Eastham for his continued misconduct in church. The accused was the local parish clerk, that is a minor functionary at the lower end of the Anglican hierarchy, but he had failed to live up to the expectations even of this modest office. As we read in the Act Books of the Ecclesiastical Courts, he was presented there ‘for spreadinge mowle hills with a shovell in the churchyard upon the Sundaye nexte Septuagesima last being the xiiith daye of Februarie 1613 and that betweene morninge and eveninge prayer’ (Hale, 1847, p. 238). Such behaviour seems strange enough, but his other offences are even more intriguing:

for that he doth not kneele on his knees in tyme of devine service when as it is fittinge he should and the rather in that he is the parishe clerke who ought to give good example therby unto others that are negligent therin, and he hath often tymes bene admonished for to kneele by the minister but he doth altogether refuse it. (Ibid.)

The most serious charge against him, however, concerned not just his body language, or lack thereof, but his vocal conduct during divine service:

And for that he singeth the psalmes in the church with such a jesticulus tone and altitonant voyce, viz. squeakinge like a gelded pigg which doth not onlie interrupt the other voyces, but is altogether dissonant and disagreeing unto any muscally harmonie and he hath been requested by the minister to leave it, but he doth obstinatelie persist and contynue therin. (Ibid.)

These charges point to an interesting mode of misbehaviour. Employed in church to set a model of piety for the whole congregation to follow in their worship, the clerk of Eastham has evidently refused to function in this way and does his best to disturb all sense of harmony. But he has not entirely left the service nor totally disrupted the liturgical order. Instead, he has continued to participate with obstinacy, marking difference in some small ways: spreading molehills on a Sunday, not bending his knees in prayer, and with ‘jesticulus’ singing. To us, his offences seem trivial enough, but the authorities evidently took them very seriously.

What was their point in calling Thomas Milborne to court? And what was *his* point in persisting in these strange ways, against the better advice of his superiors?

To raise such questions leads us to think about the politics of parody. For whatever else the figure of the squeaking clerk may illustrate, he clearly illustrates the basic and etymologically oldest understanding of *parody* as 'counter-song' or 'song sung beside'. This is what standard accounts of the term tell us.⁷ In the context of Greek drama, where it first appears, *parody* signifies the supplementary and adapted version of a well-known song offered in addition, and often in opposition, to an established cultural model. In this sense, Aristotle calls a poem parodistic when it employs the metrical and rhetorical devices of great epic songs but speaks of light or mundane matters instead of the heroic subjects normally treated in this way. In his dictionary *World of Wordes* (1598), John Florio defines *parody* in relatively neutral terms as 'a turning of a verse by altering some words' (quoted in Rose, 1993, p. 10). Yet it is the incongruity resulting from such alterations which is central in all forms of parody. Parodistic strategies inform a broad spectrum of cultural practices and can take a number of literary shapes, variously known as travesty, pastiche, burlesque and several others. What they share is the incongruous application of some pre-existing textual paradigm to a different situation where it appears to be quite out of place. The familiar model is evoked and imitated but used in a questionable shape. According to Margaret Rose (1993, p. 52), parody is '*the comic refunctioning of preformed linguistic or artistic material*'. In Linda Hutcheon's definition (1985, p. 6), it is 'repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity'. While similarity prevails and necessarily so – otherwise the targeted paradigm would not be recognized – parodists often take a distanced stance towards their model. The counter-song consists of an 'ironic "trans-contextualization" and inversion' by which 'a critical distance is implied between the backgrounded text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signaled by irony' (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 32). In this broad view, which I here adopt, parody is an umbrella term covering a range of cultural practices.

This view does not prejudice the pragmatic force of parody nor its political function. 'Both by definition (through the meaning of its prefix "para") and structurally (through the inclusion within its own structure of the work it parodies), most parody worthy of the name is ambivalent towards its target' (Rose, 1993, p. 51). Thus, the critical potential remains a matter of degree and emphasis. It is crucial to appreciate this point: parody can range in effect 'from respectful admiration to biting

ridicule' (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 16) and work in a combination of imitation and inversion, citation and subversion. Parodies play upon our familiarity with a textual pattern which they partly repeat and partly reject. In any given case, however, the precise attitudes of parodists are debatable: are they critical and derisive or rather the reverse, paying homage to an ideal norm which current practice fails to meet? As Hutcheon (1985, p. 57) says with reference to Pope's mock-epics, 'many parodies today do not ridicule the backgrounded texts but use them as standards by which to place the contemporary under scrutiny'.

To come back to the squeaking clerk of Eastham, the case is so remarkable precisely because his parody-psalm and dissonant behaviour allow different interpretations. Perhaps Thomas Milborne simply was a rascal who liked to make trouble and so got himself into trouble. But perhaps, as Butler (1999, p. xxvii) put it in another context, 'trouble need not carry such a negative valence'. Milborne could have seen trouble-making in church rather as his task because he might have held dissenting religious views, that is more strongly Protestant sympathies, which made him resent established forms of service and led him, through conspicuous conduct, to signal the intensity of true belief. Or perhaps he was a frequent play-goer and remembered certain things he had seen on stage, like the gravediggers or the 'old mole' in *Hamlet* with their profound eschatology. The court documents do not record his voice nor give his views; we do not know how or what this subaltern would speak. But we should note that his misconduct manages to highlight some of the more precarious issues in contemporary debates about ritual and doctrine. The molehills in the churchyard might evoke the controversy over the sacredness of burial grounds; the bending, or not bending, of his knees could be seen in the context of questions in the English church as to whether or not body posture serves to determine devotional sincerity in common prayer; and his notorious squeaking reminds us of the long debates over the proper use of church music, especially the argument that, with constant singing, the word of God must still be clearly heard in church. As early as 1561, the Bishop of Norwich issued an injunction to all parish clerks to this effect.⁸

In this way, investigating the possibilities of parody leads us to investigating normative forms of divine worship, because the established rites on which parodistic versions draw and comment, are themselves debatable. This is what makes parodies of mourning quite a complex issue. Unlike forms of textual borrowing and literary 'trans-contextualization', which Hutcheon, Dentith, Rose, Genette and others focussed on, we are concerned with ceremonial activities and therefore face the question of

how exactly the parodistic version of a ritual differs from a genuine performance. What signs help anybody to distinguish between sincerity and mockery, between devotional and critical participation in religious liturgies? Ritual practices are always fundamentally repetitive and commemorative; they can only be perpetuated among congregations when each performance is acknowledged as a realization of the foundational moment, the original and originating act which the practitioners – however vaguely – still recall. But at the same time, with the constant interplay of formula and performance, or norm and realization, the process of repetition also opens up a space for deviation. Thus, performative remembrance introduces possibilities of difference, transgression and parody into ritual observance.

Conversely, each performance of a ritual formula must face the question of efficacy. The issue became prominent in sixteenth-century discourses when, according to Muir (1997, p. 7), the idea of ritual was first ‘invented’ as a result of the religious crisis. Therefore the different notions of what a ritual is or does became aligned with the doctrinal differences. What do rites do? Do prescribed words and gestures carry any power in themselves? The answer to these questions served to distinguish Catholic believers from the Protestant campaigners, who ‘wanted rituals to pass a test of efficacy’ (1997, p. 150) or else declared them superstitious magic and, in most cases, banned them from further use. For the reformers, this rejection followed from their basic understanding of the central acts of faith. Against the traditional doctrine that rites make something ‘present’, reformers generally held theories of ‘representation’, which disclaim the efficacious power of verbal formulas (1997, p. 8). And yet there are some indications that elements of the old faith survived in altered shapes and continued to trouble even prominent advocates of the new religion. Parodies of mourning, I shall argue, were such cases where critical imitations of discarded forms and practices could not be freed entirely from fears – or perhaps hopes – that their real powers still endured. The parodistic performance of a ritual might still be thought to generate genuine effects. Ritual parody, therefore, moves on dangerous ground.

Within this framework, I would like to read the two comedies to argue that the questionable politics of parody also concern the project of the English Reformation. In particular, I will suggest that we can here trace cultural effects of what I call the anxiety of borrowed rites, that is anxieties which troubled the newly settled English church and which recurred for at least one generation after the Elizabethan settlement. And finally, in one more trans-contextualization, I shall briefly look at a later stage in Jacobean times to show how James ritually managed a period of crisis by

'playing with death' (Woodward, 1997, p. 131), borrowing a traditionally sanctioned burial site for his new dynastic project.

I now come to my first example.

Now, unto thy bones good night.
Yearly will I do this rite. (5.3.22–3)

These words by Claudio conclude the funeral ceremony for Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing*. The scene takes place at or in the family monument of Leonato and so derives its sombre character – or, in the Arden editor's suggestive phrase, its 'purgatorial nature' (Humphries, 1988, p. 210) – from this visual manifestation of memory and death. Tomb structures were among the few items of actual stage design by which Elizabethan theatre companies indicated *locus*, that is the fictional location of a scene (cf. Neill, 1997, p. 308). Here, the device marks the moment when plot complications culminate before their final resolution. We see Claudio taking farewell from his late bride-to-be, whom he repudiated because he thought he had seen proof of her premarital disloyalty. His rejection of her at the altar, dramatically played out in Act IV, had interrupted the church ceremony which was to unite their hands in marriage. Instead, a funeral ceremony is now performed for Hero, with Claudio as the principal mourner, laying her to rest. Or so he thinks. In actual fact, the audience is fully aware that the supposed coffin is empty. Hero's death is counterfeit. The funeral is being staged with a didactic purpose: to teach Claudio a lesson for his credulity and make him rue his rashness in denouncing Leonato's daughter.

In this way, the mock-funeral provides a metadramatic reflection of what we understand to be always the case in the playhouse: there is no actual corpse involved. But the scene also provides an occasion to reflect on the dynamics and effects of rituals. The critical debate about it has concentrated on this issue: how genuine is Claudio's mourning? How much, if any, faith are we supposed to place in his participation in the ceremony and in his ritual utterance of grief? Can he, in the framework of the play, seriously be thought to have *done* anything with his words? Opinion is divided. The funeral scene shows a mere 'travesty on religious psychology, conversion and ethical self-reformation', Harry Berger writes. For him, the case is clear: Claudio remains the same; 'no one is new-created by verbal or theatrical magic' (2001, p. 29). Claudio's grief is expressed only through 'external forms', such as the epitaph, the poem or the hymn, never in personal terms, Alexander Leggatt notes. Still, he suggests that 'formal expressions of feeling have their own kind of value' (1974, p. 165). What kind of value this could be has been

spelled out by other critics who, like John H. Long, understand the dirge scene as 'a ritualistic exorcism' (1955, p. 133) or, like Robert Hunter, as a 'sacrament of penance' (1965, p. 103). More recent readers, though, remain unimpressed: Claudio's 'penitence is perfunctory and coerced', Carol Thomas Neely argues (1988, p. 117). And for Richard Levin, 'the few words that Don Pedro and Claudio exchange between themselves lack a convincing indication of sorrow'. Their funeral ceremony resolves none of the doubts, 'because the reality that lies behind Claudio's willingness to conform to social rituals is questionable' (1985, p. 112).

Equally questionable, though, is the notion of ritual that underlies such readings. Without necessarily defending Claudio, we should surely say that such an opposition between conviction and convention, as it is implied here, does not hold. Perhaps we should go even further and question Levin's understanding that there must be some 'reality' lying 'behind' the ritual for its performance to succeed. Other critics' views are just as problematic. Ross (1972, p. 130) says that the 'ceremony is as mechanical and casual as the turning of a prayer-wheel', and Ormerod (1972) sees the whole play in terms of an opposition between 'faith and fashion'. All these interpretations are thus predicated on a specific understanding of what rites are or do, and none of them takes into account that 'fashion' or even a 'mechanical' activity are central aspects of ritual habituation. A closer look at the mock-funeral and its social contexts will help to put this issue in perspective and reconsider some of the critical judgements.

Whatever its precise effects and whether fraud or sacrament, the mourning ritual performed in *Much Ado* is sanctioned by the ecclesiastical authority in the play. The project has been devised and stage-managed by Friar Francis, although he now remains conspicuously absent when Hero's funeral show takes place. But when he earlier justified his plan to 'maintain a mourning ostentation' and 'do all rites / That appertain unto a burial' (4.1.204–7), he made a most remarkable point:

She – dying, as it must be so maintained,
 Upon the instant that she was accused –
 Shall be lamented, pitied, and excused
 Of every hearer. For it so falls out
 That what we have, we prize not to the worth
 Whiles we enjoy it, but, being lacked and lost,
 Why then we rack the value, then we find
 The virtue that possession would not show us
 Whiles it was ours.

(4.1.213–21)

The Friar's argument suggests a depth of psychological insight which well becomes a spiritual father, because it reverses the lay notion – manifest, for instance, in most critics' understanding – about loss and the effects of ceremonial lament. We do not mourn for anyone the more we value him or her; the Friar claims that the reverse holds true: performances of mourning *engender* the appropriate attitude and intensify the emotional investments we are prepared to make. Instead of looking for a reality 'behind' ritual utterances, therefore, we should rather acknowledge the realities in which they result. As Wright claimed in *The Passions of the Minde*, 'usually men are more moued with deeds than words' (1971, p. 175), and this claim also concerns their own deeds. In this perspective, even a counterfeit funeral rite is likely to have true effects. Whoever finds himself cast as mourner will come to treasure what he thinks has passed away. Going through the motions thus creates the emotions of mourning.

The argument is not without topical relevance for a society in which, one generation earlier, all ritual practices had been newly regulated. In view of reformed funeral customs and the contemporary debates about them that we noted, the performance of a dirge and death rite must have real implications. When Shakespeare's Friar announces, in front of an Elizabethan audience, 'to do all rites / That appertain unto a burial' (4.1.206–7), he raises a famously contested issue: what exactly *are* those rites? What *does* appertain unto a burial?

The answer given in Act V is teasingly vague. The verses of the dirge and epitaph are trochaic, in Shakespearean drama usually a sign of gnomic, magic or self-consciously archaic language. The ceremonial movements we observe, such as the circling around the tomb, are strange and certainly do not look like a Christian burial. No doubt, the stage representation of any recognizable religious ceremony here would be improper and blasphemous and would have been banned by censorship, but the remaining elements are significant enough. In the absence of a proper liturgy, we witness how an epitaph is read aloud; then a scroll is hung upon the tomb and a song follows, accompanied by music:

Pardon, goddess of the night,
 Those that slew thy virgin knight,
 For the which with songs of woe
 Round about her tomb they go.
 Midnight, assist our moan,
 Help us to sigh and groan,

Heavily, heavily.
 Graves yawn, and yield your dead
 Till death be utterèd,
 Heavily, heavily.

(5.3.12–21)

This 'solemn hymn' (5.3.11) has caused much indignation among editors and critics for its silly rhymes and muddled syntax. The song 'is among Shakespeare's worst', the Cambridge editor sums up the critical consensus, and adds: 'Perhaps Don Pedro and Claudio were mediocre poets' (Mares, 1988, p. 140). Or perhaps, as I would add, the linguistic clumsiness is calculated, a point of poetic mockery befitting the occasion. The whole scene, after all, is parodistic in the sense established earlier: a funeral dirge is performed in a context where it is evidently out of place. The heavy-handed rhymes reflect this fundamental incongruity between the solemn modes of mourning and their present use. Altogether, Holger Klein observes, Hero's funeral 'has something double-bottomed and grotesque, and perhaps even nearly comical about it' (1992, p. 284). No matter what its politics turn out to be, the parody of mourning here is unmistakable.

But for all their comic or grotesque aspects, the verbal forms and ceremonial features of this ritual scene in fact appear conspicuously Catholic – we are, after all, in Sicily. There are several telling hints which point in this direction. These include the invocation of the dead and of Diana, pagan 'goddess of the night', frequently evoked to suggest Marian veneration (cf. Taylor, 2001, p. 25). A stronger hint is given with the tapers, or torches, and the nocturnal setting of the scene. 'It is grown altogether in fashion to bury now by night', John Chamberlain wrote in 1618 (Nichols, 1828, II, p. 497), suggesting that twenty years earlier night burials were quite out of question. In 1615 he already reported that a lady 'was buried by night with above thirty coaches and much torchlight attending her', a custom which he thinks 'was brought up by the papists' (McClure Thomson, 1966, p. 131). It was around this time, according to Woodward (1997, p. 141), that the use of torch-light was gradually becoming re-legitimated, though in some eyes 'such funeral accoutrements would still appear popish'. All these are indications of the fact that, for a late-Elizabethan audience, the burial performance in *Much Ado* must have mobilized distinctly Catholic associations. These are strengthened by two further details: the singing of the hymn, and Claudio's final promise that he will 'yearly' do this rite. His only personal speech act throughout the entire scene, this phrase recalls the

ritual year's minds in the traditional commemoration of the dead. Like all the other features mentioned, it thus refers to a religious culture which the Elizabethan Church opposed as superstitious and had outlawed, though not always outrivalled, in the country. How are we to account for such precarious references? And what may be their function in this parodistic setting?

There have been serious attempts to identify Christian patterns in Hero's mock-burial. For instance, B. K. Lewalski read the scene as an allegory of 'Christ's death, burial, and resurrection' (1968, pp. 250–1) just as, more recently, Tom Rist sees a powerful 'dramatic allusion to the Passion'; he surmises that the play's vindication of Hero's innocence must also be a vindication of the Friar's Catholic faith (1999, p. 187). That *Much Ado* should be a Counter-Reformation statement, however, seems a questionable claim. Quite apart from doubts about Shakespearean involvement in recusant conspiracies, I think that the theatre, as a sceptical enterprise, does not easily lend itself to champion any one religious cause. As in my earlier remarks on the religious stance of revenge tragedy (cf. section 2.4), I would here stress the ambiguous ways in which the politics of the performative work. The very process of performance, with its constant double-play of repetition and deviation, precludes a one-dimensional reading. In the case of Hero's mock-funeral, we should rather mark the levels of discrepant awareness between audience and the various participants on stage. The immediate protagonists, Claudio and Pedro, are unaware that the rite they perform is a counterfeit production. By contrast, the frame protagonists in the play, led by Friar Francis, represent this level of awareness and so share our insight into the metadramatic character of the occasion. The structure works to emphasize the parodistic nature of this funeral. As a result of the double layers we are invited, as it were, to see the quotation marks around the stage ceremony performed here, suggestive of some Catholic customs, but clearly trans-contextualized. The old rites have been borrowed for quite another purpose. It even seems as if the silly rhymes serve as a wink to tell us that the ritual participants are being hoodwinked here.

Yet once again we must ask what this means in a historical context. As in the case of the squeaking clerk, the matter cannot easily be resolved one way or the other. What then can we hypothesize about its political and cultural significance?

I shall address this question when I return to *Much Ado* in the final part of this chapter. I would first like to approach the answer by way of a historical digression into mid-sixteenth-century debates, through a

reading of some Reformation polemics as well as an early Tudor comedy which raises the same issue. At this point, just a brief reflection on the work of rituals. According to Muir (1997, p. 5), rituals can have two basic functions which work in complementary, perhaps contrary, ways: they model or they mirror social matter. As models, rituals present a standard version of the world, a norm or an idea for the practitioners to follow. As mirrors, rituals have rather a declarative character and present the world in such a version as it is generally understood to be. While the performative force of a model is utopian, that is urging the participants to change their ways and approximate to the given norm, the social power of a mirror is conservative, that is urging participants to accept the version set up by present powers. The distinction is highly suggestive, not least with regard to the theatre. But Muir's point is to stress the ambiguities between these options that most actual rituals show: 'Rituals tend to blur these two processes, which is perhaps the very source of the creative tension in rituals, the tension between a conservative mirroring of what is and the utopian modeling of what might be' (1997, p. 5). In this light let me look at the dirge scene from Nicholas Udall's domestic English comedy.

4.3 *Ralph Roister Doister* and the anxiety of borrowed rites

Like *Much Ado*, *Ralph Roister Doister* is a comedy about conflicting gender norms and impeded courtship. Unlike *Much Ado*, however, its social setting and ideological profile are urban, middle-class and anti-aristocratic. The title character, a mildly Falstaffian and Quixotic figure, is a vainglorious knight without employment, who serves as the butt of laughter precisely because he tries to fashion himself according to an aristocratic social script long out of date and place. The traditional code of chivalric behaviour in war and noble wooing, so emphatically re-staged in the opening scene of *Much Ado*, is ridiculed and bitingly exposed here. With two suitors courting one lady – the aptly named Christian Custance – the comedy is loosely structured on the pattern of Morality Plays. But the fact that the lady refuses even for a moment to give in to Roister Doister's seductions and instead remains faithful to Gawyn Goodluck shows how firmly this model of female constancy sides with the ethos of middle-class and mercantile life. Whatever else it may be, Udall's play clearly 'is a satirical parody of medieval chivalric heroes' (Plumstead, 1963, p. 142) and a satire on knightly romances. Their codes of heroic masculinity and honour are finally deflated in the grand mock-battle in

Act IV between the unrelenting suitor and the household of his chosen lady, a ludicrous and incongruous fight conducted with pots and pans and other kitchen items.

This climactic scene is preceded in Act III by the mock-funeral, an elaborate and sustained performance based on the Roman Catholic obsequies for the dead, but applied here to a reluctant corpse who keeps falling out of the role assigned to him in the traditional rite:

M. MERRYGREEK: How feeles your soule to God?

ROISTER DOISTER: I am nigh gone.

M. MERRYGREEK: And shall we hence streight?

ROISTER DOISTER: Yea.

M. MERRYGREEK: *Placebo dilexi.*

Maister Roister Doister will streight go home and die,

Our Lorde Jesus Christ his soule have mercie upon:

Thus you see today a man, tomorow John.

Yet saving for a woman's extreeme crueltie,

He might have lyved yet a moneth or two or three,

But in spite of Custance which hath him wried,

His mashyp shall be worshipfully buried;

And while some piece of his soule is yet hym within,

Some parte of his funeralls let us here beginne.

ROISTER DOISTER: Heigh how, alas, the pangs of death my hearte do breake.

M. MERRYGREEK: Holde your peace for shame, sir; a dead man may not speake.

Nequando: What mourners and what torches shall we have?

ROISTER DOISTER: None.

M. MERRYGREEK: *Dirige.* He will go darklyng to his grave;

Neque lux, neque crux, neque mourners, neque clinke,

He will steale to heaven, unknowing to God, I thinke.

A porta inferi. Who shall your goodes possess?

ROISTER DOISTER: Thou shalt be my sectour, and have all more and lesse.

M. MERRYGREEK: *Requiem aeternam.* Now God reward your mastershyp.

And I will crie halfepenie doale for your worshyp.

(Tydeman, 1984, pp. 148–9)

The dramatic situation, briefly, is as follows. Roister Doister realizes that his courtship has failed. Since the lady has turned him down in no uncertain terms, he despairs of life, falls into a feigned swoon and declares himself dead – though not without continuing to comment on

his state and to give further instructions. In the *Officium pro defunctis*, now performed for him, the position of the priest is assumed by Matthew Merrygreek, acting as Roister Doister's servant, but actually a self-employed and independent character, a Vice and trickster and, as his opening soliloquy makes clear, an expert in emotional engineering, just like Shakespeare's Friar Francis.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Merrygreek is also well versed in the Roman Catholic liturgy. The quoted passage is only a short excerpt, yet it shows how closely the whole scene follows the liturgical process, marking successive stages in the imagined progress of Roister Doister from sickbed to grave. For instance, Merrygreek's initial question 'How feel your soule to God?' is a translation of the *Commendatio Animae*, that is the question that the priest asks the dying man in the *Ordo ad Visitandum Infirmum*. The ensuing lines are grafted onto the traditional sacramental order, that is Vespers, Matins, Mass, and Burial Service, each of them specifically marked by the Latin phrases cited.⁹ *Placebo* refers to a verse from Psalm 114, *Placebo domino in regione vivorum*, 'I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living' (Vulgate, Psalm 114: 9), which forms the opening of the Vespers antiphone. *Nequando* ('Lest he devour my soul, like a lion, and tear it in pieces', Vulgate, Psalm 7: 2) derives from a Matins antiphone, prior to the Mass. *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine* is an apostrophe recurring throughout the funeral Mass, and so on. These verbal echoes are accompanied by the paraphernalia mentioned in the text, such as candles, crosses, mourners, bells, all belonging to traditional obsequies. In this way, the Latin tags alluding to specific moments in the rite are supported by bell-ringing, psalm-singing and other elements of great connotative power. Despite the comic context, 'there can be little doubt that the audience sensed' the ritual sequence (Miller, 1946, p. 47). So Udall's audience must have felt the shadowy but recognizable presence of the Roman Catholic service for the dead – in a manifestly absurd situation.

This liturgical stage performance, therefore, is a text-book case of parody. Far more specific in its citational strategies than Hero's mock-funeral in *Much Ado*, the mock-funeral for Roister Doister shows all the classic points of parodistic projects: it is an allusive imitation of another cultural practice (cf. Dentith, 2000, p. 9); it presents a blatant incongruity between textual and situational features and, with its macaronic Latin-English mixture, it forms what Hutcheon (1985, p. 33) calls a 'bitextual synthesis'. As a metadramatic scene, it operates in a *mise-en-abyme* structure, so that it also shows what Rose (1979) identified as the critical self-mirroring character of parody. What, however, is its function?

Should we regard it, like the later mock-battle, as the satirical use of an old and worn-out cultural code which can no longer define meaningful norms? Does Udall's parody of mourning, in this sense, constitute a polemic against the Roman Catholic service as an absurd ritual performance? Or does it rather criticize the present situation and, through the echoes of traditional religious practice, try to evoke familiar certainties? *Ralph Roister Doister*, probably first performed by choir boys (Edgerton, 1965, p. 559), presents itself as a self-confident imitation of Latin comedy modelled on Plautus and Terence, who are mentioned by name in the Prologue. For some sixteenth-century humanists and schoolmasters, this choice would already have been bad enough.¹⁰ Yet Udall has transformed and quite domesticated the classic models and their stock types, and has combined them with allusions to medieval romances as well as topical concerns. Among the latter, his play contains several familiar points from religious debates. Roister Doister's courtship, for example, is largely conducted through various messengers, love letters and tokens, and in the discussions about a token's power to signify true presence we hear some echoes of the eucharist controversy.¹¹ In the framework of burlesque and comedy, serious questions are at stake, especially when we place the mock-liturgical performance against the contemporary background of religious dispute. In Muir's terms, are we to understand the ritual parody as a model or a mirror, that is as modelling what might be or as mirroring of what is? The case is vexed because, as in other parodies, the incongruity works both ways. The 'paradox of parody', in Hutcheon's phrase (1985, p. 68), allows for both conservative and for utopian readings.

The difficulty is increased because, unlike the scene from *Much Ado*, Udall's audience has no superior awareness. All figures on stage know full well the fictional and incongruous character of their funeral game; the quotation marks, as it were, remain visible throughout. The Roman Catholic liturgy is cited rather than recited, while the corpse falls in and out of his role. In this way, the ritual allusions are displayed and at the same time undercut by theatrical illusion. The role of the priest is taken on by one impostor, Merrygreek, in order to strip another impostor, Roister Doister, of his false pretensions. The constellation thus appears to be quite similar to Catholic exorcism, as described by James in *Daemonologie* (1969, pp. 72–3), where one devil casts out another. And yet, for our case as for the king's, the question of efficacy remains: how and why does this work? Who or what does Udall's parody of mourning serve or subvert?

Contextual evidence is inconclusive.¹² The author was a dazzling and remarkably resilient figure throughout decades of turmoil and division.

Born in 1504, Udall was strongly associated with Protestantism under Henry VIII and his successor. Since his years as an Oxford student, he seems to have been committed to the politics of reform. In 1533 he contributed to the pageants for Anne Boleyn's coronation; in 1549 he published his English translation of Peter Martyr's treatise against transubstantiation (see Vermigli, 1550); in 1553 he compiled and partly translated Thomas Geminus's anatomy of the human body and dedicated the work to Edward VI (cf. Geminus, 1553). With Mary's accession later the same year, he was deprived of public standing, patronage and some lucrative posts, but he evidently managed to reconstruct his career and before long resumed his involvement in entertainments for the royal household,¹³ soon defending 'the Marian regime with the same enthusiasm with which he endorsed Henry's work of reformation' (Tydeman, 1984, p. 24). At one point during Edward's reign, though, Udall's defence of the reformed religion took a public turn when he became a spokesman for the authorities, a role which has received surprisingly little attention in critical discussion of his plays.¹⁴ When in 1549 the commoners of Devonshire and Cornwall stood up against Edward's enforced Protestantism, Udall was ordered to respond to them. The Catholic rebels demanded the right to continue their traditional worship (e.g. pray for souls in purgatory) and they expressed their discontent in interesting terms: 'Item, we will not receive the new service because it is but like a Christmas game, but we will have our old service of matins, mass, evensong, and procession in Latin, not in English, as it was before.' (Pocock, 1884, p. 169) To these traditionally minded Cornishmen, the new forms of worship appeared simply like a playful – not to say parodistic – reversal of the proper ritual order, a festive joke, a Christmas game.

It strikes me as significant that Udall, in his answer to the rebels, does not dispute this point. Instead he argues for the power of habituation:

I say, if it shall please God to give you grace in season to reconcile yourselves after ye shall once have made a devout Christmas game of this new service, that is to say, after ye shall have well used it one Christmas, ye shall find such sweetness and ghostly comfort in it, that all days of your life after ye will curse, abhor, detest, and defy all such pernicious ringleaders of mischief as will attempt or entice you to make any more such midsummer games as ye have now at this present time played. And doubt ye not but ye shall find the right using of the new service a better Christmas game than this is a midsomer game. (Pocock, 1884, p. 170)

The new ritual order may be a 'Christmas game', but it is still 'devout' and certainly a better form of worship than the old 'Midsummer game'. Besides, he argues, all practitioners of the new faith will gradually, through time and experience, discover what blessings Protestant worship can bestow. The argument is fundamentally related to the reasoning by which Shakespeare's Friar explains the incongruous use of mourning rites: the effects justify the means. In both cases, the performance of a ritual is considered a formative act which produces rather than presupposes the appropriate emotional attitudes on the part of its participants. Conviction is the result of, not the reason for, conversion.

Such ritual shaping of emotion is also relevant when considering the effects of theatre performance. And although early Tudor interludes were not 'theatrical' in the manner of later commercial theatres (cf. Walker, 1998, p. 1), the point has bearings on the mock-funeral in *Roister Doister*. Historically, the play belongs to the most critical and dramatic period of religious change in sixteenth-century England. Written and performed in the early to mid-fifties, it is situated around the precarious transition from the Edwardian to the Marian regime, that is from the resolutely Protestant to the resolutely Catholic monarch. But its precise place in this embattled period remains intriguingly uncertain. Most editors have favoured an earlier date of composition,¹⁵ so that the play would still fall into Edward's reign, when jokes against Catholic rites were the order of the day. However, others have argued for a date during the initial phase of Mary's reign,¹⁶ when the Latin liturgy was re-established and Udall seems to have been eager to regain favour at court. Not least because Merrygreek's playful allusions keep the shape of the Roman liturgy intact, it has been said that any sense of parody was much too mild for Edward's court to have been entertained by it (cf. Tydeman, 1984, p. 21). But as the debate concerns merely a few months – Edward VI died in July 1553 – the question about *Roister Doister's* exact location cannot be finally resolved.

A better way to negotiate this impasse therefore is to focus on the strategies of parody and try to assess their function in such times of historical transformation. For with reforms and counter-reforms in religious life, the use of religious parody gains some importance, offering a sense of social continuity and operating as a mode of cultural reflexivity. I want to argue that parodistic repetition, as in Udall's ambiguous performances of mourning, works both to hail and to heal the violent ruptures in contemporary ritual organization. Drawing on historical as well as some theoretical material, my subsequent discussion should serve to justify this claim.

In her discussion of discursive agency, Butler comments on Bourdieu's distinction between performatives that work and those that fail.¹⁷ For Bourdieu, this difference 'has everything to do with the social power of the one who speaks: the one who is invested with legitimate power makes language act; the one who is not invested may recite the same formula, but produces no effects. The former is legitimate, and the latter, an imposter' (Butler, 1997, p. 146). With regard to Udall's parody of ritual mourning, we can say that in the framework of his play *Merrygreek* is clearly an imposter: he recites the liturgical formula without having been invested with any legitimate power to do so. His language therefore cannot produce effects; he does not act but play-act. However, Butler then goes on to question Bourdieu's opposition because, in some cases, the distinction between imposter and real authority is blurred. There are moments, she insists, 'where the utterance calls into question the established grounds of legitimacy, where the utterance, in fact, performatively produces a shift in the terms of legitimacy as an *effect* of the utterance itself' (1997, pp. 146–7). As an example she refers to Bourdieu's discussion of liturgical ritual, but argues that a deviant and different, hence 'illegitimate' use of the liturgy may yet come to transform and supplant the old: 'In fact, the ritual that performs an infringement of the liturgy may still be the liturgy, the liturgy in its futural form' (1997, p. 147). Or, as we could say, in periods of cultural transformation a parodistic and unauthorized performance may, over time, come to be regularized and established as the new norm.

The long and fitful process of the English Reformation was such a period. And Udall's comedy is so interesting when placed in this perspective, not just because the play belongs historically to a most critical phase, but because its parodistic strategies indeed play up the blurred distinctions between authorized and unauthorized ritual, whichever way we see it. If we assume that *Roister Doister* was performed for Edward's court, the mock-funeral could be seen to reveal Catholic imposture, with a ludicrous priest assuming an unauthorized role and pretending to effect things by ritual language. If we assume, however, *Roister Doister* was performed for Mary's court, the mock-funeral could be seen to mark the end of 'Christmas games' in worship (as the rebellious Cornishmen put it) and to invoke Catholic liturgy in the 'futural form' which at the time was being re-legitimated. Present infringement often leads to performative transformation. Historic change is thus initiated: one who acts as an imposter for some, acts as the restorer of true ritual for others.

Previous readings of the comedy have been puzzled by these ambiguities of its parodistic strategy. Miller thought that it is 'doubtful whether any

satire upon Roman rites is involved' because Udall 'does not mutilate the actual words of liturgy' but simply 'applies the rites, themselves intact in so far as they are suggested, to an incongruous situation' (1946, pp. 56–7). Although this is parody, it does no harm to the integrity of the practice parodied. 'Roister does not satirize the code', Plumstead said about the chivalric code in Udall's play; 'the code satirizes him' (1963, p. 153). Besides, it has been pointed out that the mock-funeral, too, is 'medieval in flavour' (Willson, 1975, p. 17), that is that it recalls the old practice of *parodia sacra*, liturgical parodies like the comic drinkers' Masses popular in medieval festive culture.¹⁸ Surely this is an important context in which to read early modern cultural productions; Bakhtinian interpretations generally see the sacred and the parodic moving in this kind of 'flux and reflux' (Dentith, 2000, p. 54). But for the present case, this model seems to me beside the point. There must be a pragmatic difference between carnivalesque customs mocking sacred rituals yet firmly placed in the tradition of the Roman Catholic church – indeed licensed by this church – and parodies of the liturgy taking place in a historical situation where an alternative is actually available in Protestantism. My reference to Butler's argument was meant to clarify this point. In a period of religious reformation, whatever satirical inversions of traditional worship are performed, they have a 'futural' reference in the service of the new church. If old rites are now applied to an incongruous situation, this can be a way of showing how incongruous the rites themselves are for the present situation.

This is why liturgical parodies, and especially parodistic funeral rites, were much used in Reformation polemics, widely circulating in plays, interludes, tracts, treatises and poems. At the time when Udall was negotiating with the Catholic rebels, early during Edward's reign, a certain Luke Shepherd published a number of biting satires which all work by the same device. They construct the voice of a Catholic persona who laments the loss of traditional rites and mourns the passing away of the old faith:

Alas who wolde not mone
 Or rather grunt or gro[n]e
 To se suche seruyce gone
 Whiche saued many one
 From deadly synne and shame
 And many a spote of blame
 From purgatorye payne
 And many showre of rayne.

(Devereux, 2001, p. 13)

In one case, the speaker is presented as the Pope himself passionately weeping for his dead daughter, the mass, and showing all the physical signs of deep distress:

Oh what inwarde passion
 Doth torment on this fassion
 Who wold not take compassion
 To heare my Lamentacion [...]
 Oh so I inflame
 My hart with heate
 Doth bolke and beate
 I swell and sweate
 I can not eate
 My sorowes greate
 Do me replete
 My papall seate
 They will defeate

(Devereux, 2001, p. 35)

The Pope's lament culminates in a parodistic rendering of the rite of Extreme Unction, indicated by the Latin phrases: 'Tu quum defungeris / Sacro que vngeris / Oleo papali / Hoc genus sed mali' (2001, p. 46). In another of Shepherd's satirical poems, the speaker is presented as a mourning lover bewailing the death of the Mass, his former mistress. The parody is drastic, smutty and effective, and it employs the same kind of macaronic verse, complete with liturgical tags, that we find in Udall:

A good mestres missa
 Shal ye go from vs thissa
 Wel yet I muste ye kyssa
 Alacke for payne I pyssa
 To se the mone here Issa
 Because ye muste departe
 It greueth many an herte
 That ye should from them start
 But what then tushe a farte
 Sins other shifte is none
 But she must neades be gone
 Nowe let vs synge eche one
 Boeth Iak and gyll and Ione
 Requiem eternam

Lest penam sempiternam
 For vitam supernam
 And vmbram infernam
 For veram lucernam

(Devereux, 2001, pp. 24–5)

Such parodies of mourning were extremely popular and long-lived. Mock-requiems of this sort began to appear even before the official break with Rome, like *Rede Me and Be Not Wrothe*, also known as *The Burial of the Mass*, by Jerome Barlow and William Roye (see Arber, 1871, p. 19–123), who published it in 1528 as an attack on Wolsey. In fact, the popularity of the genre continued well into the period of the Elizabethan settlement. Jean Veron's 1561 treatise *The Hvntyng of Purgatorye to death*, to which I have repeatedly referred, also concludes with a mock-funeral and a mock-epitaph for purgatory personified and now dead, ending on the lines: 'For hym, I praye, that there he maye in helle / Broyle with the Pope, whose broude and sonne he is' (Veron, 1561, p. 397). In all these polemic texts, just as in *Roister Doister*, a Requiem is sung in borrowed voices to put the dead to rest. But as with Merrygreek's ambiguous performance, we are at the same time challenged to reflect how final this death really is. The Mass is claimed to be no more and yet the ritual form used in each case to finalize its death must question such a claim. As a result of their citational character, Protestant parodies perpetuate what they want to terminate. Their mock-liturgical performance also performs the resilience of the old rituals – just as the resistance in Devonshire or Cornwall or other parts and pockets of the country showed their continuing attraction. These parodies of mourning are thus haunted by the ghosts they hunt.

In his study of early Tudor politics of the sacred, Richard McCoy has described John Skelton's work in terms that bear upon my argument. Skelton was an ardent promoter of reform, a biting satirist and a Catholic priest resolutely committed to defending ancient institutions. The bitter parodies and satires he wrote were directed not against the authority of the church but against the ambition, vanity or shortcomings of church representatives abusing their power. But as McCoy goes on to show, the move to Protestantism, shortly after his death in 1529, 'brazenly used Skelton's satirical style for its own purposes, praising those he scorned and mocking those who persecuted them' (2002, p. 48). Skelton's poetic afterlife in the English Reformation thus reversed the critical trajectory of his own works and redirected them to targets he would himself have defended. Protestant writers 'adapted Skeltonic

parody to blasphemous mockeries of the Mass in order to build support for its suppression' (2002, p. 49). Historically, McCoy's point concerns writers like Luke Shepherd (whose liturgical parodies were sometimes even ascribed to Skelton). But principally, the point concerns *all* parodies because it shows the way in which they work: trans-contextualizing certain elements and so encouraging the possibility of re-contextualizing them. By the same token, a writer like Udall formerly known as a Protestant might well stage a parodistic liturgy for a newly established Catholic context. Parody always speaks in borrowed voices and with a double tongue. So when Protestant polemicists take their material from Catholic parodists like Skelton, they re-appropriate the double tongue of parody and re-employ its double-edged power.

But in the religious debates of the English Reformation, this process of appropriation leads to difficulties. For some Protestants at least, problems of borrowing were not just a matter of comic interludes, polemical poems or other such marginal material, but a central and deeply troubling concern in the performance of their religious service. They suspected that some elements in the newly established form of worship continued to be parodies of the old: trans-contextualized versions of what should have been left behind. This concern is what I earlier referred to as the anxiety of borrowed rites, an anxiety that haunted Protestant elites for decades. It shows that parody and its discontents were at work in some aspects of the Reformation, while Protestants were trying to implement another ceremonial order.

The problem emerged with particular force after the Elizabethan settlement. The 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* opened with the Act of Uniformity, which made special efforts to explain why some ceremonies were abolished while others were retained:

Some [ceremonies] are put away, because the great excess and multitude of them hath so increased in these latter days, that the burthen of them was intolerable; [...] And besides this, Christ's gospel is not a Ceremonial law (as much of Moses' law was), but it is a religion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of spirit, being content only with those Ceremonies, which do serve to a decent order and godly discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified. Furthermore, the most weighty cause of the abolishment of certain Ceremonies was, that they were so far abused [...]. But now as concerning those persons, which peradventure will be offended, for that

some of the old ceremonies are retained still: if they consider that without some Ceremonies it is not possible to keep any order or quiet discipline in the church, they shall easily perceive just cause to reform their judgements. (Clay, 1847, p. 37)

The passage shows the search for compromise between doctrinal points and pragmatic considerations. As far as Protestant theology is concerned, church ceremonies are not central; since 'Christ's gospel is not a Ceremonial law', true faith should not require ritual acts. But with regard to personal and public discipline, ceremonies are still said to serve a crucial function: they help 'to stirr up the dull mind' to religious duty and generally maintain order. Even without theological grounds, there are powerful political and psychological reasons for keeping some of the old rituals for the new church.

As anticipated in the quoted passage, however, this practice met with strong resistance. As late as 1590, an anonymous petition directed to her most excellent Majesty pointed out that all 'defenders of our common cause expect a further Reformation', because the papists will continue to triumph as long as 'we are glad to borrowe their ceremonies, & to haue an apish imitation of the Masse booke' (Anon., p. 5). To the ardently Protestant writer, rituals in the Church of England resemble nothing so much as a parody ('apish imitation') of Catholic ceremonies. He therefore raises the plausible question: 'whether our rites and ceremonies taken from the papistes, doe not giue them offence and harden them in their sinne, seeing *Harding* doeth gather thereby, that *Poperie* is not so ill as it is commonly reputed. And *Bristowe* sayeth, That our religion and Communion were nothing worth, vnlesse we borrowed from them and their Masse-booke' (Anon., p. 74). As he points out, the parodistic version might be construed to confirm Catholics in their faith when they see Protestants retain elements of the old service.

The same conflict had earlier erupted with the so-called vestiarian controversy.¹⁹ In 1565, Archbishop Parker, at the Queen's insistence, ordered his clergy to wear the surplice and the cap, that is traditional vestments. The order infuriated many leading representatives in the Church of England, who objected to such a blatant use of the old ritual gowns – perhaps all the more so as it gave visible evidence that several other ceremonial features had been borrowed, too, and were now rapidly assimilated. Shortly after Elizabeth's succession, John Jewel had written to the Continental reformer Peter Martyr, about the final triumph of the English Reformation: 'All the monasteries are every where levelled with the ground: the theatrical dresses [in the original: *vestes scenica*], the

sacrilegious chalices, the idols, the altars, are consigned to the flames; not a vestige of the ancient superstition and idolatry is left' (Robinson, 1842, pp. 39–40). But his sense of victory proved premature. A few years later, many English bishops who had survived the Marian years in Swiss exile, were upset by current developments and wrote to Heinrich Bullinger, leader of the Protestant Church in Zürich, to complain about Elizabeth's re-introduction of more than 'vestiges' of the old religion: 'Whether in respect of habits and external rites, it is allowable to have any thing in common with the papists, and whether Christians may borrow ceremonies from any counterfeit and hostile church' (1842, p. 152), Laurence Humphrey wished to know from Bullinger in February 1566. A week later, Thomas Sampson, another leading objecter, asked Bullinger: 'Whether it be expedient to borrow rites from idolaters or heretics, and to transfer such as are especially dedicated to *their* sect and religion to the use of the reformed church' (1842, p. 154). This was the key question which troubled major members of the English church for years: are borrowed elements of a discarded rite a danger to the integrity of one's own? Can 'apish imitation', that is parody, eventually threaten the integrity of true religion? The issues were particularly troubling in the 1560s, in the aftermath of the Council of Trent and the Catholic response to religious reform. As Muir says, the Reformation brought a revolution in ritual theory. But Protestants 'thereafter faced a tenacious dilemma: even though the theological reformers doubted the efficacy of many rites, all communities require them' (Muir, 1997, p. 181). The anxiety of borrowed rites thus marked a continuing tension.

The historical material is cited here to substantiate my claim that parodistic strategies are not confined to literary fields, but perform central functions in the wider social sphere, especially in the process of liturgical reform. In her *Theory of Parody*, Hutcheon shows that forms of parody often work as ways 'to preserve continuity in discontinuity' (1985, p. 97), because they are 'acknowledged borrowings' (1985, p. 38). In the vestiarian controversy, the English clergymen were so reluctant to acknowledge what their church had borrowed because this heritage implied that some of their rites were more like parodies than the true original forms of Christian worship which they claimed to have restored. For leading Anglicans, the incongruity of parody thus remained a serious problem, threatening to unravel the terms of the Elizabethan settlement. For Bullinger, their spiritual adviser, on the other hand, the point was not an issue. As he replied to Humphrey's and to Sampson's letters in May 1566, he did not see 'why it should be unlawful to use, in common with papists, a vestment not superstitious,

but pertaining to civil regulation and good order. If it were not allowable to have any thing in common with them, it would be necessary to desert all the churches, to decline the receipt of stipend, to abstain from baptism, and the reciting of the apostles' and the Nicene creed, and even to reject the Lord's prayer' (Robinson, 1842, p. 348). To him, the borrowed forms of worship are not worrying because they are now trans-contextualized and made to serve new functions. This also applied to ceremonies in the reformed church: Bullinger by no means approved of 'the addition of new ceremonies', but he was 'not prepared to deny that some may lawfully be instituted, provided the worship of God is not made to consist in them, and that they are appointed only for the sake of order and discipline' (1842, p. 352). Strictly speaking, the old rituals are known to be without efficacy. But pragmatically speaking, they can still perform a useful task.

All this shows that ardent English Protestants faced a dilemma similar to that of the ardent English Catholics reluctant to give up their faith. To either side, the reformed service seemed like an 'apish imitation', as both the Cornish rebels and the petitioner for further reformation put it, that is a distorted and parodistic version of what each side considered their true worship. Because vestiges of tradition continued to co-exist with and among the new, discontent was pervasive. But for this reason, Bullinger's answer to the religious complainants, like Udall's, resorts to the same pragmatic argument: both argue for the power of habituation, the process by which performing sacred duties eventually produces personal readiness to accept their terms.

Where does this lead our discussion about theatrical parodies of mourning? And what, in particular, does it suggest about the staging of counterfeit funerals in Udall's and Shakespeare's comedies? Before I presently return to these questions, I want to emphasize the theoretical point which has been argued here. Parody, we have seen, plays on the disjunction of performance and belief. Thus, in the field of sixteenth-century religious debates, we are challenged to rethink the politics of the performative. Just as Blaise Pascal would later argue that one kneels in prayer and only then acquires belief (an argument which Butler recalls in this context, cf. 1997, p. 155), Reformation disputes about the use of ceremonial forms eventually suggest that doing things with words will change their users. In the context of her Bourdieu reading, Butler argues that '*habitus* is formed, but it also *formative*: it is in this sense that the bodily *habitus* constitutes a tacit form of performativity, a citational chain lived and believed at the level of the body' (1997, p. 155, emphasis in the original). In my attempt to trace historical developments while

also addressing theoretical concerns, I shall now explore how the 'citational chain' here identified might link parodistic stage performances of burial rites with cultural politics in late-Elizabethan and Jacobean England.

4.4 Noting and ghosting: what stage parodies do

Throughout my readings, I have tried to show how performances of mourning serve as ways to shape and control public memory. By means of rituals, memorials, monuments or verse, the dead are subjected to some form of cultural canonization which answers the needs of the living. This also holds true, we can now add, to the parodies of mourning considered in the present chapter. They, too, are often part of self-legitimizing projects and play a part in strategies for self-empowerment through the disempowerment of others. A counterfeit funeral for someone effectively proclaims a particular version of his or her standing and so engages with political realities. For instance, when Protestant polemicists pronounce the Mass dead and then gloat over it in parodistic lamentation, they use the modes of mourning as a form of mockery. So even without the 'sincerity condition', they have illocutionary force because their real speech act is to denigrate the old ways of religious worship. Parody proceeds with a clear sense of address, directed to an intended audience. Receivers must be able to decode the parody and appreciate the fact that its voice, in truth, is borrowed and its real point disguised. But the pragmatics of parodistic communication cannot guard against the possibility of being redirected, as with Skelton's biting verse. His parodistic force, after his own death, was re-addressed and so re-dressed for the purposes of Protestant campaigns.

However, in sixteenth-century religious debates, parody served not just as a self-empowering strategy but also as a form of slander. Each side accused the other of promoting a debased, theatrical and improper version of Christianity, clinging to a parodistic ritual instead of practising true worship. 'Will you see, then, what a Protestant's faith and doctrine is?', Cardinal Allen asked in *Souls Departed* (1565) and went on to show that Protestantism simply consisted of negating every point of positive belief: 'There is no free will, there are no works needful to salvation, there is no Church known, there is no chief governor thereof, there be not seven sacraments, they do not give grace', and so on (Allen, 1886, p. 391). To him, negation is the linguistic form by which Protestants reverse and reject all proper articles of faith. His case is clear: 'by way of negative proof they confirm their negative and no-faith' (1886, p. 393).

In a rejoinder to this argument, William Fulke's *Confutation of the Popish Churches doctrine* takes on Allen's rhetoric and returns it with full force: 'he sayth we are ouerthrowers & destroyers, we confesse we are so, of all false doctrine and heresie' (1577, p. 450). Fulke here endorses Allen's charge that Protestants have reversed the religion but only to insist that they have so reformed the church according to the scripturally authorized model long obscured. 'But it is a proper conceit wherein he pleaseth him self, as other of his sect do, to tel vs that all our faith standeth vpon negatiues', Fulke continues and concludes: 'All trueth is to be affirmed, all falshood to be denied. Therefore it is not to be loked what is affirmatiue and what negatiue, but what is true or false that is affirmed or denied' (ibid.).

Negation is not fully equivalent to parody, but in terms of cultural articulation they have equivalent effects. Both represent something in language while attempting to abrogate, or at least undermine, its representational power. The performative paradox of parody discussed above (see section 4.1) also applies to negation because the negative in language cannot erase without also creating something to erase. As Calderwood (1983, p. 55) says in the context of his *Hamlet* reading, 'to be *and* not to be', negation always gives life to what it tries to kill. Fulke's treatise bears this out, for his book reprints the entire text of *Souls Departed*, chapter by chapter set in italics, before launching his own attack against the argument presented there. Allen's book was published in Antwerp and may not, in fact, have been readily available to Fulke's readership. Thus, his attempted negation of the Cardinal's attack on Protestantism as 'no-faith' must literally first give life to the opponent and reproduce his offensive text before trying to refute it. Fulke's strategy is to append refutation to citation, but its pragmatic effects are far from certain. Just as in the case of parodistic projects, readers draw their own conclusions from it and these may differ from his intended purpose. Meaning is contextually produced; the 'trans-contextualized' meanings of parody are therefore often uncontrollable and always shifting.

Punning is a case in point. The semantic ambiguities employed in word play translate into pragmatic differences when placed into social context. *Much Ado* offers several noteworthy examples. When in Act I, for instance, Don John confers with his henchmen to hatch the plot against his brother, he utters the celebrated line: 'If I can cross him any way I bless myself every way.' (1.3.53) Here he manages to moralize two meanings in one word. In the Anglican Church, to cross oneself was clearly seen as a recusant act and hence a particularly offensive sign of political opposition (Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, 1952, p. 258). But

Don John's remark also plays with the alternative meaning of *to cross* in the sense of 'to frustrate or thwart'. The Catholic reference is thus undercut – or indeed crossed – by his sinister intent, only to be reinstated with 'bless myself' in the second part of his quip. Whichever context we apply, the meaning shifts and the pragmatic uses vary. In this sense, my discussion now returns to Shakespeare's comedy to reconsider the mock-funeral and place it into a historical perspective of religious politics.

In a famous reading, the whole play has been identified as a 'dramatized' pun, a dramatization of mis-noting (Hockey, 1957, p. 354). Hockey cited many lines where the text plays on *notes*, *noting* and *nothing*, and she argued that the capacity or failure to observe, or note, is the central issue which combines the two disparate strands of the plot. She also noted that the semiotic issue is especially prominent in the religious contexts evoked in the play: 'In fact, the entire church scene – the high point of the main plot – turns almost entirely upon the idea that seeing or hearing is believing' (ibid.). But she did not concern herself with the larger cultural context where all this takes place. That 'seeing or hearing' should be the same as 'believing', however, is a heavily loaded statement involving fundamental articles of faith and the doctrinal divisions of the time. 'To see it was to be blessed', Duffy said of traditional Catholic worship in England where, in the most sacred ritual of the church, 'seeing the Host became the high point of lay experience of the Mass' (1992, pp. 102, 96). What lay congregations *heard* in church, by contrast, was largely conveyed in 'the decent obscurity of a learned language' (1992, p. 110), whereas Protestant worship is organized around reading and preaching God's word in the hearers' language. The alternatives of 'seeing or hearing', therefore, point to a central opposition in the articles of belief; it concerns the basic divide in sixteenth-century religious culture.

O'Connell has therefore reconsidered the play's ado about noting. Among all Shakespearean comedies, he says, *Much Ado* is the one that is most obsessed with anxieties of perception (2000, p. 128); such anxieties are staged in juxtaposing the eye and the ear, exploring the different powers of seeing and of hearing while also exploring their powers to deceive. This is how the two strands of the plot – involving the witless Claudio/Hero as opposed to the witty Benedick/Beatrice – are differentiated and related. Claudio's love for Hero comes entirely through the eyes, like his later rejection of her: if he 'falls in love by sight, he falls out of love just as quickly' when he is made to watch the dumbshow at the bedroom window (O'Connell, 2000, p. 129). By contrast, the matter between Benedick and Beatrice is entirely developed through verbal activity and the use of hearing or overhearing, as in their scenes of arranged eavesdropping. The different modes of perception, of noting or

mis-noting through eyes or ears respectively, are thus presented as strategically different ways of showing, forging or enforcing belief. This also applies to the playwright's own work, since 'theatre is a practice on the eyes of the audience as well as upon ears' (2000, p. 130). How, then, are the audience's eyes and ears engaged, and how do the anxieties of perception *in* the play affect our perception *of* the play?

It is surely significant that both the good Friar and the evil Bastard use stage-craft and theatrical performance for their ends to manipulate the prince's passions. The nightly scene of wooing staged at Hero's window for the eyes of Claudio corresponds to the nightly scene of mourning staged for him at Hero's tomb. In each case, he is placed as participant observer of some counterfeit action he does not understand as such but takes for the actual event. The difference between the two shows, however, lies in the way they are produced in the theatre: only one of them is staged for us to see, the other we just hear about. Despite its great dramatic power as a scene of multiple observation, the window dumb-show is never mimetically presented, only diegetically represented. Several times we hear detailed reports but, since we never see any of it, we cannot know how, exactly, Claudio has been deceived. The Friar's funeral show, by contrast, is openly enacted in all its metadramatic potential. Here we can use our own eyes and ears and so perceive the range of allusions and ambiguities noted earlier.

When, for example, the epitaphic scroll is read aloud, either by Claudio or by an attendant, we can hear the revealing pun in line two: 'the Hero that here *lies*' (5.3.4, emphasis added). The double meaning in this mourner's verbal formula only emerges from the position of superior awareness in which we have been placed. The mourner himself cannot appreciate what ironies the script he performs might contain and so remains unaware of its parodistic subtleties. Accordingly, the 'solemn hymn' that follows also prompts rereading. With its poor poetic features, the muddled syntax and the silly rhymes so often criticized (cf. section 4.2), this heavy-handed song forms a clear contrast to the witty and allusive epitaph just heard. In the context of the funeral scene, then, the song is a parody in the strict sense of this term, a counter-song set beside, or set against, the verses just performed. Its most prominent feature – the clumsy rhyming couplets 'night/knight', 'woe/go', 'moan/groan', 'dead/utterèd' – further underlines this point. Only one scene earlier, problems of rhyming have been comically debated. Here, Benedick is trying to perform his love in poetic form but fails: 'Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme. I have tried. I can find out no rhyme to "lady" but "baby", an innocent rhyme; for "scorn" "horn", a hard rhyme; for "school" "fool", a babbling rhyme. Very ominous endings.' (5.2.30–4) These

endings are so 'ominous' because the similarity of sound implies similarity of meaning. For other ears, the 'festival terms' of wooing (5.2.35) thus produce unwelcome echoes, as the predictable rhymes in the second line undercut the desired meaning established in the first. Like the couplets in the 'solemn hymn' at Hero's tomb, these rhymes shift a serious occasion into the playing field of parody. For all its comic verbal play, Benedick's literary debate also comments on memory and mourning: 'If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies', he tells Beatrice, 'he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.' (5.2.65–7) This reminder further strengthens the link between the wooing scene and the mourning scene which follows. In both cases, the rhyming problems remind the audience that established forms of articulation, like love poetry or funeral dirges, are never 'innocent'; their patterns of consonance and repetition suggest meanings which go beyond the verbal statement. Rhyme may sound like 'babbling' and yet be 'ominous' because it often seems the echo of quite another sense.

As a matter of fact, this was a point used to attack Catholic worship. In debates during the English Reformation, the linguistic forms of traditional church service were criticized on this account, and satires like Luke Shepherd's made prominent use of silly rhyming (see the examples above in section, 4.3). Protestants generally preferred prose for prayer and, with the exception of the psalms, decided 'to abandon verse as a vehicle for public devotion' (Targoff, 2001, p. 66). For Protestant polemicists therefore, it was easy to ridicule the effects inadvertently produced by rhyme words in the liturgy. For instance, in the context of Veron's anti-purgatory dialogue, the speakers at one point discuss the *Dies Irae* in the Requiem Mass as follows:

PHILALETES: Dies irae, dies illa, soluet seclum in fauilla, teste Dauid cum Sibylla etc. In it they [the Catholics] haue these verses:

O king of magestie greatly to be dreadde.
That all faithfull soules by grace doste saue
Deliuer me freli both liuig and dead
O fountayn of pitie this mercy I craue.

Here do thei plainly confesse, that we are saued by the grace of God, vsing this aduerbe gratis, which signifieth frely, and for naught. Whereunto doeth agre the testimonie of S. Paul which saith: Ye are saued and iustified by grace: It is not then by our merites and satisfactions, for then grace should be no grace. But I meruayll howe this good woorde dyd escape them.

EVTRAPELUS: I thinke that the same is happened because of the rythme,
that all might fall and ende in atis, for this is the beginninge of the
verse:

Rex tremendae maiestatis,

And for to make al to come in atis they haue added.

Qui saluandos, saluos gratis

Salua me fons pietatis.

(Veron, 1561, pp. 78–9)

The sound, then, compromises sense. In the Catholics' constant search for rhyme words, we are told, the pressures of conformity have led them to include a term into their sacred ritual which contradicts their doctrine of salvation by good works. The poetic principle of sound equivalence has overruled theology: as this reformer is only too pleased to explain, the 'aduerbe gratis' rather suggests the Protestant notion of grace. For once, the Catholic liturgy here makes a right point, albeit inadvertently, by following what is suggested by the formal patterns of poetic language. Thus, rhyme operates like a magic force of language, uncannily productive in establishing unwanted likenesses and meanings. As in the debates on witchcraft, beneath all the ridicule we sense hidden anxieties in Protestant texts when they disavow rhymes in ritual utterance but cannot fully disown their effects. The ending in the Requiem Mass is so 'ominous' because it secretly reverses basic principles of faith.

Veron's treatise was published in the early years of Elizabeth's reign and is not likely to have been remembered in her late years when *Much Ado* was first performed. But audiences of that time, who watched Hero's mock-funeral and heard the badly rhymed hymn for her, would have recalled a recent Shakespearean comedy which stages just as badly rhymed performances of mourning:

But stay O spite!

But mark, poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here?

Eyes do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck, O dear!

(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.265–9)

Some of the rhyming couplets are the same as in the 'solemn hymn', and here their parodistic point is unmistakable. Bottom's histrionics clearly show what the funeral staged for Hero merely implies: the

incongruities between traditional repertoires and current realizations of lament. His Pyramus act plays with the familiar repertoire of mourning, set at 'Ninny's tomb' in Babylon, a traditional place of weeping. But all conventional gestures of lament and sorrow, which we observe in this dramatic presentation, are fully trans-contextualized and become parts of stage parody. And yet, the underlying semiotic issues about the ambiguities of 'noting' are the same as in *Much Ado*. When Pyramus, for instance, misconstrues the story told by Thisbe's bloody mantle, we are invited to consider the trustworthiness of visual signs, just as we are prompted to consider the real effects of performance when Bottom, in rehearsal, warns: 'let the audience look to their eyes' (1.2.20). Both points relate the comic show to serious issues in contemporary culture. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* rehearses central themes and conflicts of religious practice and, 'in the true performing of it' (1.2.19), asks us to note what happens when grave matters are inadequately performed. When in the end 'Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead' (5.1.335), the play-within-the-play concludes in general laughter, but the lack of proper burial rites remains.

In the artisans' display of mourning, the sense of parody is established through the work of poor performers and through the onstage presence of superior spectators adding commentary to the inept play. In Hero's mock-funeral, the onstage audience is removed but still there is a distancing effect. It is the real audience in the playhouse who are given the role of superior spectators. *We* are now placed in a position from which to watch the metatheatrical ritual, to listen to its traditional allusions and to savour the ambiguities throughout the show. The characters in both plots of *Much Ado*, Hockey said (1957, p. 537), are quite incapable of clear noting. Instead, this play enables *us* to note what they cannot. It is as if we notice the quotation marks in their funeral ceremony, that is we realize the underlying incongruities and recognize the pragmatic use of some old material in borrowed rites. The clumsy rhyme words in the song are just the most prominent signs of manufactured harmony in an attempt to bridge or settle the disparity that has been troubling all along. The rhymes show us how meanings are produced, just as the whole play shows, in Myhill's words (1999, p. 291), the fashioning of others through theatrical display. But from our privileged position, we also note that these productions work indeed. Unlike Benedick's attempt to woo in festive terms and unlike Bottom's attempt to act the tragic lover, this performance does not fail. The Friar's parodistic play-act finally serves to make its point.²⁰ To our eyes and ears, the stage rites may reveal their citational quality and still show their efficacy. Thus,

while no one is buried in the scene, the mourning rite which is performed can still succeed in laying the anxieties of borrowed rites to rest.

The parody of mourning in *Much Ado About Nothing*, to sum up, engages with key issues of performance in religious culture. Towards the end of the Elizabethan period, a good generation after the religious settlement which marked its beginning, the play re-semanticizes certain signs and so invites us to commemorate exigencies of cultural adaptation. The counterfeit funeral performance shows continuities in the apparent discontinuity of religious worship; at the same time, it tests the efficacy of its own theatrical devices which remind the audience of what has passed away. If, in Butler's terms (1997, p. 158), performatives do not just reflect prior social conditions but also produce social effects, such productions can here be witnessed in their effects on Claudio and Pedro as the unwitting participants. And if 'in such bodily productions resides the sedimented history of the performative' (1997, p. 159), I have argued that the parodistic version works to probe for us into sedimentations of recent religious history. As Hutcheon says of parody in general, the 'historical consciousness' of this scene 'gives it the potential power to bury the dead, so to speak, and also to give it new life' (1985, p. 101). This surely is a strong claim to make about the power of the theatre, but it seems to be justified by theatre's peculiar relation to the materials and fabrics of on-going social performances. In his study of performance, Marvin Carlson offers a suggestive term to describe 'the external associations that the continually recycled material of theatre brings in from the external world, as well as from previous performance' (1996, p. 53).²¹ This is a process he calls 'ghosting' – which is an apt term to sum up what happens in this ritually emptied but culturally loaded funeral performance when it trans-contextualizes traditional mourning rites from Renaissance Messina, clothed in mythological vestments, and transfers them onto a London stage. In the arena of the late-Elizabethan playhouse, ghosted rituals are here recalled from previous performances and from a former social world. As with *Campion's* cultural ghost, their theatrical reappearance allows for critical as well as reverential responses to what is represented, or indeed made present, with these parodies of mourning.

One further point remains. It illustrates how such trans-contextualizations continue to be re-employed to comment on the politics of cultural memory. *Much Ado About Nothing* was revived by the King's Men for two court performances in the Christmas season 1612 (cf. Wilson, 1999, p. 197). This was a difficult and troubling time for the king. His son, the much adored Prince Henry, had died in November, and this

sudden death had interrupted marriage preparations for his daughter so that a royal funeral, instead of a royal nuptial, was performed in December. Still, the Christmas games went ahead. Throughout the festive celebrations, Prince Henry's hearse remained in silence in Westminster Chapel where it stood alongside the sumptuous new monument of his grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, in which she had been enshrined only the month before his death. To be sure, Mary had already been buried after her execution 25 years earlier. King James, however, eager to appropriate the central Tudor burial site in Westminster Abbey for his own dynastic claims, exhumed his mother's remains from Peterborough Cathedral and had them brought to London. There, in a calculated move against his predecessor, he staged a grand night-time funeral to have his mother buried once again and this time in Henry VII's splendid Chapel, whence Elizabeth was removed to a marginal place at the side (Woodward, 1997, p. 138). Thus, Mary Stuart came to be re-interred in the Tudor founding father's monumental space – so that, and here we can quote *Much Ado*:

Death in guerdon of her wrongs
 Gives her fame which never dies.
 So the life that died with shame
 Lives in death with glorious fame.

(5.3.5–8)

It seems to me, in conclusion, that this Jacobean revival of the play offers another powerful example of the kind of 'ghosting' which always occurs in theatrical performance as in parodies of mourning.

Conclusion

When and how is mourning suitable? One final example serves to return to this question and reconsider its significance in early modern English culture. When Henry Prince of Wales died in November 1612, his father was quite overwhelmed by grief. James I took the prince's sudden death 'with more impatience than was expected', John Chamberlain wrote in a letter and went on to report that 'the King was quickly weary of Kensington because he said the wind blew through the walls that he could not lie warm in his bed' (McClure Thomson, 1966, p. 70). As an expression of paternal mourning, the king's apparent concern for a warm night's sleep might seem inappropriate. But his insomnia could also be regarded as a symptomatic way of showing how the experience of bereavement had wrecked or broken the frame and fabric of his life. The fact that the king's predicament was publicly reported is remarkable enough. It shows that places of living turn cold and unhomey under the impact of mortality. The work of mourning lies in reconstructing a place by and for the living to inhabit, so that they can accommodate themselves once more in the home that has remained.

But in this letter, Chamberlain described another strange disruption of the royal household at the time. A week after Henry's death, a 'very ridiculous accident' occurred: 'A very handsome young fellow, much about his age and not altogether unlike him, came stark naked to St. James's whiles they were at supper, saying he was the Prince's ghost come from heaven with a message to the King' (1966, p. 71). There was no way to explain this incident nor to find out who was behind it. The most we can say about this young man's self-commissioned performance as the prince's spirit is that he had chosen the right audience and occasion for his act. Quite as riddling and unexplained as Henry's death, the

ghost act might have been a hoax, parodying a theatrical convention and perhaps playing on the king's notorious interest in apparitions. And yet, the unauthorized performance fits rather well into this period of nationwide and intense mourning. It seems to mark the general desire for a posthumous message from the much-loved prince, as if to redeem the widespread hope for 'England's lost Renaissance' (Strong, 2000).

In this sense, the curious anecdote might illustrate how the experience of painful loss can be effectively addressed and possibly even be redressed by a 'ridiculous' performance. This was the point I argued in the foregoing chapter as, indeed, throughout this book. Performances and parodies of mourning are culturally significant and socially productive because they do not just indicate the way things are but can work towards changing them. Parody has offered a useful perspective for seeing the two main concerns of my project side by side: the issue of religious change in early modern England and the issue of performance. In Rose's definition, parody is 'the comic refunctioning of preformed linguistic or artistic material' (1993, p. 52). Except for the adjective 'comic', this phrase could just as well serve to define all ritual practice: refunctioning preformed material. To some extent, this was what also happened in the long course of the English Reformation, eventually leading to the establishment of the new church. Protestant religious practices – above all, the rites of death and mourning – were formulated and presented as an innovation, breaking with corrupt tradition. But as we saw in Chapter 4, after Elizabeth's religious compromise the Protestant elite continued to voice some anxiety about their borrowing old vestments and using preformed ceremonies. According to O'Connell, 'in nearly all cases, the new wine of English Reformation was successfully decanted into the old bottles of the Catholic past' (2000, p. 52). My concern throughout has been to trace some uses of these old forms and explore their function in the new cultural context. We have looked at such processes of re-signification (to recall Lachmann's term, cf. section 4.1) and established that, in times of turmoil and transition, even parodies of mourning could suggest a sense of cultural continuity against the otherwise prevailing sense of rupture. According to the various readings I presented, Shakespearean theatre and the early modern stage were prime sites where these processes took place. Whether in history plays, revenge plays, tragedies or even comedies, stage performances of mourning involved residual memories not only of the dead, but of the cultural past. On stage, their ghosts appeared once more to be faced by the living.

On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge clearly that the Reformation brought considerable change to the signifying practices of

English culture when, for instance, it placed so much emphasis on the written word. The Protestant maxim *sola scriptura* has often been interpreted in this sense as a major cultural development, promoting and establishing the scriptural basis of church and faith. But the publication of the vernacular Bible, in fact, provides another case to demonstrate the principally open-ended process by which meaning is produced in an interplay of textual and performative engagements. For, even when Roman authority was officially abrogated, Tyndale's pioneering effort in translating and publicizing holy scripture was not unanimously welcomed. The 1541 proclamation ordering the Great Bible to be placed in churches and so made available to all English readers specifically tried to control, if not prevent, any act of individual reading or interpretative debate. Lay subjects were not allowed free access to God's word nor were they encouraged to 'take upon them any common disputation, argument or exposition of the mysteries therein contained' (Kastan, 1997, p. 59). Although the Reformation, at this stage, publicly displayed the central text for Protestant religious culture, this text had to be guarded against uncontrolled, hence unauthorized, readings. In Kastan's words, the Tudor state 'reluctantly' provided the English Bible and so 'necessarily' created 'a nation of readers and interpreters that would resist the monopoly on scriptural interpretation claimed by Church and State' (1997, p. 63). In this view, interpreting the scriptures is seen to be a performative act with potentially dangerous consequences in the sphere of politics.

The case of the English Bible thus also serves as evidence of the productive power of performance. It shows the clear awareness in early modern English culture that meaning is unstable and contingent upon the modes and acts of reading. What a text says results, at least in part, from the different ways in which this text is read and given voice. This lesson must have been relevant for theatre professionals and their work – often unauthorized, contested and resented – in giving new voices to dead figures and old texts, especially if these texts were central points of cultural reference. That their performances and presentations could be perceived as threatening the authority and integrity of pre-established meaning is powerfully illustrated by the comic scenes of misreading sometimes presented on the stage. In Udall's *Roister Doister*, for example, a love letter is read aloud in such a way that its original message is completely turned around (scene 3.4), a scene which was canonized as an example in Tudor rhetoric text-books. Just like in Peter Quince's stumbling delivery of the prologue to 'Pyramus and Thisbe' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.108–17), the features of performance are here foregrounded

in their productive power to make or remake sense. The effects of the speaker's voice – in enunciation, articulation, intonation – are shown to be so meaningful because they can be used to reinterpret and even to reverse what has been written down. As Lysander remarks of Quince's prologue, 'it is not enough to speak, but to speak true' (5.1.120). But truth, as we observe, cannot be reiterated other than by speaking, for authority here lies in the utterance, not in the scripted basis of a text.

Such dramatic moments of productive reading once more highlight the general approach I have adopted in my project. I have discussed the sites and rites of mourning in Shakespearean theatre in terms of the acts, the processes and the reiterative strategies which define them, rather than in terms of the fixed codes and textual structures on which they are based. In conclusion, we can simply say about such projects that theatrical performance *matters*. For Elizabethan and early Jacobean audiences, whose age-old practices of grief and active commemoration had been outlawed, the theatre constituted a performative space in which to encounter and engage with embodied memories of what was lost. This was possible precisely because the kind of truth that was spoken in this space was so clearly predicated on the performative conditions of utterance that it could, if necessary, always be denied or turned around. Under conditions of censorship, the stage thus became a productive place of cultural meaning. In her discussion of the politics of the performative, Butler observes that 'it is clearly possible to speak with authority *without* being authorized to speak' (1997, p. 157, emphasis in the original). Her comment might serve to describe the speech act of the nightly visitor to St James's palace noted above. But her comment certainly describes how we can see the social function of the stage in early modern culture, for the authority of Shakespearean theatre derives from the very fact that it has not been authorized to speak. Instead, in staging the performative conditions of speaking, the theatre can both reiterate and question the current practices of authorization. If mourning is a mode of regulating public memory, performances of mourning should be seen as moves to explore and, possibly, expropriate such modes of imposed cultural regulation.

In the four chapters, we have been looking at a range of texts trying to trace their performative practices and their re-signifying power. My general assumption throughout has been that stage events promote diverse and often divergent social meanings because performance does not easily allow the suggestion of any doctrine without also suggesting its reversal. The very fact of having 'the truth' performed makes it contingent on performers and the conditions of their act. If theatre is at all allied to a particular

philosophical attitude, it should be scepticism, since scepticism – in the sense established with Verena Lobsien's comprehensive study (1999) – suspends final judgement and constantly reflects the possibility of its own negation. Therefore, the theatrical representation of Christian ceremony and language may in fact be censured in Elizabethan England and yet proceed in other forms and guises. In this way, Chapter 1 began the discussion by looking at the Shakespearean versions of late-medieval English history. The scenes of mourning in these plays generally operate on two levels: the level of the history they represent and the historical level of their representation, separated by the difference in religious practice. As the histories perform aspects of pre-Reformation culture under the conditions of post-Reformation England, their scenes of memory and mourning also concern current Protestant injunctions against praying for the dead. Especially the frequent female acts of lamentation are significant in this respect. Like Anne's 'obsequious lament' for Henry VI, such actions explore the politics of mourning in a field of mimetic and symbolic engagements – the field in which the theatre itself is placed. Here, the playhouse emerges as a space where performances of mourning need not be authorized and yet can be acknowledged. This also concerns the serial order in performing the past, over the long course of eight interconnected plays. As Carlson showed, performance and memory are always closely related (2000, p. 237). Therefore, the very form of the Shakespearean history cycle is socially productive because it exercises the power of memory already through the performance of these plays. With so many figures reappearing or remembered throughout the two tetralogies, remembrance is so actively rehearsed for and by the audience that, I suggested, these plays of political mourning could transport as well as transform cultural engagements with the dead.

Chapter 2 looked at central cases in which this symbolic transformation process was disturbed. Following Sacks's interpretation, I read Elizabethan revenge tragedies as dramatizing the pathologies of mourning where the mourner turns into a violent revenger when the modes of cultural signification fail. Unlike Sacks, however, I suggested that this crisis should be seen in relation to contemporary developments in religious and material culture which increasingly exerted pressures on symbolization and, especially with the colonial encounters in the New World, questioned familiar signifying practices. In this way, early ethnographic observations on foreign rites of mourning could also mark positions in domestic and dramatic conflicts such as the problem of revenge in *Titus Andronicus* or *The Spanish Tragedy*. However, my point was not to argue that these plays themselves take any one position, be it Protestant

or Catholic. Instead, they try out various positions in the sceptical process of theatrical enactment. Finally, I looked at *Hamlet* to suggest how claims to knowledge are suspended in favour of provisional, perspectivist and theatrical arrangements. My reading argued that this also shows in the reluctant relation of *Hamlet* to its generic model of revenge, thus demonstrating the uses of scepticism in performance.

For this reason, the religious implications in Shakespearean plays of mourning should not be seen as evidence for or against Shakespeare's presumed religious faith. Catholic memory traces noted in the play texts, in my view, do not point to matters of doctrine but to material for performance. This also holds true for the physiologies of mourning discussed in Chapter 3. Tears and crying held strongly religious connotations, as witnessed in Lesly's telling phrase about the 'purgatory of weeping'. But in a theatrical arena, the body signs of grieving operate with a mimetic power based on the shared consciousness of fiction, even if a player's weeping often stimulates spectators to respond in kind. And yet he only weeps 'for Hecuba': his passions follow an imaginative cause and force the body so to his own conceit that imagined grief becomes substantiated in performance. In fact, the phrase 'weeping for Hecuba' works in a double sense: it means to weep for her sake and to weep instead of her. It was on the basis of this second meaning, I suggested, that theatrical performances proceed. In the playhouse, tears can be shed because they are shed only in mimetic acts. This helps to account both for the process of catharsis which defenders of the theatre classically described, and for the dangers of effeminization which opponents of the theatre often decried. In either perspective, performance is seen to produce the physical signs of passion and of mourning outside the domain of their pragmatic uses. In Chapter 4, finally, I turned to parodies of mourning in order to suggest that this theatrical process of re-signification continues and culminates in comedies. Mock-funerals and mock-liturgies of burial are so revealing because they consciously foreground the condition of 'as if' which governs stage performance. In this way, corpseless comedies highlight and reflect the central project we have explored throughout: to look at performances of mourning as a way by which Shakespearean theatre could engage with early modern culture even while disengaging from it.

All this should serve in conclusion to show, in Worthen's sense (1997, p. 24), that performance is a mode of production, not merely a mode of enunciation. This mode first produces the conditions of cultural meaning which it then continues to put to the test. It is for this reason, I contend, that performance does not commit itself to the alternatives of truth or

falsehood, affirmation or negation, yes or no. The point has best been formulated by the ethnographer Johannes Fabian when he said: 'If "to be or not to be" is the question, then "to be *and* not to be" – to me the most succinct conception of performance – might be the answer' (2004, p. 179, emphasis in the original). To me, this answer also gives the most succinct conception of what happened when the dead were mourned on the Shakespearean stage.

Notes

Introduction

- 1 In the German original: 'Dem allegorisch Bedeutenden ist es durch Schuld versagt, seine Sinnerfüllung in sich selbst zu finden. [...] Es ist in aller Trauer der Hang zur Sprachlosigkeit und das ist unendlich viel mehr als Unfähigkeit oder Unlust zur Mitteilung' (Benjamin, 1978, p. 200). See also Sacks (1985, p. 76), where this point is discussed.
- 2 In his famous study of medieval political theology, Ernst Kantorowicz argued that this effigy symbolized the immortal body of the king, see Kantorowicz (1957). Under Kantorowicz's mentorship, Ralph Giesey (1960) wrote the first comprehensive historical study of funeral ceremonies in Renaissance France and their politico-legal rituals of monarchy.
- 3 See, for example, Cressy (1997, p. 386), Scodel (1991, p. 19) and Greenblatt (2001).
- 4 See Binsky (1996).
- 5 For a study of seventeenth-century notions about heaven in English Protestant theology, see Rupp (2001); for a comprehensive presentation and discussion of worship and theology in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, see Davies (1996).
- 6 See Gittings (1984), Calderwood (1987), Llewellyn (1991), Duffy (1992), Watson (1994), Cressy (1997), Neill (1997), Greenblatt (2001) and McCoy (2002).
- 7 For a lucid introduction to the cultural history of death, see Macho (2000).
- 8 For surveys of and some recent research in this field, see Haviland-Jones and Lewis (2000), Harré (1986), Schlaeger and Stedman (1999) and Kasten, Stedman and Zimmermann (2002).
- 9 For these points, see Petrey (1990), Carlson (1996), Fischer-Lichte and Kolesch (1998), Fischer-Lichte and Wulf (2001), Wirth (2002), Bial (2004) and Fischer-Lichte (2004).
- 10 See Krämer (2002), on whose account my survey is here based.

1 Politics of Mourning: English History Plays

- 1 Several editors, like the Oxford editors, have argued that this play was in fact preceded by the other two Shakespearean histories about the period of Henry VI.
- 2 See the discussion of travelogues about foreign and pagan burial rites in section 2.3.
- 3 My reading of this painting is throughout indebted to Aston (1993).
- 4 See O'Connor (1942), Beatty (1970) and Guthke (1992).
- 5 See Platt (1996) and Ariès (1982, p. 152).
- 6 Segar goes on to give detailed instructions: 'That forsumuch as diuers degrees of men doe vsually and casually meete at our funerals in *England*, it seemeth

necessary that in accompanying of euery corps, heed should be taken that no indignity be offered vnto any Mourner, but ech man to march in such place, as is meete for his estate. The Heralds therefore by their skill and care, are to take a List or Rolle of all Mourners, then to marshall them into seuerall classes, by their diuers titles, as Gentlemen, Esquires, Knights, Barons, Viscounts, Earles, &c., euer preferring her Maiesties Officers and seruantes before all others, *in pari dignitate*' (Segar, 1602, p. 253).

- 7 For a discussion of the gendered repertoire of mourning, see Ecker (1999b, p. 12); for further discussion of this scene and its cultural implications, see Chapter 3.
- 8 For a recent discussion of Foxe and the Elizabethan cult of martyrs, see Höfele (2005).
- 9 See Montrose (1996) and Laroque (1991); for a reading of Shakespeare's 'festive histories', see Ruiters (2003).
- 10 For this term, *Gedächtnisspur*, see Jan Assmann (2000a).
- 11 See, for instance, Righter (1962) or Calderwood (1979).
- 12 See Bronfen (1998) and Bronfen (1999).
- 13 See North (2002).
- 14 See Lacan (1981, p. 98) and Lukacher (1989).
- 15 Nash's comment has therefore attracted much attention in central studies of the history plays, see Rackin (1990, p. 114) and Howard and Rackin (1997, p. 113).

2 Pathologies of Mourning: Elizabethan Revenge Tragedies

- 1 All quotations from Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* are from Philip Edwards's edition of the play (London: Methuen 1959), with act, scene and line numbers given in brackets.
- 2 See Levinson (1983, p. 86).
- 3 This issue will be further discussed in Chapter 4.
- 4 See the points raised in section 1.3 with reference to Thomas Beacon's *Sick Mans Salue*.
- 5 This point has been analysed and comprehensively theorized by Bhabha (1994, p. 102–22).
- 6 See Haselstein (2000, p. 46) for an excellent account, on which this paragraph is based.
- 7 The same observation, almost verbatim, is recorded in Torkington's journal, suggesting the standard topics of pilgrimage accounts, cf. Loftie (1884, p. 36).
- 8 See my discussion of this scene in Döring (2005).
- 9 See my discussion of this moment in the Introduction.

3 Physiologies of Mourning: Tears and the Purgatory of Weeping

- 1 In a book-length study, Tom Lutz (1999) has promised to do just this but, despite the challenging material he has amassed, his universalist readings are

- disappointingly superficial; the same holds true for James Elkins's study on tears and paintings (2001).
- 2 See my discussion of parodistic repetition in section 4.1.
 - 3 Turner conjectures it was first performed in the last years of Elizabeth's rule or in 1604 at the latest, cf. Heywood (1967, p. xii).
 - 4 See the king's speech in *Edward III*, cited and briefly interpreted in section 2.1.
 - 5 For these issues, see Paster (1993) and Lange (1996, chapter 1), or Schoenfeldt (1999), Scholz (2000) and Healy (2001).
 - 6 On body narratives and their political functions, see Scholz (2000).
 - 7 This debate is comprehensively surveyed and discussed by Lange (1996), chapter 4, without, however, mentioning Lesly's treatise. The following two references are taken from p. 158 and p. 164 of her study.
 - 8 See, for instance, Fietz *et al.* (1996), Bachorski *et al.* (2001), Pfister (2002a), Dentith (1995).
 - 9 See Bright (1969, p. 152); at another point, Bright indeed refers to Aristotle's rhetoric (1969, p. 140).
 - 10 See Austin (1975, pp. 21–2), Derrida (1977) and Searle (1977); discussed in Culler (1983, pp. 115–20); see also Krämer (2001) and Wirth (2002).
 - 11 All references are given by act, scene and line according to the following edition: George Chapman, *Plays and Poems*. Eds Jonathan Hudston and Richard Rowland. Harmondsworth: Penguin 1998.
 - 12 Maus (1995, pp. 16–17) discusses such issues; see also Zagorin (1990).
 - 13 See, for instance, Crane (2001), Chapter 4.

4 Parodies of Mourning: Corpseless Comedies

- 1 The arrest took place at Houghton Tower, like other areas in the north of England a stronghold of recusant culture. For recent discussions of this context, see Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay and Richard Wilson (2003a) and (2003b). All details about Campion's life and death are taken from Richard Simpson's biography (1867) and Evelyn Waugh's account, first published in 1935 (Waugh, 2001, pp. 1–128).
- 2 This was one of the great insights offered in Michel Foucault's classic study, cf. Foucault (1976).
- 3 For the semiotic problems raised with the process of forgetting, see also Umberto Eco's comments on the impossibility of the *ars oblivionalis* (Eco, 1988) and, in particular, Sybille Krämer's philosophical reconsiderations of this question (Krämer, 2000).
- 4 Richard Wilson (2005) relates the cultural memories of this incident to the tragic action involving a handkerchief in Shakespeare's *Othello*.
- 5 Again, see Höfele (1999) to whom my discussion of this issue is indebted throughout.
- 6 In a survey article, Neill (1992, pp. 47–74) has listed several of these plays and accounted for them in an interpretative framework based on Frye and archetypal patterns. He has not, however, considered the politics of parody – which is my central concern in this chapter.

- 7 The information in this paragraph follows Dentith (2000, p. 10) and Preminger and Bregan (1993, pp. 881–2); for the etymology of *parody*, see also Hutcheon (1985, p. 32) and Rose (1993, p. 49); the terminological spectrum is categorized, for instance, by Genette (1993).
- 8 *Iniunctions exhibited by John [Parkhurst] by gods sufferance Bishop of Norwich* (London, 1561) ‘For Clarkes and theyr dutie: Whether that the songe in the Churche be modest and distincte so deuised and vsed that the ditte my plainly be vnderstand.’ (Wickham Legg, 1903, p. 98). For questions of devotional sincerity and the use of church music, see Targoff (2001, pp. 6, 67).
- 9 The following analysis is based on Miller (1946) and Tydeman’s notes (1984) in his edition of the play text.
- 10 In *The Schoolmaster* (1570), Roger Ascham wrote of Plautus and Terence that these writers ‘be like meane painters, that worke by halfes, and be cunning onlie in making the worst part of the picture, as if one were skilfull in painting the bodie of a naked person from the navell downward, but nothing else’ (Smith, 1904, I, p. 28).
- 11 See, for example, Mage Mumblecrust’s line: ‘Nowe, by the token that God tokened, brother / I will deliver no token one nor other!’ (Tydeman, 1984, p. 133).
- 12 Biographical information about Udall follows Walker (1998, p. 163) and Scheurweghs (1939, pp. xxxv–lxxi).
- 13 His political morality *Respublica* is likely to have been performed at court over Christmas 1553/54. The play’s religious politics are assessed by Walker in the following terms: ‘Udall is quite prepared to argue for a church restored to much of its former wealth, but it is the reformed church of the Edwardian settlement which he wants to strengthen, not the full-blown Catholic institution with its monks, friars, and chantry priests. [...] Udall adopts the rhetoric of restoration and renewal associated with the new Marian regime, and addresses the real social hardships created by Edwardian and later Henrician policies squarely and resolutely. But he does so for his own purposes’ (Walker, 1998, p. 189).
- 14 None of the critical sources consulted ever mention the occasion, though all of them discuss Udall’s religious standing.
- 15 Cf.: ‘closer examination shows that the play was written in the reign of Edward VI and imperfectly revised for printing in the reign of Queen Elizabeth’ (Edgerton, 1965, p. 557); ‘that Roister Doister was written between 1545 and 1552, the period when Udall again lived in London, is further proved by the final prayer: it obviously was written during the reign of Edward VI’ (Scheurweghs, 1939, p. lviii).
- 16 T.W. Baldwin and M.C. Linthicum (1927) venture ‘a pretty safe guess’ that Roister Doister was performed during the Christmas season 1553 by Gardiner’s choir boys.
- 17 She is referring to Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991, p. 109).
- 18 In drinkers’ Masses, for instance, the word *dolio* (‘cask’) is used instead of *Domino*, or *potemus* (‘let us drink’) instead of *oremus* (‘let us pray’), and so on; see Bayless (1996).
- 19 See Englander *et al.* (1990, pp. 448–51).

- 20 In an oft-cited reading, Jean Howard has argued that the play works to re-establish patriarchal power by re-legitimizing a form of theatricality: 'This occurs when the patriarch, Leonato, takes up the task of righting the social order through a series of fictions to be enacted at Hero's tomb and at a second wedding' (1987, p. 181). I argue that these 'fictions' are elements in (re-)establishing a religious order and legitimating parodistic rites.
- 21 See also Carlson (1994).

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Index

- Alfield, Thomas, 150–1
'Allegory of the Reformation:
Edward VI and the Pope'
(painting), 39–45, 60
Allen, William, *Souls Departed*, 72,
119, 180
Anamorphosis, 65–6
Anglican Church, *see* Church of
England
Antonio and Mellida (John Marston), 155
Arden of Faversham, The (Anon.), 92
Ariès, Philippe, 9, 196
Aristotle, 16, 107, 126–7, 131, 139,
140, 145–6, 158, 197
Ars memoria (art of memory), 105
Ars moriendi (art of dying), 30, 44
Ascham, Roger, 199
Assmann, Aleida, 21, 47, 58, 71
Assmann, Jan, 10, 197
Aston, Margaret, 42, 196
Austin, John L., 13–17, 132, 197

Bachorski, Hans-Jürgen, 197
Bacon, Francis, 35, 82, 85, 104
Bakhtin, Mikhail, 121–2, 173
Bale, John, *King Johan*, 41
Barber, C.L., 60
Barlow, Jerome, *The Burial of the
Mass*, 175
Bate, Jonathan, 81, 86, 90
Bayless, Martha, 199
Beacon, Thomas, *The Sick Mans Salve*,
30–2, 47, 197
Beaty, Nancy L., 196
Beaumont, Francis, *see* *Knight of the
Burning Pestle*
Belsey, Catherine, 5, 11, 111–13
Benjamin, Walter, 4, 196
Berger, Harry, 161
Bevington, David, 16
Bhabha, Homi K., 139, 197
Bial, Henry, 196
Binsky, Paul, 196

Bohrer, Karl-Heinz, 71–2
Boleyn, Anne, coronation of, 170
Bourdieu, Pierre, 172, 179, 199
Breger, Claudia, 80
Bright, Timothy, *Treatise on
Melancholie*, 22, 129–30, 140, 197
Bronfen, Elisabeth, 64–5, 197
Bullinger, Heinrich, 178–9
Burton, Robert, *Anatomy of Melancholy*,
22, 73, 121–2, 134–5, 147
Butler, Judith, 151, 159, 172–3, 179,
187, 192

Calderwood, James L., 80, 108, 181,
196, 197
Campbell, Lily, 82
Campion, Edmund, 149–54, 187, 197
Cannibalism, 86, 93–5
Carlson, Marvin, 13, 187, 193, 196, 200
Catharsis, 16
Catholic
 anniversaries, 59–61, 71, 164
 liturgies, 58, 61, 91
 memory traces of, 20, 69, 77,
 164, 194
 persistence of in Elizabethan
 England, 10, 160, 190
 resistance against new dispensation,
 170–1, 179
 rites, 56–8, 59
Cavell, Stanley, 104, 109
Censorship, 22, 75, 151, 153–5
 against theatre and drama, 4, 17,
 48, 163, 192
Ceremonies, *see* Ritual
Chamberlain, John, 164, 189
Chapman, George, *see* *Widowes
Teares*
Chaste Maid in Cheapside, A (Thomas
Middleton), 155
Church of England
 Act of Uniformity, 109, 176
 Book of Common Prayer, 79, 176

- Church of England – *continued*
 Elizabethan settlement, 17, 34, 38,
 48, 69, 176
 emphasis on conformity, 20, 34,
 39, 109
 Thirty-Nine Articles, 9
 variety within, 39, 165, 179
see also Protestantism
- Cicero, 2, 126
- Citationality, 47, 63, 114, 150–1,
 153, 175
- Clothes
 black as mourning apparell, 12, 117
 and memory, 116
- Collinson, Patrick, 18, 26
- Counter-Reformation, 26, 165
- Cox, John, 91
- Crane, Mary Thomas, 197
- Cressy, David, 27–8, 34, 39, 57, 63, 196
- Culler, Jonathan, 132, 197
- Cultural history, 10–11, 23
 as history of meanings, 5
- Dabydeen, David, 93
- Dance of Death, 112–13, 156
- Davies, Jon, 10–11
- Death
 attitudes towards, 26, 51, 100–1
 as basic anthropology, 10–11
 as cultural formation, 7, 11
- Dentith, Simon, 159, 168, 173, 197, 199
- Derrida, Jacques, 14, 132–3, 197
- Diehl, Huston, 76, 91, 101–2
- Doctor Faustus* (Christopher Marlowe),
 83, 91
- Donne, John, 121
- Dubrow, Heather, 113
- Duffy, Eamon, 37, 56, 57, 69, 182, 196
- Dynastic transitions, 41, 45–6, 50
- Eagleton, Terry, 110
- Ecker, Gisela, 197
- Eco, Umberto, 132, 197
- Edgerton, William L., 169, 199
- Edward II* (Christopher Marlowe), 6–7
- Edward III* (William Shakespeare?),
 75–6, 197
- Edward VI, King, 39, 41–2, 46, 65,
 170–3, 199
- Elizabeth I., Queen, 26–8, 42–3, 58–9,
 177, 188, 199
- Effigies, 3, 6, 72
- Elegies, 74, 127, 150–1
- Elkins, James, 197
- Emotions, *see* Passions
- Engel, William E., 4
- Englander, David, 199
- Erne, Lukas, 90–1
- Eschatology, 10, 96, 99, 100, 159
- Eucharist debate, 93, 95, 169
- Fabian, Johannes, 100, 195
- Fair Maid of the West, The* (Thomas
 Heywood), 21, 113–16, 143
- Famous Victories of Henry V, The*
 (Anon.), 46–7
- Febvre, Lucien, 11
- Festive culture, 46, 60, 88
- Fietz, Lothar, 197
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika, 13, 14, 196
- Florio, John, *Worlde of Wordes*, 158
- Forgetting, *see* Oblivion
- Forker, Charles R., 62, 65
- Foucault, Michel, 197
- Foxe, John, *Actes and Monuments*,
 59–60, 68, 72, 90, 99, 117, 197
- Freud, Sigmund, 74–5, 80, 111–13
- Fricke, Gerlach, 42–3
- Fulke, William, *Confutation of the
 Popish Churches doctrine*, 181
- Funeral mass, *see* Requiem
- Funeral processions, 28, 51–2, 116
- Funerals
 aristocratic, 24, 27–30
 counterfeit, 23, 137, 141, 143, 155,
 161–3, 167, 171
 as dynastic rituals, 6–7, 41
 and pomp, 51
 Protestant, 27, 31, 33
- Galenic theory of humours, 117,
 120–1, 125, 129, 131, 133–4
- Gardyner, Stephen, bishop of
 Winchester, 8–9, 10
- Garlick, Harry, 24
- Geminus, Thomas, 170
- Gender difference, 22, 118,
 132, 133

- Gender difference – *continued*
 in performance of lament, 52, 54–7,
 63–4, 75–6, 115, 134–6, 143, 193
- Genette, Gerard, 159, 199
- Ghosts, 77, 80–2, 92, 96–7, 99–100,
 111, 113–14, 154, 189
- Giesey, Ralph, 196
- Gillies, John, 92
- Gilman, Ernest, 66
- Ginzburg, Carlo, 6, 67
- Girard, René, 81–2, 84, 87, 104
- Gittings, Clare, 196
- Gosson, Stephen, *Plays Confuted*, 147
- Green, Lawrence D., 127
- Greenblatt, Stephen, 9, 12, 20, 96,
 99–100, 101, 121, 196
- Grief, ineffable, 140–1, 145
- Griffin, Benjamin, 46, 69
- Guillén, Claudio, 65
- Gurr, Andrew, 131
- Guthke, Karl, 196
- Gylforde, Richard, 98
- Hahn, Alois, 122, 129, 140
- Hamlet* (William Shakespeare), 12–13,
 17, 18, 22, 73, 76, 77, 78–81, 86,
 89, 97, 100–9, 111–13, 116, 124,
 128, 130–3, 143, 146, 159, 194
- Harré, Rom, 196
- Harriot, Thomas, *A Briefe and true
 Report*, 95–97, 99, 107
- Haselstein, Ulla, 197
- Healy, Margaret, 197
- Helgerson, Richard, 92
- Henri II, King of France, 28, 30
 London funeral service for, 29–30, 34
- Henry, Prince of Wales, death and
 funeral of, 121, 187–90
- Henry IV, Part One* (William
 Shakespeare), 155
- Henry IV, Part Two* (William
 Shakespeare), 45–8, 156
- Henry VI, Part One* (William
 Shakespeare), 3, 24–6, 28, 38, 44,
 48–51, 57
- Henry VI, Part Two* (William
 Shakespeare), 38, 58, 66–7, 85
- Henry VI, Part Three* (William
 Shakespeare), 51, 128
- Henry V* (William Shakespeare), 25, 71–2
- Henry VIII, King, 8–9, 30, 39, 41–2,
 45, 170
- Herodotus, *Histories*, 141, 145
- Heywood, John, *see Play of Love*
- Heywood, Thomas, *see Fair Maid of
 the West*
- Historiography, 67
- History plays, English, 7, 21–2, 35, 38,
 43–4, 47–8, 50, 57–8, 60, 66, 68, 71
- Hockey, Dorothy C., 182, 186
- Höfele, Andreas, 17, 113, 153, 197
- Holbein, Hans, 65
- Homer, *Iliad*, 70
- Hoskyns, John, *Speech and Style*, 127–8
- Howard, Jean, 197, 200
- Hulme, Peter, 95
- Humphrey, Laurence, 178
- Humphries, A.R., 161
- Hunter, George K., 127–8
- Hunter, Robert, 162
- Hutcheon, Linda, 158–9, 168–9, 178,
 187, 199
- Hysteria, 64–5
- Iconoclasm, 35–8, 41–2, 45, 56, 153
- Idolatry, 38, 41
- Iser, Wolfgang, 145
- James I, King, 187–90
- James VI, King of Scotland
Basilikon Doron, 154
Daemonologie, 118, 169
- Jenkins, Harold, 107
- Jewel, John, 177
- Jones, Robert, 25
- Jones, Rosalind, 107, 116
- Joubert, Laurent, *Treatise on Laughter*,
 22, 124–5, 129–30, 134–5
- Julius Caesar* (William Shakespeare),
 70–2, 73, 126
- Kantorowicz, Ernst, 45, 196
- Kastan, David Scott, 191
- Kasten, Ingrid, 196
- Kermode, Frank, 71
- Kerrigan, John, 76
- King Lear* (William Shakespeare), 62
- Klarer, Mario, 41

- Klein, Holger, 164
 Knapp, Jeffrey, 18
Knight of the Burning Pestle, The
 (Francis Beaumont), 155
 Kolesch, Doris, 196
 Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve, 15
 Krämer, Sybille, 196, 197
 Kyd, Thomas, 90–1, 113
see also Spanish Tragedy
- Lacan, Jacques, 65, 197
 Lachmann, Renate, 153, 190
 Lange, Marjorie, 123, 130, 197
 Laroque, Francois, 197
 Laughter, 1–2, 87–8, 102, 123–4, 131,
 146, 155
 Lavater, Lewes, *Of Ghostes and
 Spirites*, 100
 Leggatt, Alexander, 161
 Lesly, John, *Epithrene*, 119–21, 140,
 148, 194, 197
 Levin, Richard, 162
 Levinson, Stephen C., 125–6, 197
 Lewalski, B.K., 165
 Liebler, Naomi C., 60, 88
 Linton, Joan Pong, 93
 Llewellyn, Nigel, 28, 196
 Lobsien, Verena, 193
 Long, John H., 162
 Loreaux, Nicole, 25, 55–6
 Lukacher, Ned, 197
 Lutz, Tom, 197
- Machiavellian figures, 44, 97, 127–8,
 130, 132, 135–7, 139
 Macho, Thomas, 7, 196
 Machyn, Henry, 27–8, 57
 Manningham, John, 35
 Mares, F.H., 164
 Marlowe, Christopher, 6
see also Doctor Faustus, Edward II
 Marston, John, *see Antonio and Mellida*
 Martyr, Peter, 170, 177
 Mary I., Queen, 26–7, 43, 58, 170–2
 Mary Stuart, 153, 188
 Massinger, Philip, *see*
Roman Actor
 Maus, Katharine, 12, 117, 123–4,
 132, 197
- Mazzola, Elizabeth, 34, 37–8
 McCoy, Richard, 10, 41, 175–6, 196
 McMillin, Scott, 62
 Melancholy, 4, 73–4, 100, 137, 140
Memento mori ('remember that thou
 must die'), 51, 65, 66, 85
 Memory
 battles of, 21, 47–8, 52, 54, 56
 collective, 25, 36, 52, 71
 cultural, 22, 23, 47, 59, 68, 105,
 113, 153–4, 180, 192
 in monuments, 35–7, 48–50, 53, 69,
 72, 184
 in paintings, 42–4
 rites of, 26, 55–6, 59, 61
Michaelmas Term (Thomas
 Middleton), 155
 Middleton, Thomas, *see Chaste Maid
 in Cheapside, Michaelmas Term*
Midsummer Night's Dream, A
 (William Shakespeare), 125, 130,
 144, 185–6, 191–2
 Milborne, Thomas, 157–9
 Miller, Edward S., 168, 172–3, 199
 Montaigne, Michel de, 22, 117, 140
 Montrose, Louis, 17, 197
 More, Thomas, 99
 Mourning
 change in rituals of, 9–10, 31
 as compensation for loss, 5–6, 73
 forms of debated, 3–4, 12, 106, 140
 as public performance, 25–6, 76, 192
 as restoration of social order, 2, 4,
 6–7, 28, 50, 189
 as theatrical performance, 3, 7, 24,
 50–1, 61–3, 88, 115, 136, 155,
 163–4
Mucedorus (Anon.), 155–6
Much Ado About Nothing (William
 Shakespeare), 3, 23, 156–7, 161–6,
 168–9, 171, 181–8, 200
 Muir, Edward, 18, 60, 61, 63, 111,
 160, 166, 169, 178
 Munday, Anthony, 149–53
 Mutschmann, H., 181
 Myhill, Nora, 186
- Nash, Thomas, 4, 68, 71, 72, 100, 147
 National Portrait Gallery, 39, 65

- Neely, Carol Thomas, 162
 Neill, Michael, 3, 24, 51, 101, 161, 196, 197
 New World encounters, 22, 77, 93, 95–8, 100–1, 107, 130, 193
 North, John, 197
- Oblivion, 36–8, 56, 68, 72, 105, 153, 197
 O’Connell, Michael, 18, 144, 182–3, 190, 196
 Orgel, Stephen, 16
 Ormerod, David, 162
 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 73, 86
- Pagan practices, 32–4, 77, 92, 93–4, 107
 Parker, Andrew, 15
 Parker, Archbishop, 177
 Parody, 14, 151, 156, 164, 166, 168, 179, 186
 definitions of, 158–9, 190, 199
 and negation, 181
 as re-signification, 23, 155, 160, 172–3, 175–6, 187
- Partings, 70–1
 Pascal, Blaise, 179
 Passions
 control of, 32, 55–6, 102, 119–20, 136, 139
 expression of, 1–3, 22, 55, 62, 64, 80, 116, 130, 141–2
 history of, 11
 production of, 20, 25, 66, 111, 131, 138, 163, 171
 purging of, 16, 34, 148
 stirring of, 18, 127, 128–9, 135, 146
- Paster, Gail Kern, 121, 133–4, 197
 Peacham, Henry, 5
 Performance
 and belief, 20, 97, 108–9, 165, 171, 179, 187, 190
 concepts of, 14, 19–20, 172
 cultural, 14, 17, 111
 and memory, 47–8, 68, 105–6
 and ritual, 16, 29–30, 162, 172
 studies, 3, 10, 13–14
 and theatricality, 7, 62–3, 65, 78, 102, 142, 183
 theory, 12–16, 111–12, 194–5
- Performative contradiction, 19, 60
 Perspectives (trick paintings), *see* Anamorphosis
 Petrey, Sandy, 15–16, 196
 Petronius, *Satyricon*, 136
 Pfister, Manfred, 11, 87, 113, 122, 197
 Pilgrimage, 98–100
 Pigman, G.W., 30
 Platt, Colin, 196
 Plautus, 169, 199
Play of Love, The (John Heywood), 122
 Playfere, Thomas, *The Meane in Mourning*, 18–19, 93–4, 115, 117
 Playhouse, *locus and platea*, 24, 43, 57
 Plumstead, A.W., 166, 173
 Plutarch, 110
 Pope, Alexander, 159
 Porter, Joseph, 62
 Praying, 22, 61, 72, 79, 97, 107, 179, 184
 for the dead, 26, 29, 32, 34, 36, 43
 on the stage, 77–8, 88–9
 Preaching in church, 18–19, 27, 29–30
 Price, Daniel, 121
 Protestantism
 established with Edward’s succession, 41, 171
 injunctions against mourning rituals, 9, 18, 31–2, 47–8, 57, 75, 190, 193
 polemics against mass, 17–18, 32–3, 91, 173–5, 180, 184
 principle of *sola scriptura*, 191
 as return to beginnings, 30, 32, 178
 see also Church of England, Iconoclasm
- Purchas, Samuel, *Pilgrimage*, 100–1
 Purgatory, 61, 77, 90, 96, 99, 148
 doctrine of abolished, 9, 30, 32, 34, 37, 60
 see also Ghosts
- Puttenham, George, *Art of English Poesie*, 127, 140
 Pye, Christopher, 63
- Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 2, 126, 131

- Rackin, Phyllis, 44, 197
- Rainolds, John, 127–8, 131, 139
- Raleigh, Walter, 117
The Discoverie of Guiana, 95, 98
- Ralph Roister Doister (Nicholas Udall), 21, 23, 156, 166–9, 171–3, 191, 199
- Reformation
 debates on ritual, 22, 160, 176–9
 effects of, 27, 36, 190
 impact on emotions, 11
 in Tudor England, 9, 26, 35, 37, 46, 90, 153, 172, 176
- Reichert, Klaus, 124, 146
- Repetition, 54–6, 70, 107–9, 111, 113, 151
- Representation, 57, 66, 160
 foundation in death rites, 6–7
 history of, 6–7
 partiality of, 5
- Requiem mass, 9, 61, 167–8, 174–5, 184–5
- Revenge
 as contrast to law, 82, 111
 as failure of mourning, 73–5, 80, 85–7, 114–15
 as genre in tragedy, 5, 22, 73, 75–6, 83, 88, 100–1, 108, 112, 114, 193
 as performance, 81, 83–6, 91, 106, 108
 as personal effacement, 48–9, 76
 and remembrance, 101, 104–6
- Rhetoric, 20
 body, 2–4, 22, 55, 117, 121–2, 126–9, 131, 135, 140
 classical, 2, 19, 126–7, 131, 139–40, 146
 figures of, 99–100
 in religious discourse, 19, 131–2
- Rhyme, 59, 183–5
- Richard II* (William Shakespeare), 22, 44, 48, 58, 61–6, 68, 69
- Richard III* (William Shakespeare), 3, 22, 52–7, 60–1, 63, 91, 125, 128–32, 140, 143–5, 193
- Righter, Anne, 197
- Rist, Tom, 165
- Rituals
 of burial and mourning in Church of England, 30–3, 52
 change in Church of England, 9–10, 26, 29, 34, 57
 controversies about in Church of England, 23, 159, 163, 176–8
 efficacy of debated, 63, 77, 92, 97, 161
 and emotions, 80, 111
 formation of, 160, 166, 178, 190
 and memory, 56–7, 59
 in relation to theatre and drama, 3, 17–18, 61, 69, 88, 109, 155, 163–5, 169, 186
 variety of, 33–4, 179
- Rogers, Richard, 119
- Roman Actor, The* (Philip Massinger), 16
- Rose, Margaret, 158–9, 168, 190, 199
- Ross, Thomas W., 162
- Roye, William, *The Burial of the Mass*, 175
- Ruiter, David, 197
- Rupp, Susanne, 196
- Sacks, Peter, 73–5, 86, 101, 104, 108, 111, 151, 193, 196
- Sales, Roger, 28
- Sampson, Thomas, 178
- Sawday, Jonathan, 19–20
- Schechner, Richard, 13
- Schlaeger, Jürgen, 196
- Schoenfeldt, Michael, 133–4, 197
- Scholz, Susanne, 54–6, 117, 197
- Schülting, Sabine, 95
- Scodel, Joshua, 196
- Scot, Reginald, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 92, 100, 118
- Scrots, Gwillim, 65
- Searle, John, 126, 132, 197
- Segar, William, *Honor Military and Ciuill*, 51–2, 196–7
- Senecan tragedy, 77, 82–4, 86, 105
- Shakespeare, William, 3
 question of religious faith, 20, 165, 194
Works, see under individual titles
- Shepherd, Luke, satirical poems by, 173–6
- Shuger, Deborah, 19
- Sidney, Philip, *Defence of Poesy*, 110–11, 147
- Siemon, James, 65–6

- Singer, Milton, 14
 Skelton, John, 35, 175–6, 180
 Skura, Meredith Ann, 100, 129
 Southwell, Robert, *Mary Magdalens Funerall Teares*, 22, 143–5
Spanish Tragedy, The (Thomas Kyd), 4, 21, 22, 73, 77, 79–87, 89, 90–2, 102–5, 108, 113–14, 193
 Speech–act theory
 analysis, 62
 concepts of, 14–16, 73, 112–13, 126, 132, 141–2, 180
 debates in, 132–3
 foundation of, 13–14
 and religious ceremonies, 16
 Spenser, Edmund, 19, 117
 Spivack, Bernard, 130
 Stallybrass, Peter, 107, 116
 Stearns, Peter N., 11
 Stedman, Gesa, 196
 Stow, John, *Survey of London*, 35, 68
 Strong, Roy, 41–2, 190
 Stubbes, Phillip, 18

Taming of the Shrew, The (William Shakespeare), 137
 Targoff, Ramie, 20, 78–9, 109, 184, 199
 Taussig, Michael, 97
 Taylor, Gary, 164
 Tears, 22, 111, 117, 194
 as acts of faith, 18, 115, 119, 123, 143–4
 as conventional signs of mourning, 2, 6, 45, 75, 137, 140–2, 148
 difficulties in deciphering, 120–2, 124, 134–5, 138, 146
 as gender markers, 118, 132, 134–5, 145–6
 as speech acts, 125–6, 128, 132
 in the theatre, 110, 129–31, 137, 141, 147
 Terence, 169, 199
 Theatre
 attacks on, 4, 8, 128, 147
 and cultural memory, 18, 38, 72, 154–5
 place of in cultural topography, 5
 and religion, 8, 17–18, 57, 61, 77–8, 107, 187, 192
 and scepticism, 20, 53, 90–1, 112, 165, 193–4
 and truth, 12–13, 61, 192
 Tillyard, E.M.W., 43, 53
Timon of Athens (William Shakespeare), 15, 17
Titus Andronicus (William Shakespeare), 1–5, 6, 8, 17, 22, 73, 77, 86–90, 92–3, 95, 102–5, 108, 123, 193
 Torkington, Richard, 98, 197
 Travelogues, 22, 77, 93, 95–8, 100
 see also New World encounters
Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare), 31, 117, 139
Two Gentlemen of Verona, The (William Shakespeare), 124–5
 Tydeman, William, 169, 171, 199
 Tyndale, William, 191

 Udall, Nicholas, 169–71, 176, 179, 199
 see also Ralph Roister Doister
 Use/mention distinction, 91

 Valesio, Paolo, 62
 Veron, Jean, *The Hvntyng of Purgatorye to death*, 32–4, 94–5, 99, 175, 184–5
 Vestiarian controversy, 177–8
 Violence, 22, 35, 37, 69, 73–4, 82, 84, 87, 103–4, 108, 110, 113
 institutionalized, 14, 80, 152

 Walker, Greg, 171, 199
 Watson, Robert N., 196
 Weeping, *see* Tears
 Weever, John, *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, 35–7, 68
 Weimann, Robert, 24, 72, 97, 102
 Wentersdorf, K., 181
 Westminster Abbey, 24, 35, 37, 188
 Whitney, Geoffrey, *Book of Emblems*, 133

- Widdowes Teares, The* (George Chapman), 4, 21, 22, 133, 135–46, 155
- Willson, Robert F., 173
- Wilson, Richard, 20, 187, 197
- Wirth, Uwe, 196, 197
- Witch trials, 118
- Wolsey, Thomas, 175
- Woodward, Jennifer, 7, 161, 164, 188
- Worthen, W.B., 194
- Wright, Thomas, 117
- The Passions of the Minde*, 116, 131–2, 138–40, 163
- The Reall Presence*, 79, 89–90
- Wulf, Christoph, 196
- Yates, Frances, 105
- Zagorin, Perez, 197
- Zimmermann, Margarete, 196
- Zizek, Slavoj, 65