

Archaeologies of Bereavement: Accessing Historical Grieving through Object Use, 1850-1900AD

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Abstract

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the 'cult of mourning' reached its height. This period saw a boom in material culture related to the funeral, and to mourning. However, this boom was short-lived, reaching its peak in the 1870s and 1880s, before waning into the twentieth century. However, while the performative material culture of the funeral, the cemetery and the elaborate mourning dress, have received scholarly attention, material has not often been studied with a focus on grief. Grief, and all emotional experience, can be considered a culturally constructed phenomenon. Though all people possess the same biological and psychological foundation for emotion, the expression, conception, and even experience of emotions, are constructed from the things we've seen, the culture we grew up in, and the communities of which we are a part. This project explores objects related to bereavement in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the aim of identifying how the enculturation of British society was drawn on in order to create a material culture of grieving, as well as considering how that material served to reflexively produce its own cultural schemas.

Focusing on British working- and middle-class populations, in the period 1850-1900, this project analyses four classes of objects – postmortem photographs, funeral cards, domestically produced hairwork and death memoirs. Utilising a broadly qualitative approach, this project is exploratory, considering how the use of a lens which centres the impact of culture on the experience of grieving may provide new insight into the experience of bereavement. Overall, this thesis shows how the globalisation of media in the late nineteenth century, led to the spread of cultural tropes related to grieving, and provided people with more potential schemas through which to curate their own production of the material culture of grief.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my dad, Ian Morris, who was endlessly interested in learning, and fascinated by the world. You passed your love of history onto me, dad. I wouldn't be here if not for you.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

“It is when the coffin has been lowered into the newly-made grave,
or the door of the tomb is shut, and we go to our homes, that the
complete realization comes painfully and forcibly to our minds and to
our hearts.”

The Poets' Tribute 1881, 24

Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Declaration	iii
Contents	v
Figures	ix
Tables	xiii

I INTRODUCTION

I.1 Aims	2
I.2 Scope	3
I.3 Methodology	4
I.4 Structure of Analysis	10

SECTION I: CONSTRUCTING AN INTERPRETIVE LENS

2 THE ‘CULT OF MOURNING’ IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

2.1 Patterns of Dying and Bereavement	12
2.2 Funerary Culture	25
2.3 Cemeteries	30
2.4 Commemoration and Memorialisation	32
2.5 Industries of Mourning	38

3 CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF GRIEF

3.1 Historiographies of Emotion	44
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3.2 Grief as a Cultural Construction	46
3.3 Theoretical and Methodological Framework	49

4 OBJECTS AND GRIEVING IN CONTEMPORARY POPULATIONS 57

4.1 Psychologies of Grieving	57
4.2 Encultured Grieving through Objects in Contemporary Populations	62
4.3 Encultured Grieving as an Interpretive Lens	70

SECTION II: ENCULTURED GRIEVING, 1850-1900

5 SLEEPING CHILDREN AND POSTMORTEM PHOTOGRAPHY 72

5.1 Palliative Caring and the 'Good Death' in the Late-Victorian Period	72
5.2 The Laying Out of the Corpse and Acts of Care	82
5.3 Photography and Memory	85
5.4 Postmortem Photographs in Cultural Context	90
5.5 Photographic Effigies and Comforting Images	111

6 'MISERABLE DOGGRELS' AND MESSAGES BEYOND DEATH 113

6.1 Historical Context of Funeral Cards	114
6.2 Analysis of Funeral Cards	121
6.3 Analysis of Gravestones	128
6.4 Paper Monuments?	133
6.5 Authenticity and Encultured Emotional Languages	140

7 HAIRWORK AND GRIEFWORK	149
7.1 Hairwork in the Nineteenth Century	150
7.2 Methods	156
7.3 Experiential Hairworking	162
7.4 Symbolism of Hair	177
7.5 Cultures of Victorian Crafting	178
7.6 Hairworking, Griefworking and the Wearing of Hair	182
 8 GRIEF MEMOIRS AND STORIES OF THE DEAD	 189
8.1 Life-Writing and Death-Writing in the Nineteenth Century	190
8.2 Methods and Dataset	194
8.3 Thematic Analysis	201
8.4 Cultural Constructions of Meaning in the Grief Memoir	214
 9 CONCLUSION	 218
9.1 Victorian Cultures of Grieving	218
9.2 Approaches and Methodologies to the Study of Historical Grief	224
9.3 Archaeological Analyses of Written Objects	226
9.4 Materiality and Future Work	226
9.5 Research Significance	228
 10 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 231
10.1 Primary Sources	231
10.2 Secondary Sources	239
 APPENDICES	 268

Appendix A: Image Credits for Figures	268
Appendix B: Compiled Data for Causes of Death, 1850-1900	270
Appendix C: Funeral Cards	271
Appendix D: Gravestones	300

Figures

Figure 1 Diagram showing process of digital archive search utilised in this project	7
Figure 2 Graph showing deaths from selected acute infections as a percentage of total deaths, between 1857 and 1892	14
Figure 3 Graph showing deaths from selected chronic conditions as a percentage of total deaths, between 1857 and 1892	15
Figure 4 Graph showing averages of deaths from acute infections and chronic conditions, as a percentage of total deaths between 1857 and 1892	17
Figure 5 Graph showing the number of deaths from smallpox by age group in 1857, 1874 and 1892, following the <i>Vaccination Act 1853</i>	19
Figure 6 Graph showing percentage of deaths from acute and chronic causes by age group between 1857 and 1892	20
Figure 7 Graph showing the percentage of widowed men and women in different age groups living in York in 1861	22
Figure 8 Photograph of late-nineteenth century gravestones at Old Calton Cemetery, Edinburgh, showing gothic (foreground), pedimented (back left) and obelisk (back right) style memorials	33
Figure 9 Photograph of obelisk style memorial in York Cemetery, York	34
Figure 10 Photograph of rusticated cross memorial with ivy/foilage decoration in York Cemetery, York	35
Figure 11 Photograph of The Angel of Death (1894) memorial by William Wetmore Story for his wife, Evelyn, in the Non-Catholic Cemetery, Rome	36
Figure 12 Illustration of the interior of the London General Mourning Warehouse (Jay's) published in <i>The Pictorial Times</i> , 24th Aug 1847	40
Figure 13 Advertisement for Peter Robinson's Mourning Warehouse taken from <i>Illustrated London News</i> (28 Jan 1888)	41

Figure 14 Illustration taken from <i>Punch</i> , 18th Sep 1847, showing a satirical image of a sobbing mourning warehouse assistant, displaying an appropriate countenance for the role	42
Figure 15 The influences of a grieving person's behaviour, based on a Bourdieusian model	55
Figure 16 Hand-tinted photograph taken of Emily Gosse, four days before her death, 1857	76
Figure 17 <i>An Old Man in Red</i> by Rembrandt, c.1652	91
Figure 18 <i>La Madonna della Pietà</i> by Michelangelo, c.1499, in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican	93
Figure 19 <i>The Virgin with the Sleeping Christ Child</i> by Orazio Gentileschi, c.1610	94
Figure 20 <i>Madonna del Silenzio</i> by Michelangelo, c.1540	95
Figure 21 <i>Mrs Peale Lamenting the Death of Her Child</i> (1776) By Charles Willson Peale	96
Figure 22 Plaster model of the effigy of Penelope Boothby by Thomas Banks (1793), located in Sir John Soane's Museum	97
Figure 23 <i>The Sleeping Children</i> by Francis Chantrey (1812)	98
Figure 24 <i>Sleeping Children</i> by William Rinehart (1869)	99
Figure 25 Postcard of Chantrey's <i>Sleeping Children</i> , produced by E. T. W. Dennis of Scarborough, c.1890s	101
Figure 26 Postcard of the Bank's memorial to Penelope Boothby, produced by Valentine, 1900	102
Figure 27 Postmortem photograph of a young girl, laying across fabric covered furniture	104
Figure 28 Postmortem Photograph of a young boy, laying on a pillow, with white sheets covering him	105
Figure 29 Portrait of three young girls, taken c.1888	105
Figure 30 Postmortem photograph of a man, taken in 1892	106
Figure 31 Perimortem photograph of a woman, laying in bed	108
Figure 32 Postmortem photograph of a young girl, surrounded by flowers	109
Figure 33 Photographs of funeral card envelope, interior and exterior	115

Figure 34 Photograph of funeral card dating from 1883	116
Figure 35 Funeral card for Alexander Campbell (1865)	117
Figure 36 Photographs of funeral cards showing stylistic change over time	118
Figure 37 Advertisement for funeral cards from ‘Latham’s Funeral Card and General Printer’s’, Manchester, 1858	120
Figure 38 Graph showing a comparison of the themes identified in verses on funeral cards and gravestones	131
Figure 39 Graph showing comparison of percentage of verses on funeral cards and gravestones which included emotive words	132
Figure 40 Advertisement for Pears Soap, c.1888, using <i>Bubbles</i> by John Everett Millais (1886)	139
Figure 41 Gold sentimental brooch, c.1860, likely representing romantic love, and including a lock of hair on its reverse	151
Figure 42 Comparison of a) late-18th century hairwork ring, with b) early-19th century hairwork ring	152
Figure 43 Wide hairwork bracelet, c.1820-1850	153
Figure 44 Openwork brooch, in the shape of a crescent, with three openwork drop beads, c.1855- 1865	155
Figure 45 Gold ring with concealed hairwork, 1865. The clasp mechanism is opened, displaying the hairwork enclosed around the ring	155
Figure 46 Photograph of the hair used in experiential project, showing colour and wave pattern, approx. 5cm in length	160
Figure 47 Lattice-style plait from Speight (1871, 105), recreated in 7.3.1	161
Figure 48 Bracelet braid from Campbell (1865, 20), recreated in 7.3.2	161
Figure 49 Ring braid from Campbell (1865, 83), recreated in 7.3.2	161
Figure 50 Plate from Campbell (1867, 125) showing a nineteenth century hair-braiding table	163
Figure 51 Diagram demonstrating the use of a mold during braiding	163

Figure 52 Figures from Speight (1871) showing the creation of hairwork flowers	165
Figure 53 Photographs showing completion of a lattice-style plait	166
Figure 54 Mourning ring (1809) commemorating Anna Seward, and detail of hair plait, showing crossed hairs	168
Figure 55 Comparison of hairwork plaits, created experientially. Left: first plait created; Right: second plait created	169
Figure 56 (left) Diagram demonstrating the method for separating useable hair described by Campbell (1867); (right) Photograph of hair strand prior to this step, showing the shorter hairs in the strand	170
Figure 57 (Above) Photograph of the first hairwork chain produced, demonstrating increased fraying due to ineffective preparation of hair strands (Below) Photograph of the second braid, showing neater result with effective preparation	172
Figure 58 (Above) Photograph of hairwork bracelet consisting of six individual hairwork braids, c.1820-1850; (Below) Photograph of a hairwork bracelet, consisting of three individual hairwork braids, c.1820-1850	173
Figure 59 (Left) Ring pattern from Campbell (1867, 83); (Centre) <i>Kumihimo</i> table set up for ring pattern, showing unevenness in strand thicknesses caused by breakage; (Right) Completed hairwork ring	174
Figure 60 Jet jewellery in the chunky style popular in the 1870s and 1880s, c.1870	183
Figure 61 Photograph of a hairwork necklace, 1852	184
Figure 62 Brooch, gifted to Queen Victoria, from her daughter, Alice, in 1873	185
Figure 63 Colour-lithographed print, <i>The Mother's Dream</i> by Currier and Ives, c.1870s, using the Dove verse	221

Tables

Table 1 The prescribed mourning periods following bereavement of relatives	23
Table 2 The direction of verses in funeral card sample	123
Table 3 Themes identified in funeral card sample	124
Table 4 Frequency of emotive words in funeral card verses in sample	126
Table 5 The direction of verses in gravestone inscriptions from All Saints', Childwall	129
Table 6 Themes identified in the gravestones from All Saints, Childwall	129
Table 7 Comparison of emotive words found in verses on funeral cards and stone memorials ..	130
Table 8 Process of completing a hairwork plait	164
Table 9 Process of creating a hairwork chain braid	171
Table 10 The death dates and publication dates associated with the six memoirs analysed in this chapter	193
Table 11 Overview of the subjects and authors of memoirs discussed in this chapter	195
Table 12 The length and form of the six memoirs	196
Table 13 The point of view and tone of the six memoirs	197
Table 14 Examples of the point of view used in the six memoirs	198
Table 15 Examples of the Dove verse found in England	219

I Introduction

Grief is messy. Though we can define it as an emotional response to the loss of someone who forms part of our lives, grief is not something that can be summed up as a singular *feeling*. The experience of it is predicated on our culture, our personality, our relationship with the deceased, and the circumstances of the death, as well as a thousand other minutiae, too unique and personal to quantify. Different people are unlikely to react in the same way to a death, and a single person is unlikely to react the same way to different deaths. In fact, our experience of grief is likely to fluctuate by the day, or even the hour, particularly in the initial period. Bound up with sadness can be feelings of regret, anger, relief, guilt, even humour – however dark or bittersweet. Nevertheless, grief is considered a universal human experience. Though the specifics may change, the loss of someone who has had an impact on us, whether with good, bad, or complicated results, generally prompts some kind of emotional response. Grief is, however, a highly culturally-mediated experience. Our expression of, and even our experience of, grief is affected by our enculturation. This conception of grief as constructed through social interaction, rather than simply as an innate psychological response, may offer an interpretive lens for material culture studies of bereavement, which have perhaps lacked a strong methodological framework for understanding the complex interconnections between mourning as a social behaviour, as grief as an emotional experience.

This is particularly important for studies of late-nineteenth century bereavement, a period which was characterised by a 'cult of mourning' (Taylor 2009). Mourning culture increased rapidly from the mid-nineteenth century before reaching its peak in the 1870s and 1880s, and included extended mourning periods for bereaved women and a diverse range of material culture - crape and taffeta, jet jewellery and ostrich plumes; mourning clothing, jewellery and even stationery were available to cater for the bereaved. Mourning culture was, however, already in decline by the 1890s, and as such, the 'cult of mourning' represented a very brief milieu, which, nevertheless, had a fundamental impact on contemporary conceptions of 'Victorian grieving', and on the popular conception of a 'traditional' British funeral.

The majority of funerary archaeology on this period focuses on the material culture of the burial and commemoration (eg. Cox 1998; Mytum 2004; Cherryson *et al.* 2012; Cannon and Cook 2015; Mytum and Burgess 2018). In contrast, social history research has focused more heavily on mourning as a behaviour related to social display and identity (eg. Strange 2002; Taylor 2009). Therefore, objects related specifically to the process and emotionality of grieving have been relatively poorly considered. This is likely because objects related to grief are perhaps more likely to be ephemeral, or to be discarded once they are no longer meaningful, for example by subsequent generations. The

lack of focus on objects related to grief may also be influenced by the debate on the value of the archaeology of emotions (Tarlow 2012; 2000).

Where emotion is mentioned in study, it tends to be on a broader scale, focusing on cultural questions about the way sentimentalised images of death represented cultural narratives around the importance of the family, the innocent piety of children, the passive emotionality of women. This has not tended to focus on grief as an enculturated phenomenon, in which people experienced and enacted grieving through socially mediated schemas, and in doing so reified those social constructions.

Contemporary funerary archaeology has begun to engage with psychological theories of grief, most notably continuing bonds theory (Klass, Silverman and Nickman 1996) and dual-process oscillation theory (Stroebe and Schut 2010). These theories conceptualise grief as dynamic and continuing, and align well with theories which envision grieving and mourning as primarily culturally mediated. Archaeological engagement with these ideas has been instrumental in avoiding the transposition of explicitly twentieth-century conceptions of grieving as a pathological affliction onto past groups. There remains, however, a methodological question as to the applicability of research conducted on present populations to the people of the past. While contemporary conceptions of grieving have been utilised as a theoretical basis for understanding past behaviour, this has generally taken the form of abstract theories of the way the brain conceives of, and reacts to, grief, potentially implying an innate biological bias which could act to reconstruct essentialist narratives of the past, and fail to engage with grief as a socially and culturally constructed experience. This project explores the experience of late-nineteenth century grieving, and through analysis of the use of objects as fulcrums during this grieving, discusses the specific social and cultural experiences through which grieving was enacted and constructed.

1.1 Aims

The period between 1850 and 1900 represents an era where material culture related to mourning and grieving reached an unprecedented level, both in regard to the amount and variety produced, and in societal acceptance of highly visible mourning. In contrast, it was also a period with a dichotomic relationship to emotion, in which art and literature often displayed highly sentimentalised themes, but overt, physical emotional reactions were generally not societally acceptable. Because of this, the specific social and cultural context from which this interest in mourning and grieving emerged, offers a unique opportunity to study the social, emotional and cultural interactions which affected the experience of grief during this time. This project explores this social context of grieving in the second half of the nineteenth century, in order to consider the reflexive relationship between cultural conceptions of grief, bereavement and emotionality; social constructions of 'acceptable'

grieving; and the use of objects in the experience and enacting of grieving. In order to explore these themes, this project has two main aims:

- 1) To reconstruct how people in late-Victorian Britain grieved through their use of ephemeral objects.
- 2) To use the interactions with these ephemeral grief-focused objects to explore how the experience of grieving was affected by the specific cultural and social context of late-Victorian Britain.

1.2 Scope

The core temporal scope of the project is the period from 1850 to 1900, though material is considered from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, where it is necessary to establish context. This temporal scope is narrowly focused when compared to the *longue durée* approach often favoured by historical archaeological analyses, which often use timescales such as the 'long nineteenth century' (generally considered to range between the late-eighteenth century and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914). Such analyses allow for the examination of broad trends and systemic processes which produce and influence change over time, and these long chronologies have formed a key basis for the study of funerary practices in the post-mediaeval period (eg. Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Litten 1993; Tarlow 1999). Here, however, a *longue durée* approach may not be best suited to consider this project's research aims.

The 'cult of mourning', which provides the temporal background for this analysis of encultured grief, is best described as an extremely short-lived cultural event, lasting from the 1860s to the mid-1880s, before declining significantly into the 1890s. This short period therefore represents the peak of a brief, and specific cultural milieu, which may benefit from a focused analysis. It was therefore decided that questions around change over time, and explanations for the rapid boom and bust of the mourning industry would be consciously excluded from the research aims, in order to maintain the emphasis on the effects of enculturation on specific experiences of grief. This project aims to present a snapshot of specific cultural influences on individual grief events, rather than to examine broad trends. This narrow temporal scope allows for a more nuanced analysis of the cultural influences at these moments.

Of course, between 1850 and 1900 there was large-scale social flux, which dramatically changed the experience of living and dying within Britain, as such, an attempt to define a static 'culture' over the course of half a century is as anachronous as over the long nineteenth century. For this reason, the objects and datasets chosen for analysis represent two separate chronologies; a) chronological snapshots of the period 1850 to 1900, with death memoirs broadly taken from the beginning of the

period (pre-1870), hairwork pattern books and post-mortem photographs broadly from the middle period (c.1865-1885), and funeral cards from the end of the period (post-1885); b) chronological snapshots following a death, with post-mortem photographs and funeral cards produced in the hours and days following a death, and hairwork and memoirs created in the following weeks and months.

Initially, the project scope was limited to Northern England, however, as a result of limited access to, and survival of, material culture and documentary evidence, this scope was expanded to cover Great Britain as a whole. As the project is exploratory in its methodology, aiming to consider the effectiveness of the methods, regional variation is not considered in detail, though where variation is suggested from the evidence, this is highlighted for potential future study.

The analyses in this project do not aim to produce arching narratives of change over time, or to curate an exhaustive history of working- and middle-class grieving behaviour over the second half of the nineteenth century, which would be incongruous with both models of encultured emotion, and with non-normative approaches to understanding grieving. Each analysis chapter considers a snapshot, drawn from the dataset of objects, in order to explore how their enculturation may have affected those people's experience of that grief event, and the material objects that they produced commissioned, bought or used. The narrow focus of this scope allows for a more granular analysis of emotional enculturation in historical people, and provides a complementary interpretation to broader *longue durée* approaches.

1.3 Methodology

The project uses a mixed methods approach, with each case study applying a range of methods. Broadly, however, the project takes a qualitative approach. A systematic literature review was conducted to identify discussions of object use following bereavement. Themes were identified from these papers. Papers discussing self-reported behaviours were prioritised, in order to exclude clinical reports detailing the effectiveness of treatments. Papers which referred to 'abnormal' grieving, or to patients in treatment for their grief, were also excluded. This review is discussed in Chapter 4. The themes identified are discussed with reference to their links to contemporary cultural constructions of grief, dying and bereavement.

The main methods applied within archaeological analyses in this project are textual and content analysis of primary sources (Chapters 5, 6 and 8), experiential and sensorial archaeological production from primary sources (Chapter 7), demographic analyses of death rates from primary sources (Chapter 2), and statistical comparisons of the form and content of historical artefacts (Chapter 6). The methods employed in each case study are discussed in more detail below and in the corresponding chapters.

1.3.1 Digital Archives and Collections

The collections of objects were chosen due to four factors. Firstly, they represent a large temporal range of the bereavement experience, with postmortem photographs and funeral cards produced in the initial hour or days following a death, and hairworking and memoir-writing taking place generally in the following months or years. This offers the opportunity to consider object use at different stages of the grieving process. Secondly, the objects chosen for analysis broadly represent different social groups within the period, with funeral cards associated with the working class, post-mortem photographs and hairworking undertaken to some extent by both the working- and middle-class, and death memoirs as almost exclusively the preserve of the middle class. Thirdly, these objects have received relatively little scholarly attention from an archaeological perspective, in which they are treated as objects which provide a fulcrum for grieving to be enacted through, rather than as historical or literary documents. Finally, data collection for this project was affected by the closure of archives and museums due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, object types were chosen for which there was a collection of online material available for study. The collections analysed were comprised of post-mortem photographs held by the Library of Nineteenth Century Photography (LoNCP) (Frecker 2025); funeral cards compiled by the Lost Ancestors Project (LAP) (Buckhorn n.d.); gravestone records held by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS); and hairwork pattern books and memoirs held by the Internet Archive, Google Books, and Gale Nineteenth Century Collections (GNCC).

The use of digital collections over, and in addition to, physical archival holdings is a topical one in historical and archaeological disciplines (eg. Putnam 2016; Carbajal and Caswell 2021; Owens and Padilla 2021). The use of digital collections requires distinct methodological, critical and interpretative considerations. There are several criticisms of the use of digital archives centring around two major themes – questions around archival and curatorial decision-making during collection and digitisation; and questions around how the form of digital archives affect the methodologies employed by researchers. Owens and Padilla (2021) discuss the importance of asking questions around the quality of digitised information, and assessing how decision-making around digitisation affects how representative the collection can be said to be. Owens and Padilla (2021, 327-9) in particular raise three questions to be considered when utilising digital archival collections; a) why was the collection digitised, and by who; b) is the quality of the digital copy sufficient; and c) how does the searchability of texts affect sampling method and representativeness of the collection. These criteria were considered in reference to the collections identified.

A major factor in identifying collections of objects for analysis was that the collections represented general, rather than exceptional examples. A limitation of any collection of historical sources and

objects is that by necessity they have been selectively preserved. In this sense an archival collection is similar to an archaeological assemblage, though the mechanism for preservation bias is different. Rather than being determined by material properties or taphonomic processes, archival collections are generally preserved according to what individuals have found to be interesting and, as such, are more likely to include non-typical examples. The LoNCP and the LAP represent private collections compiled, respectively by an individual curator and a collective genealogical group. As such, these collections represent a curated sample of available digitised objects. Frecker (n.d.) states his aim to create a library of *carte de visite* and cabinet card portraiture, as well as an interest in “the odd, the quirky, and the unusual”. In contrast, the LAP aims to compile a resource for genealogical enthusiasts, creating a photographic database of funeral cards submitted by family history researchers and interested parties (Buchorn n.d.). The ADS, Internet Archive, Google Books and GNCCs represent efforts to digitise grey literature (ADS), and collections held by archives such as the university libraries of Harvard, Stanford, Michigan and Oxford (Google Books) (Jones 2010), the Smithsonian and Getty Research Institutes (Internet Archive) (Internet Archive n.d.) and the British Library (GNCC) (Gale n.d.). As the research questions for this project centre on investigating individual experiences of grieving through objects, rather than to attempt to typify objects, these curated digital collections are appropriate for this project.

For this reason, this project utilises small-scale collections of objects, focusing on an in-depth analysis of individual cases. This approach was preferred over large-scale analyses for three reasons. Firstly, drawing general trends from curated material evidences trends in curatorial decision-making rather than trends in the production of material. Secondly, an approach which attempted to ‘typify’ grief objects would be in opposition to theories of grieving which highlight the non-normative nature of grieving and emotional responses in general. Finally, a smaller, more case study-led approach allows for a more nuanced testing of an encultured approach to exploring grief. Lucas and Olsen (2022, 14) argue that beyond using case studies as a method of using exemplars and examples to showcase the output of theoretical approaches, case studies offer a space through which theoretical approaches are explored, critiqued and developed.

This project also used digital surrogates, including scans of original documents. OCR transcriptions of original documents, which offer ‘plain text’ versions of original documents were utilised where archives employed them in their search engines, however, only scans of original documents were used in analysis. Owens and Padilla (2021, 328) note that when using digital surrogates some artefactual information cannot be identified, such as wear on the object indicating use, fold marks, or other damage. The research questions of this project were information led, meaning that it was the form, style, and language use which was analysed. As such the digital surrogates used were of sufficient quality for this purpose. Future research, however, may further explore the materiality of

objects such as funeral cards, post-mortem photographs, hairwork and memoirs, in order to answer questions around use-wear, storage and display. This would complement this project's outputs well by adding information about the life of the objects after they were created.

The final consideration that Owens and Padilla (2021, 328-9) suggest is focused on the methodology of searching the collections for relevant information. One major concern over the use of digital collections is that the specificity of using search terms on OCR scans, means that evidence may be cherry-picked, while pouring through full archive collections engenders a deeper or broader contextual understanding (see Putnam 2016 for discussion). Owens and Padilla (2021, 329) argue that using digital archival collections requires an equally robust methodological base as using physical archives. Rather than the narrowing of scope required in physical archival research, digital collections require the researcher to approach the work backwards, to move from the narrow to the broad, in order to build context (Owens and Padilla 2021, 329). The research methodologies used in this project took this narrow-to-broad approach, and used an iterative process to explore the objects and themes. An example of this process is given in Figure 1. This methodology uses the properties of digital archives to best survey large amounts of documentary evidence, while maintaining a broad contextual understanding of the treatment of the topic over the entirety of the collection.

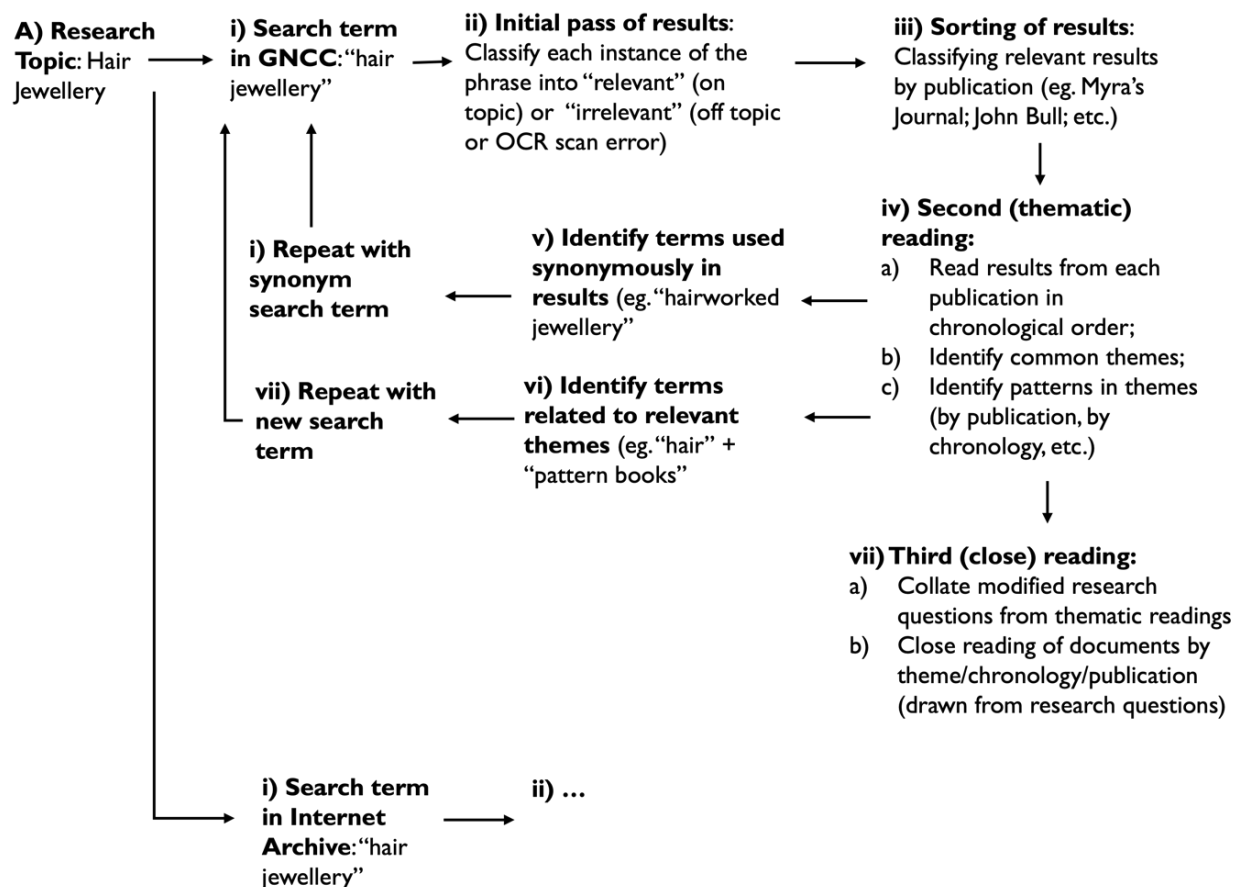


Figure 1 Diagram showing process of digital archive search utilised in this project

1.3.2 Post-mortem Photographs

Post-mortem photographs represent a phenomenon which emerged almost simultaneously with the popularisation of photography. Photographers were generally summoned to the home of the deceased to take photographs quickly following the laying out of the body. Often stylised with the deceased posed as if sleeping, or within their coffin, the phenomenon of the post-mortem photograph was most commonly associated with children, however, adult examples from the period can also be found.

The dataset chosen for this analysis was held in the Library of Nineteenth Century Photography (Frecker 2023), as this collection held a relatively large collection of British examples, as opposed to other digital archives which often prioritise North American post-mortem photographs. In addition, this collection was composed of examples of cards produced for personal and 'ordinary' use, in contrast to collections held by museums, which often contain examples of notable individuals, which may have been produced for consumption by the wider public.

The analysis of these post-mortem photographs in this project utilised a small sample approach in concordance with wider research aims. The methodology of this process was similar to that undertaken in the systematic digital archive review (1.3.1) and the analysis of death memoirs (1.3.5):

- 1) Identify British postmortem photographs (32 in collection).
- 2) Initial review to identify broad trends.
- 3) Review of documentary sources (using process shown in Figure 1).
- 4) Revise and refine research questions.
- 5) Reanalyse British postmortem photographs with a focus on revised RQs.
- 6) Identify photograph case studies through which to explore identified trends and RQs; and theoretical approach.

1.3.3 Funeral Cards

Funeral cards were very common in the late-nineteenth century as a way of both informing of, and commemorating, the death and funeral. Funeral cards usually took the form of cards including biographic information about the deceased, and a rhyming verse. As funeral cards have been described as 'monuments for those who cannot afford brass' (Gatty 1866, 109), and their form is similar, cards are here compared with gravestone inscriptions from the same period, using textual analysis.

This chapter uses two datasets; a collection of British funeral cards held by the Lost Ancestors Project (Buckhorn n.d.); and gravestone records from All Saints Church, Childwall, Liverpool, compiled as part of the Discovering England's Burial Spaces (DEBS) project, and held by the ADS.

The LAP collection was chosen as it contains a large collection of funeral cards from around the UK, produced for personal and 'ordinary' use, rather than cards for notable or infamous individuals which may have been produced for commercial purposes. The LAP also presents high-quality digital images of the funeral cards within the collection, meaning that analysis of verses can be undertaken directly, rather than relying on another transcriber or OCR.

The gravestone records from All Saints, Childwall, were chosen for several factors. Firstly, sites which were recorded as part of the DEBS project have a clear methodology for data collection and recording, compared with recording completed by local history and interest groups, allowing for a clearer understanding of proportion of memorials surveyed and the condition of inscriptions. Secondly, sites recorded by the DEBS project have available raw databases of records which can be used to facilitate analysis. Of the DEBS sites, only All Saint's included a useable database which included fully transcribed inscription texts. A more comprehensive national picture could be obtained through a systematic consolidation of information held in individual records of memorials; however, this was beyond the scope of this project. As the project methodology prioritises individual experience rather than analysis of broad chronological or regional trends, this sample was considered appropriate for the scope and aims of this project.

1.3.4 Hairwork

Hairwork, jewellery produced from, or containing, human hair forms a major part of mourning jewellery in the post-mediaeval period. From the mid-century, books and periodicals began to publish patterns allowing for the production of sentimental hairwork domestically. These published guides have generally appeared in research as a footnote illustrating contemporary anxieties around fraud within the hairwork industry. Here, an experiential project recreating hairwork from patterns, provides insight into the technical and sensorial experience of creating hairwork domestically.

The patterns which were recreated were taken from two guides published as books, written by professional hairworkers; *The Art of Hair Work* (Campbell 1867) and *The Lock of Hair* (Speight 1871). These books were chosen as they provide more detailed instructions than those published as short articles in periodicals. Comparative hairwork objects were drawn from the online collections held by the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum.

1.3.5 Death Memoirs

Most commonly associated with non-conformist groups, death memoirs were written following the bereavement of a family member or close friend. They often included a biography of the deceased's life, with particular emphasis on religious convictions, followed by a detailed description of the dying process. These memoirs could be kept for familial use, or published in denominational magazines or

books for dissemination amongst community members. The majority of prior research has focused on how memoirs can be used to inform on non-conformist religious belief and practise, and on deathbed behaviours. Here, death memoirs are interpreted through the experience of writing them during the grieving process, and an in-depth textual analysis is performed on six memoirs which were published as books during the period of study.

The dataset chosen for this analysis was limited to published longform books, the length of which allowed for writers to include more detail, narrative-building and authorial voice, when compared with the brief biography-obituaries often published in denominational magazines. The impact of editing by publishers is discussed in 8.1.

The methodology of this process was similar to that undertaken in the systematic digital archive review (1.3.1) and the analysis of postmortem photographs (1.3.2):

- 1) Initial search for published death memoirs, hosted on Google Books and Internet Archive, using process shown in Figure 1.
- 2) Screening of results based on research criteria discussed in 8.2.
- 3) Relevant books from initial search identified (limited to 12 due to scope of project and length of books).
- 4) Second reading to identify themes for closer analysis.
- 5) Review of documentary sources (using process shown in Figure 1).
- 6) Revise and refine research questions.
- 7) Identify case study memoirs for close reading informed by revised RQs (6 total).
- 7) Third close reading to explore identified themes and RQs; and theoretical approach.

1.4 Structure of Analysis

To achieve these aims of this project, it is first necessary to analyse the historical context from which the 'cult of mourning' arose, and how archaeological researchers have approached the study of bereavement in the period; and secondly to theoretically conceptualise the relationships between socially-mediated grieving and object use. The first section of this thesis constructs a theoretical framework and an interpretive lens, through which to consider late-nineteenth century grieving.

Chapter 2 explores the historical context of dying, bereavement and the 'cult of mourning', and suggests how the examination of grief as a culturally-mediated emotion, could aid in understanding the experience of bereavement. Chapter 3 explores the conception of grieving as a culturally-mediated emotion, and constructs a theoretical framework for exploring grief in past populations. Chapter 4 provides an overview of contemporary theories of grieving, and explores the impact of

enculturation on present day object interactions during grieving to create a lens through which to interpret past object use.

The second section of this thesis explores the social context of grieving in the late-nineteenth century through the analysis of object creation and use. Four different types of ephemeral object, representing different aspects of grief-focused behaviour, form the base for the analysis of grieving – postmortem photography, funeral cards, hairworking, and death memoirs. Each object type is treated as a standalone analysis and discussed in a single chapter - post-mortem photographs (Chapter 5), funeral cards (Chapter 6), hairwork (Chapter 7) and death memoirs (Chapter 8).

Chapter 9 draws on the discussions in the previous chapters to begin to reconstruct the cultural and social context of grieving in the second half of the nineteenth century. From this, future directions of study are identified. Finally, the effectiveness of a model of grief as a cultural construction, and of the theoretical and interpretive framework used within this project is evaluated.

2 The 'Cult of Mourning' in the Late-Nineteenth Century

In 1852, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, and hero of Waterloo, died, and was granted a state funeral. What followed was described in contemporary newspapers as one of the grandest spectacles the world had ever seen (Sinnema 2000, 30). Wellesley lay in state, both at Walmer Castle and at Chelsea Hospital (Pearsall 1999, 373), before the grand cortege, which had been two months in the planning, transported his body to St Paul's Cathedral for the funeral and interment (Pearsall 1999, 366; Sinnema 2000, 30). The room which contained the coffin at Chelsea Hospital was festooned with black fabric and ostrich plumes, and attracted 235,000 visitors (Pearsall 1999, 373), while the procession was watched by a reported 1.5 million spectators (Sinnema 2000, 30). Wellesley's funeral was a political statement, in which the image of an Anglo-Irish national hero was reified – a statement to the populous, and also to foreign powers – however, the death of Wellesley also marked a turning point in the commercialisation of death and mourning.

Memorabilia, such as commemorative coins, postcards and ceramics, was produced (Beaton 2005, 100), and it was reported in *John Bull* (1852) that the sales figures of Jay's Mourning Warehouse, in Regent Street, had trebled compare to any other period of national mourning. Pearsall (1999, 368) notes that some contemporary commentators, such as Charles Dickens, reacted with disgust to the profiteering of the back of Wellesley's death, but that nevertheless, the public attitude to mourning consumerism was positive. The mourning industry would continue to boom for the next forty years.

The period between 1850 and 1900 saw the rise of what has been described as a 'cult of mourning' (Taylor 2009, 122). This boom saw its peak in the 1870s and 1880s, and was characterised by the extended wearing of mourning clothing by bereaved women, and an increase in material culture related to memorialising and grieving the dead. This chapter explores the specific historical context from which this culture of elaborate extended mourning arose, and suggests how an examination of private grief, as separate from performative mourning, may increase understanding of bereavement in this period.

2.1 Patterns of Dying and Bereavement

From the mid-nineteenth century, in Britain, sanitation became a major concern. With rising urban populations outstripping sewerage systems, housing and burial provisions, a large proportion of the urban poor were living in conditions which allowed epidemic disease to become rampant (Allen 2007, 1). As such, physicians, scientists, and statisticians were beginning to identify the links between poor sanitation and disease. Edwin Chadwick was a leading public health reformer, and his report (Chadwick 1843) into the conditions of the poor led to the *Public Health Act 1848*, which legislated for the reform of urban water systems. In 1854, John Snow showed the link between cholera and

contaminated water (Snow 1855), while in 1856, William Budd published an article in *The Lancet* detailing the transmission of typhoid fever through contact with soiled bedding (Budd 1856). Handwashing and disinfection techniques by medical staff was shown to dramatically decrease infection rates, first by Ignaz Semmelweis in the early 1840s (though his conclusions were largely ignored by wider medical professionals) (Best and Neuhauser 2004, 233), and later by Florence Nightingale in the 1850s, and Joseph Lister in the 1860s (Gilbert 2020, 627). Public health was becoming a major parliamentary concern. Slum clearances and sewerage reforms aimed to decrease epidemic disease amongst the urban poor (Allen 2007, 1–2), and the *Vaccination Act 1853* made smallpox vaccinations compulsory for babies, with 1874 marking the final largescale smallpox outbreak (Rolleston 1933, 181).

However, it was not only the poor who benefited from increased understanding of germ theory. If filth and dirt were the sign of the lower class, cleanliness was taken up as emblematic of the middleclass home (see Crook 2006; Davie 2017), and this commitment to hygiene was extended into the sickroom. Writing in 1861, Mrs Beeton counted ‘cleanliness’ as one of the essential attributes of a good nurse (Beeton 1861, 1017), while Lionel Weatherly’s advice on domestic sickroom hygiene is familiar reading in a post-Covid world:

If ventilation be a necessity in the rooms of the healthy, how much more so does it become an absolute and imperative duty to see that it is carried out in the sick room; for we know that in the case of the sick, not only are the exhalations of the body increased, but the atmosphere of the room is still more vitiated by the effluvia from discharged excretions (Weatherly 1881, 7)

Weatherly (1881, 20–24, 29) goes on to describe the importance of disinfecting the sickroom, and any objects which have come into contact with the sick person, including bedpans, clothing and bedding, as well as the importance of avoiding unnecessary visitors to infectious patients, in order to prevent transmission.

In order to investigate the effects of this increasing understanding of germ theory on mortality trends, an analysis was undertaken to compare cause of death from selected acute and chronic conditions, reported by the Registrar-General in England, between 1850 and 1900. Causes of deaths were available from 1857 (Registrar-General 1858), 1874 (Registrar-General 1876) and 1892 (Registrar-General 1894), and data were compared for six acute infections, and six chronic diseases, shown in Figures 2 and 3. These causes of death were selected due to ease of comparison between reports, as over the period, reports varied in terms of method of data presented, categorisation, and diagnosis of disease. For example, in 1874, heart disease was recorded in three categories – pericarditis, aneurysm and ‘other heart disease’, in comparison with eleven categories for 1892. For

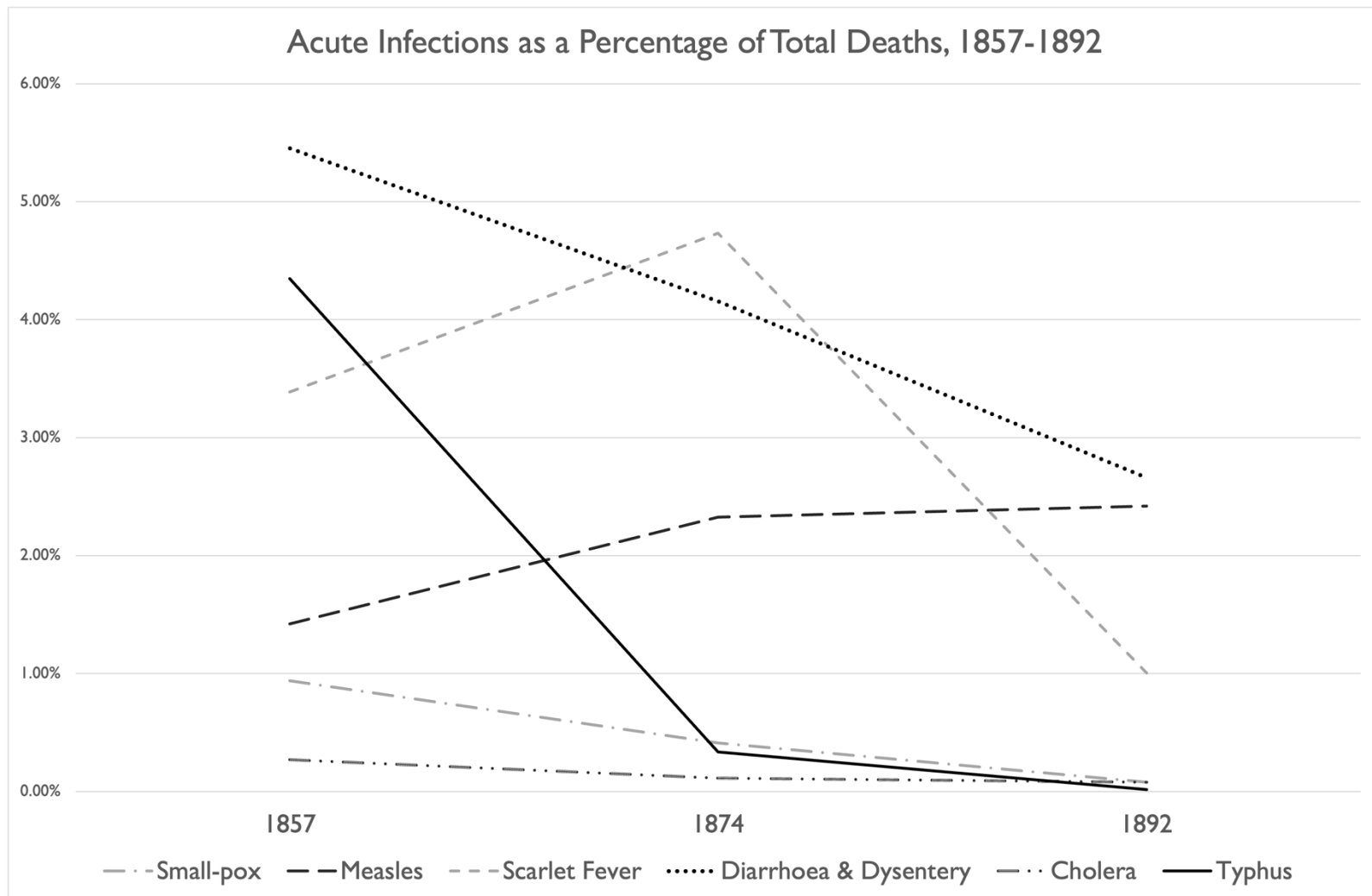


Figure 2 Graph showing deaths from selected acute infections (Small-pox, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Diarrhoea & Dysentery, Cholera and Typhus) as a percentage of total deaths, between 1857 and 1892 (Author's Own)

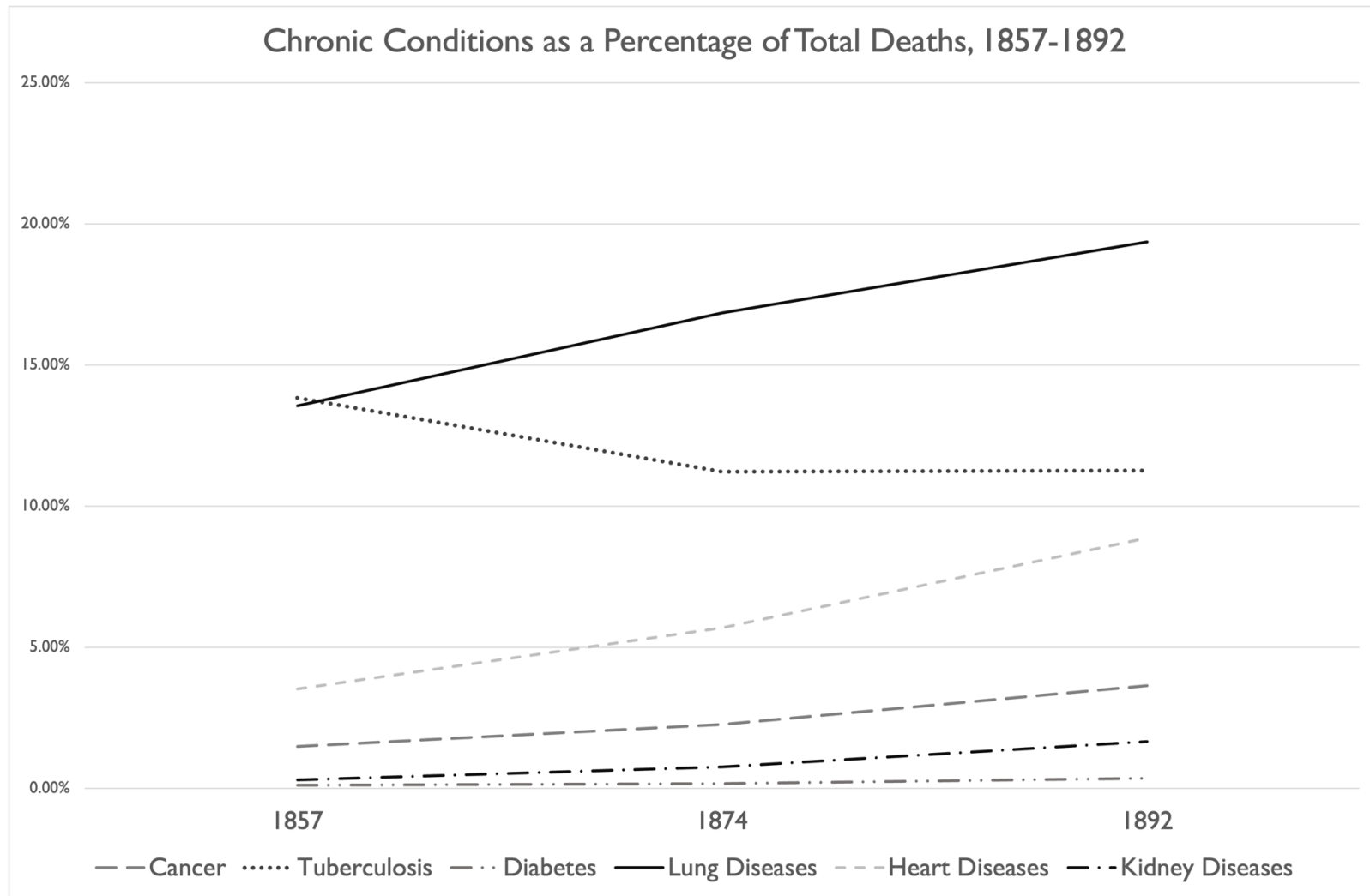


Figure 3 Graph showing deaths from selected chronic conditions (Cancer, Diabetes, Heart Diseases, Tuberculosis, Lung Diseases and Kidney Diseases) as a percentage of total deaths, between 1857 and 1892 (Author's Own)

this reason, total circulatory related deaths were amalgamated for each year. For more detailed analysis of death rates for specific diseases, an in-depth systematic analysis into fluctuating data collection methods, diagnosis criteria and death registration over the period would be necessary, however, such an analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis. More detailed explanation of data selection is provided in Appendix B. Nevertheless, this data shows the general trend of decreasing death rate from acute infections over the second half of the nineteenth century (Figure 4).

Due to this decrease in deaths from acute infection, however, a higher proportion of people were dying from long-term chronic or progressive conditions. The increase in cancer fatalities was a particular concern amongst medical professionals and policy makers. Writing in 1876, William Farr, a medical statistician for the General Register Office, emotively urged physicians and researchers to focus on the disease:

Cancer, one of the longest and most painful diseases to which mankind is subject, is growing more fatal. [...] The diagnosis of internal cancer has no doubt made considerable progress [...]; but the increase in cancer demands all the attention of pathologists. Great will be the merit of the physician who discovers how its attacks can be warded off, or its ravages arrested. (Registrar-General 1876, 221)

However, it was respiratory conditions which caused the majority of deaths, with lung diseases, including bronchitis, emphysema, asthma, pneumonia, and tuberculosis, including all subtypes, accounting for almost a third of deaths in 1892. Reporting in the period did not differentiate between chronic and acute bronchitis, and Widdicombe (2020, 305–306) estimates that between a quarter and half of bronchitis deaths were related to the acute form. Even accounting for this overestimation, however, chronic lung conditions were a major killer in the late nineteenth century, and have been attributed to poor air quality in urban areas, and to the use of coal as a method of domestic heating (Widdicombe 2020, 306–307).

By averaging the mortalities from the causes specified above, it is possible to see the broad trend over the period of more deaths resulting from chronic conditions. This conclusion is supported by documentary evidence from the period. In 1899, Joseph Jacobs (265) wrote “[n]owadays death comes later, with more warnings of his approach, and takes us less by surprise”. Jacobs (1899, 265) continued, “[o]ften, too, medical science protracts life at the cost of extra suffering, so that death comes at last more as a release, and frequently causes more relief than grief to those who remain”. This pattern of mortality must have influenced the experience of sickness and caring. Less often was death a ‘bolt from the blue’, which struck multiple family members in epidemics, and rapidly changed the lives of the household. Rather, the dying process was becoming more often extended over weeks or months.

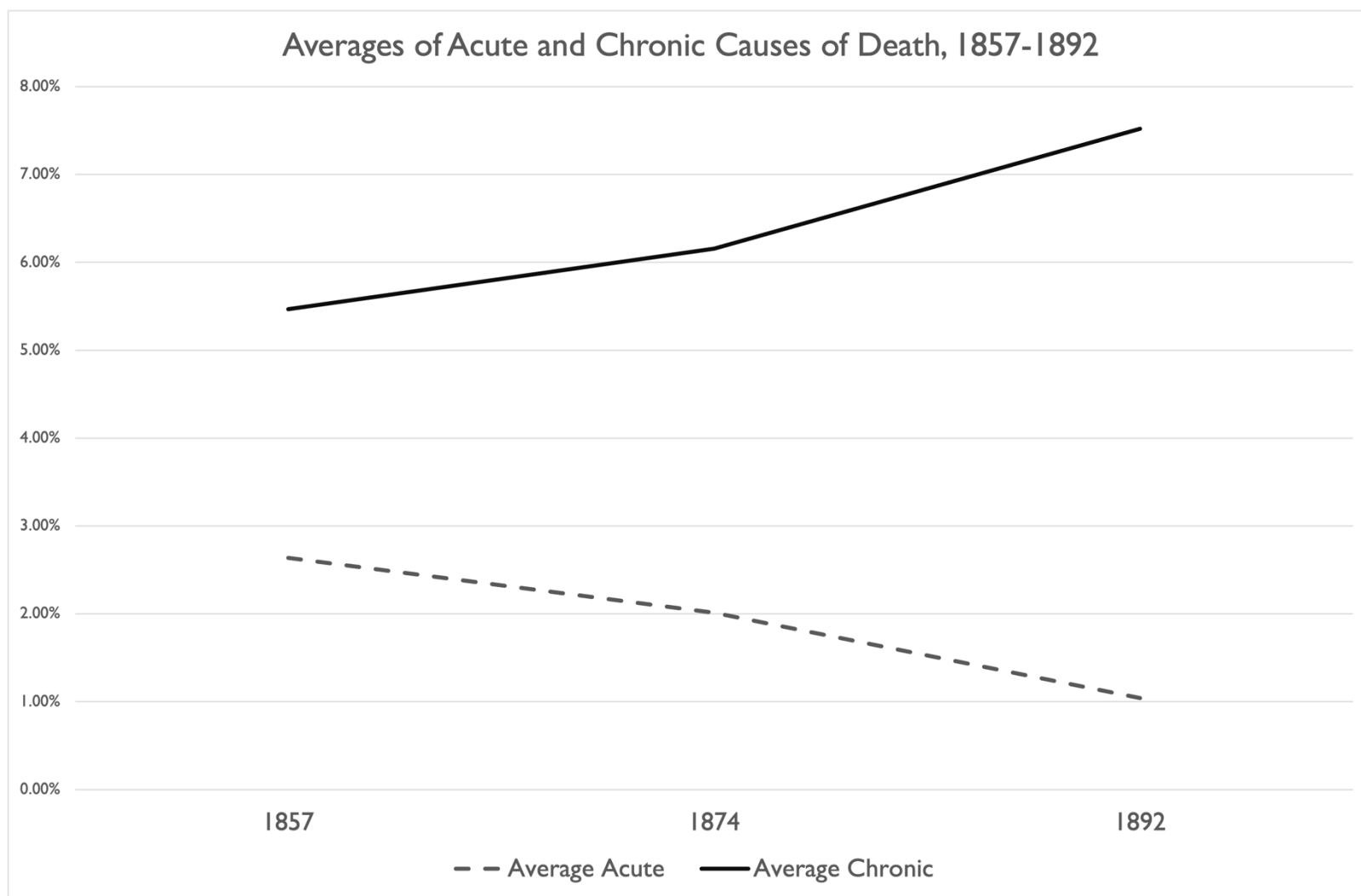


Figure 4 Graph showing averages of deaths from acute infections and chronic conditions (compiled from data shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4) between 1857 and 1892 (Author's Own)

An exception to this trend was in child mortality, though the introduction of compulsory small-pox vaccine in the *Vaccination Act 1853* dramatically decreased deaths from small-pox (Figure 5). Acute infections remained a common cause of death of children (Figure 6), with highly infectious diseases like scarlet fever often spreading rapidly through the household. The mortality rate for diseases such as this was high, and usually very quick, leading to the loss of multiple children simultaneously. Jalland (1996, 127–128) gives the example of Archibald Tait, who would later become Archbishop of Canterbury. Tait lost five children to scarlet fever in 1856, and wrote “Five little weeks did the work of fifty years” (Jalland 1996, 127). With child mortality so common, caring for sick children carried with it not only the fear of loss, but also the intensity of needing to care for multiple children at once, whether ill or not. Daily life must continue, and healthy children must still be fed and taken care of. Where possible, the quarantining of healthy children from sick may have resulted in parents being separated from some of their children, or even their spouse, for fear of spreading the disease (Jalland 1996, 124–125). In smaller households, or those without the means to send children away, the spread of illness through the family must have seemed inevitable.

In the late-nineteenth century, particularly amongst the middle-classes, the majority of dying still occurred within the home, as sanatoria, hospitals and hospices were considered to be the preserve of the poor and desperate (Helm 2013, 101). The ideal death, for the Victorian middle-class, should take place within the dying person’s own bed, surrounded by caring family (Howarth 1997, 90). By contrast, hospitals were impersonal, the preserve of those with no family, who had no other choice. However, the peaceful, steady decline, during which the dying were resigned but unafraid, and the carers saddened by the loss, but comforted by the removal of their loved one to God’s side, was likely a romanticised image (Cannadine 2012, 190).

Caring for the dying within the home was not a simple process. While increasingly, middle-class families might employ staff to help with care of the sick, these were unlikely to be professional nurses, but rather local women with some experience of caring (Roberts 1989[2020], 193; Adams 1992, 161; Strange 2002, 152; Jalland 1996, 211). While his sister was dying of fever in the early 1840s, surgeon, Charles Beckett, employed a young woman who had been caring for her ailing mother (Beckett 1852, 83), while the clergyman and philanthropist, Thomas Guthrie, was nursed by a ‘highland lassie’ in 1873 (Guthrie and Guthrie 1877, 773). In families with less disposable income, care may be taken on by existing servants, or more often, would have fallen to the family, in particular to the women, though it is likely that the men of the household also took on caring duties when needed (Jalland 1996, 98–99; Helm 2013, 105–107). Doctors’ visits were common, but often doctors did not take on the labour of administering treatment, leaving medicine with the primary

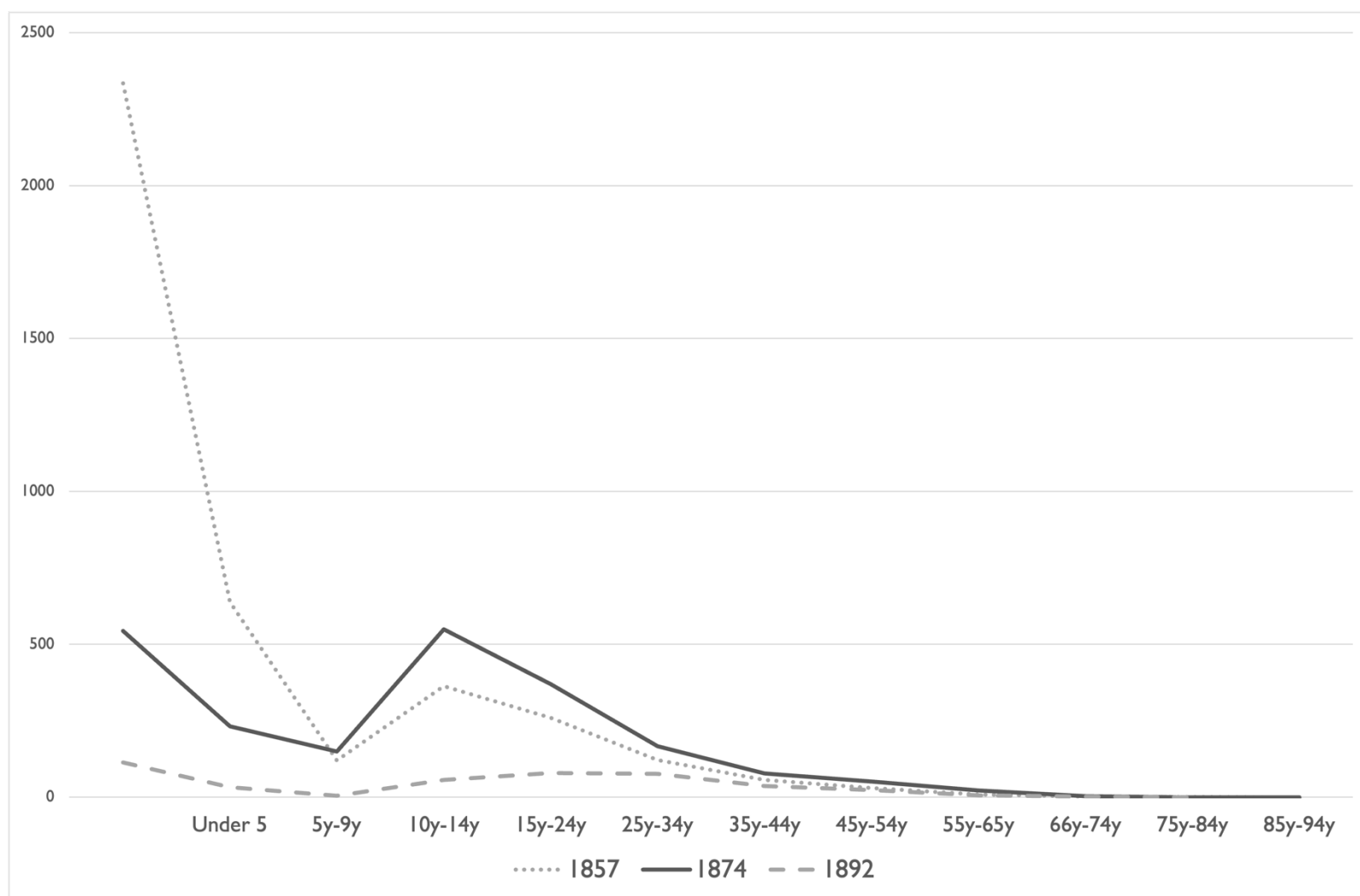


Figure 5 Graph showing the number of deaths from smallpox by age group in 1857, 1874 and 1892, following the Vaccination Act 1853 (Author's Own)

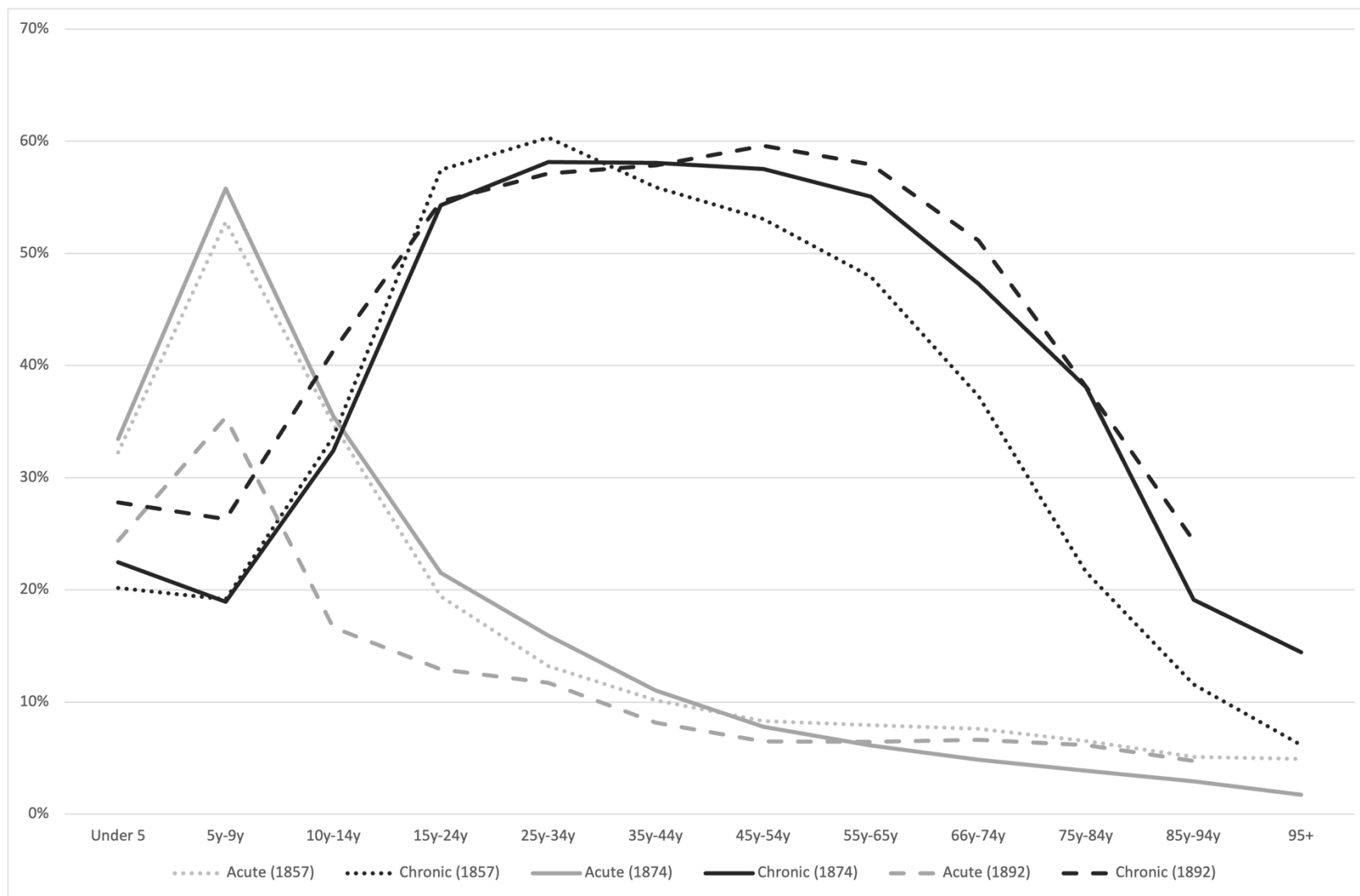


Figure 6 Graph showing percentage of deaths from acute and chronic causes by age group between 1857 and 1892 (Author's Own)

carer without much instruction, or leaving the family to purchase drugs from the chemist, with little knowledge of concentrations or dosage (Helm 2013, 106).

For those who could not afford to pay for a doctor's visit, there were few options. The Poor Law (1834) offered basic provision of healthcare for those in workhouses, and voluntary hospitals may fundraise for the 'deserving poor' (Bynum 1994, 185), but the majority of the working class did not qualify for those institutions. Many turned to private insurance brokers, worker's associations, or friendly societies, which covered medical expenses in return for regular payments (Bynum 1994, 198). This remained the predominant way for the working class to access healthcare until the *National Insurance Act of 1911* (Bynum 1994, 201). Rowntree's survey of poverty in York in 1900 showed that the majority of people on low incomes were paying for life or sickness insurance. One case study used by Rowntree (1908, 55) was the Smith family, who regularly had to go without food if they had unexpected expenses, but felt they needed to spend 10d a week on life insurance and the 'sick club'. Mrs Smith told investigators that despite it "often (being) difficult to spare the money, she has felt that these payments must be made, and has consoled herself that they were making provision for sickness" (Rowntree 1908, 272). For families such as the Smiths, provision for lack of earnings caused by ill health or death was a necessity on par with food and rent.

Similarly, membership of local funeral clubs and friendly societies provided provision for the expenses of the funeral procession and burial. Roberts (1989[2020], 190), in her study into the funeral customs of Lancashire, found that families who might not be able afford healthcare, nevertheless usually found the money to pay the funeral club. Such societies could also be counted on to bolster the numbers of attendees, increasing the spectacle of the procession (Roberts 1989[2020], 203). For those who feared a pauper's funeral (see Strange 2003; Hurran and King 2005; King 2022 for discussion), funeral clubs were a way to ensure that their loved ones received an appropriate burial.

In a period where husbands were generally the main breadwinners, and, particularly in working-class families, income was often supplemented by the wages of adult children, cousins or siblings, a death in the family may put increased strain on family finances. Drawing on census data for York in 1861, employment for adult men was generally unaffected by marital status (99% of married men, 95% of widowed men, 97% of single men). In contrast to this, only 14% of married women reported having a job, compared to 81% of widows, and 60% of single women. This may indicate that for many women, losing a spouse necessitated a return to more formalised work, and therefore a potentially dramatic change in lifestyle. Demographically, the percentage of people who gave their marital status as widowed increased with age, however, women were more likely to be living as widows at a younger age than men (Figure 7). Being widowed at a younger age also meant that women faced the chance of being left to support young children alone, creating an increased financial burden.

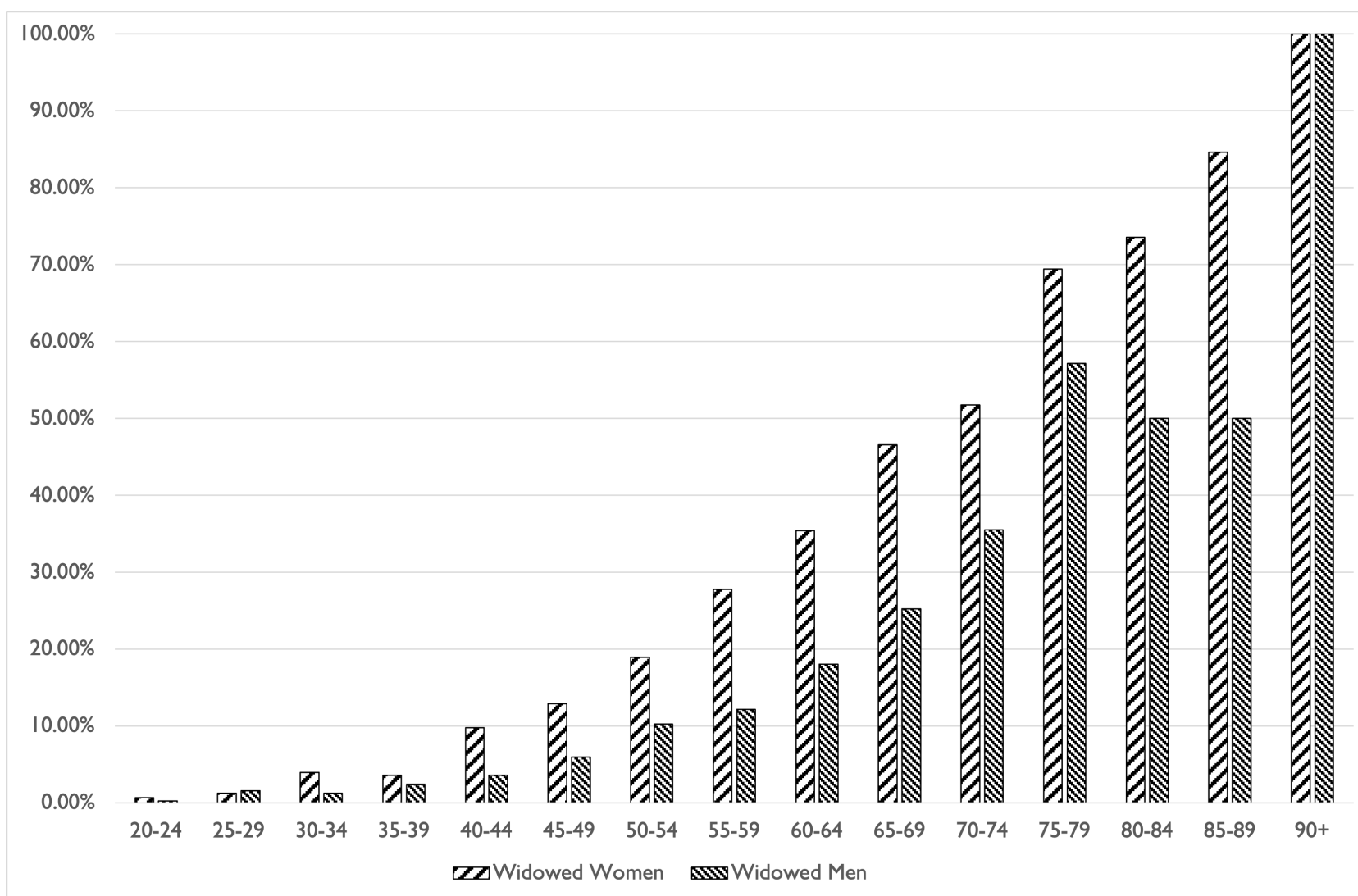


Figure 7 Graph showing the percentage of widowed men and women in different age groups living in York in 1861 (Author's Own)

Muller (2020a, 92–93) showed that widows and their children formed the majority of recipients of relief under the Poor Laws. This may indicate that the loss of a husband, or father, on whom women were financially dependent, may have elicited a strong emotional response focused on fear for the future, and material survival, as well as feelings of loss.

Curran (1993) argues that lower-middle-class women were most likely to feel the pressure of the loss of a spouse. The finances required for maintaining a middle-class lifestyle were high. While working-class women may already be supplementing the family income with paying work, and living in low-cost, overcrowded housing, middle-class widows may face the loss of their home, and the necessity of moving in with relatives or taking in lodgers (Curran 1993, 223, 233). This transformation from domestic privacy to the public working world, or the sharing of housing, may have represented a dramatic shift in lifestyle. Compared with independently wealthy landowning women, and the already struggling working class, middle-class widows may simply have had more to lose.

Figures for appropriate lengths of mourning were not consistent over the period, and varied depending on the periodical or etiquette guide they were published in. Mourning periods cannot, therefore, be considered as a prescriptive rule, but rather as a social pressure, enacted by wider culture but also by the local community. Nevertheless, Taylor (2009, 303) compiled a list of estimated mourning lengths – around 2 ½ years for a husband, 2 years each for parents and parents-in-law, and 1 year for each child (see Table 1). The remarriage rate for widowed women was relatively low in the period between 1850 and 1890, around 4% for women aged between 40 and 44 (Muller 2020b, 3). This meant that it was likely that a woman may only be married once, or perhaps twice. In contrast, women were likely to have multiple children and siblings, as well as parents and parents-in-law, who may predecease them. Though the length of time spent in mourning for a spouse was extended compared to other relatives, over the course of their lives, women were likely to spend more time in mourning for other relatives. High child mortality meant that the vast majority of mourning would likely have been for children, and there was little differentiation in mourning material culture for a spouse compared with other relatives, on whom the woman may or may not be relying on financially.

Deceased Relative	Women	Men
For spouse	2 ½ years	3 months
For child	1 year	None

For parent	2 years	None
For parent-in-law	2 years	None
For grandparent	9 months	None
For sibling	6 months	None
For aunt/uncle	3 months	None
For cousin	3 months	None
For parent-in-law of child	6 weeks	None

Table 1 The prescribed mourning periods following bereavement of relatives (after Taylor 2009)

Though the middle-class expanded in the second-half of the nineteenth century, and therefore more women likely fell into this precarious category, the possibility of financial ruin following a spouse's death, was not novel. Wall (2015, 31) showed from the recipients of poor relief that widows were proportionally more likely to be living in poverty than the rest of the population throughout the sixteenth- to the early-twentieth-centuries. While mourning culture existed throughout this period, along with material culture related to death and bereavement, it did not reach the elaborate, extended, and performative levels which were common in the 1870s and 1880s, and nor was mourning reserved for spouses. Most notably, however, the prescribed mourning periods for relatives does not appear to allow variance for the level of grief felt. A woman may be expected to mourn for twice as long for her father-in-law as for her child, but there seems to have been little expectation that her grief should be greater. Conversely, men were not expected to mourn performatively for their children at all, but there are numerous documentary accounts and literary depictions of men grieving deeply for their lost children (examples are discussed in Chapters 4-7).

Despite increasing life expectancies and greater medical understanding, death remained close for late-Victorians, occurring primarily within the home. The loss of children was still common, and financial dependence on men meant that widowhood was a dismal prospect for many women. This was not, however, a marked difference from earlier periods, or from the twentieth century prior to 1914. It does not seem, therefore, that emotion, whether an outpouring of grief at repeated losses, or anxiety about future destitution, was a driving force behind the extended performative mourning which characterised the second half of the nineteenth century.

2.2 Funerary Culture

Performative mourning was practiced throughout social classes, and working-class funeral celebrations were particularly elaborate during the second half of the nineteenth century, drawing criticism from contemporary commentators for the expense. Victorian social reformer, Edwin Chadwick (1843, 46), argued that the expensive funerals of the working class were both increasing poverty and creating a public health crisis, as burials were often delayed, while sufficient funds were found, leaving the corpse to decay within the rooms of the living. For Chadwick (1843, 77), it was the responsibility of the middle-class to set an example of humble funerals. Others took up the mantle, with the founding of the National Funeral and Mourning Reform Association in 1875 (Morley 1971, 63), nevertheless, lavish working-class funerals, including mutes, silks, ostrich plumes and black horses, continued well into the twentieth century in some communities (Curl 2000, 205).

Late-Victorian funerals were intensely visible community affairs, which involved both secular and religious traditions. Frisby (2015) considers the folklore around death and dying, which existed particularly in working-class communities, and which influenced the experience of the funeral week, such as the tolling of bells, the lighting of candles and sitting in vigil. The visiting of the house of the deceased, and the viewing of the corpse was a common occurrence, even for children (Strange 2002, 155). The sorrowful silence of visits and vigils could be contrasted by the ebullient atmosphere of the wake, which generally took place the night before the funeral. Wakes in Britain were often associated with the Irish diaspora, though they were also common in Scottish and Welsh communities, and were often referred to as “Irish wakes” in newspaper reports (eg. *Yorkshire Gazette*, 8th March 1884). This was also often combined with anti-Irish sentiments which considered wakes to be a public health hazard, such as in the *Sanitary Record* (1875, 151) where a death within an Irish immigrant family prompted a wake which was blamed for spreading smallpox within Haslingden, Lancashire. In another case, a wake was blamed for an outbreak of typhus in Fethard, County Tipperary by the British colonial registrar (Registrar General 1874, 21). In York, there were calls for “Irish wakes” to be discouraged by Catholic priests following an outbreak of scarlet fever in Walmgate (*York Herald*, 19th November 1877). In working-class English communities, the celebration more often took place on the day of the funeral, and were called funeral feasts, or avrils (sometimes avrals or averills) in the North of England.

Wakes and avrils were similar customs, centred around the consumption of food and drink within the home of the bereaved or on the street. Providing alcohol and funeral cakes to the local community was considered part of death folklore, and the custom was contemporarily believed to stem from pagan practices (Frisby 2019, 224). However, the atmosphere in wakes and avrils was one of celebration. Writing in 1858, Elizabeth Stone describes rural Northern avrils:

There is abundant wealth of beef, ham, bacon, mutton-ham, fowls, and other such sufficing refreshment; and spirits (usually smuggled) fly about merrily; and mirth too often becomes uproarious, and excess sadly degrading (Stone 1858, 325)

Wakes and avrils often included the sharing of stories about the dead, as well as singing, joking and dancing (Gammon 1988; Richardson 1988, 22-23). The singing of popular hymns and laments might also follow the funeral procession, and in some cases continue in the church or graveyard (Gammon 1988, 413, 436). Because of this contrast with more sombre middle-class funeral rites, and because of its association with the working-class Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English communities, such funeral feasts were criticised heavily. This criticism tended to focus on the idea that the grieving demonstrated during funeral feasts was false, and an excuse to carouse, drink, and in some cases, fight. Stone (1858, 325) continues:

Some hours are spent in what may fairly be termed jovial conviviality before the funeral takes place; and we are not far from the truth when we remark that many who go ostensibly to attend a funeral, have in reality no such object in view.

However, Richardson (1988, 23) characterises wakes not as a communal celebration, but rather as a catharsis, allowing for the legitimised expression of intense emotions, whatever those emotions may be. Frisby (2019, 225) considers this the part of the 'social process' of the funeral, reaffirming social ties and following the expectations of local community. All of these social funerary behaviours have been interpreted as representing 'doing right by the dead' (Strange 2002, 156; Frisby 2019, 225), however, they also reconnect the living. This builds on the idea of the funeral ritual as one focused on the maintenance of social niceties, which demonstrates the respectability of the family, and the participation of the bereaved in continued social life.

The funeral itself would generally take place within a week of the death. Analysis of death and burial dates given on funeral cards in the period gave an average of 3.3 days.¹ Particularly in unexpected deaths, there may have been considerable time pressure to organise a funeral. The professionalisation of the funeral industry had begun in the seventeenth century, and by 1850, there were a proliferation of trades providing materials for the funeral, including coffin makers, undertakers and funeral furnishers, as well as tangential industries, such as carriage operators for funeral transport, and printers for funeral cards (see Litten 1991; and Fritz 1994 for discussion of this transition). In the second half of the nineteenth century tradition was largely preferred in funerary ritual. The form of funeral materials did not undergo a fundamental change into the 1850s, however, the increasing availability of material culture allowed for an increase in the elaborateness of the display. Nevertheless, prevailing patterns of consumption, in which non-essential goods were

¹ See Chapter 6 for methodology of funeral card analysis.

becoming increasingly affordable, and for many, especially the expanding lower middle-class, disposable income was also increasing, meant that spending on traditional forms of funerary material culture was increasing. The increasing specialisation of the funeral industry has been argued to have intersected with the advent of novel technologies, to create a standardised and chronologically distinct material culture of burial between the early-eighteenth- and the mid-nineteenth centuries (Litten 1991, 1998).

Excavation and analysis of post-1850 graves in the UK have been limited by the potential for soft tissue preservation, and lack of development opportunities on the sites of more recent burials. As such, 1850 has usually been used as a terminal date for analyses of excavated coffin material. Excavations of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century burials have focused on shrouds and burial dress (eg. Davidson 2016; Leader et al. 2021; Cherryson 2018), and, most expansively, on coffin furniture (generally called 'coffin hardware' in a North American context), (eg. Boore 1998; Boston et al. 2009; see Church and Smith 1966; Garrow 2018; Hancox 2006; Hoile 2018; Leader et al. 2022; Loe and Boston 2018; Mytum 2018; Trinkley and Hacker 2018; Mahoney-Swales, O'Neill and Willmott 2011).

Coffin furniture consists of the metal fittings of the coffin, such as the grips (handles), *depositum* breastplates, decoration such as tinplate coffin lace, and the nails, staples and pins which fastened the coffin together and attached fabric decoration. In the eighteenth century, these fittings were often produced by cabinet makers, and consisted of repurposed hardware from the furniture industry (Litten 1991, 106). Into the nineteenth century, however, technological innovations, such as mechanised tinplate manufacture meant that fittings could be designed specifically for the coffin industry (Litten 1991, 109). Despite this, however, coffin furniture shows more conservatism in style and little chronological change over the course of the nineteenth century (Mytum 2018, 91). This stagnation of coffin furniture form has been attributed to the funerary industry being relatively resistant to change in general, with both consumers and producers preferring the comfort and stability of tradition (Hoile 2018, 218–219; Mytum 2018, 91). In addition, coffins were on view for a relatively short period of time, usually only a matter of hours in the private space of the home, and for an extremely limited selection of mourners, and when on display, they were likely to be eclipsed by the presence of the body and the bereaved (Hoile 2018, 217; Mytum 2018, 76). The social interaction between the mourners, and the heightened emotional state of the participants likely diminished the social importance of the form of the coffin (Mytum 2018, 76). Importantly, Mytum (2018) and Hoile (2018) both consider the conservativeness of coffin furniture from the perspective of grief, as well as performative mourning. In contrast to the purchase of the gravestone, which could take place up to a year after the interment, coffins and their accoutrements would have been bought immediately after the initial bereavement, likely by relatives in an emotional state who would

have relied on the undertaker to suggest something appropriate (Mytum 2018, 76). This heightened emotional state, coupled with limited audience for the coffin itself, may have meant that innovative design choices were beyond the notice of grieving relatives, and an unnecessary expense for undertakers. In this way, the consideration of grief as a contributing factor to decision making around performative material culture adds nuance to the understanding of the experience of bereavement in the period.

The end of the nineteenth century saw the rise of cremation as a potential option for the deposition of a body. The Cremation Society of England was formed in 1874, in order to promote cremation as a more sanitary option for the disposal of the dead for a population that was rapidly outgrowing its burial spaces (Thompson 1899, 6). Henry Thompson, first president of the society, wrote that the main opposition to cremation centred around religious arguments, which labelled the practice as 'pagan' (Thompson 1899, 4). The issue of cremation was divisive across religious communities, with the Catholic Church vehemently opposing it, and Jewish and Protestant leaders divided (Colombo 2017, 28–30). The first legal cremation took place in Britain in 1885, however, uptake of the practice remained low for the rest of the century. Though the number of cremations increased from three in 1885 to 240 in 1898, this figure represented only 0.04% of deaths registered in that year.² It was not until after the Second World War that cremation became a common option in the United Kingdom (Colombo 2017, 23).

Knight (2018, 303) suggests that opposition to cremation was partially founded on the cultural connotations of burning as the punishment reserved for heretics, as well as resistance from the Church of England. Trends in religious adherence in the second half of the nineteenth century have been characterised by an expansion of religious freedom and individual choice; a decrease in attendance of formalised religious service; and an increase in a more culturally-Christian rather than practising population (Brown 2011; McLeod 1984; Heimann 2012; Melnyk 2008). With the expansion, and governmental legitimisation, of both protestant nonconformism and, largely Irish-led Catholicism in the early- to mid-nineteenth century, the Anglican Church reacted in order to try maintain its state influence by proposing a less rigidly doctrinal approach, allowing for more individual freedom (Brown 2011, 102, 106).

Overall trends in Christian belief in the second half of the nineteenth century included a decreased interest in biblical literalism and the study of scripture (Brown 2011, 126), and a decreased participation in formalised and denominational worship (McLeod 1984, 63). Morley (1971, 104) posits that the religious and supernatural remained material presences in life, with God, and his

² The number of deaths in England and Wales in 1898 was 552,141, taken from the Annual Report of the Registrar General (Great Britain. General Register Office 1899, xv)

angels conceived of as corporeal presences rather than ephemeral forces in the world. The conception of providence, that God's hand was guiding earthly affairs, was especially important in Protestant doctrine (Brown 2014, 2). God's will guided not only the outward trajectory of empire and colonialism (Brown 2014, 3), but also the lives of individuals (Hardwick 2021, 119). However, religious thinkers and the lay population began to embrace the idea of God as benevolent and loving rather than wrathful, rejecting the notions of the inherent sinfulness of mankind and the eternal punishment of the wicked (Brown 2011, 103; Melnyk 2008, 84; George 2011, 68). Heaven became conceptualised as an idealised landscape, home to those loved ones who had died before (Wheeler 1994, 11), and ideas of hellfire and damnation were replaced by the vague notion of being separated from God's love (Rosman 2003, 269). Knight (2018, 305) attributes this rejection of a literal belief in Hell as a factor in the increasing acceptance of cremation by Church of England leaders at the turn of the twentieth century. This, however, largely did not translate to the lay population, who continued to find the symbolism of being consigned to the flames a little too uncomfortable (Knight 2018, 305).

Discussions around the promotion of cremation in the late nineteenth century have often centred around proponents' appeals to the emotive. Continental European writings extolling the use of cremation focused on lost loved ones discarded in the cold ground, or the horrors of slow decomposition (Kosuch 2020). Proponents in the United Kingdom, such as Henry Thompson, used similar arguments:

[C]ould I paint in its true colours the ghastly picture of that which happens to the mortal remains of the dearest we have lost, the page would be too deeply stained for publication [...] it would arouse a powerful repugnance to the horrible notion that we too must some day become so vile and offensive (Thompson 1899, 90–91)

The use of such emotive language was common in British cremationist literature, which emphasised the 'evil' and 'horror' of the decomposing corpse in contrast to the 'purification' of the fire (Marshall 2014, 465). Emotion has not often, however, been explored as a driving factor behind the popular rejection of cremation, with scholars, such as Knight (2018), focusing more on theological debate. The increasing acceptance of cremation by Anglican leaders in the early twentieth century did not appear to impact the public, however, who largely did not take up the practice until after the Second World War. An analysis of how emotions, such as fear or disgust, might have coalesced with the connotation of fire as symbolic of religious punishment, to produce a discomfort with cremation, which could not be overcome by arguments of sanitation, or descriptions of the horrors of decomposition, which were, at least, familiar evils.

2.3 Cemeteries

Though it would be another 70 years before it was popularised, cremation was posited as a solution to the significant problem population growth was having on burial space in the second half of the nineteenth century. Before the 1820s, most people could expect to be buried within their parish churchyard. However, with the large scale population increase, particularly in urban areas, with the Industrial Revolution, graveyard provision quickly became outstripped (Mytum 1989, 286). This led to fears of a public health crisis, as bodies were being interred very close to the surface, and waterlogged burial areas were potentially contaminating local rivers and water supplies (Mytum 1989, 292). In order to manage this, a series of parliamentary acts were passed which eventually mandated cities to provide cemeteries for their populations. These cemeteries were often operated by private companies and dramatically altered interment in England, though Rugg *et al.* (2014, 631) critique the narrative of a transition from the religious to the capitalist as 'overly simplistic'. In addition, Baxter (2013, 107) argues that cemetery research in North America have tended to form to distinct streams of analysis, either focus on broad structural questions around status and demography, or focus on sentimentality and symbolism as a cultural phenomenon which articulated familial grief. Since then, Baxter (2020) has begun research into the cemetery landscape, engaging more heavily with questions related to individual emotionality and affectivity, however, this research area is still underdeveloped.

Morley (1971, 52–62) initially discussed cemeteries in reference to the form of, and the social response to, the monuments within them, while Curl (1975) charted the emergence of the cemetery, and cemetery companies, focusing largely on the initial planning, architecture and layout of cemeteries within London. However, this was followed by work which explored the cemetery, particularly the garden cemetery, as an experiential landscape, one which embodied the ideals of Improvement (Tarlow 2000, 227). The garden cemetery has been argued to represent the ideals espoused by this movement, as hygienic, aesthetic, and morally uplifting for the working people of urban centres (Tarlow 2000, 228). Rugg (1998, 124–125) also explored cemeteries as a social force, suggesting that cemeteries, hosting multid denominational burials, and therefore managing the competing interests of religious groups, and often administrated by local community boards, may have been the site of social negotiation and conflicts. The advent of municipal cemeteries created a tension between inclusion and alienation, in which the working-class had simultaneously had more rights to a burial place in perpetuity, and were increasingly segregated by a cemetery system built upon a commercialised model (Herman 2010). Mytum (1989, 295) suggests that the emergence of permanent private plots in cemeteries, offered the middle class, as well as some of the more affluent working class, to continue their accumulation of private property into the afterlife. A stone monument, above an individual or family plot, acted as a marker for success, and wrote the family name quite literally into stone (Mytum 1989, 295). It was partly this desire for earthly immortality,

and for the display of familial status, which drove spending on stone monuments (Mytum 1989, 295). The sum of this research into the broad narratives of the reasons for, and the social effects of, the cemetery movement represent some of the most well-articulated funerary research into nineteenth-century practice, offering a complex and nuanced discussion into the impact of this transition into a burial landscape more familiar to us today. The cemetery as an affective space has, however, perhaps been less well trodden.

Tarlow (2000, 232) argues that the dead remain 'visitable' in the landscape, and this is important for people to go and enact grieving behaviours physically. The monument stone locates the dead in a physical location which could be visited (Tarlow 2000, 232). Tarlow (2000, 235) emphasises the cemetery as an 'emotional' landscape, one which represented the sentimental ideals associated with mourning and appropriate grief. However, Tarlow (2000, 235) approaches this on a broad level, ascribing wider societal values, and abstract conceptions around morality, memory and sentiment, to the cemetery design, rather than focusing on the bodily and emotional experience of those using the cemetery landscape.

Jalland (1996, 291–295) explores the cemetery, and particularly the graveside, with greater reference to the location as part of the grieving process. Visiting the grave was part of many bereaved people's routine, either with regular visits, or more sporadic trips on anniversaries (Jalland 1996, 293). The graveside acted as both a location at which to undertake commemorative behaviours, but also as a 'home' for the dead, which provided comfort and consolation to the bereaved (Jalland 1996, 293). However, it is arguably Baxter's (2020; 2019; 2013) work on childhood, child death and the cemetery in nineteenth-century America, which has most effectively explored the cemetery as a landscape in which the living spend time, rather than as a static home for the dead. For Baxter (2019, 35) death and mortality were central to the experience of the lifeway in the nineteenth century, as high mortality rates meant that children would be exposed from a young age to the concept of dying and to grief, either within their own families or their wider community. Toys such as dolls could be used to play-act dying and funerals, with special doll 'coffins' manufactured for children's play (Baxter 2019, 34).

This research by Jalland (1996) and Baxter (2020; 2019; 2013) is important because it narrows the focus back onto the individual bereaved, and how the cemetery as a place may have featured within some people's experience of grieving. This has been an important addition to the field of study, which brings the locates the individual in context with the grand narratives of social and political change.

2.4 Commemoration and Memorialisation

Part of the appeal of the cemetery was that a plot was granted *in perpetuum*. In York Cemetery, even for public plots, which could contain up to forty people, there was a guarantee that the grave would not be reopened once it was filled. However, the erection of a stone memorial to the dead remained the preserve of the few throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. At York Cemetery, between 1837 and 1901, around a quarter of plots had an associated memorial, and only around 12% of those buried were commemorated on a memorial (Buckham 2000, 160). In addition to this, Buckham's (2000, 162) survey of memorials in York Cemetery found that gravestones may be inscribed with memorials to individuals buried in a different plot, or a different burial ground. The funds available, and the logistics of the burial, may have had a large impact on where within a cemetery an individual could be buried, and on where any stone memorial may be placed. Though kinship ties were commonly articulated on gravestones, those connections were often not replicated by burial location, except for those who may be able to purchase a full family plot.

Memorial styles in the post-mediaeval period were largely chronologically distinct, and the stylistic transition from literal representations of the death's head in the seventeenth century to a more figurative symbolism in the eighteenth century has been well documented in the British Isles (Buckham 1999; Tarlow 1999; Mytum 2003, 2009; Cannon 1989), as well as in North America (Gorman and DiBlasi 1981; Baugher and Winter 1983; Rainville 1999; Veit 2009, 2021; Heinrich 2014; Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Deetz and Dethlefsen 1967), and Australia (eg. Burke *et al.* 2018; Muller 2023). In comparison, post-1850 stone memorials have been relatively underinterpreted, though well documented in cemetery surveys, such as those deposited in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). A recording guide (Mytum and CBA 2020) emerging from the Discovering England's Burial Grounds (DEBS) project has further elucidated the recording of late-Victorian monuments.

Gothic-style headstones represented a common form of stone memorial in the second half of the nineteenth century (Brooks 1989, 64; Snell and Jones 2018, 63), however, other forms were also represented at different times in different areas, for example pedimented stones from the 1830s to the 1880s in Pembrokeshire (Mytum 2002, 222), and angel statues from the 1890s (Jones and Snell 2021, 98) (Figures 8, 9, 10, and 11). Overall, patterns of memorial form appear more complex in the late-Victorian period, than the transition from literal to figurative symbolism identified in the eighteenth century, potentially representing regional, class, religious and cultural variance (eg. amongst the middle class in Pembrokeshire demonstrated by Mytum 2002, 224).

Cannon (1989) argued that as funerary monuments amongst the elite became more elaborate, this encouraged increasingly elaborate gravestones amongst the middle class, in an attempt to increase their status. This was followed by a decline in ostentatious memorials by the wealthy in favour of a showcase of demure restraint (Cannon 1989, 349). This theory draws on Veblen's (1973) ideas of



Figure 8 Photograph of late-nineteenth century gravestones at Old Calton Cemetery, Edinburgh, showing gothic (foreground), pedimented (back left) and obelisk (back right) style memorials (Author's Own)



Figure 9 Photograph of obelisk style memorial in York Cemetery, York (Author's Own)



Figure 10 Photograph of rusticated cross memorial with ivy/foilage decoration in York Cemetery, York (Author's Own)



Figure 11 Photograph of The Angel of Death (1894) memorial by William Wetmore Story for his wife, Emelyn, in the Non-Catholic Cemetery, Rome (Wikimedia Commons)

conspicuous consumption, and Leibenstein's (1950) demand theory, which model a cyclical effect, in which the upper-, middle-, and working-classes take on fashionable trends in order to emulate and distinguish themselves from each other. Theories of emulation have, however, been heavily critiqued and these models may offer a reductive view of class conflicts (see Weatherill 1996; Douglas and Isherwood 1996; Trigg 2001). Johnson (1988, 42) argues that it was not emulation between different social classes that drove fashion, but the complex social hierarchies between peers. Trigg (2001, 110) links all this with cultural capital, and argues that this capital, in the form of consumption, can be community specific, relevant only within a person's own social group. This, along with the relatively narrow demographic represented in stone memorials, means that the use of class emulation as a model for explaining the form of memorials, may not represent a driving force in stylistic change.

In contrast, Buckham (2002) uses consumerist theory to investigate the reciprocal relationship between customer and stonemasons, in order to shift the focus from what was bought, to why particular items were chosen, and what values the consumer placed upon the object. Buckham (2002) also engaged with the pattern books not just as a documentary source but as an object of material culture in their own right. By considering the practicalities of their use, the difficulty in navigating the different styles, and the lack of information included about pricing, Buckham (2002, 205) was able to show that the use of the books likely involved discussion with the stonemason, allowing opportunities for both negotiation and upselling. By engaging with both pattern books and the material remains of gravestones within York cemetery, Buckham (2002, 212) was able to show that memorial styles were not simply chosen from the available options, but adapted for the individual consumer, indicating that the choice of the form of the gravestone was something that the bereaved engaged with actively.

Memorials often included familial information, and a little less commonly, information about where the deceased came from, or lived. Tarlow (1998, 43) argues that gravestones memorialise relationships, in these cases, they memorialise kinship relationships, and people's relationships to place. More succinctly, Snell (2003) refers to these connections as belonging, a word with overtly emotive connotations. Primarily, the commemoration of multiple individuals on a single stone demonstrates that gravestones remained fulcrums of commemorative behaviour in the years and decades following their erection. Mytum (2003, 111) draws on Kopytoff (1986) to term this the "continuing social life of the memorials". These multi-generational stones articulate complex kinship relationships, demonstrating and showcasing the familial and local ties of the living. Snell (2003, 126–127), in particular, explores the specific context of Midlands parochial gravestones within the early- and mid-nineteenth century, drawing on rising migration rates, to argue that the importance of marking belonging to a parish may have been a defensive reaction by those who remained in their birthplaces, witnessing the loss of the traditional community. As migration was further normalised,

towards the end of the nineteenth and, even more so, in the twentieth century, a sense of attachment to a singular place became less common, and the phrase 'of this parish' increasingly disappeared from memorial inscriptions (Snell 2003, 128). Gravestones have also been considered as articulations of belonging to national cultures, for example, the prevalence of Welsh language inscriptions in North Wales (Mytum 1994). This is contrasted by a lack of Irish language inscriptions in Ulster (Mytum and Evans 2003). This indicates that gravestones offer an interesting discussion around articulations of Anglo-colonial power, and social relations in the nineteenth century, such a discussion is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis.

Emotionality has been a factor which researchers have been reluctant to address directly, though an undercurrent of the emotional is present throughout discussion of affective topics, such as national and local identity, long-term care of, and interaction with memorial stones, and the care taken with the commissioning of stonemasons. Tarlow's (1999) examination of Orkney gravestones does provide an examination of emotional language, which Tarlow (1999, 127, 134) linked with a shift in culture towards Romanticism and Sentimentalism, in which romantic and familial love was prized, combined with a decreased emphasis on religious themes such as the *memento mori*, which emphasised the inevitability of death, and the necessity to prepare for the afterlife. This cultural shift coincided with the increase of figurative language on memorials, (Tarlow 1999, 64–65). Tarlow (2005, 165) also identifies a shift in emphasis from detailing the virtues or professions of the dead, towards commemorating emotional relationships – describing lost family members as 'beloved' or missed by the bereaved. This emphasis on the deceased as an individual, loved and lamented by their families is argued to represent a cultural trend by which the communities dead were no longer thought about as a collective group, as in earlier mediaeval conceptions, but as personified individuals who had close emotional ties to the living (Tarlow 2005, 166–167). Tarlow (2005, 167) is, however, dismissive of what she describes as mass-produced, overly sentimentalised language, and in particular, verses on gravestones, describing them as 'excruciating doggerels'. This evaluation of funerary verses' literary merit echoes nineteenth-century critiques (eg. Hare 1856), however, the methodological implications of inferring the authenticity of emotion in past populations is discussed in Chapter 3.

2.5 Industries of Mourning

The cult of mourning engendered a rich and expensive material culture supplied by drapers, department stores, and, perhaps most idiosyncratically, the mourning warehouse. Mourning warehouses emerged in the 1840s, before increasing in popularity throughout the mourning boom. At the peak of this fashion for mourning, Regent Street, alone, hosted three separate *maisons de deuil*. These included the London General Mourning warehouse, popularly called Jay's, and Peter Robinson's Mourning Warehouse, called Black Peter's. The competition between these two

businesses, located almost opposite each other on one of the busiest shopping streets in Britain, continued throughout the second-half of the century. However, though Jay's continued trading as a mourning establishment into the twentieth century, the market for mourning appears to have already been declining in the 1880s, with Black Peter's diversifying in both colour and range by 1889 (*The World of Fashion* 1889) and rebranding as 'Everything for ladies' wear' into 1890 (*Myra's Journal* 1890).

At their height, however, far from being dour and maudlin experiences, mourning warehouses offered innovative shopping experiences, creating extravagant sensory displays (Figure 12). Jay's was decorated in classical scenes from Pompeii (*Le Belle Assemblée* 1843), brightly lit and making innovative use of mirrors to give the place an airy feel (*The Lady's Newspaper* 1847), and decorated in scarlet and gold to better set off the sombre palette of their goods (*John Bull* 1848). Jay's was also one of the early retailers to take up innovations like the mannequin to display clothes (Morris 2023). Far from staid, mourning wear kept up with the fashions of the period, ensuring a steady supply of the newly bereaved, looking to update their wardrobes. Earlier in the period, descriptions of mourning establishments were more likely to refer to the emotions of their shoppers.

Warehouses offered ease and convenience during distressing times, when grief "most disqualified [the bereaved] from the duties of searching out and purchasing the required articles" (*Le Belle Assemblée* 1843, 161). The light interiors not "tending to increase the painful emotions of the forlorn sufferers" (*John Bull* 1848, 307), and numerous assistants to aid in locating items (*The Lady's Newspaper* 1847). Later in the period, however, commentators and advertisements were far more likely to extol the virtues of the clothing on display as the latest in French fashion, at affordable prices, and offering the best in innovative fabrics (Figure 13).

The dichotomy of the settings of such 'cathedrals of consumption' (Crossick and Jaumain 1998)³ and the supposed sombre nature of the occasion was ripe for satire, and as such the mourning warehouses, and their "melancholy millinery" (*Punch* 1864, 175), were frequent subjects for periodicals such as *Punch*. In one article suggesting improvements in the ambience of the shopping experience, *Punch* (1847, 108) suggests:

an assistant utterly prostrate over a counter with mental anguish, who should sob out hysterically the prices of any article he has the "intense misery" - not the pleasure - of showing (Figure 14).

³ Crossick and Jaumain drew on the description in Émile Zola's 1883 novel, *Au bonheur des dames*, of a shop as 'la cathédrale du commerce moderne'.

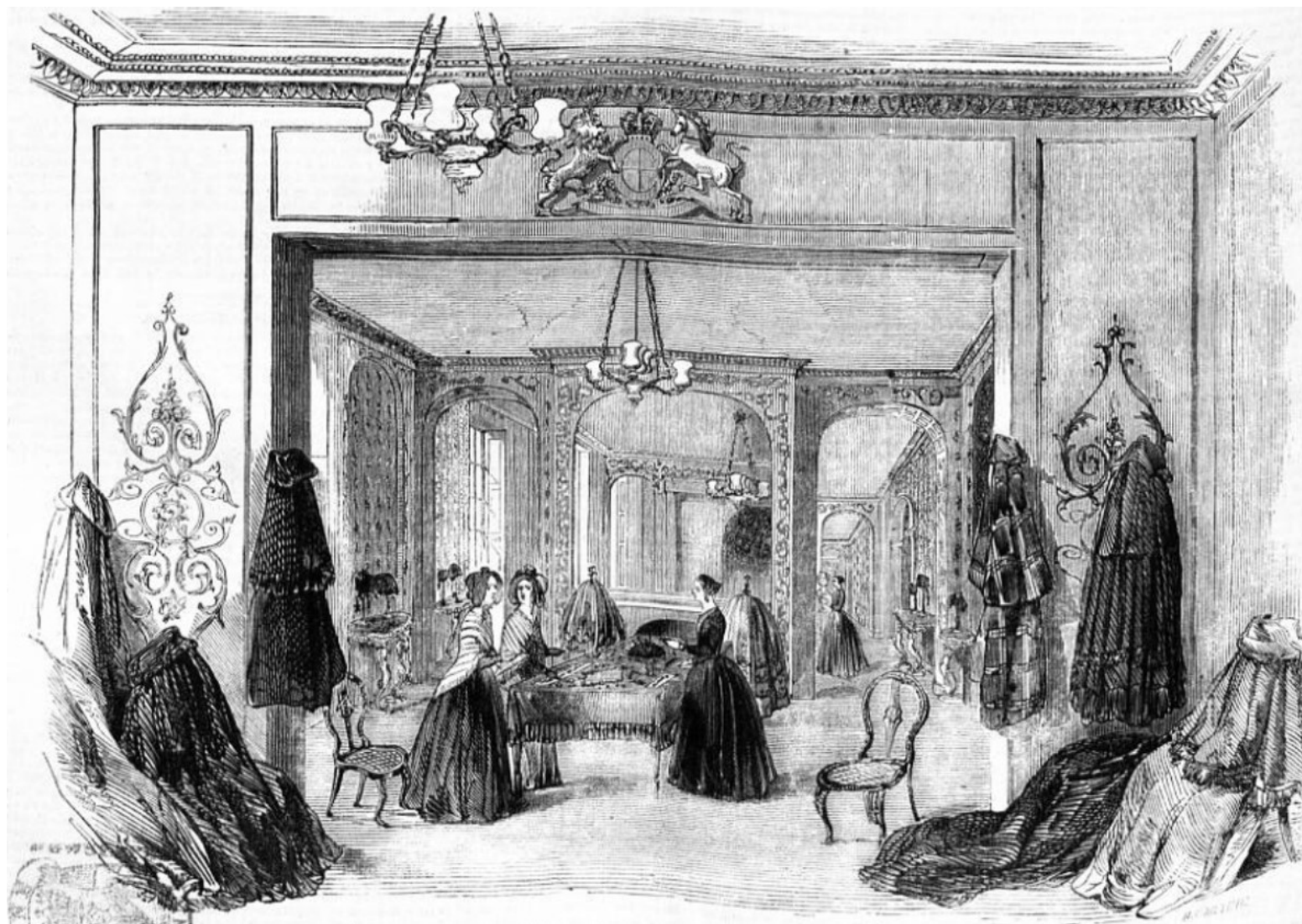


Figure 12 Illustration of the interior of the London General Mourning Warehouse (Jay's) published in *The Pictorial Times*, 24th Aug 1847 (British Newspaper Archive)

NOTICE. **PETER ROBINSON'S**
COURT & FAMILY MOURNING & BLACK GOODS WAREHOUSE
256, REGENT-STREET, LONDON.



THE STOCK-TAKING SALE,
 AT GREATLY REDUCED PRICES,
 commenced on the
FIRST MONDAY IN JANUARY,
 and will continue during the month.

GENUINE BARGAINS will be offered in each Department. The whole of the Stock has been re-marked to very low prices purposely for this Sale. Those ladies who kindly pay an early visit can secure remarkably cheap goods.

ATTENTION IS INVITED to the Superior and Elegant Mantles and Jackets recently imported. Also to the Superb Silk and Material Costumes, Evening Dresses, Opera Cloaks, Beaded Bodices, Tea-Gowns, Underclothing, &c. Silks by the yard; also Velvets, Plushes, both plain, striped, and brocaded, will be sold wonderfully cheap. All black and grey materials are considerably reduced in price. The beautiful stock of French Millinery Bonnets, just imported, also Crape Bonnets, will be sold very cheap. Gloves, Hosiery, Umbrellas, Neckties, Fichus, the rich stock of Trimmings, Furs, Fur Capes, Muffs, Fur-lined Cloaks, Fur Visites—all will be offered at extremely low prices.

MOURNING ORDERS during the SALE will be supplied at the same cheap rates. Best care and prompt attention will be given to all orders, large or small. Travelling assistants, fully competent to take measures and instructions, will be sent at once to any part of the country, free of any extra expense whatever to the customer, immediately, on receipt of Letter or Telegram, addressed to

PETER ROBINSON { **MOURNING WAREHOUSE,**
REGENT-STREET, LONDON.

Figure 13 Advertisement for Peter Robinson's Mourning Warehouse taken from *Illustrated London News* (28 Jan 1888) (British Newspaper Archive)



Figure 14 Illustration taken from *Punch*, 18th Sep 1847, showing a satirical image of a sobbing mourning warehouse assistant, displaying an appropriate countenance for the role (Gale: NCUP)

The underlying suggestion, occasionally not presented too subtly, was that such extravagant expense on mourning might not represent authentic emotion, and may perhaps “denote the grief of the heirs of rich old gentlemen and ladies” (*Punch* 1864, 175). Muller (2020b) explores the prevalence of this idea in popular culture in the nineteenth century, suggesting that the stereotype reflected a discomfort with the idea that displays of idealised feminine grief may be manufactured – a cover for the manipulation of sexually experienced women intent on finding a new wealthy husband. While the roots of this idea likely comes from widows’ place outside the ‘normal’ acceptable social categories for women as modest wife or innocent virgin (Muller 2020b, 929), women could equally be castigated for not performing appropriate mourning. Morley (1971, 67) notes the ‘anxious’ questions which appeared in women’s periodicals, asking for advice on correct mourning.

The differing opinions on display, satirising deep extended mourning, as well as critiquing whether women’s dress portrayed an appropriate amount of sombreness, demonstrates the plurality of responses to mourning in the second half of the nineteenth century. The ‘anxiousness’ (Morley 1971, 67) found in women’s correspondence to magazines, and the variation found in the responses to them across the period, demonstrate the fluidity of the concept of respectful mourning, which may reflect specific cultural, local or personal value judgements on how emotion could, and should, be outwardly expressed. The material culture related to bereavement in this period was wide-ranging, and some, like stone memorials, might remain of cultural and social importance for many generations, the deceased passing from living memory. Others, like the extended performative mourning reserved only for women, might exclude many of the bereaved entirely. Contemporary responses to these practices were varied, with groups like the National Funeral and Mourning Reform Association and the Cremation Society, campaigning for changes in cultural expectations of funerary practice, and others arguing for the maintenance of tradition. This demonstrates some of the complexity of accessing emotion in the past, and the methodological difficulties of judging ‘authentic’ emotion through material culture. Chapter 3 explores this in more detail, considering how the study of historic emotion has been undertaken, and creating a framework for analysis in the rest of this project.

3 Cultural Constructions of Grief

The previous chapter examined the historical context of the ‘cult of mourning’ in the late nineteenth century, and how scholars have approached the study of the experience of bereavement during this period. Methodological questions were raised around the accessing of emotions in the past. Trying to consider the ‘authenticity’ of the emotions expressed through interaction with objects is potentially fraught, due to the perceived value judgements around emotionality in both past and present populations. Therefore, this chapter explores two questions, firstly how sociological and historical researchers have defined emotion as a largely cultural construction, and secondly, how archaeologists have approached the study of historical emotion through material culture. Finally, the implications for methodological approach, and theoretical background, in the study of nineteenth century grieving are discussed, and a framework is defined to guide the rest of this project.

3.1 Historiographies of Emotion

Writing in 1941, Lucien Febvre called for historians to begin to consider emotions in their narratives of past populations, as without the inclusion of this integral part of the human condition “there will be no real history possible” (Febvre 1941 [1973], 24). Following this, scholars have placed increased focus on the study of emotions (see Lemmings and Brooks 2014 for discussion on the ‘emotional turn’ in the humanities and social sciences), as well as on methodological debates around the effective access of emotion in the past. Reddy’s (2001) proposal of a methodology uniting psychological and anthropological conceptions of emotion, through examination of structuralist, poststructuralist, and, in particular, Bourdieusian ideas, created a foundation for the study of historical emotions. This was built on by scholars such as Scheer (2012), Stearns (2008, 2019a, 2019b), and Rosenwein (2006, 2010, 2015, 2021), and these discussions form the underpinning framework for conceptualising, and studying, grief within this project, and take the form of three topic areas – the internal production of emotion; the links between language and emotion; and the role of emotion in communication, which are discussed here.

Scheer (2012, 195) critiques the tendency for researchers to create a cartesian binary in an attempt to categorise the inconsistent and contradictory elements of emotional expression and experience. We feel emotions, but do not necessarily display them. We may hide what we feel, or, like actors, we may perform emotion we are not necessarily experiencing. This has led to attempts to define emotion by separating these factors into dualities such as inner feeling vs outer expression, or embodied emotion vs mental feeling (Scheer 2012, 195). Scheer (2012, 196), however, rejects this distinction, emphasising that emotion emerges from the confluence of body and mind, and is constructed through the interplay with the two. This is an interrelation which we understand instinctively. It is possible to think our way out of emotions, to impose rationality on the irrational.

This is the cornerstone of treatments such as cognitive behaviour therapy. Our emotions also affect our thinking and decision-making. A third factor not often considered is the effect of embodied expression on both thinking and feeling. Adopting the body language of a confident person can produce a feeling of confidence, as much as embodying nervousness can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Acting ‘as if’, or in more modern parlance, ‘faking it ‘til you make it’, has been a concept in psychotherapy since Adler’s (1927 [2002]), 1927 book, *The Neurotic Character*. It may, therefore, be constructive to conceptualise the experience of emotion as a reflexive experience on these three axes, in which each affects the others. These aspects may also, however, conflict with each other, creating the feeling that we have been ‘overcome’ with an emotion which we would cognitively reject (Scheer 2012, 207), such as crying during an argument, or laughing in a quiet office.

Scheer (2012, 194–198) argues that the best way to conceptualise emotions is as ‘practice’ in a Bourdieusian sense, which links the embodied feeling to ‘historically and culturally specific habits’ (Scheer 2012, 198). This draws on the idea of *habitus* as a way of modelling emotional behaviour. *Habitus*, as the confluence of specific norms, beliefs, behaviours and ideas which an enculturated person adheres to, provides a guide for emotional expression and behaviour, rather than acting as a set of rules by which all people abide (Scheer 2012, 204). The concept of practice informed by *habitus* also inherently implies plurality, due to the contextual nature of *habitus*, and people’s ability to code-switch in different situations (Scheer 2012, 204). This project builds on these Bourdieusian ideas in order to conceptualise the relationship between emotion and behaviour in the past.

Due to emotion’s role in bodily communication, emotion has been conceptualised as dynamically linked to language, with Reddy (2001, 64), in particular, emphasising the importance of the linguistic effects on the experience of emotion – by speaking about them, and naming them, we influence our experience of them. Emotions do not exist as a discrete data source, so it is through our naming of them that we place emotion into typical groupings (Scheer 2012, 213). This idea has become popular across the study of emotions (see Plutchik 2001 for his circumplex model of emotions; and Watt Smith 2015 for her cross-cultural exploration of emotion-words), and has important implications for the study of emotions in the past, as changes in linguistic classifications of emotion may represent a consequent change in the way that emotion is understood (Scheer 2012, 214). It is important to consider, however, that though language affects the understanding and experience of emotion, it does not *produce* emotion. This is evident in the experience of people with alexithymia, common in people with neurodivergence, certain psychiatric conditions and brain injuries (Hobson *et al.* 2019, 247), which affects the ability to identify internal emotion. Alexithymia is typified by a difficulty in ascribing linguistic classifications for emotions, and affects communication of emotional states (due to an inability to describe what is being felt), and emotional regulation (Pandey, Saxena and Dubey 2011, 616; Nahar and Kakulte 2022, 54), but not the *absence* of emotion. Language acts as a factor

affecting emotional experience, but emotion also exists as a phenomenon beyond linguistic typification.

Nevertheless, emotional experience does have a communicative function, and historians have tended to conceptualise their study in this way, largely as a way to access interpersonal relationships in the past (Scheer 2012, 195). Aspects of our speech, language choice, tone, and body language, all serve to communicate something of our emotional state, or the emotional state we *want* to convey, to observers. However, Scheer (2012, 214) conceptualises this as a social script which can be read by others, but which is not foolproof. The management of emotions into a socially acceptable expression is considered part of social etiquette, and differences in either cultural or personal expressions of emotion may lead to community accusations of insincerity or melodrama (Scheer 2012, 215). Like all forms of communication, performed emotional expression may or may not accurately reflect internal thoughts or feelings, and may or may not be read as intended. This has important implications for the study of grief, as an emotion which is often heavily socially policed, and which represents a complex web of internal feelings, some of which may be more or less appropriate for social communication. Bereavement, as well, may represent an exceptional event, in which the usual social rules apply differently. This can be perhaps seen in contemporary British culture, particularly in masculine presenting people, who tend to be enculturated to consider crying in public unacceptable. It is, however, necessary to display appropriate sadness when confronted by a death. There is, therefore, a disparity in what is socially acceptable following a bereavement event, and under normal circumstances – a disparity which is often ill-defined and unspoken, which can leave the bereaved unsure of ‘correct’ behaviour (see Walter, Littlewood and Pickering 1995 for discussion on how the British media polices public expressions of grief). Bereavement is by no means the only of these ‘exceptional’ events, however, it is the focus of this project, and the separation of what is felt, compared to what is performed, compared to the social response to that performance, is of central importance. It is also vital to consider how this enculturation of both the display of, and reading of, emotional expression may affect the researcher’s reading of grief in past individuals. It is therefore necessary to avoid implied, or unconscious, value judgements regarding the sincerity of emotional performances in past populations, as the ability to correctly interpret other’s internal feelings from their emotional display is highly dependent on cultural context, but also on the skill of both emoter and observer in understanding social emotional scripts.

3.2 Grief as a Cultural Construction

A study of grieving as a cultural construction requires an understanding of the difference between mourning and grieving as conceptions. Mourning refers specifically to the behaviours and actions undertaken following a death, these are generally meant to signal to the wider community that an individual is bereaved. Grieving refers specifically to the complex web of emotions felt in the

aftermath of a bereavement. Often mourning is related closely to the use of material culture, either in ritual activity, or in a change in personal adornment or clothing. Archaeologists, however, have tended to draw a separation between public and private behaviours, which may be incongruent with the idea of mourning and grieving as an intangible intertwining of embodied, cultural, and social cues which reflexively influence and construct each other. While our understanding of emotion may be culturally mediated, culture does not represent a set of universal laws, and nor are individuals inherently or permanently tied to a single culture. Individuals with multiple cultural heritages may have different cultural expectations placed on them amongst family, friends, and their wider society. In the same way, individuals who routinely move between cultural groups, whether based on heritage, class, sexuality, or gender, may find themselves able to express and conceptualise their emotions differently within those differing groups.

A separation between mourning, a social behaviour in which people communally express emotion in a culturally mediated way, and grief, the way emotions are felt, expressed, and processed when alone, or amongst close friends and family, emphasises that there is a difference between the way people emote. Maintaining this distinction, particularly in an archaeological study, allows for greater ease in creating an interdisciplinary framework for understanding bereavement, and also allows for an understanding of the different uses of objects as for the benefit of other people and for the benefit of the self. However, the separation of grief from mourning is best conceptualised as a constructed distinction, through which to facilitate analysis, but which does not represent the complexity of reality. Care must be taken then, not to downplay the reflexive relationship between feeling and behaviour when constructing narratives of the emotional past.

Taking this into account, mourning can be understood as the set of culturally specific behaviours undertaken following a death, which are linked to expressions of grief, but which are not synonymous with them. Largely, mourning behaviours are based on belief systems, ideas around respectability and honouring the dead, as well as culturally appropriate ways of expressing emotion. A person may undertake mourning behaviours out of a sense of duty and propriety, even when they had little connection to the deceased. Equally, a person may grieve deeply, but be unwilling or unable to undertake mourning behaviours. Mourning itself is inherently social. It is a behaviour that is meant to be seen, acknowledged, and shared with the local community and wider society. However, as discussed by Scheer (2012, 215), mourning as an embodied practice has the potential of being misread, leading to observers within the community to make inferences about the grief felt by the bereaved. This may present an outside pressure on the mourner to ensure that their performative mourning is read as sincere and congruent by the community.

Durkheim (1912 [2016], 400) was critical of emotional understandings of funeral rites, writing “mourning is not the natural response of a private sensibility hurt by cruel loss. It is an obligation

imposed by the group". This idea has been mirrored in numerous anthropologies since (eg. Averill and Nunley 1993, 82; Clark and Franzmann 2006). Jakoby (2012, 681) argues that loss is experienced in multiple dimensions - that the emotionality inherent in grief influences mourning ritual, while cultural understandings of 'acceptable' expressions of emotion during mourning fundamentally affect the way that emotion is felt.

Prior to around 2000, archaeology largely applied grief theory from an evolutionary-psychological and cognitive-archaeological perspective, focused on the idea that grief has a foundational biological base, related to group cohesion, and as such, is innate and immutable, with only its expression governed by cultural difference (Mithen 2000, 738). Other evolutionary psychologists (eg. Crawford, Salter and Jang 1989) utilised theories which proposed links between supposed reproductive value and the depth of grief felt for an individual. In other words, grief is felt more acutely for teenagers and young adults, than young children or the elderly, due to the resulting loss of potential subsequent generations (Crawford, Salter and Jang 1989, 305). These evolution focused understandings of grief paired particularly well with processual-leaning archaeologies of death, such as those based on Binford's (1971) theories. These ideas, however, received little attention outside the study of cognitive evolution.¹ A by-product of these ideas, is the reproduction of gender essentialist narratives, in which women are biologically programmed to grieve deeply due to ingrained maternal instinct – a narrative which can be clearly seen in Mithen's (2000, 738) rebuttal to Tarlow's (2000) discussion on emotional archaeology. Mithen's (2000) argument hinges on the idea that it is impossible for a woman to not feel sadness in the wake of her child's death, and charges Tarlow to provide a case study to the contrary.

Such a case study is found most notably in Scheper-Hughes' (1992) *Death without Weeping*. Scheper Hughes' (1992) proposes that high infant mortality amongst populations in Northern Brazil has led to a cultural way of grieving which de-emphasises both funeral rituals and feelings of grief over young babies. This book was incredibly influential, both in the study of grief and bereavement in general, and in archaeological applications, due to its examination of the way enculturation impacts not only the expression, but the experience of emotion. Scheper-Hughes (1992) details both the involvement of young children in the funerary preparation and burial of deceased babies, and the cultural pressure on mothers not to perceive the death of children under around nine months as a cause for distress. This led, not only to a lack of emotive expression in the face of infant death, but also a community which did not generally experience sadness in response to these deaths (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 430). Works like Scheper-Hughes' have been particularly used in order to counter 'normative' understandings of grief in the past, which were previously common in archaeological studies (Eriksen

¹ An exception to this being MacDonald, who used this idea in order to interpret Hohokam burials in which young adults were generally buried with more grave goods than young children.

2017, 338), as well as to refute arguments such as Mithen's (2000, 738), which assume a biological base for emotion, and to instead favour a model of grieving as an encultured response.

Scheper-Hughes (1992, 437–438) discussed with her participants the reason for their lack of sorrow. In response, the women stated that very young babies were “without history”, and without personality. Arguably, without much history, or personality, there was little in the way of an imagined future for the child. It was only after they began to develop their personality, and they began to interact with the world, that the women had things to miss about them as individuals. As such, babies who died after around nine months did cause sorrow. Finally, Scheper-Hughes (1992) demonstrates that women were not emotionless at the death of infants, but rather they did not experience sadness. In general, they were more likely to experience pity and regret for the suffering and illness of babies (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 425), and relief at the end of that suffering and the end of the drain on extremely limited resources (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 423). However, as little investment had been made into knowing the baby as an individual, and with little of day-to-day life contingent on a single infant amongst many, little adaptation to continuing life would be needed, and therefore there was correspondingly little grief felt. This response was propagated by a culture in which, from a very young age, children were exposed to adults who did not experience or model sadness in response to infant death, and in fact, chastised such shows of emotion as harmful to the infant's spirit (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 425).

Scheper-Hughes (1992, 430) is clear in her argument that it is not just the expression of grief which is culturally influenced, but also the internal experience of that grief. Most interestingly, she argues that the imposition of pathological diagnoses and explanations which deny individuals' self-insight, by researchers, are propagating both normative views of 'healthy' grieving, and gender-essentialist narratives around women's emotions (Scheper Hughes 1992, 427–430). It is, after all, generally women's grief, as mothers, wives, daughters, which is critiqued, and women who are most often accused of not expressing or feeling as they should (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 427). Interestingly, this, potentially unconscious, association of women with feeling, and men with doing, carries over to many archaeologies of grief in the past. Parental grief, when studied in the past, is almost always associated with mothers (eg. Cannon and Cook 2015; Baitzel 2018). In Baitzel's (2018, 195) study, fathers are mentioned only to state that it is “probable” that they felt grief similar to mothers, but that there is no material evidence of it. Because of this, this thesis aims to avoid implicit or assumed gendering of emotion, and to use gender neutral language in regard to emotion. Any evidence of gendered *practice* in the late-nineteenth century will be made explicit.

3.3 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The study of the material culture of grief in the past is necessarily interdisciplinary, requiring an engagement with literature related to archaeology, history, psychology, literature, and art history.

Due to this, and the variance of methods and approaches across these disciplines, a robust theoretical framework is necessary in order to create a coherent methodology. Taking an approach that models grieving as a cultural construct is most congruent with approaches which prioritise dynamic and plural understandings of social relations. These theoretical underpinnings are therefore discussed here.

3.3.1 Dynamism, Plurality, and the Rejection of the Normative

Tringham (1991, 97) critiqued archaeology's writing of a past populated with "genderless, faceless blobs", and since then, archaeological research has arguably included a more nuanced discussion on identity and performance (see Voss 2006), which has gone some way towards creating opportunity for a more multi-vocal writing of the past. However, these identity-led narratives can have the effect of implying homogeneity and essentiality (Cipolla, Crellin and Harris 2021 discuss this with reference to Indigenous archaeologies). For example, a discussion of 'mothers' or 'motherhood' in the past implies that to be a mother is a singular, immutable, and constant experience shared by all women with children. The solution to this has tended to be adding ever more specific qualifiers to descriptors – so that 'mothers' become 'married, working-class mothers in the North of England'. While this has gone some way towards rejecting the idea of the white, middle-class as the default experience, it perhaps does not address the core issue, nor engage thoroughly with the concept of intersectionality (coined by Crenshaw 1989). Posthumanist approaches have begun to suggest ways to counter this; through a rejection of the ideas of the normative, of dualistic thinking, and of the privileging of the experience of select individuals (Cipolla, Crellin and Harris 2021, 6). By drawing on Deleuze's 'difference-defined-within-itself' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983 [2000]), posthumanist archaeology rejects these ways of thinking, rather focusing on variability and multiplicity of lifeways.

Often our perceptions tend to be influenced by binary conceptions - man/woman; person/object; normal/abnormal, alive/dead - a mode of thinking which has its origins in the Enlightenment. These Cartesian dualities are limiting in their implication of an antonymic relationship, in which things are defined purely in relation to what they are not. For example, a woman is not only the opposite of a man, in all senses, but she is only a woman by virtue of lacking the characteristics of a man (Butler 1993). This method of categorising the world has had the effect of creating discrete non-overlapping groups, which does not reflect the human experience of the world, nor modern scientific classification (Braidotti 2013, 99). It has an additional effect of judging classifications based on their variance from the perceived norm. In other words, the only correct way to be a woman is to be the opposite of a man. Under this mode of thinking, difference is synonymous with deviance.

Posthumanism, along with queer theory, rejects this in favour of an emphasis on variance and plurality in order to adopt ways of deconstructing normative and binary thinking. This is particularly important for the study of the nineteenth century, as many of the dominant cultural narratives of the

contemporary world, including conceptions of gender, race, and class, owe much to nineteenth century thinking. Therefore, when these white, masculine, middle-class narratives are regarded as evidence of the reality of the experience of the past, they are both reified and perpetuated (Morris and Bickle 2022).

Archaeological discourses have often focused on the concept of embodiment – a way to conceptualise the lived experience as a confluence of the external physical world, the physical materiality of the body and the cognitive and emotional mind (Craig-Atkins and Harvey 2024, 9). Tarlow (2011, 8) draws a distinction between the study of what she describes as the ‘material body’ and the ‘experiencing body’, with the former referring to the materiality of bodily remains, and the latter as the experience of the world within a physical body. Put more simply, a distinction between the body as object and the body as subject (Tarlow 2011, 8). Arguably, the materiality of bodily remains has been more comprehensibly considered in archaeological analyses of post-mediaeval British populations, than the ‘experiencing body’; though bodily experience has been explored more creatively in other temporal and cultural contexts (eg. Borić and Robb 2014; Attala and Steele 2019; and Skeates and Day 2019). Bulger and Joyce (2012) argue that a model of the body as an object to which culture is overlaid and reproduced has been overtaken by models which prioritise the lived experience of both being a body, and being *within* a body. In this way, the body is both an interface for interaction with the wider world, and a physical object which is affected by the material world. Archaeological models of embodiment have drawn on Butler’s (1993) ideas of identity performance in order to reject the idea of people as stable and unchanging examples of cultural categories (Bulger and Joyce 2012). Instead, embodied approaches focus on the praxis of being bodily in the material and cultural world, and how embodied behaviour reflexively produces and constructs identity and life experience.

This emphasis on dynamism; considering the people of the past not as static archetypes, but as people who lived and changed throughout their lifetimes, is central to posthumanist approaches. Not only were people likely not confined to rigid categorisation, their experiences, relationships, and social and self-identifiers would have changed over their lives. A young woman would have become an old woman, provided she lived long enough, and her experiences and relationships would have been impacted by that change in a way which was likely reflexive. Her experiences of youth would have impacted her reaction to age, and the reaction of the world to her ageing. This is important because it positions people in the past not as passive recipients of outside change, but as a culmination of their lived experience. This is an approach which echoes Braidotti’s (1993) call for an emphasis on imminence and of the continued process of becoming.

This acknowledgement of dynamism in the lifeway is particularly important in the study of grief, as bereavement is, by definition, a transient experience. To be bereaved, the person must first be a

husband, a wife, a parent, and the experience of grief, like any emotion, is not constant across days or months. For this reason, a posthumanist approach, and its focus on dynamism, multiplicity and variance aligns well with the study of grief in the past. However, the application of posthumanist ideas within archaeology can pose a methodological problem. Making meaningful conclusions often requires generalisations and archaeological methodologies are often focused on finding patterns in data – therefore, the question is, how to maintain a focus on variance and multiplicity while keeping interpretations generalised enough to construct meaningful narratives.

In order to do this, posthumanist archaeology draws heavily on assemblage theory. Assemblage theory is used to conceptualise the complex, dynamic and non-exclusive way people, things and ideas influence, and are influenced by, each other (Crellin 2017; Harris 2017). Most important in this context is the rejection of the idea that the relationships within assemblages are unidirectional and dependent (Hamilakis and Jones 2017). Rather, the relationships articulated within assemblages are constantly changing, and agents can be part of multiple assemblages at once (Hamilakis and Jones 2017). This acceptance of the dynamism of the world again draws on Deleuzian ideas, most notably the concepts of ‘becoming’ and ‘immanence’ (Colebrook 2002), which makes assemblage theory a natural partner to post-humanism, but also a natural partner to an archaeology of grief.

3.3.2 Evocative Objects and Emotional Communities

The archaeology of emotion emerges from postprocessualism, and the confluence of conflict theories such as feminist and Marxist approaches (Tarlow 2012). The central thesis of the archaeology of emotion is that feeling is a fundamental, universal, though not unique, part of being human (Tarlow 2012, 177), and that emotions form a crucial role in the lives of all people, cross-culturally (Harris and Sorenson 2010, 147). However, emotional expression, as well as the understanding and valuing of emotion, are all culturally created (Harris and Sorenson 2010, 147). For these reasons, understanding the emotions of individuals in past cultures is vital to understanding the lived experience of those people and the society they were a part of (Tarlow 2012, 180–181). Emotional archaeology emphasises the interconnectedness of people and communities, which Supernant *et al.* (2020) consider as having an explicitly emotional heart.

Critiques of the archaeology of emotion largely fall into two groups – how far the study of emotion in the past can rely on biological essentialism to draw conclusions, discussed above, and whether objectivity in the study of emotion is possible, or even desirable. Harris and Sørensen (2010) critique the use of empathy, of drawing analogies between the archaeologist’s emotional response to objects, in Tarlow’s (1999, 2000) work on post-medieval gravestones, and Meskell’s (1999) work on emotion within the family in ancient Egypt, as implying transhistorical and cross-cultural understandings of emotion. While Tarlow (2012, 178) draws a distinction between the archaeology of emotion, and

what she terms emotional archaeology; the first being objective and detached, the second, subjective and introspective. The study of past emotions should remain rigorous and objective, and focus on the ways in which emotion, or the manipulation of emotion, created cultural hegemony, conformity, conflict, and community, rather than simply ask questions about *how* people felt (Tarlow 2012, 181).

However, Supernant *et al.* (2020) attempt to create a theoretical framework which takes a more holistic approach to the interpretation of emotion in the past. Drawing on ideas from feminist, postcolonialist and Indigenous archaeologies, this framework of emotional archaeology critiques the idea that objectivity demands the separation of the subject from the observer. Such a distancing results in an ‘othering’ of people in the past, which at best is unhelpful in attempting to understand the totality of human experience, and is actively harmful when applied to populations which have historically been marginalised (Lyons and Supernant 2020). While Supernant *et al.* (2020), contains numerous examples of the application of this framework to archaeological contexts (eg. Graesh *et al.* 2020; Abbott 2020; Lindstrom 2020; Chang and Nowell 2020; Gelder 2020), Baxter (2020) deals explicitly with this question of subjectivity. Baxter (2020) focuses on the death of children in nineteenth-century America, on the grief and loss felt by their families, and on the effect the high rate of child mortality may have had on surviving children, through analysis of the cemetery landscape and gravestones. Aware of the closeness of her period to the contemporary world, and the centrality of children to modern American family and culture, Baxter (2020, 128) acknowledges the difficulty of avoiding the projection of “contemporary emotional sensibilities into the past”, and examines, reflexively, her own emotional response to child graves (Baxter 2020, 133). However, because of the issues with interpreting emotion, my own emotional responses are not discussed in relation to past objects, and my own experiences with grief are not used in an autoethnographic sense within this project. It is, of course, necessary to acknowledge that a complete separation between researcher and subject is not possible, particularly when dealing with a topic area which has such personal resonance as death, bereavement, and grief. I have endeavoured not to create an interpretation which is objective, but rather to prioritise contemporary nineteenth-century contextual information, rather than my affective experience with the objects. I have also endeavoured to avoid questions relating to the authenticity and sincerity of the emotions expressed both through objects and documentation, as these implied value judgements are likely to be affected by my own emotional enculturation. Rather, a theoretical framework drawing on Rosenwein’s (2006) model of emotional communities is used in order to aid analysis.

Baxter (2020, 129) argues that the way to access the emotions of the past, is to investigate ‘evocative spaces and objects’ (from Fleisher and Norman 2016), which can link to these ‘emotional communities’. People who share a culture, experience or space may use evocative objects and landscapes in order to form relationships with each other, either directly or indirectly (Baxter 2020,

128). In this way, cemeteries are re-understood, not as landscapes of memory, but of landscapes of *emotion*, places where people go not only to feel, but to connect with other people who are feeling the same. Crucially, cemeteries are not segregated spaces, families would visit to picnic, alongside active mourners, and those who have previously lost family (Baxter 2019, 39–40). Families who have not yet been bereaved will necessarily engage differently, with the space and with grave markers, than those who have recently lost someone, but the important factor is not what is felt, but the shared act of *feeling* (Baxter 2020, 132). Gravestones are therefore important as affective objects, not because they inspire grief, but because they inspire *empathy*.

Rosenwein (2006) conceptualised populations as split into small relational groups who share values around emotionality, emotional expression and emotional stimuli. Rosenwein argues that the emotion-focused researcher should aim:

“to establish what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them (for it is about such things that people express emotions); the emotions that they value, devalue, or ignore; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.” (Rosenwein 2010, 11)

This model refers to the search for ‘systems of feeling’ within groups, which influence the way people relate to each other, and the wider world. These groups are relational, interconnected, plural, non-exclusive and non-discrete, and as such retain methodological similarities with assemblages. However, where assemblage theory focuses on the relationships between people, objects, places, non-human agents and concepts, an ‘emotional communities’ model focuses on the relationships between people, as mediated by objects, places, non-human agents and concepts. As such, it is possible to conceptualise an emotional community as a type of assemblage, or to conceptualise assemblages as containing emotional communities (Morris and Bickle 2022, 307).

This emphasis on affective objects and evocative spaces models the relationship as reflexive. People may deliberately use objects in order to inspire an emotional effect, or objects may tangentially gain affectiveness through their use, form, or context. Viewing a grave is affecting because it has contextual links to previous bereavement experiences, inspires empathy through confrontation with other people’s bereavement, and taps into a cultural schema which identifies cemeteries as sad places, through their inclusion in cultural narratives and media depictions. However, it is also affecting because people intended it to be, through the use of emotive language and culturally specific motifs. Modelling objects in this way, as agents which, purposefully or not, evoke some kind of emotional effect which people may choose to use in order to trigger, provide meaning to or share

their own emotional experience, places the focus back on material culture as a mediator, and allows for a more concrete materially-based archaeological approach.

Accessing objects being used in these ways is difficult in the archaeological record due to their nature as related to emotion and belief. These can be easier to access when there is some cultural context, for example, when there is documentary evidence, which is the case in nineteenth century studies. For example, there is documentary evidence discussing using hairwork as a mnemonic to recall the dead. Even in these contexts, however, it is easy to come up against ‘what goes without saying’ (Bloch 2018). When things are considered self-evident, they are rarely explicitly stated. This is especially true when a subject is painful or emotional.

This model is particularly useful as it acknowledges that people engage in multiple types of emotional expression, at different times, and emotional expression and behaviour is influenced by local community, familial groups, and wider culture. Therefore, people are undertaking emotional behaviours which are influenced by internal feelings, behaviours seen modelled by family, friends, and local community, and what they see, read, or hear about in mass media and culture. This is important in the study of nineteenth-century culture, because, in this period, the majority of people were still living largely localised (or regionalised) lives, where the local community still held much influence over behaviour. However, the mid-nineteenth century was also characterised by the popularisation of printed mass media, meaning that emotional behaviour, expression, and values around mourning could have been affected by the homogenising effect of this hegemony. The origins of these cultural tropes may be so intermingled as to be unknowable.

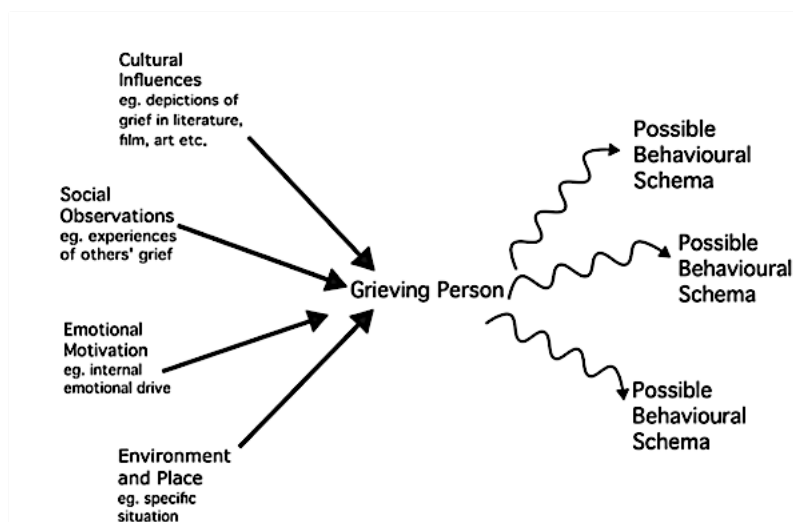


Figure 15 The influences on a grieving person's behaviour, based on a Bourdieusian model (Author's Own)

Instead of attempting to untangle this complex web of influence and counter influence, it may be more productive to conceptualise multiple, simultaneous models of emotional expression and behaviour people may have, which may be more or less 'acceptable' in various circumstances and settings. Drawing on Bourdieusian conceptions of cultural schemas (Bourdieu 1972 [2005]; Spiegel 2005), it is possible to conceptualise mourning and grief behaviours as coming from a combination of spontaneous internal emotional desire, and schemas of behaviour which have been experienced from wider society (Figure 15). Therefore, people choose behaviours and emotional expression from a range of these known schemas based on how well they fit their feelings in the moment, or how appropriate they are for the situation or setting. This removes the burden of requiring proof that this object meant the same thing to all people. Rather, the aim here is to create a stepping point, from which to think differently about past behaviours, using the ways people self-describe their use of bereavement objects in the present to rethink about the reasons people may have used them in the past. Particularly from the late nineteenth-century to the present day, there are significant similarities in the ways people keep and utilise objects following bereavement, as well as differences which can be examined in more depth in regard to differences in enculturation.

4 Objects and Grieving in Contemporary Populations

In Chapter 3, a framework of analysis was presented which models emotion as a cultural construction, which can be approached using a methodology which utilises the concept of behavioural schemas, along with Rosenwein's (2006) 'emotional communities'. This chapter explores how our own enculturation, including medicalised understandings of grieving which have permeated popular culture, affects object use following bereavement in present-day Western cultures. The material culture of grief in these populations emerges from a cultural context in which prevailing metaphor and symbolism; and societal paradigms and popular culture; intersect with object use, providing the bereaved with familiar schemas in order to express, explore, and feel their grief. It is suggested that an analysis of cultural influence provides nuance to the understanding of grieving differences, in particular in the avoidance of implying normativity and homogeneity.

4.1 Psychologies of Grieving

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the link between physical and emotional health seems to have been taken as evident, and there was an acknowledgement that grief, untampered, could progress into insanity (eg. Bucknill and Tuke 1874, 105). Writing in 1850, physician Thomas Harrison Yeoman, described the bodily effects of emotion, including both the immediate physical reactions, such as crying, breathlessness and chest pain, as well as the more chronic effects, like decreased appetite, lethargy, insomnia, and problems with circulation and digestion (Harrison Yeoman 1850, 177–178). Weeping and wallowing may provide temporary catharsis, but ultimately 'giving way' to chronic sorrow would produce poor health outcomes:

There is sometimes a luxury, and very often a becoming propriety, in grief, and the gentler sex, especially, think themselves justified in seeking the relief of tear, which often means a passive yielding to emotion which never yet did any body good (Harrison Yeoman 1850, 71)

This kind of indulgent, or excessive grief was often, though not exclusively, associated with women. Grief has been viewed as an inherently feminine emotion, and feminine emotions have been pathologised from the nineteenth century to the present day (Silverman and Klass 1996, 16), with 'feminised' emotion seen as abnormal, when compared to 'normal' 'masculine' emotion. This represents both a form of enculturation, and a potential bias, which could be seen in research literature.

In the late-nineteenth century, the 'treatment' for grieving, or for consistent sorrow and melancholy, was suggested to be rest and recuperation, similar to other illness (Orton 1895; Hall 1894). It was considered an error for family members to attempt to force cheer on the grieving:

To urge work, study, travel, the vain search for amusements, is both useless and dangerous. For a time the whole organism is overthrown, and temporary seclusion is imperative for proper readjustment (Hall 1894, 127–128)

It was necessary to allow the bereaved to feel the pain of grief, to take to their bed, and reject company, for a time (Orton 1895, 689), and then to allow them to begin to slowly take visitors and find pleasant distractions (Harrison Yeoman 1850, 99):

Grief cannot be ignored, since it is one of the facts of existence; neither can it be cheered up. It must be accepted and allowed to wear itself away. Time, the restorer, aided by solitude, by the companionship of books and children, together with the solace of music and routine tasks that gradually increase in moment and amount, are some of the aids to natural living. Readjustment comes slowly. The wound may sometimes ache, but it will cease to smart (Hall 1894, 129)

There also, however, seems to have been some acceptance of the variance in individual's responses to grief in the nineteenth century. In his discussion on the effects of grief on health, Harrison Yeoman (1850, 177) wrote:

[Grief] may be simple, as is most common under the loss of kindred or friends; or it may be united with chagrin, or impatient and angry repinings. And, again, it may grow out of, and hence be blended with, the various malignant feelings of the heart, as envy, jealousy, hatred, revenge, all of which are more or less fraught with moral pain. Grief may be acute and transient, or it may assume a more chronic and lasting character; in which case it is generally designated by the term "sorrow" or "sadness."

For some, grief 'benumbs', leaving them "silent, motionless, stupefied" (Harrison Yeoman 1850, 10), and "[s]ome persons can never weep under affliction of any character" (Harrison Yeoman 1850, 9).

Overall, physicians in the late nineteenth century seem to have considered grief a natural reaction to negative events in life, not simply to bereavement. Responses to it may have varied, though women were more likely to embody physical responses, such as weeping. Though grief was thought to be associated with attendant health problems, which may need treating, or may progress into 'insanity' or 'melancholy', transient grief simply required time and rest in order to pass into something more manageable.

Writing in the early twentieth century, Freud transformed cultural conceptions of grieving, an influence which remains to this day. Freud's (2005, 204) main thesis about successful grieving was that the process required the bereaved to uncouple themselves from the dead, and this remained the dominant conception of the grieving process until the 1980s. This also created a normative model of grieving, implying that grieving 'incorrectly' could lead to pathology. This was an evolution of nineteenth century ideas, however, it shifted the character of grief from a set of emotions to be felt, to an activity which could be done 'wrong' – *Trauerarbeit*, or grief work. This idea of typifying grief responses was subsequently built on by other researchers in order to construct the ideas of phases of grieving (eg. Bowlby 1961; Kübler-Ross 1969; Bowlby 1998), which remain a common feature of understanding grief in the public consciousness. Though it is Kübler-Ross' (1969) five stage model – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance – which has, perhaps, gained the most attention in popular psychology, it is Bowlby's (1998) attachment theory which has had the most pervasive effect on contemporary grief theory.

In brief, Bowlby (1998, 39) proposes that humans innately form attachments, beginning in childhood, through which they derive comfort and security. The loss of these attachments, in the form of parents, partners, children and friends, causes feelings of sadness and anxiety, as the bereaved are unmoored from the people who have been a stabilising force in their lives (Bowlby 1998, 212). Though Bowlby's ideas have also been used as a cornerstone of the study of pathologised grieving, with 'attachment style' being conceptualised as a new way to typify grief reactions (see Russ *et al.* 2022), attachment theory has also become the foundation for contemporary demedicalised conceptions of grieving. This idea was congruent with the prevailing paradigm at the time, which argued that the successful resolution of grief required a severing of ties with the dead. However, researchers (Klass, Silverman and Nickman 1996; Walter 1996; Stroebe and Schut 1999; see Parkes 1988; Parkes and Prigerson 2009; Rosenblatt 1996, 1988) began to recontextualise the grief process as a way of reincorporating the deceased into continuing life. In Stroebe's (1997, 256) words, the bereaved learn "to live with the dead". Contemporary understandings of grief tend to draw on three main ideas – Reminder Theory (Rosenblatt 1988; Walter 2009); Continuing Bonds Theory (Klass, Silverman and Nickman 1996), and Dual Oscillation Theory (Stroebe and Schut 1999, 2010). The emergence of these theories, in response to the rejection of Freudian paradigms, forms the foundation of contemporary grief theory.

Rosenblatt (1988, 72) argued that the feelings of grief are not constant, rather they are interrupted by the necessities of life, before being prompted, either by internal thoughts or external reminders. These reminders may be many things – objects, places, people – and may result in sudden resurgence of the negative emotions (Rosenblatt 1988, 72). Part of grieving is coming into contact with these reminders, until they are no longer painful (Rosenblatt 1988, 73). Some people may avoid

reminders, in order to avoid the discomfort of the negative feelings they engender. Walter (2009, 404) argues that this may be considered a necessary part of continuing life, as these 'surges' of negative emotion may be too disruptive at a time when life must go on. An example of this may be the leaving of sorting through the deceased's things, after the funeral, until a time when the task feels more manageable. However, as well as this avoidance behaviour, the bereaved may also seek out reminders of the dead (Walter 2009, 404). Under a Freudian conceptualisation, in which decoupling from the deceased is the desired end goal, this seeking out of reminders of the dead is seen as a fruitless, instinctive reaction to cling on to the deceased (Silverman and Klass 1996, 4). Silverman and Klass (1996, 5), however, reject this, arguing that it may represent potentially harmful psychotherapeutic techniques.

Klass *et al.* (1996) instead propose that a connection with the dead is maintained following bereavement, and, rather than a resolution in which the connection is severed, the majority of bereaved reconstrue a relationship with the dead, which can feature in continuing life:

Memorializing, remembering, knowing the person who has died, and allowing them to influence the present are active processes that seem to continue throughout the survivor's entire life (Silverman and Klass 1996, 17)

Even following a death, people generally consider the relationship, and its influence on them, important (Normand, Silverman and Nickman 1996). This may take the form of continuing to consult with the deceased, albeit one-sidedly, or incorporating the lessons and morals learnt from the dead into continuing life (Normand, Silverman and Nickman 1996, 97). Though this has been termed an 'internalisation' of the deceased's persona, Silverman and Klass (1996, 16) reject the term as too passive and one-sided, arguing instead that the perceived relationship with the dead is dynamic and interactive. Though the deceased themselves exist only as a constructed representation of themselves as remembered through the bereaved, this internal representation of them cannot be static, because the bereaved is everchanging (Silverman and Klass 1996, 17). For example, the relationship with a deceased parent may be altered by the bereaved's new parenthood, as the memories and representation of the deceased is reconstruction in response to the experience.

Simplistically, the dual process oscillation model (henceforth DPOM) (Stroebe and Schut 2010, proposed by 1999) represents a combining of the ideas of reminder theory and continuing bonds theory. Stroebe and Schut (2010, 277) argue that bereavement consists of a combination of loss-focused and restoration-focused stressors. For example, the loss-focused stressors, such as missing the dead person, may be compounded by the loss of that person's income from household finances. The restoration-focused stressor is therefore more focused on the necessity to find a way to continue life. The feelings of sorrow may result in the bereaved wanting to mourn alone, but the

financial situation may demand that they work more hours. Stroebe and Schut (2010, 278) argue that the process of grieving requires the dynamic engagement with these stressors, resulting in both fluctuating feelings and behaviours. Though Stroebe and Schut (2010, 279) do suggest ways in which cognitive behavioural therapy may assist when patterns of behaviour are detrimental, they generally avoid implying a value judgement on these oscillating methods of engagement. They are conceived of as methods of coping, whether they involve confronting problems, or avoiding them (Stroebe and Schut 2010, 278–281). Though the idea that loss-focused and restoration-focused behaviours are fundamentally at odds has been questioned (eg. Walter 2009, 405), this model effectively conceptualises grieving as encapsulating the need to both continue the relationship with the deceased, and begin to reconstruct life separately from the dead.

A final important feature of contemporary conceptions of grieving is the idea of grieving as a social activity, as well as an individual one. Social support, from family, friends and strangers, has been identified as an important factor in grieving (Rosenblatt 1988, 73). Internal representations of the dead are mediated and reconstructed through shared memories and communal reminiscences (Silverman and Klass 1996, 18). Support from those who have experienced similar loss can help the bereaved feel less isolated (Rosenblatt 1988, 73), while spending time those unconnected with the death may allow the bereaved a break from the all-encompassing reminders of the dead at home (Walter 2009, 408). As such, Walter (2009, 406–409) conceptualises this oscillation as predicated on the people we are with, the places we are, and the obligations that are placed on us, as much as internalised coping mechanisms. As Walter (2009, 409) concludes:

Grief does not occur in a social or geographical vacuum. Though these theoretical perspectives alert us to some experiences mourners may have, they neither reveal a picture of normal behavior [sic] nor provide clear directives that will guarantee speedy return to normal functioning. Rather, what they highlight is the sheer diversity and complexity of mourners' experiences, and the need [...] to treat, as far as possible, the bereaved worker as an individual.

Nevertheless, Bandini (2015, 350) critiques the way grieving is treated in diagnostic literature, which may imply a standard of 'appropriate grief'. Psychological data on grief is often collected with references to very specific groups, dealing with specific circumstances, and there is often little consideration of the effects of these contexts, or how this may differ in other situations and communities (Breen and O'Connor 2007, 204). There is a general consensus that grief is unique to the individual and circumstances, and therefore this distinction between 'normal' and 'abnormal', in medicine, creates what Breen and O'Connor (2007, 207–208) describe as a paradox. While, Walter (2000, 110) refutes "medicine's colonisation of grief" as overstated, psychological language permeates non-professional discussions on grief, with many internalising the idea of grief as a

process, having normative stages (Walter 2000, 99; Turnham 2015). However, the social pressure to grieve 'properly' is not simply formed from these psychological discussions. Group-led normativity, whether formulated from psychological theory or from experiential accounts, affects the bereaved's perception of their own grieving and its 'success' (Walter 2000, 111). Walter (2000) therefore argues that the societal consensus of the 'normal' course of grief is affected by social pressures with more impact on the bereaved's lives than medical treatment. This idea is congruent with both the cultural understandings of emotion, and the Bourdieusian framework under which this project operates.

Regardless of whether the pressure is stemming from medicalised, or social, conceptions of grieving, these understandings of the way grief 'should be', likely have an effect on the bereaved's experiences, and reporting, of their own grieving. It may affect actions, as people's behavioural schemas are affected by the observations and representations they have come into contact with, but also people's interpretation, experience, and communication of their own feelings. This is likely to affect both the research available for study in this review of literature, the research focus of these studies, and the way people describe their own experiences.

The key theme to draw from this discussion on the changing understanding of grief across the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries is that grief is conceptualised as both non-normative, and dynamic. As grieving is an encultured action, closely linked with culturally (rather than biologically) conceived notions of emotivity, the emotion felt by the bereaved is mediated by their cultural and social context, affecting both their experience, and expression of, feeling. Contrary to older conceptions of 'successful' grieving, contemporary research argues that people tend to maintain their connections with the dead, by reconstituting the relationship, and enmeshing the deceased into continuing life. These contemporary understandings of grieving, constructed through research on present day populations, and then reinforced by the reporting of that research in both popular psychology, and through medical interventions, form an important base for understanding the cultural context of contemporary grieving.

4.2 Encultured Grieving through Objects in Contemporary Populations

Much of the research into object use following bereavement draws on Winnicott (1953) theory of the transitional object – an object used in childhood which simulates the presence of a caregiver in their absence. This was later adapted by Bowlby (1998) and Ainsworth (1969) to incorporate the idea of attachment and the secure base in young children. More recent literature has considered how attachment to objects tend to gain more complex meanings and symbolisms in older children, providing the foundations for the construction of identity, or acting as fulcrums for the negotiation of relationships (Richins and Chaplin 2021). Though the character of our attachment to objects

changes as we age, some kind of sentimental attachment to specific objects remains important throughout life (Bell and Spikins 2018). Often this has been attributed to their mnemonic nature, however, Bell and Spikins (2018) argue that the relationship many people have to objects is more complex than simply triggering memory. This section considers the way object use has been considered in grief research, and how the enculturation of contemporary populations may influence grief object use. Three major themes were identified in the systematic review of literature; objects which continue the bond with the deceased into the present; objects which are created by the bereaved during grieving; and objects which form part of meaning-making and narrative construction around the death. These themes, and their cultural context, are explored in the remainder of this chapter.

Though the contemporary world considers itself increasingly secular, with 37.2% of UK adults describing themselves as having no religion in the 2021 census (ONS 2022), the dead often remain a presence in our lives. The continued sense that the dead are with us has been found to be a common feeling in the bereaved (Bennett and Bennett 2000, 142; Davies 2017, 195), and particularly in the immediate aftermath of a death, hallucinations, dreams of, and 'visits' from, the dead are a commonly reported phenomenon (Fiorini *et al.* 2009; Bradbury 1999, 177). For others, communication with the dead is more deliberate. Holding imagined conversations and arguments with the dead, as well as imagining the deceased's reaction to unfolding events is common (Bradbury 1999, 179). This presence of the dead, whether interpreted by the bereaved as a psychological phenomenon or a haunting, continues to influence the bereaved's feelings and behaviour in everyday life. The importance of the relationship with the deceased does not simply cease with death, but rather its form must be renegotiated (Chentsova Dutton and Zisook 2005). Often objects have been noted as focal points for both the renegotiation of this relationship and expression of the dead's continuing presence within daily life (Klass, Silverman and Nickman 1996; Field, Gao and Paderna 2005; Chentsova Dutton and Zisook 2005).

Objects which evoke the presence of the dead are often invested in some way with the agency of the dead, either as a physical embodiment of the deceased's presence, or through their retention of ownership of the object. The most intuitive way objects evoke the presence of the dead is through physical bodily remains. In the contemporary world, this most often takes the form of cremation ashes, though hair and teeth, particularly of children, can form part of this bodily commemoration. In some cases, these remains are transformed into jewellery and other objects, with two of the most common examples being the creation of ashes diamonds (see Benkel, Klie and Meitzler 2020), and the embedding of ashes within resin (see McCormick 2015). McCormick (2015, 181) draws on Hertz (2004, 43) to argue that cremation ashes act as a 'second body' through which the dead interact with the living world. In discussing objects created using cremation ashes, McCormick (2015, 186) uses

participants' language choices, referring to objects both by the name of the dead, and as an inanimate thing, to highlight the position of cremains as straddling the ontological categories of 'person' and 'thing'. The ashes, or the jewellery created from the ashes, are physically the deceased person, and the bereaved continue to refer to them as such (Benkel, Klie and Meitzler 2020, 13; McCormick 2015, 186). In this way, the diamond acts as a fulcrum for which the bereaved continue to interact with the deceased.

Participants in McCormick's (2015, 190) study discuss their use of cremation ashes in objects to continue their relationship with the deceased, for example, by touching and speaking to the object. In this way, the person remains physically involved in the living world (Cann 2022, 61). This is echoed in the words of participants in Benkel, Klie and Meitzler's (2020) study. One participant described talking to her ashes diamond to comment on events in her life, such as at museums or sightseeing (Meitzler 2020, 59). Others talk to the jewellery about the death event and their grief:

I even talk to the thing. [...] I often say to him: "You asshole, was that really necessary, so early?" (Benkel, Klie and Meitzler 2020, 151)

This allows for the bereaved to have a conversation with the deceased about the death event, their subsequent feelings and their grief in a way in which they control both sides of the conversation (Benkel, Klie and Meitzler 2020, 150). This may provide a way to talk through difficult thoughts, which may be perceived as too intimate or taboo to discuss with others.

The bereaved also emphasise the importance of the ashes objects as portable, able to be carried around with the bereaved, where an urn would stay static on a mantelpiece. This allows the dead to be physically present and interacting with the world at large, and provides the bereaved with the comfort of their imagined presence at times when they feel ill at ease or anxious (Meitzler 2020, 60). Participants in Cann's (2022) study on the creation of cremation diamonds also emphasise the importance of being able to continue daily activities which the dead would have been part of in life:

We travelled a lot and I wanted him traveling with me. Since I received my diamonds [...] I feel like he is right there experiencing it with me (Cann 2022, 62)

Other objects physically place the dead within the home, with the most common example being photographs (Parrott 2010, 135; Rose 2005, 231). For many scholars (Rose 2004; Edwards 2005; 1999; Parrott 2010), it is the physicality of photographs which grants them this power. Interacting with photographs, framing, hanging, and holding the material image of the dead allows the photograph itself to act as a proxy for the person. This can be seen in the case of one of Gibson's (2004, 291) participants, who, in the wake of a bereavement, used to hold a photograph of the

deceased next to her heart. Held in this way, the image of the deceased could not be seen, it is instead held as though it were the deceased's body being held (Gibson 2004, 291).

In Parrott's (2010) study into the use of photographs following bereavement, the majority of photographs which were displayed within the household were of deceased parents and children, followed by siblings and grandparents. This potentially represents the importance of the parent-child relationship in contemporary Western culture, however, it may also be linked to those who had a presence in the household in life. Parrott (2010, 137–139) shows that the photographic presence of the dead can be particularly important when the bereaved is establishing a new household, either through moving out of the parental home, moving in with a spouse or having children. In these cases, the dead who were part of a previous household may be materially placed in the new household as well, through the display of photographs or other objects (Parrott 2010, 138). Objects may also enmesh the dead in the continued running of the household. Holmes (2019) focuses on the ability of inherited 'mundane' objects to evoke deceased family members in the maintenance of the household. This is in contrast to the usual focus on 'sacred' keepsakes which are generally sequestered and removed from family life (Holmes 2019, 175). One participant discussed how the physicality of using her grandmother's breadknife made her feel an affinity with her mother and grandmother (Holmes 2019, 182). These objects, and their continued use, "anchor[] the departed within the land of the living" (Turley and O'Donohoe 2012, 1342).

Studies linking these experiences of the continuing presence of the dead, and the bereaved's deliberate evoking of that presence, have been rarely associated with cultural constructions in Western contexts, but rather as psychological phenomena and hallucinations (Keen *et al.* 2013, 396). Keen *et al.* (2013, 395) articulate this discrepancy in contrast to studies of non-western cultures, in which the continuing presence of the dead is considered as a cultural manifestation of ancestor worship, and draw on Bennett and Bennett (2000) to argue that this cultural construction model should be included in studies on Western populations. Bennett and Bennett (2000, 148) found that enculturation was an inherent part of people's experience of this presence of the dead, with participants interpreting such feelings as psychological or paranormal in accordance with their own personal beliefs.

This focus on 'keeping the dead close' may be linked to what Hill (2010, 1) describes as a 'paranormal turn' in contemporary culture, with a revived interest in the concept of ghosts, mediums, and communication between the living and the dead. In contrast with the cultural depiction of ghosts as strange entities haunting the living, Kwilecki (2009, 102) argues that from the 1990s, there has been an increased representation of communications coming from deceased relatives. Such communication is generally perceived as comforting and reassuring (Kwilecki 2009, 114), and with around 40% of young British adults (Rauf *et al.* 2023, 798), and 51% of American

adults (Kwilecki 2009, 102), expressing a belief in ghosts, the interpretation of, and sharing of, experiences perceived as paranormal may be increasingly socially acceptable.

Often this evoking of the dead has an explicitly sensory aspect, and which is often articulated through clothes and other textiles. Particularly in the initial aftermath of bereavement, objects can act as a source of physical comfort (Simpson 2014). As children, we are often conditioned to associate softness and warmth with comfort and security, and the sensory and tactile properties of these objects make them ideal for providing this kind of solace (Odabasi 2022). In addition to this, clothes are often closely linked to identity in contemporary Western culture, and are often shaped by their owners' bodies (Stallybrass 1993). The way we move wears them down, at the elbows and wrists, the knees and the hem, and often clothes begin to smell of their owners (Stallybrass 1993). These intense sensorial properties, and their cultural propensity to act as proxies for their owners' bodies, lead many people, in the wake of bereavement, to smell or wear the clothes of the dead, to sleep in their bed, or to hold or cradle their toys (Simpson 2014; Gibson 2004, 2008; Porch *et al.* 2022; Dolan and Holloway 2016). Gibson (2004, 290) explores this through interviews with the bereaved, who often emphasise scent as an important sensory factor for evoking the presence of the dead. One participant described deliberately keeping a pair of sneakers worn by her deceased husband:

I did keep a pair of his sneakers which I used to smell occasionally— that's very powerful because you can envisage him standing right beside you when you've got this smell (Gibson 2004, 290)

Scent holds an important place in contemporary popular culture, with idioms such as 'the smell of fear', and the idea that pheromones are innate, unique chemical signallers to potential romantic partners reported in popular magazines like *TIME* (Oaklander 2016) and *New Scientist* (Robson 2024). Through this, scent is constructed as an important communicator between people, and may be considered as linked to identity, and interfamilial connections.

The presence these objects evoke may not, however, be received positively. Objects which are used repeatedly during the grieving process, such as clothing which smells of deceased, can become intensely suffused with negative emotions (Gibson 2004, 289). They can come to memorialise grief itself. Simpson (2014, 2) discusses the potential for the evoked presence of the dead to be startling and upsetting, as encounters with objects can trigger "the presence of absence" (Barthes and Leger 2010, cited by Simpson 2014, 3). This can lead the bereaved to attempt to control their interactions with objects which evoke the dead, such as by restricting them to certain areas of the house, or keeping them hidden in drawers (Simpson 2014, 3). This idea aligns well with Büster's (2021) conception of 'problematic stuff', and Gibson's (2010) 'sacred' and 'abject' objects – objects too

enmeshed with the identity and memory of the dead to either be repurposed or unceremoniously discarded. Such objects can become fulcrums for the deceased's continuing agency in the world. This is illustrated through the example of a participant who engages their own children in continuing their deceased parent's collection – looking for figurines that “Nanny would have liked” (Parrott 2011, 295). This agency, however, is a facsimile, constructed through the impression and memory the living have of the dead. These imagined or recalled opinions of the dead can hold great weight. Their status as the ‘wishes of the dead’ grants them an almost hallowed status, and the voicelessness of the dead makes it easy to position the dead as moral or aesthetic arbiters. As Verdery (1999, 29) wrote “words can be put into [the dead's] mouth”, and as such, the continued presence of the dead, evoked by objects, can have important influence over the continued behaviour of the bereaved.

The experience of the evoked dead may be affected by how the bereaved are encultured. Steffen and Coyle (2017) discuss interviews with their participants around the feeling of the ‘presence’ of the dead in the home. While the mother found this comforting, proof that her husband continued to watch over them, other family members found the idea disturbing (Steffen and Coyle 2017, 374). Her daughter, particularly, disliked the idea, as it conflicted with her belief that death was final, and that the dead were ‘gone’, while her son argued that if their father was with them, then he was not in heaven (Steffen and Coyle 2017, 375). This illustrates the idea that meaning-making around death does not need to include a religious aspect, or a belief in an afterlife, only the need to make logical sense for the bereaved.

Cultural context and metaphor can become important in meaning-making narratives, and in the feeling that things make ‘sense’ under the individual's belief system. One of Fuller and Kuberska's (2022, 10) participants related her choice to place a five pence coin in her stillborn child's hand within the coffin to ‘pay the gatekeeper’. This is narrative meaning-making which is constructed around cultural myth, in this case a pastiche of ‘a coin for the ferryman’, and St Peter manning the gates of Heaven. The material aspect of this also plays a factor in how the bereaved mother approaches continuing life, as the coin is now transformed by its link to her child's life and death, from a purely practical object to one heavy with meaning. The mother now wears a locket containing a hidden five pence coin as part of her memorialisation practice (Fuller and Kuberska 2022, 11).

One of the commonly kept items are prints of the feet or hands of the baby, which is interesting due to the imagery of prints being synonymous with identity in contemporary culture (Layne 2000, 334). With little else to form a stillborn's identity around, the uniqueness of their hand- and footprints is indicative of their uniqueness as a person, even if they existed only very briefly. However, this tendency to inherently consider metaphor can also be painful. One participant in Fuller and Kuberska's (2022, 9) study automatically linked the failure of a garden-rose to grow to the loss of

her baby. This idea was also articulated by her mother who urged her not to think that way (Fuller and Kuberska 2022, 9). Babies are often linked to nature, flowers, and growing things, and in English (the family's native language), the word 'barren' has both the meaning of infertile land, and the old-fashioned, callous meaning of a woman unable to carry a child. The death of the rose, which would generally not be portentous, became significant when it was narratively linked to the death of the child. This was not an intentional act of meaning-making, and not one that the bereaved mother found helpful or productive, but she reasoned it "was too soon to have that sort of rational thinking" (Fuller and Kuberska 2022, 9). This shows how objects, places and things can gain significance without conscious effort, often due to linguistic or cultural context.

One final theme to consider is the impact ideas around creativity, art and therapeutic interventions on the 'processing' of grief. From the 1980s, there has been an increased interest in the possibility for art practice to affect mood and well-being, and in particular in the use of art as a therapeutic technique following trauma and loss. Creative hobbies are relatively common in the present day. Accurate data is difficult to source, but Feldman (2020) suggests that up to half of people write in a journal at some point in their lives, around 10% of people in the UK knit as a hobby (Wood 2022). Conceptually in the present day, art-making is inherently linked with emotionality, and in particular, with emotional catharsis. De Petrillo and Winner (2005) investigated the effects of artmaking on the mood of adults shown distressing imagery. When describing their choices in producing the artwork, the participants generally gave their reasoning as either wanting to explore the negative feelings they had experienced, and so "release [the] negative energy"; or as a way to "forget" the negative imagery (De Petrillo and Winner 2005, 209). In this way, amongst De Petrillo and Winner's (2005) participants, art-making is conceptualised as a way to experience, control, or reject negative emotion.

Death can bring with it feelings of powerlessness, and loss of control, as the bereaved are confronted with both their own inability to care for and protect their loved ones, and the inevitability of their own demise (Glaser, Knowles and Damaskos 2019, 768; Aho, Inki and Kaunonen 2018, 677). Kaufman (1996, 243), when writing about her experience of sculpting a memorial for her deceased son, discussed her feelings of grief and the powerlessness of being unable to save her child:

My unbearable pain as a mother powerless to help her son is healed by my effectiveness as an artist.

The art itself, and the feelings it produces, are under the control of the bereaved (Kohut 2011, 128), and the production of the art object, provides a focal point for emotions, and prevents the bereaved from ruminating on directionless anxiety (Junge 1985, 5). William's (2015, 48) identified a theme of

the bereaved using the art as a place to 'put' overwhelming feelings. This is congruent with the way Kaufman (1996) described her experience. The sculpture 'contained' her grief:

“the impetus for creation is an immediate response to and flight from suffering and death. It is the only way for the artist to contain, and both avoid and deal with, the otherwise overpowering feelings [...] The process of making the sculpture provides a place where intensity of feeling can be experienced and contained” (Kaufman 1996, 243)

Art-making also has the potential to connect people with shared experiences. In the contemporary world, in which we are increasingly connected globally, but also increasingly distanced from in-person community, the need for communal grieving is something undertaken for numerous reasons, something illustrated emotively by the National Covid Memorial Wall (Anon). This memorial, consisting of 240,000 hand-painted hearts, consciously or unconsciously references the form of memorial walls across Britain, including in crematoria gardens, and military memorials at the National Arboretum in Lichfield, in which the names of the dead are inscribed on self-contained plaques. The uneven shapes and spacing between the hearts, however, reflects the grassroots nature of the NCMW. This is not a state-sponsored memorial, but rather a coming-together of the bereaved, many of whom were critical of the government response to the pandemic (see Anon).

Other grassroots commemoration projects have drawn on the traditions in textile art in order to situate their loss and grief. Examples include the AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Grenfell Tower Memorial Quilt. Quilts have long been associated with the concept of familial legacy, history and memory. Writing about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British practice, Smith (2023, 232) describes the quilt as an archive, recording “hidden domestic histories”. Quilt creation often lasted several generations, the task passed down as a legacy, encompassing the merging of families, tragedy, as well as celebration (Smith 2023, 233). This makes the quilt ideal for enacting communal memorialisation. Traditionally the production of a quilt was a family affair, and the bereaved are in some ways tied together by their shared loss – a blended family of grief. There is also often a political aspect to grassroots memorial making. The AIDS epidemic and the Grenfell Tower fire represent tragedies in which government legislation and response have been criticised. Communal memorial quilting enmeshes the intimate and the domestic with the public and the political to make a powerful statement about personal losses which are often subsumed by questions of accountability. Kerewsky's (1997) research on the creation of the AIDS Memorial Quilt is particularly interesting as her friend, Frederic, was facing the prospect of his own death as he was grieving the loss of his former partner. Frederic used the quilt to consider the place of his own death alongside his former partner and many others. This could be said to create a sense of connection to the cycle of life and death, in which his own death was recontextualised as being one of many (Kerewsky 1997, 438). In

this way, the production of the quilt-panel could be said to act as a fulcrum for meaning- and sensemaking. There is community in death, and in grief.

4.3 Encultured Grieving as an Interpretive Lens

Investigations into grieving in contemporary Western populations are heavily influenced by psychological conceptions of grieving proposed in the twentieth century. There is a tendency for research to focus on medicalised grief, due to the increased necessity of clinical intervention in these cases. This means that a large amount of research focuses on people who have sought medical help related to their grief, and on the outcomes of medical and psychological intervention. There are exceptions to this, notably in the study of grassroots memorial projects where the political and social aspects of the making of the memorial are often highlighted in research. However, this is notably different from explorations of grief in non-Western populations, as noted by Keen *et al.* (2013, 396) and Bennett and Bennett (2000, 154). Western and non-Western grief practices fit into both psychological and cultural models of grieving (Keen, Murray and Payne 2013, 396), however, studies on Western populations have a tendency to ignore the impacts of enculturation.

In contrast, culture is often used to explain ‘othered’ grieving practices, for example in responses to Scheper-Hughes’ (1992) *Death without Weeping*, in which has been summarised as high child mortality rates resulting in lower maternal attachment, and lack of grieving of infant death (eg. Kofod and Brinkmann 2017, 530). This is not necessarily a critique on Scheper-Hughes (1992) who does not assert this, but research which uses this data has had a tendency to imply that the women’s poverty creates a grieving response different from (the implied) us. Einarsdóttir (2021) in particular critiques the divisions created in these discussions, between ‘poor’ and ‘well-off’ mothers, and between Western and non-Western – us and the ‘other’ – in favour of a more nuanced, dynamic and plural conception of encultured grieving. Einarsdóttir’s (2021, 68) analysis may come close to implying a biological innateness to maternal grief, with the assertion that though financial desperation may force mother’s to ‘withhold medical treatment’ from children, “such infant deaths are not free from sorrow”. This is in direct contradiction with bereaved mothers’ accounts from Scheper-Hughes (1992) who deny feeling any sadness, and potentially risks invalidating the ability of ‘non-academics’ to understand their own lived experience. These topics, and the complexity of discussions around the decolonisation of sociological and anthropological research, are beyond the scope of this thesis, however, they highlight that such questions remain extremely relevant to contemporary research into grief.

As discussed in Chapter 3, this thesis takes an approach which considers grieving as culturally constructed. However, the undertaking of this approach requires an exploration of whether this enculturation can be accessed, and interpreted, through an analysis of material culture. This chapter

demonstrates that enculturation impacts present-day object use following bereavement, in particular, that figurative linguistic conventions, societal paradigms, and objects which embody specific cultural connotations, can create a familiar visual and kinaesthetic language through which grief can be explored, expressed and communicated. These can take the form of practices formed out of intensely personal histories and beliefs, however, material practices which wider groups or communities allow for a discussion and exploration of specific encultured constructions of grieving.

The second part of this thesis draws on the discussions presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, in order to analyse four specific material practices which formed part of the encultured landscape of grieving in the second half of the nineteenth century.

5 Sleeping Children and Postmortem Photography

The idea of the 'aesthetic corpse' (Tarlow 2002) refers to burial preparations which emphasised the beauty of the dead body, and has been considered a common practice in the late-nineteenth century. Innovations in technology in this period meant that access to photography was improving, leading to the phenomenon of postmortem photography, which captured the image of the aesthetic corpse as a physical object. Over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, the practice largely fell out of favour. That is, until increased focus on maternal grief prompted a revival in the photography of stillborn children from the 1980s, with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists recommending it as best practice (Reddin 1987, 49). The practice of capturing an image of the stillborn child, its implementation, and its effect on parental grief is still debated (Blood and Cacciatore 2014, 2). Many question why anyone would want to create a visual record of a traumatic moment, nevertheless, almost as soon as photography became available to the wider public, the corpse began to feature as a recurring, if never common, subject.

As today, the child was the most common subject of the postmortem photograph in Britain, depicted, usually, as sleeping, either in bed or in the coffin, though adults were also photographed following their deaths on some occasions. This chapter considers how the experience of the dying process may have affected the way late-Victorian families interacted with the new availability of the photograph as a recording medium. The advent of the photograph represented the first time that the majority of the population could retain a likeness of the deceased after death, something which, previously, was reserved for the gentry and aristocracy. Focusing primarily on the deaths of children, this chapter explores the social, historical, and cultural context out of which the postmortem photograph emerged, drawing on the experience of caring for the dying within the home, the visual culture of effigies and portraiture which informed photographic composition, and the transformative ability of the photograph to externalise the likeness of the deceased and so curate internalised memory.

5.1 Palliative Caring and the 'Good Death' in the Late Victorian Period

As discussed in Chapter 2, the majority of palliative care, particularly for the middle class, took place within the home. As in the modern world, the presence of the seriously ill or dying transformed the household. Caring became 'monotonous', an endless round of doctors' visits and medication, punctuated by moments of crisis, when pain or other symptoms flared, and dying loved ones became distressed or delirious (Helm 2013, 106-107). Families were often left to deal with such moments alone, with little option for help beyond sending someone to fetch a doctor or a neighbour. Writer, Esther Le Hardy (1863, 205) warned caregivers of taking on too much of the

burden, reminding them to switch with other members of the household, or call in friends or extra staff to help:

We would impress upon the mind of the anxious Home Nurse the great necessity of taking due care of herself. We have often heard it said, as proof of devoted affection, that such a wife, mother, or daughter, had been a week or ten days without changing her clothes or taking off her stays (Le Hardy 1863, 205)

The stress of this familial caring can be seen in memoirs and diaries from the period. Writing in 1866, Alexander Murray described an 'interminable' night a few days after the birth of his fourth child. With his wife still recovering from the birth, whooping cough struck the Murray children:

The recovery of the infant of days was pronounced to be hopeless; and for some days, our first-born seemed to us like one who was going to leave us and fly back to the God who gave him. One night in particular, while the mother, herself very weakly, was tenderly watching her sick babe in the room below, your father in the one immediately above, was alternately praying and bending over the suffering form of his languishing boy.[...] "Would God it were morning" was the cry of your father's heart (Murray 1866, 29)

Caring within the home is a more physical and embodied experience than merely sitting at the bedside, though companionship, reading and singing were all aspects of the experience of nineteenth century caring, in a way which is often not experienced in a present-day medical setting. Esther Le Hardy, writing in 1863, gave examples of 'amusements' to be brought in as a diversion if the sick were well enough – playing cards, music and reading aloud were all suggested as possible activities for the sick and carers to partake in (Le Hardy 1863, 265–267). Thomas Guthrie asked for Scottish folk songs to be played at the piano in the room adjoining his sickbed, in the days leading up to his death (Guthrie and Guthrie 1877, 775).

Persistent weakness, as health declined, meant that caring could be intensely physical. Many terminal illnesses cause weight loss (cachexia) and muscle wasting (sarcopenia) as the illness progresses. Cachexia and sarcopenia are common in cancer (Reid *et al.* 2009), AIDS (Tate and George 2001, 164), tuberculosis (Chang *et al.* 2013), heart failure (Rahman *et al.* 2016, 475), kidney failure (Cheung, Paik and Mak 2010, 711), liver failure, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (Berardi *et al.* 2021, 116). In up to a fifth of cancer patients, cachexia may be identified as the cause of death (Berardi *et al.* 2021, 116). This persistent weakness, common in patients undergoing palliative care, meant that care within the home often resulted in the family helping with the physical care of the sick.

Le Hardy (1863, 190) warns women caring for the sick, of injuring themselves trying to lift them, as well as providing description of the best position in which to support someone to sit upright. This close physical support is described as both a “comfort” and a “necessity” (Le Hardy 1863, 189). Often this kind of physical help was provided by family, in preference to hired servants, with patients preferring the help of a familiar face to a ‘stranger’ (Le Hardy 1863, 206). Studies into present day patients have noted that weakness, weight loss and fatigue, often created a disconnect with their bodies (Whitaker 2010, 100). Studies into men with AIDS have found that the associated weight loss, visible in themselves and their friends, was perceived as an irreversible change – a signal that there was no way to stop the progression of the illness (Tate and George 2001, 167). Persistent weakness and fatigue marked a new normal, and the increase in these symptoms was a reminder that there was no way back to the way things had been (Tate and George 2001, 167).

In his memoir, Alexander Murray describes his wife, Eliza, as struggling to continue with the day-to-day of the toilette (washing, dressing and haircare), refusing help “even when the operation of the toilet became distressingly slow” until her sister finally arrived to assist (Murray 1866, 113). This care of the dying is undeniably intimate. On his deathbed, Thomas Guthrie, remarked on the change in family dynamics:

When two of his sons were lifting him up on the pillows, he looked round to them and said, “I am just as helpless now in your arms as you once were in mine.” (Guthrie and Guthrie 1877, 774)

While Murray describes carrying Eliza to her bed for the last time:

Feeling tired, with the flicker of a smile on her face, she intimated shortly after ten o'clock, her wish to retire to her chamber.

As my arms enfolded and carried their cherished, imponderous lapful that night, I little thought that my task was over and done (Murray 1866, 125)

In the present day, elderly patients have talked about an increasing disconnection with their own bodies, which were becoming “skinny” and “ugly” (Whitaker 2010, 100). They described the awareness they had of their own coming demise, of watching themselves wither and become frail (Whitaker 2010, 101). ‘Not looking like themselves’ is considered a moderately severe concern in over a quarter of patients with late-stage cancer (Neel *et al.* 2015, 376). For many, and particularly those who have witnessed it before, the dying body is conspicuous and unmistakeable. As Ellis (1995, 78) said, as she related the experience of sitting in a restaurant, across from her friend, who was in the late stages of HIV infection, “I see death in front of me”. Gibson (2004, 291) identifies the commonality of this image of the dying person ‘overwriting’ prior memories, arguing “the wasting away of the dying is often an indelible and dominant memory image for the grieving”. After a long illness, it can be difficult to remember how the dead had looked when they were well.

Despite this, some caregivers, and the dying, desired that the image of the sickbed be immortalised in photography and paint. Sensing her death was immanent, Emily Gosse worried that her son, Edmund, would have no portraits of her to remember her by, and so two of her friends offered to take photographs and paint a miniature of her (Figure 16). This was undertaken four days prior to her death, with another photograph taken around twelve hours before her death. Though taken for her son, Philip, her husband, describes the comfort he derived from these final images:

The circumstances were almost as unfavourable as they well could be, yet the resemblances produced, especially the first of two photographs, are to me beyond all price [...] A third photograph was taken on the following Monday, about twelve hours before death. It is characteristic and pleasing, though somewhat undefined, because of the motion arising from her laborious breathing: she appears as if she is sleeping, but this was owing to the bright sun's rays compelling her to keep her eyes closed during the exposure (Gosse 1857, 67–68)

These words are interesting, as they highlight that the photographs remain, not only as a final likeness, one which recalled painful memories for Philip – images, and objects, which are suffused with the memory of the moment they were taken.

Late-Victorian ideas of the dying process were very much influenced by the concept of the 'good death' as a religious ideal (Riso 2013). The dying would be faithful and calm, sure of their eternal life (Riso 2013, 49–50). They would spend their final moments proclaiming their faith, and passing on comforting last words to their family and friends (Riso 2013, 49). Narratives of examples of these 'good deaths' were explicitly evangelical, and provided a model for those facing their own mortality, as well as a representation of the comfort offered by faith (Riso 2013, 52–53). The realities of dying, however, may subvert these expectations.

Excerpts from letters and diaries reveal family members distressed by the 'raving' of their loved ones, or of the inability to exchange meaningful final words (Jalland 1996, 35). Jalland (1996, 36) also argues that doctors at the time found tales of pious last words and eloquent partings unconvincing. Dr William Savory argued, in 1863, that by the moment of death, most people were too insensible to make grand statements, and that it was family members who, in the "instinct of love", tried to find meaning in final words or actions (Savory 1863, 175). Savory also, however, attempted to find comfort in this lack of lucidity, arguing that it likely meant that the dying were beyond feeling pain or discomfort, and that:

[t]he cold dew upon the face and surface generally, the collapsed, and perhaps distorted features, the heaving, gasping or gurgling respiration, or it may be the convulsive agitation, are by no means necessarily the signs of pain and distress.

Therefore, whatever may have been the amount of previous suffering, we may fairly



Figure 16 Hand-tinted photograph taken of Emily Gosse, four days before her death, 1857 (Taken from Rees 2023, 99)

assume that, except in extreme cases the actual process of dying is not one of intense agony, or indeed, for the most part, even of pain (Savory 1863, 175-176).

Savory's description of death is detailed and visceral; a long way from the romanticised ideal of peaceful farewells, and closer to the clinical descriptions of active dying found in contemporary literature. Even in the modern world, the experience of dying is generally one of intense physical and emotional distress (Rees 2001, 128). Often pain is uncontrolled (Rees 2001, 129), with both caregivers and patients fearing overdosing on analgesia, particularly opioids (Zerwekh, Riddell and Richard 2002). Arguably, for some, opiate analgesia was more easily available towards the end of the nineteenth century than today, as it was less heavily regulated. The wealthy, with access to physicians making home visits, could be given morphine at home, while others could buy laudanum, paregoric and other opiate tinctures from druggists without prescription (Clark 2016). This would change with the Dangerous Drugs Act 1920. However, even in modern healthcare facilities, the control of pain in palliative patients is often not complete (Rees 2001, 129), and similar concerns over accidentally (or intentionally) killing a patient with an overdose appear to have been present in late nineteenth century medical practice (Emanuel 1994, 795). Discussions around the use of morphine, ether, and chloroform to euthanise dying patients, who were suffering a prolonged and painful death, began around 1870 (Emanuel 1994, 794), indicating that increased access to analgesia and sedation was not necessarily making dying easier to bear or to witness.

During her cancer treatment, Emily Gosse was reluctantly forced to take laudanum in order to sleep (Gosse 1857, 31), and upon commencement of treatment of her breast cancer, a process involving the daily application of black salve (sanguinarine and zinc chloride) and, later, nitric acid:

The effect of this application was very distressing. In about an hour after its renewal every morning, the breast began to be the seat of an aching piercing pain, under which my beloved sufferer was fain to wander up and down her narrow room, leaning now and then her head upon the mantel-piece or against the wall, unable from the agony to lie, sit or stand. For several hours this continued, after which the intensity of the anguish commonly abated. Abatement of suffering, however, was the most she could look for; suffering never ceased from the beginning of the operation, till her spirit was freed from the worn out body (Gosse 1857, 30, original emphasis)

Breathing generally becomes more difficult as death approaches. Terminal respiratory secretions, caused by a decreased ability to swallow and clear the airways, cause what are colloquially known as death rattles (Clark and Butler 2009). Laboured breathing, in which the jaw moves, giving the appearance of gasping, is common, occurring in more than 75% of people within 12 hours of death from a chronic or progressive condition (Morita *et al.* 1998; Matsunami *et al.* 2018; Kaneishi *et al.* 2022). In the moments before death, agonal breathing can occur. As the brain is starved of oxygen,

reflex breathing, triggered by the brainstem, occurs to try to keep the individual alive (Chan *et al.* 2019). The dying person may gasp, moan, or convulse. The gasping may last only seconds, but can also last for hours prior to death.

This respiratory distress, whether the death rattle, or the laboured gasping of the last few hours of life, has been identified as particularly distressing for loved ones (Chartrand 2020, 1165). Listening to the breathing of someone very near to death has been described as “hypnotic” (Wakely 2008, 16). The ‘death rattle’ fills the room, and relatives can find themselves waiting on the next breath. The sound can become oppressively loud in a quiet room, such that the final breath, when it comes is obvious, not because it is noticeably different from the last, but because of the intense silence that follows. Parker-Oliver (2016, 3) vividly describes the lingering trauma that comes from witnessing a loved one struggle to breathe – “Having had this experience firsthand, I know the haunting presence of concern that continues into bereavement as we continue to hear the terrible sounds of dyspnoea and respiratory distress”.

Reference is made within Henry Dymond’s description of his sister’s death to the distress of watching her struggle for breath, along with attacks of exhaustion and delirium:

During Third-day night, her breathing became much affected. This was a distressing attack [...] Early the next morning extreme exhaustion came on, which was succeeded by uneasiness and a little rambling; but the cloud was quickly dispelled, and a time of sweet peacefulness followed, during which, some instructive remarks were made to those around her.

About four o'clock on Fifth-day morning, being attacked with another fit of exhaustion, the family collected around her bed, in expectation that her purified spirit would be released from its emaciated tabernacle (Dymond 1857, 92)

In the final days of illness, the dying were rarely left alone, as it was considered important that people should die surrounded by family. On the final night of Emily Gosse’s illness, both her husband and the two maids who lived in the household refused to go to sleep, presumably out of fear of missing her last moments (Gosse 1857, 75). Touching the dying person was important and is often discussed in documentary evidence from the study period, with relatives often cradling, stroking the hair, or holding the hand of the dying person (Jalland 1996, 27-28). Philip Gosse describes the moment of Emily’s death:

[E]xactly at one o'clock, she breathed a long exhalation and ceased. I laid her dear head, which for an hour had been on my arm, on the pillow, closed her eyes, and, all kneeling round the bed, gave thanks to God, amidst sobs and tears, for her peaceful admission into her happy Home (Gosse 1857, 79)

The moment of death itself is most often described as a moment of relief, a calm and peaceful release of the soul to God. Alexander Murray illustrates this particularly poetically:

In the consciousness of safety, and at five minutes past ten o'clock, her eyes calmly closed on the receding world; the lungs ceased to play and the heart to beat; and her lovely spirit, no longer wrapped round with earth, but clothed with immortality, took its quiet flight beyond the shadows of time, into the bosom of God the Saviour. The struggle with mortality was short - scarcely at all perceptible. The most practiced eye or ear could not tell the moment when the silver cord had snapped (Murray 1866, 128– 129)

This description of a 'gentle release' (Dymond 1857, 96) is often in deep contrast to the suffering described in the same memoirs, and the body itself is often described as losing the tension and wear engendered by long illness:

About two in the morning, the maid whispered, "Surely the wrinkles on the brow are smoothing out!" It was no fancy; the whole countenance wore an expression of profound calm, and the traces of age, work, and weariness were literally passing away (Guthrie and Guthrie 1877, 779)

No sooner was the death-struggle over, than his features seemed to regain the early beauty of which age and sickness had deprived them; his fine forehead, so often lately contracted with pain, lay smoothed and unwrinkled as an infant's; all appearance of paralysis had passed away; and the lifeless face, in its placid composure, seemed in a moment to have lost twenty years of its age (Blomfield 1863, 271)

While descriptions of these peaceful dying moments echo the requirement for a 'good death', emphasising the belief of both dying person and caregiver in the comfort of the resurrection, often these accounts are not simple documents of the saintly deaths of the devoted. Philip Gosse, in particular, demonstrates the potential for doubt and sorrow among the dying:

To a beloved sister in Christ, who called and asked of her state, [Emily] said, - "I have peace, but not joy. It would not do to go into eternity with a lie in my mouth." At the same time she complained that the body and its claims so occupied her thoughts that she could scarcely pray or think much. She observed that she had not supposed dying was like *that* (Gosse 1857, 69, original emphasis)

Philip went on to describe Emily's disappointment that she had not experienced the visions and hallucinations of Heaven, which were often found in "descriptions of happy death-beds", offering proof of the comfort of salvation (Gosse 1857, 70):

I said, “Is Jesus precious to you?” She knew I meant *consciously, joyously* precious; and replied, “I can’t say that: I have not the joys I expected. *I rest upon his Word, his Inspiration.* I have not the fears of the wicked, but I have not the affections that I expected.” (Gosse 1857, 70, original emphasis)

Philip recontextualises this as an honour given by God, the opportunity to die without proof of salvation, but rather to die with the strength of her faith alone. The inclusion of these moments of doubt perhaps indicates that evangelising the lives of loved ones was not the only purpose in the narratives of peaceful death found in memoirs. Rather, the peaceful passage may reflect not only a moment of relief for the dying, but also for the caregiver – the labour of caring is over, and is represented by the stilling of the pained and exhausted body. Any moments in which this relief was shaken were recontextualised, and reinterpreted in order to buoy up those feelings of relief. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

In contrast to the ‘happy death’ of adults gaining salvation after a life of good works, the seemingly senseless death of children was less easy to rationalise. Despite medical advancements, child mortality in the second half of the nineteenth century remained high, and would not begin to drop until the Edwardian period (Jalland 1996, 120). In a culture in which the familial and domestic world was held as the centre of life, the loss of a child was truly devastating. Jalland (1996, 121–122) showed that despite the high likelihood of losing children, the pain of that loss was not lessened by anticipation, nor diminished by the survival of other children. The death of a child was considered a special kind of grief, for being in opposition to the usual ‘life-course’ (Jalland 1996, 119), and though, for the devout, the loss of child still carried the hope of a reunion in Heaven, it usually did not hold the same comfort of the relief of the end of suffering (Jalland 1996, 124). The child had, hopefully, not yet faced many of the trials of the world, and as such, the death of a child may be more likely to be seen as a punishment from God for the parents (Jalland 1996, 125).

Unlike the slow decline often experienced in adult deaths, children often died rapidly from infectious diseases, sometimes in quick succession. This meant that the care for them was often short, but intensive. Multiple sick children often meant splitting time and attention between them, with parental attention subsumed with the most ill. When writing of their care for their children with whooping cough, Alexander Murray described he and his wife in separate rooms, each caring for a child who was on the brink of death, and not knowing what was happening in the other room (Murray 1866, 29). There would be little time for mourning the death of one child, while others were still sick. Burials needed to be carried out quickly, due to both infection risk, and few ways of safely storing the body. This may mean that multiple burials were carried out in quick succession, with parents returning from the funeral to continue caring for other dying children (Jalland 1996, 126). Jalland (1996, 130) demonstrates this through the experience of Catherine Tait, wife of future

archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Tait, who was unable to spend time with the body of her young daughter, as she needed “calmness of spirit to enable [her] to take [her] watch beside [her] firstborn”. All of this meant that in some cases, the rituals of leave-taking, of farewells, and of sense-making may have been impossible, leaving the death feeling inadequately marked or incomplete.

Jalland (1996, 124) argues that the inability to perform the idealised deathbed scene with children increased the pain of the loss for parents. This deathbed leave-taking was rarely possible in its entirety for young children. Many of the memoirs which recount idealised Christian deaths make explicit reference to the resignation of the dying to the will of God. Conversations between the dying and loved one’s allowed for the dying to express their peace with the death, and their hope and happiness at being able to meet with Jesus. This can be seen in Philip Gosse’s memoir for his late wife, in which he quotes many of his conversations with her:

In solemnly reviewing the history of our married life, she spoke of the principles by which she had striven to walk, and ended with the following words – “I feel that, be it much or little, I have finished my course. I have loved the Lord and his work; and my only thought, if He were to give me another twelvemonth of life, would be that I might labour a little more for Him.” (Gosse 1857, 68)

These statements offer religious comfort, that the dying were fulfilling the requirements of a Christian death, and as such, were dying under the word of God, ready for the promised salvation. However, also common in memoirs were accounts of conversations of a more practical nature – often in the form of ‘setting their house in order’. Eliza Murray spoke openly of what she wanted following her death:

Several things were named which she wished to be distributed amongst you when she was gone, as keepsakes – symbols of a mother’s love and gentle thoughts, which you know how to prize. She expressed no preference as to a resting place for her dear remains. (Murray 1866, 119–120)

She also spent time ensuring that loose ends were tied up before her departure:

Her collecting books were audited, and the monies intrusted to her counted, and directions left as to what was to be done with them. The very dates of certain payments which she had made it her province to remind me of at the proper time, were thoughtfully chronicled (Murray 1866, 122)

This resignation towards death allowed, not only for the easing of tasks relating to the funeral, the will and continuing life, but also made it possible for the dying and loved one’s to speak candidly about the dying process, and to offer farewells in the days and weeks leading up to the death event.

Philip Gosse describes the openness with which he and Emily discussed her death:

We looked it in the face; we well knew no blessing, no strength, was to be gained by concealing it from ourselves or from each other, and we talked of it freely. [...] At another time she said, "My beloved Henry, gladly would I remain, if such were the Lord's will, and be your companion for the rest of your pilgrimage!" (Gosse 1857, 52–53)

This understanding, and dialogue, offered between adults, served to reify the shared belief in God and resurrection, as well as offering mutual comfort and support in the face of the loss. The importance of the relationships could be articulated, and final farewells and declarations of love could be exchanged. All of this may have provided a sense of closure to the relationship, which though it did not make the loss easier, did at least ensure that everything that was needed was said.

This is a comfort that could not be found in the deaths of young children, though Gadpaille (2024, 212) notes that often seemingly unconnected gestures and conversations were reinterpreted as having religious meaning in the wake of a death. Nevertheless, very young children would not only not be able to express the religious faith, and resignation to God's will, required of a 'good death', they would also be unable to understand what was happening. The pain and suffering was not buffered by the knowledge that they would soon be at peace with Jesus. Children were simply crying for comfort which parents could not provide. All of this served to make the loss of children one that was uniquely traumatic, and one during which the rituals of the dying process may not be possible to complete adequately.

5.2 The Laying Out of the Corpse and Acts of Care

Following a death in the late nineteenth century, the first practical act that needed to take place was the laying out of the body, ready for encoffining. During the laying out, pains were taken to conceal all outward signs of deterioration, which can become apparent within minutes of the final breath. Corneal clouding was concealed by the closing of the eyes, and the body was laid out and washed, the limbs straightened, and the jaw bound up to prevent it gaping, before rigor mortis made this impossible. Rigidity usually lasts between 1 and 3 days (Madea 2016, 462; Kori 2018, 2), and therefore may delay funerary preparations if the body was not positioned to allow for encoffining (Richardson 2000, 19). The dead body was also dressed, often from head to toe, in shrouds designed to resemble night clothes, or in the dead's own clothes (Cherryson 2018, 41). Long sleeves, caps, socks, gloves and artfully tucked coffin sheets not only mimicked sleeping apparel and the bed (Cherryson 2018, 48; Janaway 1998, 25; Litten 1991, 214), but also hid all but the face, concealing the pallor and lividity of the corpse (Nyberg 2010, 20). In some cases, cosmetics could be used to hide the initial signs of death on the face (Stearns and Knapp 1996, 137).

Hallam and Hockey (2020, 133) characterise the dead body as “radically vulnerable”. Within minutes, without a pulse or breath to keep entropy at bay, the body becomes pale and cold, and autolysis, the first stage of decomposition, begins (Mathur and Agrawal 2011). The vulnerability of the corpse to decay has been discussed at length, as has the tendency of people to find the idea unsettling. Tarlow (1999, 195–196, 2011, 119) argues that the decay of the body was considered an “affront” to personhood, stripping the corpse of its physical identity. The decay of the body could also be considered unsettling because it reminds us of our own impermanence (Bronfen 2017, 114–115; Hallam and Hockey 2020, 25). The treatment of the dead body, made to resemble a figure sleeping, could be considered an attempt to fix the body in time, in Hallam and Hockey’s (2020, 133) words, to stabilise the unstable. Decay could be arrested, or concealed, briefly, for the few days before burial. If the body which goes into the grave is the same as at the moment of death, then we can perhaps trick ourselves into believing that it will remain so, quietly sleeping, unchanging within the grave.

Within European culture, beauty is heavily associated with goodness, and goodness with religious righteousness (See Janes 2009, chap.2). Therefore, aside from its denial of decay, the creation of the beautiful ‘sleeping’ corpse also enacts cultural and religious ideals. The metaphor of death as sleep is itself biblical, drawing on the idea that eventually, the sleeping dead will be woken, as Jesus ‘woke’ Lazarus (John 11:11). In the second half of the nineteenth century, the metaphor of the sleeping corpse was enacted through the dead body. The preparation and presentation of the body emphasised that the corpse was at peace, dressed for bed, and ready for eternal slumber before rising again. In other words, the visual appearance of the corpse within its coffin reified the metaphor of death as sleep. The preparation of the dead body to the aesthetic sleeping corpse transforms it, and separates it from the suffering, sickly, earthly world, but part of the eternal peace offered by the afterlife.

This focus on the aesthetic corpse has been interpreted as indicative of the middle- and upper-classes increasingly distancing themselves from the unpleasant realities of death, as part of a cultural disgust towards death and decay (Tarlow 2002, 90). The laying out of the dead body was often a task carried out by servants (Cock-Starkey 2024, 4), which has often been interpreted as a disgust towards the corpse. However, rather than distress or disgust at the body, there are accounts of the bereaved struggling to be parted from the body (Jalland 1996, 212–213). Jalland (1996, 213) gives the example of Seth Thompson, who’s brother-in-law wrote in 1849 that following the death of his wife, “[he] hardly leaves the room and it is becoming almost necessary he should”. Another widow, Agnes Grieg, confessed that she “kept on his bed as long as they would let me” (Jalland 1996, 212). Viewing, and spending time with the body was considered a normal part of grieving. Depending on their culture, social class, or nationality, this may take the form of a wake, or death watch, or of a gathering the morning of the funeral. Regardless, the body would likely spend some time in the

family home, giving the relatives time to spend with the body, saying their final goodbyes. Touching or kissing the body was considered normal (Frisby 2015, 115), and interaction with the body itself was part of normative leave-taking. The treatment of the body, and the final few days spent touching, kissing, and talking to the dead, all represent intimate final acts of care, a continuation of the love and care that characterised the relationship before death.

It may be more constructive then, to consider the passing on of the task of laying out the dead as indicative of the potentially distressing nature of the task. During the 1831-2 cholera epidemic, in Manchester, in attempting to undertake contact tracing, Henry Gaultier (1833) provides glimpses into the networks of support which existed amongst the very poor. Following a death, families may call in extended family or neighbours to help, not only with nursing the sick, but also with the washing and laying out of bodies. When both William Bradley, aged 47, and his son, John, aged 5, died within three days of each other, William's brother-in-law helped to wash the bodies, and a neighbour came in to clean the rooms that the dead lay in (Gaultier 1833, 168–169, 172–173, 179). More graphically, when Mary Barlow died, and both her husband and mother were unable to remove her wedding ring, Mary Walker, a lodger, 'forced' it from her finger for them (Gaultier 1833, 178).

Adams (1992, 161) and Strange (2002, 152) both discuss the prevalence of layers-out in poor communities, who were often called upon to take up the task. Though Gaultier's (1833) accounts are scientifically clinical, and somewhat coloured by Gaultier's middle-class sensibilities, there are moments reflecting the grief of a community reeling from the epidemic, such as Mary Walker, weeping at Barlow's funeral, or 45-year-old Edward Johnson, a joiner, getting drunk as he prepared a coffin for his child, having "just before the boy died [...] caught him up in his arms in an agony of sorrow and kissed him several times" (Gaultier 1833, 184). Strange (2002, 152) notes the presence of community networks who would come together in times of crisis and strife, to sort out the practicalities. This reciprocal relationship meant that families could count on their communities to rally round them when death struck their household. It is possible that the convention of the laying out being undertaken by someone less closely related to the dead was an acknowledgement of the need to remove the burden of distressing practical tasks from the bereaved, who were likely to be in an intensely emotional state in the immediate aftermath of a death, or indeed, sick themselves.

More tender descriptions come from the first-person accounts of the middle-classes. Jalland (1996) discusses the immediate aftermath of the deaths of Archibald and Catherine Tait's children in 1856. The laying out and dressing of the bodies were undertaken by the housekeeper and other maids (Jalland 1996, 132), however, from Archibald's description, this reads less like a directive from the couple to their staff, and more related to the inability of the parents to undertake the task. On the final night of their fourth daughter's illness, Catherine had become so distressed, the child's

governess had taken her to bed. When the child finally died, Archibald left the washing and dressing of the body to the housekeeper who had been nursing her, and laid down on the floor of the dining room beneath. With only around three days between death and funeral, and the onset of rigor mortis within three hours of death (Madea 2016, 459), the presence of grief-stricken parents or spouses may have proved a hindrance to the task.

Simply being in the room the room in which the dead occurred, and the body lay, could be distressing. Le Hardy (1863, 220–221) in her final paragraph on the managing the ‘chamber of death’, writes vividly of how the room could be infused with distressing memories:

the furniture, and particularly the bed, all vividly recall, as they stand in their same places, scenes so realising the past, that the heart twines around and treads the old familiar room again with trembling step and palsying agony.

She advises moving around the furniture, and if possible redecorating “to dim these painful memories” (Le Hardy 1863, 220). This is not only reminiscent of Ahmed’s (2004) discussion of the ‘stickiness’ of objects, in which objects become infused with strong emotion through repeated interaction, but also recalls discussions on the potential for memory to be overwritten and curated, through interactions with those memories.

5.3 Photography and Memory

Photography was invented in the early nineteenth century, before being popularized by the invention of the daguerreotype photograph. While initial exposure times ranged from between three and fifteen minutes (Barger and White 1991, 29), rapid improvements reduced this to between five and fifteen seconds (Barger and White 1991, 34), allowing the process to be used for portraiture in the 1840s and 1850s. The second half of the nineteenth century saw many innovations in the field of photography, which reduced the price and increased the availability. Daguerreotypes were popular for portraiture in the 1840s and 1850s, before being largely replaced by ambrotypes and tintypes and subsequent advancements. Carte de Visite style portraits, on small card bases, were popular in the 1860s and 70s, while the larger cabinet photographs, became popular from the 1870s. Both these types were superseded by the photographic postcard which became available from the beginning of the twentieth century. The first mass market camera was released in 1888, by Kodak, and it was the Brownie camera, released in 1900 which popularised owning personal cameras. Victorian photographs were generally planned and taken with staging in a photographers’ studio, though in some cases, photographers would come to the house to take photographs in domestic settings.

Although initially expensive, the price of photographs dropped rapidly with subsequent technological advancements, becoming, if not popular, then at least accessible to most of the British population

over the second half of the nineteenth century. It was not possible to locate prices for photographs, however, Rowntree (1908), describing the housing situation of those living in poverty in York in 1901, makes reference to photographs even in the poorest households:

Under the window stands a table on which many household treasures are displayed – fancy vases, glass slippers, photographs, etc. There are several framed photographs on the wall, and an unframed almanac or two (Rowntree 1908, 231)

This shows, not only the relative affordability of photographs, but also the perceived social importance of them. The family which Rowntree was describing had two children who did “not look very strong” (Rowntree 1908, 231), and lived with unstable income, relying on gifts from family and falling into debt during the periods when work dried up. Nevertheless, when disposable income was to be had, the family chose to have photographs as some of their few ‘treasures’.

Johnson (1999, 232) argues that photographs are ‘repositories of memories’, which preserve the visual image of the dead. Photographs of the dead while living can act as the foci of familial memory and heritage, providing a tangible link to relatives who may have died before children and grandchildren were born (Johnson 1999, 232). However, Johnson (1999, 234) draws a distinction between photographs of the dead, and photographs taken while the deceased was alive. Death photographs acted as a record of the death, and served as a physical reminder of the reality of the bereavement (Ruby 1995, 174). By contrast, photographs of the living acted as memory objects, to be used in memorialisation, and to act as a physical visual record of the dead’s appearance (Ruby 1995, 174).

Batchen (2004, 14) argues that photographs are invested heavily with memory, and that in the nineteenth century, they became a visual shorthand for the act of remembering and nostalgia. In the mid-nineteenth century, looking at or holding a photograph was a common pose for sitters, creating an image which evoked a sense of contemplation and nostalgia (Batchen, 2004, 10). Photographs, however, are not simple passive recipients of memory, capturing an accurate snapshot of time. Interaction with them constructs and alters memory itself (Garry and Gerrie 2005; Gibson 2004; Barthes 2000; Naudé 2010). Photographs, rather than acting as a repository for memory, instead produce an entirely new image, one which overlays the real memory (Barthes 1981, 91). One which might, in the case of postmortem photography, be brighter, cleaner, more peaceful. Photographs do not capture the reality of a memory, but rather an angle, selected for composition, for light, for clarity, for obfuscation, and the repeated viewing of the photograph creates opportunity for continual reinterpretation, as the internal memory of the event interacts with the curated externalised ‘memory’ (Naudé 2010). This overwritten memory is argued to “carry more memorial weight” than the internalised memory (Naudé 2010).

A varied material culture grew up around these photographs, with portraits hidden inside locket, framed, and hung on the wall, or curated and placed within albums, illustrating the importance of the materiality of the photograph as an object. Photographs were interacted with in a physical sense. They could be written on, folded, or carried in envelopes in the pocket. They could also be placed in context with each other, in order to communicate familial and friendly connections, or to spark memories and associations. Kunard (2006, 237) argues that the photograph album allowed for portraits to be grouped, in order to convey social connections and links between the sitters. Space around the photographs allowed for the writing of notes and messages through which contextual information which was deemed important could be expressed (Kunard 2006, 237). For Kunard (2006, 239) the photograph album was fundamentally archival, a place where thoughts, ideas, connections and memories could be physically curated and stored. Photographs could be similarly grouped in displays around the home, or on the walls, displaying important relationships, and giving the absent a presence within the home.

Postmortem photography was a phenomenon which boomed with the invention of photography, and rapidly faded from popularity in the early twentieth century. Though postmortem photography was likely a minority practice, it was undertaken by a broad spectrum of society, due to the relative affordability of photo-portraiture (Linkman 2006, 312). Brangwin Barnes (1883, 450), a photographer working in Scotland, described attending a house to take photographs of a recently deceased child, and being surprised by the living conditions of the family:

I found that the corpse was kept in the general living room, in the grate of which a bright fire was burning, and where two or three other children were playing about. I suppose this excuse would be want of room [...] This room was evidently a sleeping room as well as a living room, and yet the occupiers could afford to have a child photographed.

Linkman (2006, 311) argues that the majority of photographers working within the period would have had requests for such portraits, though it was likely not a regular occurrence. This is supported by the writings of photographers in the period. Edward Dunmore, writing in 1891, describes postmortem photography as a practice which “at some time or other the photographer is called upon to perform” (Dunmore 1891, 142), though a few firms in larger cities such as London did specialise in photographs of the dead (Brangwin Barnes 1883, 449). This does not appear to have been a popular job to take on, with photographers describing the experience as “sickening” (Brangwin Barnes 1883, 450), “unpleasant”, “painful” (British Journal Photographic Almanac 1889, 593) and “repugnant[t]” (Dunmore 1891, 142). Philadelphia photographer, John L. Gihon (1871, 32) noted, rather sardonically, that calls to take these jobs “almost invariably occur to us either very early in the morning or very late in the evening”, while Brangwin Barnes (1883, 450) bemoaned that senior photographers tended to despatch junior assistants to such unpleasant jobs:

[the payment], however, did not go into my pocket, but into that of my then employer, who it is needless to say, had nothing to do in the matter but graciously to approve my work and take possession of the proceeds thereof.

Brangwin Barnes (1883, 450) gave the price of 50 shillings for a home visit, for the taking of a large (half life-size) negative plate, full retouching, and a single 18"x15" print, though he implies that this may have been considered a high price as he adds "the father did not object to pay".

Although occasionally the body would have been taken to the studio, it was more usual that the photographer would be called to the home in order to take the photograph within a domestic setting (Linkman 2006, 314). Aside from the fear of contagion, which was always a concern when working with the dead (eg. Brangwin Barnes 1883, 449-50; Dunmore 1891, 142), the primary difficulties identified by photographers were working outside their studio environment, and managing the bereaved relatives during the process. Finding adequate lighting was the primary barrier to producing a good photograph of the dead:

In many cases the body is in a bed in the very darkest corner of the room, and the friends will not, under any circumstances, allow it to be removed to a more convenient situation (Brangwin Barnes 1883, 450).

The disinclination one has to handle the subject, and the restrictions of a sentimental nature imported into the proceedings by relatives or friends, often hamper the successful performance of this class of work very much. It has to be done, and if the results are to be better than a horrid nightmare we must smother our squeamishness and make the best of it (Dunmore 1891, 142)

Where the body could be moved, it was suggested that it be placed with natural light shining from the top of the head, however, where the lighting could not be improved mirrors or white card were used to lift the deepest shadows, and a long exposure made the best use of what was available (Bool 1877, 90).

Postmortem photographs depicting children were overwhelmingly more common. The explanation for this has commonly been that the parents, not yet having a photograph of a young child, desired to have a likeness preserved (eg. Enns 2020, 24). While this is likely to be a factor in the decision-making process for some people, Linkman (2006, 343) showed that this was not the case for all, and that in some circumstances the family also held photographs of the deceased while alive.

Enns (2020) argues that, in North America, the goal of the postmortem photograph was to disguise the death of the subject, either by propping the body up and leaving the eyes open, or by posing the body as if asleep. In Britain, children were often depicted as though sleeping, with the coffin hidden, though some photographs do depict children and infants within their coffins (see Linkman 2006 for

examples); a style more usually associated with adult postmortem photographs. There does not, however, appear to be an effort to 'fake life' in British postmortem photographs. This seems to be reflected in the way North American and British photographers described their aims for postmortem photographs. John L. Gihon (1871, 35), from Philadelphia, appears relatively optimistic about the photographs produced:

Death almost always deals gently with us. He does that which we know the living often vainly try to do – he smoothes away wrinkles, and gives an expression of calm placidity to the careworn face.

In contrast, Edward Dunmore (1891, 142), working in London, was more circumspect about what could be achieved:

The idea you wish to convey is that of a sleeping person [...] A pleasant, life-like appearance is not an invariable result, take what trouble you may, but such precautions will make a much more agreeable picture than if they are neglected.

C. Brangwin Barnes (1883, 450), another British photographer, was more pessimistic about the results of postmortem photography:

It must be admitted that postmortem portraits are never entirely satisfactory, owing to many causes, one of which is that the relatives of the subject expect the resulting photograph to represent their deceased relative as they knew him or her in life; and the lens, however skilful the operator, cannot overcome or hide the alterations affected by the hand of death.

It seems, in fact, to have been a concern that the commissioning public may be disappointed in what could be achieved, and therefore refuse to pay. A.H. Bool (1877, 90) warned to take payment in advance in case the bereaved refuse to take the prints, and therefore decide not to pay. This also perhaps provides more context to Brangwin Barnes' clarification that his client paid the owed 50 shillings without complaint. Dunmore (1891, 143) gives the following advice:

One very important factor, from a business point of view, is to supply the photographs promptly, as the recollections of the friends of the deceased person soon revert to the remembrance of how they appeared when living, rather than the short time they were on view afterwards; and every week makes your post-mortem photograph appear less like, and consequently less favourably looked at.

The photographers in these articles generally do not give specific advice about the composition of photographs, other than the advice on appropriate lighting, and potentially covering coffins with fabric to disguise them. Little discussion is made on the specifics of the composition of postmortem

photographs of children, despite them being more common in a British context than photographs depicting adults. Nevertheless, photographers do state that often the family express little preference in regard to the composition of the finished photographs:

unless the friends desire the surroundings to be included in the photograph (but this is usually left at the discretion of the operator), confine the attention to the face (Dunmore 1891, 142)

Brangwin Barnes (1883, 450) suggests that his clients usually prefer 'Rembrandt' style compositions – a style of portrait lighting in which the face is lit at roughly 45° from above, brightening the upper half of one side of the face and allowing the other side to be lit by ambient occlusion (Figure 17). This highlights the importance of the interaction between professional photographer and bereaved relative in the creation of the postmortem photograph. Though the bereaved are commissioning the photograph, they may lack the vocabulary or understanding to either know or express what they want the photograph to look like. In this sense, the end product is determined by the photographer. However, the photographer is also constrained, both by the fact that they are working within the clients' home, where the client has the ability to refuse to allow them to alter the environment or the body, and, perhaps more interestingly, by their perception of what the client will be willing to pay for. In this sense, the photographer is likely to use a combination of their technical knowledge, along with their knowledge of common styles of postmortem photographs, as they are likely to try to successfully recreate popular styles. The end product, therefore, is likely constructed through the confluence of the clients' control over the space; the photographer's technical skill and knowledge of what sells well; and common stylistic tropes which both client and photographer are familiar with. For their compositions, it seems that some British photographers, either consciously or unconsciously, referenced the familiar visual culture of the sleeping child, seen in effigies and posthumous portraiture.

5.4 Postmortem Photographs in Cultural Context

The composition of the postmortem photograph draws heavily on artistic traditions in the depiction of religious imagery and death portraiture, utilising a familiar visual language in order to reproduce tropes found in memorial portraiture and effigies. In particular, this is true of the imagery of the sleeping child. These depictions provided an existing cultural model, through which photographers could pose the subject, producing an image which referenced traditional commemoration practices usually out of reach for the middle- and working-classes.

A theme in religious art of the Renaissance was the sleeping Christ Child, usually depicted with the Madonna, and which has often been interpreted as a foreshadowing of Christ's death (Frank 1966,



Figure 17 *An Old Man in Red* by Rembrandt, c. 1652. This painting is an example of the photographic stylistic composition named after Rembrandt, in which the subject is brightly lit from one of the top corners of the image, while the other side of the face is lit by ambient occlusion (Wikimedia Commons)

304–305; Freedberg 1976, 734; Knight 2019, 69–70). Often these images recall the pose of the Pietà (Figure 18), as in Orazio Gentileschi's work *'The Virgin with the Sleeping Christ Child'* (Figure 19). In some of these artworks, the link to the sleep of death is made more explicit, such as in Michelangelo's *'Madonna del Silenzio'* (Figure 20), which depicts, beneath the sleeping baby, an hourglass with its sand run out (Frank 1966, 305).

Later depictions of ambiguously sleeping children in Britain were often secular, commemorating the loss of a child. Phillippy (2011) discusses the emergence of effigy monuments to children in the Early Modern period, as an evolution of the image of a swaddled, sleeping baby, to represent death in childbirth. In the seventeenth century, effigies of individual children, rather than familial groups, began to appear, such as the monument to the Princess Sophia Stuart in 1606 (Phillippy 2011, 24). In 1674, John Dwight commissioned two stoneware figures of his daughter, Lydia, from his pottery factory (Gould 2010, 289). The first shows her on her deathbed, while in the second she is depicted standing, resurrected (Gould 2010, 289–290). The imagery in both figures – the flowers grasped by the dead Lydia, and the skull at her feet, after resurrection – both display the links between death and life (Gould 2010, 290). Gould (2010, 290) describes the two as “mourning and its consolation”.

Children on their deathbeds also featured in posthumous portraiture in the post-medieval period, across Europe and North America. Charles Wilson Peale's portrait (Figure 21) of his infant daughter, Margaret, is particularly emotive. Though the portrait was painted in the year of her death, 1772, Peale returned to the painting to add his grieving wife, Rachel, four years later. The portrait depicts Margaret laying upon her deathbed while her mother weeps over her body. The figure of the child might be initially ambiguous, laid cushioned against a pillow, with her sheets rumpled around her waist, however, the pallor of her skin, contrasted with her mother's, is immediately apparent. Viewing the painting more closely reveals the cloth tied beneath her jaw, and the ribbon holding her arms close to her body – preparations for her encoffining. In adding the portrait of Rachel, Peale consciously referenced the image of the Madonna and Child (Philadelphia Museum of Art). Later monuments took on a more Romantic style. The monument to Penelope Boothby (Figure 22), who died aged 5, in 1791, inspired other sculptors such as Francis Chantrey's (1817) memorial for the Robinson children at Lichfield Cathedral (Figure 23) (Penny 1977, 117). The sleeping child memorial remained as a recurring style throughout the nineteenth century, seen in William Rinehart's (1869) memorial for his friend, Hugh Sisson's, children, located in Maryland (Figure 24).

Though these sculptures reference the earlier depictions of the Christ Child, and the imagery of innocent rest, they also served an important emotional function. Most often, they were commissioned, or created, by the parents of the child. John Dwight used his own pottery, and his knowledge of stoneware production techniques to have figures of his daughter made, while artists like Charles Wilson Peale painted their own deceased children. Penelope Boothby's parents



Figure 18 *La Madonna della Pietà* by Michelangelo, c.1499, in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican (Stanislav Traykov on Wikimedia Commons)



Figure 19 *The Virgin with the Sleeping Christ Child* by Orazio Gentileschi, c.1610 (Harvard Art Museum)



Figure 20 *Madonna del Silenzio* by Michelangelo, c.1540 (Harley Foundation, The Portland Collection)



Figure 21 *Mrs Peale Lamenting the Death of Her Child* (1776) by Charles Willson Peale (Philadelphia Museum of Art)



Figure 22 Plaster model of the effigy of Penelope Boothby by Thomas Banks (1793), located in Sir John Soane's Museum (Photograph: Author's own)



Figure 23 *The Sleeping Children* by Francis Chantrey (1812) (Church Monuments Gazetteer)



Figure 24 *Sleeping Children* by William Rinehart (1869) (Smithsonian American Art Museum)

commissioned the memorial for her, along with a memorial painting featuring her apotheosis (Knight 2019, 75). The inscription on the monument, however, clearly articulates the devastation of their grief:

She was in form and intellect most exquisite. The unfortunate parents ventured their all on this frail bark, and the wreck was total (Woods 2006, 77–78)

Penelope's father would reportedly come to watch the sculptor at work, weeping as the memorial began to take shape, and though the model for the sculpture was displayed at the Royal Academy, the memorial itself remained covered at in St Oswald's Church for almost fifty years following Penelope's death, allowing her parents a private place to grieve (Easter 2023, 69–70). This illustrates the private, or pseudo-private nature of many of these depictions. Though placed in Westminster Abbey, the monument to Princess Sophia Stuart was placed facing the wall, with the headboard of her cradle facing out into the public church area (Phillippy 2011, 24). Peale's portrait was hung in his own painting room, covered by a curtain, and with a sign warning: "Before you draw this curtain Consider whether you will afflict a Mother or Father who has lost a Child" (Philadelphia Museum of Art). Though ostensibly concerned with the comfort of visitors to his painting room, it is not hard to imagine that by covering the painting, Peale was also giving himself control over when, and in whose company, he viewed the potentially upsetting image.

Though these monuments were loci of private grief for the parents, they were well known images throughout the nineteenth century, reproduced as prints of engravings, and later in the form of photographs. They were also reproduced in periodicals and books, such as *The Mother's Assistant, Young Lady's Friend and Family Manual* (1851, 32) and *The Boy's Own Annual* (Shaw 1901, 746). Chantrey's *Sleeping Children* in particular was often referred to as a work of genius, and as one of the most beautiful examples of the type. By the 1890s, postcards featuring both *Sleeping Children* and the Boothby memorial were being produced by prolific printers such as and E. T. W. Dennis (Figure 25) and Valentine Postcards (Figure 26). The images would have been familiar, to both bereaved families, and the photographers who would have been commissioned to produce postmortem photographs. As such, postmortem photographs of children consciously reference the poses and symbolism of this earlier monumentation and posthumous portraiture.

In Britain, children were rarely shown obviously in their coffins, rather the child was most often in bed, or laying across a sofa, as if they had fallen asleep in the middle of play, surrounded by toys. Others more obviously resemble effigies, such as Figure 27, a photograph of a young girl, laid against draped fabric. Her ankles are crossed in a naturalistic pose, in much the same way as Rinehart's and Chantrey's effigies. Photographs like this do not imitate life. The starkness of the girl's surroundings, and the slight awkwardness of her pose, indicate that she is dead. The paleness of her skin and dress is emphasised by the dark cloth beneath her. Even photographs which depict children in bed were



Figure 25 Postcard of Chantrey's *Sleeping Children*, produced by E. T. W. Dennis of Scarborough, c.1890s (V&A)



Figure 26 Postcard of the Bank's memorial to Penelope Boothby, produced by Valentine, 1900 (University of St Andrews)

often stylised. Figure 28 depicts a photograph of a young boy, tucked up in sheets as if in bed, and cuddling a soft toy. The photograph is over-exposed, so that the whiteness of the sheets and pillows seem indistinct against the pale backdrop, creating an almost placeless and ethereal effect. This does not give the appearance of a cosy domestic scene of a sleeping child, but rather of an eternal rest.

These photographs are very different in composition from the formal, posed portraiture, which was common in this period, shown in Figure 29. The girls here were photographed in a studio, dressed to match each other, and posed in a faux rustic setting, with plants, log, and painted backdrop. The girls all wear similar stoic expressions, which were the convention for portraits in this period, and are all posed slightly uncomfortably. The only concession to the girls age and interests is the doll held by the youngest girl, though it is unclear whether this is also a photographer's prop. Personal cameras would not become common until the twentieth century, and these formal photographs represent the only images most parents in the period would have of their children. Photographs of sleep were generally reserved only for the dead, drawing on both metaphor, and the visual language established in effigies and portraiture.

Linkman (2011, 42) describes these postmortem photographs of children as 'intimate', when compared to the posed studio portraits common in the period. The boy in Figure 28 has his hair neatly brushed, sheets pulled up tight around his chin, favourite stuffed toy there as a comfort should he wake. The slightly rumpled sheets overhanging the dark bedframe give the impression of movement. The illusion is that the child has perhaps just rolled over in his sleep. The sheets are pulled up high on both the boy and his toy, creating a snapshot of a moment in time, as if a parent has just paused after checking on their son, pulling up the bedclothes where he had disturbed them, before leaving him to sleep. The effect of the stark white of the background draws attention to the boy's face, his dark hair, and the apparent serenity of his expression. Unlike in the present day, moments like those shown in deathbed type photographs, the child sleeping, cared for and peaceful would have gone undocumented in an age without personal cameras, and the image of the sleeping dead child potentially offers a chance to rescue, and make material, one of the last of these soft, intimate moments. Care for the dying would likely have subsumed most of the final days spent with the deceased, but these acts of caring did not stop at the moment of death, and as such the swaddled child, safe in bed and resting, could be considered a final act of parental care, photographed, and made eternal.

The face of the deceased often forms the focus of postmortem photographs, depicting the peace of an eternal rest (Linkman 2011, 24). Figure 30 shows a photograph of a man posed following his death. He is laid, covered in white sheets, with a crucifix and a flower, possibly a chrysanthemum, on his chest. His face is serene. This can perhaps be contrasted with the photograph taken of Emily Gosse a few days prior to her death (Figure 16). The photograph here is hand-tinted, and therefore a little stylised. It is also posed in order to express something of the sitter. Emily's expression is



Figure 27 Postmortem photograph of a young girl, laying across fabric covered furniture (Linkman 2006, 324)



Figure 28 (left) Postmortem Photograph of a young boy, laying on a pillow, with white sheets covering him (Image reproduced courtesy of Paul Frecker)

Figure 29 (right) Portrait of three young girls, taken c.1888 (Manchester Art Gallery Online Collection)



Figure 30 Postmortem photograph of a man, taken in 1892 (Linkman 2006, 321)

sombre, and contemplative, an image of a pious woman, resigned to God's will. Her hand upon the book evokes not only the final study of religious texts, but also Emily's own profession as a writer. Nevertheless, beneath the artificial colours, the strain and fatigue on her face is clear.

Photographs of the dying, such as that of Emily Gosse, are rare, and much less common than postmortem photographs. Figure 31 shows a photograph of a woman who appears close to death. Though it is possible she has died and been subsequently posed with props, following the common trope in postmortem photographs of children (Frecker 2023), this would be uncommon in photographs of adults. The letter and magazine in her lap may also be following the common theme in portraiture of holding a letter, book, or album, and is sometimes seen in sickbed photographs, such as that of Emily Gosse. The unfocused look is also common in these types of photographs, whether due to necessity, the sitter no longer fully conscious or able to sit for long enough, or deliberately, in order to convey that their attention has passed beyond the mortal world.

Nevertheless, the image of the dying body is not generally one of peace and tranquillity. The woman in Figure 31 appears thin and drawn, and there seems to be tension in her face though she appears unconscious. This provides a very different image to the peace implied in Figure 16, and potentially provides reason for the relative lack of sickbed photographs in comparison with those taken postmortem – it is more difficult to take a photograph in which the sitter seems pain-free and restful. A second reason may relate to the capacity for photography to evoke memory. It is clear from Philip Gosse's account that he remembers very clearly, the circumstances and emotions around the taking of these last photographs. They are therefore, suffused with the memory and emotion of that moment. They may, then, provide little comfort in the wake of a death, particularly if trying to manoeuvre the dying, in order to take the shot, exacerbated pain or fatigue. In this sense, a photograph taken while the sitter was alive, may not have seemed to be a better option for either a likeness or a keepsake. Taking a photograph following death offered the opportunity to either use the medium to mimic sleep, or to make a record of the aesthetic corpse.

Figure 32 shows a photograph of a girl, lying on her back, surrounded by white flowers. Unlike the boy in Figure 28, the child here is not swaddled in bed, but rather laid out, as if waiting for her coffin. However, like the photograph of the young boy, what stands out from the image is the care taken in dressing and laying out the child. Her hair is neatly brushed back from her face, and again, her peaceful expression forms the focus of the image. The angle of the photograph, taken from above and to the left, allows the length of her body to run diagonally across the image. As well as a composition which allows for both the girl's face, and the flowers to be clearly seen, this also perhaps mimics the visual experience of sitting beside her body as it was laid out – position that may have been familiar to parents who had been, or would be, sitting, talking, or holding the hand of the body during the funeral week. In this way, the photograph may have evoked memories of this time of leave-taking, and the odd liminal feeling between death and funeral, during which the bereaved may



Figure 31 Perimortem photograph of a woman, laying in bed (Image reproduced courtesy of Paul Frecker)



Figure 32 Postmortem photograph of a young girl, laying on white sheets, surrounded by flowers (Image reproduced courtesy of Paul Frecker)

sit with, talk to, or touch the body. These images may then have been comforting, evoking the emotion and memory of funeral rites and goodbyes done properly.

The white flowers around her evoke her innocence, and seem to consist of chrysanthemums or globe amaranth, and anemones. Chrysanthemums, which bloom in autumn, had an association with joy in the midst of adversity (S, J.H. 1877, 245; T. Nelson and Sons 1857, 10), which associated them with the pain of grief and the certainty of heavenly resurrection. This link can be seen in this poem, *To A Chrysanthemum*, published in 1896:

Or amid the leaves that lie
On the graves of the departed, Our
belovèd ones departed;
Withered now, but by-and-bye
Blooming in the realms on high,
Glad and joyous hearted. (Unknown author, quoted in Wright 1896, 126)

Globe amaranth were a common funeral flower, signifying immortality or eternity (S, J.H. 1877, 243), as referenced in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

Immortal Amaranth, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,
Began to bloom (quoted in S, J.H. 1877, 66)

Anemones were often associated with “withered hope”, “forlornness” and “forsakenness” (Ingram 1870, 82; Tyas 1869, 213; Dumont 1851, 122). The anemone was also associated with fragility and the brevity of life and beauty, and linked, in the nineteenth century, to the story of Anemone, a nymph, transformed into a flower and buffeted by the north wind:

who, failing to win her love, disturbs her, makes her bloom too early and causes her to
fade quickly (Tyas 1869, 213)

The metaphor here is clear, representing the child, cut down in the spring of life by an unexpected frost, and the imagery of the wilting flower or broken stem was also found on stone monuments in the period (eg. Ames 1981, 648).

The anemone was linked with sickness. Ingram (1870, 84) wrote:

A well-known writer on floral themes deems it probable that it became so ill-omened a symbol on account of the frail and delicate appearance of the wild species, which she poetically describes: “The flush of pale red which tinges the white petals of the wood anemone might well remind us of that delicate glow which lingers on the cheek of the

consumptive sufferer, marking to others the inward decay, but giving a lustre and a glow of beauty which deceives its victim.” [...]

“Youth, like a thin anemone, displays
His silken leaf, and in a morn decays.”

Like the imagery of the sleeping child, postmortem photographs such as that shown in Figure 23, drew on a familiar visual language, which placed the photographs within the context of other commemorative practices, metaphor, and literary works. The familiarity of compositions drew a direct link between traditional practices, and a relatively new technology, which was in the process of gaining its own cultural language. In this way, postmortem photographs of children expanded the reach of the effigy monument, which had been only available to the very wealthy, drawing on this traditional imagery to communicate parental grief in a culturally comprehensible visual language.

5.5 Photographic Effigies and Comforting Images

Before the advent of the photograph, access to imagery like effigy monuments and portraits would have been limited to those with wealth, artistic skill, or both. The decrease in the cost of photography, and the spread of professional photography studios, meant that by the late-nineteenth century, it was possible for a much larger proportion of people to commission portraits of the dead. The practice may be considered as part of a democratisation of a longstanding, if minority, funerary behaviour, made possible by the advancement of technology. Nevertheless, postmortem photography did follow the trend of other objects related to the ‘cult of mourning’, waning in popularity in the 1890s and into the early twentieth century. The reasons for this are unclear, but speak to the close link between postmortem photography, and wider, traditional mourning culture, and may also be linked to trends in commemorative practices, such as a decrease in tomb effigies in general. This question is, however, beyond the scope of this project, it is in contrast to objects such as funeral cards (discussed in Chapter 6), which remained popular until at least the Second World War.

The composition of many postmortem photographs, drawing on the imagery of the sleeping child, and on other funerary symbols, located the photographs within a tradition of commemoration, grounding what was a relatively new practice in an easily-read visual culture. The photograph also, however, allowed for a depiction of intimacy and privacy, which the patrons of public, sculptural effigies struggled to enact. Photographs, generally taken in the home of the deceased, depicted the dead body as it would have been interacted with by the bereaved, in the site of postmortem acts of care and leave-taking. The composition, often taken from a low and somewhat off-centre angle, in some ways mimicked the position of a caregiving parent – the position a parent may have taken in the days before the funeral.

The image of the sleeping child performed and embodied cultural metaphor. This may have allowed the postmortem photograph to become an object of comfort, which not only affirmed the acts of care afforded to the deceased, and created a visual record that respectful funeral rites were undertaken, but also reaffirmed and physicalised the belief that though dying may have been harrowing, death itself is peaceful. The narrative, here, was cyclical – the joy of life, which was interrupted by the dying process, is bookended by the peace of death. The postmortem photograph, as a curated image of the corpse, may with repeated interaction, have served to gradually overwrite some of the distressing memories of sickness, caring and leave-taking.

Photography revolutionised memorialisation. For the majority of human history, most people had no way to physicalise the likeness of a lost loved-one. Only those able to commission a portrait to be painted would have any likeness to remember the dead. In the contemporary world, with its proliferation of photography, this is difficult to imagine, though perhaps for the ordinary person, living prior to the nineteenth century, this would not have been a thought that would occur often. Perhaps those who are children now will feel similarly about those who lack videos of the dead.

Nevertheless, Charles Beckett, a Hull surgeon, living on the brink of the availability of the photograph, articulated his regret following the death of his sister, Frances. She had died in the early 1840s, and though the family had had the means to commission portraiture, Frances had never sat for one:

It had been a matter of much regret to us all that, having almost a family weakness about portraits, we were in possession of nothing to remind us of our only departed one. We ventured to leave her out of the question when the artist took the rest of the family, calculating upon a future opportunity. Nothing, in fact, but a black silhouette profile was left to recall her to us (Beckett 1852, 107)

Writing a decade later, Beckett (1852, 107) expressed his joy and surprise at finding his 'long desired portrait'. This was not, however, an unknown portrait of his sister, but rather a portrait by French artist, Émile Lassalle, of an unknown sitter. This portrait, nevertheless, bore a strong resemblance to Frances, and Beckett immediately bought it. His relief at finally having a portrait of his lost sister is evident, as he describes it, sat before him – "There she is", he writes simply (Beckett 1852, 108).

6 'Miserable Doggrels' and Messages Beyond Death

In the late nineteenth century, notifying about a death took a very different form. Though telegrams were available throughout the period, and the first telephone lines were erected in the UK in the 1870s, the postal service remained the primary means of long-distance communication. With increasing numbers of families and friends separated across both the country and the globe, the Penny Post allowed for the exchange of letters with parted loved ones, and also supported the burgeoning greetings card industry. From this backdrop, the printed funeral card emerged, drawing on previous sentimental and funerary ephemera, and with advances in printing technology, became a staple of the British funeral. The funeral card could both inform of a death and burial, or be presented as a keepsake at the funeral, and as such, it was common to keep funeral cards as mementos in albums or drawers, or to display them in frames alongside family photographs. However, despite their almost ubiquity, the funeral card has been the focus of very little study.

As well as giving the biographical information about the deceased, the funeral card often included a short religious verse or poem, and so were very similar in form to the gravestone in this period. However, while gravestones were generally erected many months or years after the bereavement, allowing time for emotions to settle, and families to consult on their style (Mytum 2002, 225), the funeral card was purchased in the immediate aftermath of a death. Funeral cards, though available in different styles to suit different purses, were historically associated with the working-class. As such, the often overtly sentimental verses were critiqued by contemporaries as both un-Christian, and as overly mawkish by middle-class commentators.

Here, textual analysis is undertaken on verses from 115 funeral cards dating from 1865 to 1914, in order to assess the themes and emotion expressed within cards, and contrasted with the inscriptions from 66 gravestones from All Saints' Church, Childwall, from the same period. Funeral cards form an interesting comparison with gravestones, due to their description as 'monuments' for the working class. In addition to this, the difference in the time of purchase – immediately after bereaved, compared with several months later – offers a potential insight into the increased consumer agency identified in gravestone studies, when compared with other funerary material, which has been suggested to be linked to the heightened emotions of the bereaved in the immediate aftermath (eg. Mytum 2015, 2018; Hoile 2018).

It is argued that funeral cards formed part of a specific form of emotional communication and expression, using overtly affective and sentimental printed verse, in a form which would perhaps not have been socially acceptable to convey physically. Differences in cultural constructions around

'authentic' emotion may have led to differences in the interpretation of such verses by different social groups. This is potentially a form of interpretation which exists to this day, and may highlight issues in affective interpretations formed through our own encultured lenses.

6.1 Historical Context of Funeral Cards

Writing in 1873, John Henry Gordon, a Baptist Minister in Darlington mused on the experience of receiving a funeral card:

There are many things which tell their tale, long before they are asked to speak. That black-edged envelope delivered its message of death and mourning long before you had courage to break the seal (Gordon 1873, 82)

Arriving in their black bordered envelope (Figure 33), the funeral card was conspicuous, and whether expected or not, must have been met with apprehension on the part of the recipient. Though the styles changed over the second half of the nineteenth century, and could vary based on cost, they did maintain the same general form. Printed, or in cheaper examples, written, on the cards would be the name, and dates of birth and death of the deceased. Often, the date, place and time of burial would also be included (Figure 34). A verse was also often included, generally a quatrain, but sometimes ranging from a simple "At rest" to lengthy bible verses and hymns. The most expensive cards would be white, blind embossed (printed without ink in order to create depressions in the card), and include lace-paper work, in which sections of the embossing were cut away in order to resemble lace (Rickards 2018, 157). These lace-paper work cards often included 'traditional' funerary imagery, such as urns, cherubs and willow trees and they could also be set on black paper, and framed (Rickards 2018, 157). Some, such as Alexander Campbell's funeral card (Figure 35), could include a photograph of the deceased.

Cheaper funeral cards were more modest, often plain printed on black-edged card. They were generally a little larger than the standard visiting or business cards, and generally used 'sombre', sans serif, black lettering (Southward 1884, 178). Earlier in the period, these might be flat for mounting or framing, however, later cards tended to be folded and free-standing. From the 1890s, cards were often chromolithographed in greys and violets (Rickards 2018, 157), and more ornately decorated than the prior black and white cards. The romantic imagery popular in the earlier part of the century seems to have been falling out of popularity around this time, to be replaced with crosses and floral designs, potentially influenced by art nouveau and art deco styles (Figure 36).

Funeral cards were considered to be more of a feature of Northern English culture (eg. Gatty 1866, 108), but they were nonetheless produced across the country. The sample of funeral cards analysed in this chapter contains examples from across England, Scotland, and Wales. Though Northern

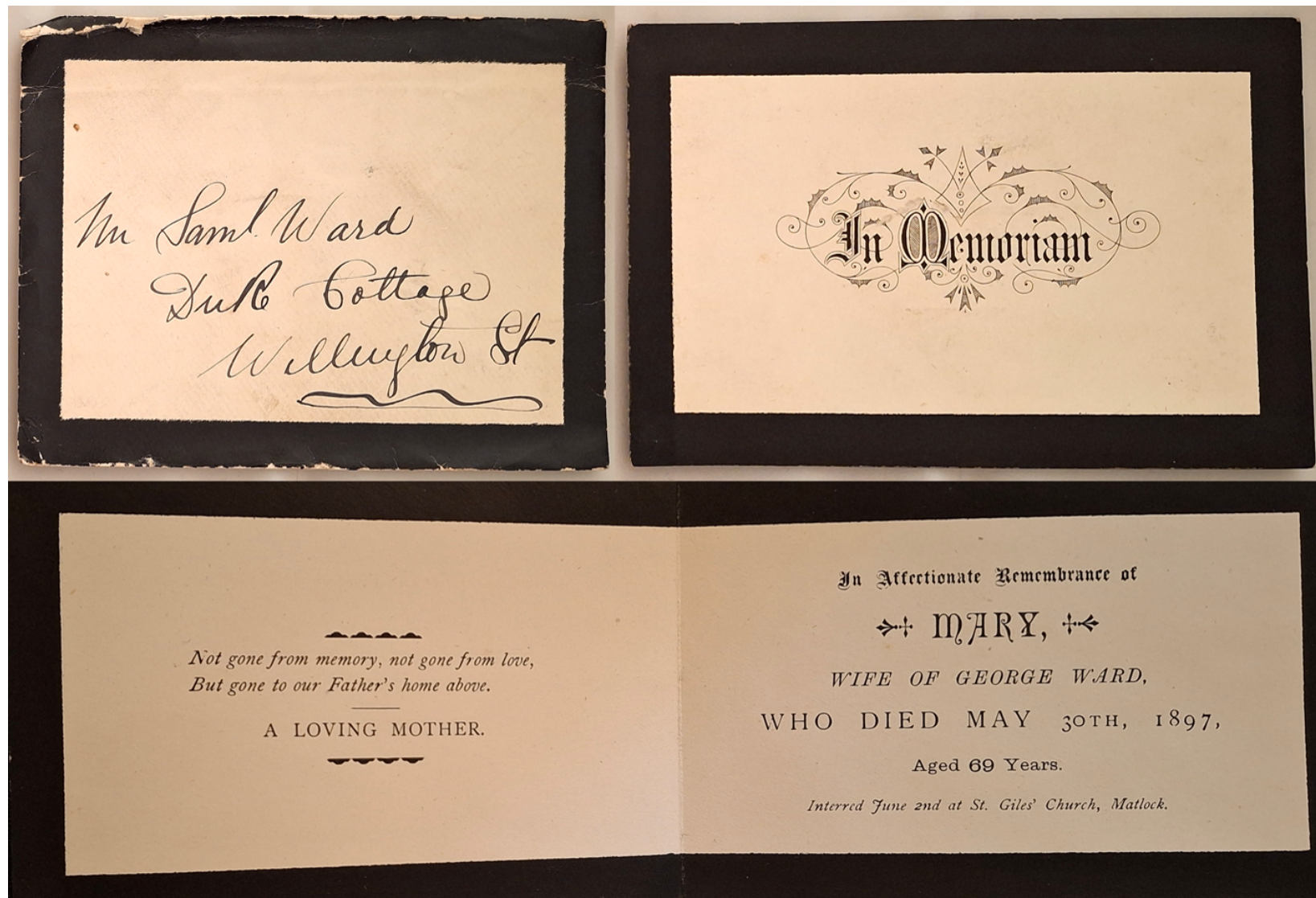


Figure 33 Photographs of funeral card envelope (top left); its funeral card (top right); and its inscription (bottom); dating from 1897 (Author's own)

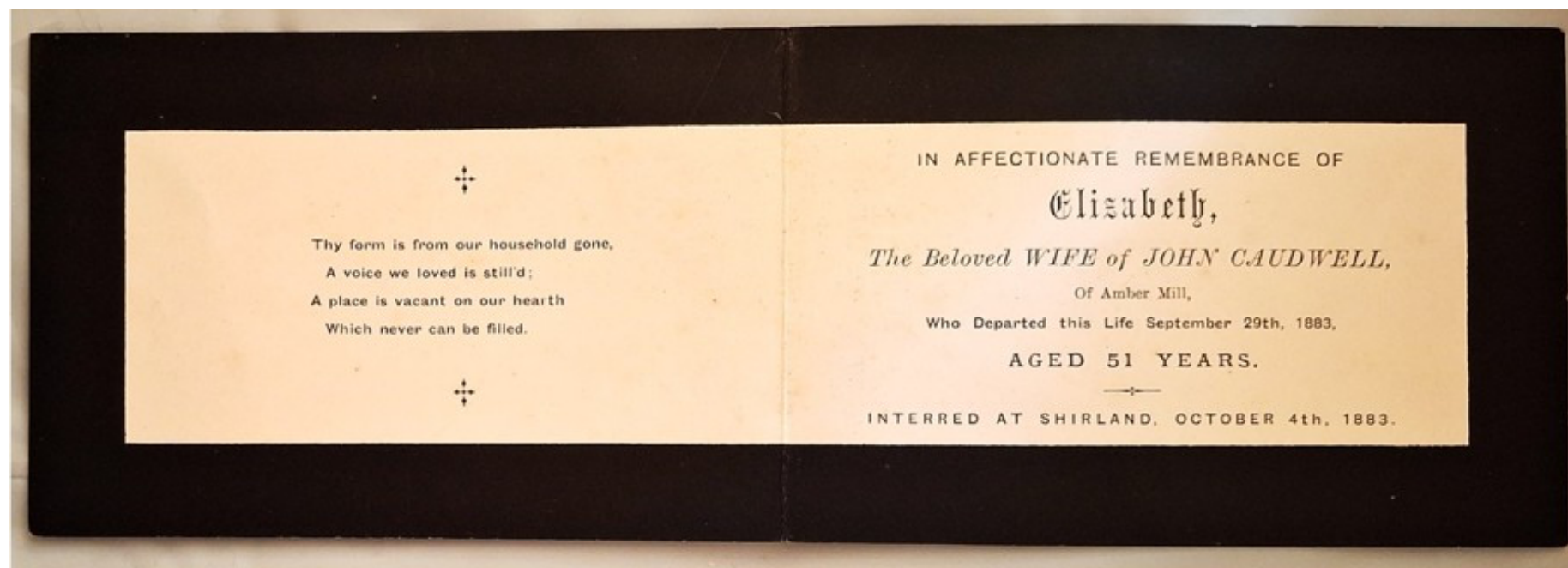


Figure 34 Funeral card, dating from 1883, showing verse and biographical information (Author's own)



Figure 35 Funeral card for Alexander Campbell (1865), including lacepaper work and photograph (V&A Online Collection)



Figure 36 Photographs of funeral cards showing stylistic change over time (Author's own)

a) thick black border (1883); b) black border thinning, some chromolithographed decoration (1897); c) black border thinning, use of silver and grey chromolithography (1898); d) chromolithographed nature imagery with plain cross, showing Art Nouveau influence (1906); e) chromolithographed nature imagery with plain cross, showing Art Nouveau influence (1907); f) chromolithographed nature imagery with plain cross, beginning to show Art Deco influence (1919)

England is represented more frequently, it is unclear whether this represents a true prevalence, or preservation bias. Though the presence of very elaborate and expensive funeral cards reflected their broad appeal, they were considered more common amongst the working and lower-middle classes, as “monuments of those who cannot afford brass or marble” (Gatty 1866, 109). Funeral cards were relatively cheap, particularly given the relative spending on funerals at the time. They were often sold in multiples of a dozen or twenty-five (Figure 37), and at their lowest cost between 0.72p and 1.68p per card. Cards could be custom printed, or half-printed, with space for specific details to be handwritten in (Rickards 2018, 157). Some undertakers offered funeral cards as part of the service they provided, and often these examples were half-printed, and included the undertakers name as advertising. The Penny Post, in operation throughout Great Britain and Ireland, from 1840, along with the Imperial postal service, meant that notifications of deaths could be sent across the empire. However, there is also evidence that funeral cards were given as a memento of funeral attendance, along with other gift-giving customs such as the funeral cake. Writing in 1886, Robert Holland produced a glossary of words and phrases in use in the county of Cheshire, and included a description of local customs:

Formerly, on leaving the house, each person was presented with a funeral cake [...] and a funeral card, but the cakes are very seldom seen now-a-days. Cards are still universal, and the recipients set great store by them; in many cases the poorer people have them framed, and hang them up on the walls of their cottages (Holland 1886, 501)

Framing funeral cards, or otherwise displaying them freestanding, was common, and reference to the funeral card on the wall was a common motif in literature, for example in John Ashworth’s *The Fog Bell*, described as a true story:

On enquiring for her mother, she informed us she was gone to Southport to receive her weekly portion of the money subscribed for their relief at the time her brother was drowned. As she uttered the last sentence, her colour changed and the tear stood in her eye. On asking the age of her brother, she pointed to a framed funeral card that hung on the wall (Ashworth 1874, 280)

Though potentially at least partially fictionalised, this interaction highlights that though funeral cards were sent away to friends and relatives, some families displayed the funeral cards of lost members of the household, which they themselves had likely commissioned. Other cards may have found their way into scrapbooks and albums, or were simply kept within their envelopes in drawers.

As well as their emotivity, funeral cards provided a practical purpose of maintaining a record of deaths and burial locations:

What the Penny Post can do !

YOU can have 25 neat MEMORIAL CARDS printed to Copy (with verse if required), at 2s. 6d., 3s., or 3s. 6d.; and forwarded FREE by Post to any part of England, Ireland, or Scotland, on the receipt of Postage Stamps to the amount, from LATHAM'S *Funeral Card* and General Printer's and Picture Frame Maker's, 100, Great Ancoats Street, Manchester.

Figure 37 Advertisement for funeral cards from 'Latham's Funeral Card and General Printer's', Manchester, 1858 (Partridge and Company 1858, 12)

in these days of universal migration, when children who have been born under the same roof-tree, are not infrequently scattered to the ends of the earth, they [funeral cards] might in cases of inheritance, prove of great value as a guide to persons and places with which the family was once connected (Anon 1853, 89)

Writing over thirty years later to the editor of *Midland Antiquity*, one contributor bemoaned the tendency of people to discard funeral cards after a few years, after the initial grief has passed, or when they became damaged (F.W.H. 1884, 56). This highlights some of the problems of preservation in the study of funeral cards. As ephemera, they are easily damaged or destroyed, and they are also liable to be discarded when they pass from the possession of the initial recipient, into the hands of someone who may have been unfamiliar with the deceased. As such, funeral cards were usually preserved only if they came into the possession of individuals who had an interest in family history or genealogy, or if they were the funeral cards of well-known individuals, or particularly unique examples. As such, the funeral cards available for study likely represent those selected for preservation by successive generations, rather than representing a random sample.

6.2 Analysis of Funeral Cards

The funeral cards analysed in this chapter were taken from the *Lost Ancestors Project* (Buchhorn n.d.), an online volunteer-run project, founded in 2004, with an aim of compiling information for those interested in genealogy. The project compiles images of stone memorials, obituaries, funeral cards and other items related to commemoration, which are submitted by users and members. No information is provided on the submitters, and in order to maintain anonymity, the names of the deceased were not collected for this analysis. Each card was assigned an index number within the database, and, where available, the dates of death and burial, age at death and gender were collected in order to contextualise the demographic range of the collection. The county that the death took place in was also collected, to assess the geographic scope of the collection. Finally, the verses on the funeral cards were collected, and form the main basis of analysis. One hundred and fifteen cards, dating from between 1865 and 1914 were analysed, representing 63 individuals with feminine names (54%) and 53 with masculine names (46%). One card commemorated two individuals, meaning that 116 people were commemorated across 115 cards. Age at death ranged from 4 months to 96 years. One hundred cards (87%) included a verse, broadly defined, in addition to the biographic information provided.

Two analyses were conducted on the verses, an inductive thematic analysis, which identified eighteen themes across the 100 verses within the sample, and a quantitative analysis of the use of emotive

words within verses. These were augmented by deeper qualitative examination, in order to add depth to the interpretation.

6.2.1 Verses

The verses found on funeral cards usually take the form of a single quatrain, or two quatrain verses, though other forms of verse are sometimes used, for example couplets or this tercet found on FC24, which is a stanza of a hymn by Charles Wesley:

No room for mirth or trifling here,
Our worldly hope, or worldly fear,
When life so soon is gone

Another common form was a single line, usually taken from a longer biblical verse or hymn, or from a common epitaph. Common examples include:

Thy will be done
(Paraphrased from Luke 22-42, variations found on FC38, FC40 and FC111)

Her[/his] end was peace
(Common memorial stone inscription, variations found on FC75, FC82 and FC102)

Gone to be with Christ, which is far better
(Paraphrased from Philippians 1:23, variations found on FC21, FC33 and FC69)

The longest verse found in the funeral card sample was on FC72, and was a complete printing of Psalm 23 *The Lord is My Shepherd*.

Verses were often written from a distinct point of view, either from the deceased or the bereaved, though others were written from a more general perspective. Verses may also have had a specific audience explicit within the text, for example, the deceased, the bereaved, or God. In order to analyse trends in this perspective, each verse from the 115 cards were assigned both a perspective and an audience. It is important, however, to consider that though the 'audience' may be addressed explicitly in the verses' texts, the true or practical audience for the cards was the recipient. In addition, as previously stated, the POV of the verse may not reflect who chose or wrote that verse. This creates an ambiguousness in regard to the 'author' of the card, especially when compared to verses on present-day greetings cards, which are generally written as if from the sender to the receiver.

Table 2 The direction of verses in funeral card sample

		Directed to			
		Bereaved	Deceased	General	God
Written by	Bereaved		4.63%	25.00%	3.70%
	Deceased	15.74%		12.04%	3.70%
	General	0.00%	0.00%	28.70%	6.48%

The proportion of verses assigned to each perspective and audience is shown in Table 1. The majority of verses (66%) are addressed to a general audience, which is unsurprising given that this likely represents the actual intended audience for the cards - mourners and more distant relatives and friends. Verses from a general perspective to a general audience were the most common, and most often consisted of quotes from the bible or hymns, or generalised statements, for example:

Life's race well run,
Life's work well done,
Life's crown well won;
Now cometh rest (FC91)

Verses from a deceased perspective to a general audience tend to take the form of memento mori statements:

Mourn not for me, my race is run-
You've done for me what could be done;
Prepare to meet thy God in time,
For I was taken in my prime (FC73)

Verses from the bereaved's perspective towards a general audience tend to be explicitly emotive, describing loss and grief, for example:

Gentle he was sleeping,
He did breathe his last;
Gentle we were weeping,
He did to heaven pass (FC96)

The inclusion of these emotive themes are discussed in more depth in the following sections.

Verses directed towards God (14%) tend to take the form of prayers (eg. Thy will be done) regardless of verse's perspective. Verses directed between the bereaved and the deceased (20%) arguably represent some of the most interesting from an analysis perspective, as they represent a fictionalised communication, intended to be read by a third party. These may take the form of farewells, statements of grief and loss, or, particularly direct from the deceased, exhortations to live life well and to love each other:

Farewell dear wife and children! I must go,
 And leave you in this world of woe;
 Mourn not for me, nor sorrow take,
 But love each other for my sake (FC76)

Dialogues appear when verses from both the deceased and the bereaved appear on the same card. Though most of the dialogues within this sample echo each other, offering farewells and hopes of reuniting, there is one interesting example found on FC46, a card for a 36-year-old woman, dated from 1905:

Weep not for me husband and children so dear,
 I am not dead but sleeping here,
 I was not yours but Christ's alone,
 He loved me best and took me home.

Had he ask'd us well we know,
 We should cry, "O spare this blow!"
 Yes, with streaming tears should pray
 "Lord, we love her, let her stay." (FC46)

In this verse, the bereaved appear to be answering the deceased's final message. The verse from the perspective of the deceased draws on themes such as offering comfort as her death was the will of God, as well as the idea that the dead are not gone, but resting in Heaven. However, her words appear of little comfort to the bereaved, who respond that they would have begged God to reconsider if they had been allowed. This is an interesting subversion to the resignation which is usual in submitting to divine will.

6.2.2 Thematic Analysis

An inductive thematic analysis was undertaken, in which the verses were read, and coded for themes. Themes which reoccurred were identified. The sample of verses was then re-examined in order to code for these themes across the entire sample. Seventeen themes which reoccurred were identified across the verses (Table 2).

Table 3 Themes identified in funeral card sample

Theme	Number of Verses	Percentage of Verses
Religion	74	67%
Grief	30	27%
Rest	24	22%
Comfort	23	21%
End of Suffering	21	19%
Love	17	15%
Will of God	17	15%

Loss	15	14%
Farewell	12	11%
Hope to reunite	12	11%
Memento mori	11	10%
Peace	10	9%
Memory	8	7%
Youth	8	7%
Regret	6	5%
Praise for the Dead	6	5%
Tried to save the dying	5	5%

Religious themes, such as references to God, Jesus, and heaven, were present in 67% of verses, while specific reference to the 'will of God' occurred in 15% of verses. This is unsurprising, given the high levels of both religiosity and cultural Christianity in late-nineteenth century Britain. However, this also leaves 33% with no reference to religious themes. Of these non-religious verses, grief was the most commonly identified theme, occurring in 34% of these verses, slightly higher than the 28% found across all verses.

When comparing verses written from the perspective of the deceased and the bereaved, it is in the emotive themes that the most variation is seen. Verses from the bereaved's perspective were more likely to reference their grief, their feelings of loss, their regret over the death and their hope that they would be reunited with the dead. For example:

The cup was bitter, the sting severe,
To part with one we loved so dear,
The trial is hard, we'll not complain,
But trust in Christ to meet again (FC37)

Verses from the deceased's perspective more often offered comfort and farewells, but did not include reference to their own good qualities. The deceased perspective verses also more often expressed *memento moris*, and referred to love, often in the context of extorting the bereaved to love each other in their absence:

Farewell dear wife and children! I must go,
And leave you in this world of woe;
Mourn not for me, nor sorrow take,
But love each other for my sake (FC79)

Comparing themes directed towards different audiences shows a similar pattern, with ideas of grief, loss, regret, and rest more often directed towards the deceased, and comfort, farewells and love directed towards the bereaved.

The sample size of verses here is very small, for example, only five verses were directed towards the deceased. Nevertheless, these trends potentially suggest that the choice of perspective and audience may have been deliberate, and chosen because of the desire to convey certain ideas and themes, in a culturally sanctioned way. It would be interesting to consider if the patterns seen in this sample are consistent across other funeral card collections.

6.2.3 Emotive Words

The analysis of emotive language also took an inductive form. Emotive words were identified within the verses. In this case, emotive words were defined as any word which described an emotion (eg. sorrow), any word which described the physical response of feeling an emotion (eg. tears), and any word which defined an abstract, but emotive concept (eg. freedom). These ‘emotive’ words were then coded as either positive or negative, as well as examined for statistical patterns. In this methodology, the presence of an ‘emotive’ word was counted, regardless of its meaning within the sentence. This was done in order to create a dataset which could be compared with verses found on monuments. However, this approach fails to account for implied or contextual emotive meaning. In the case of this dataset, this may exclude affective verses which do not contain a defined ‘emotive’ word. In this case, eleven funeral cards included a verse with no emotive words; most often in the form of biblical verses.

Twenty-seven emotive words were identified¹, and eight were present in over 10% of verses, given in Table 2. Twelve positive emotions were identified, and 15 negative emotions were identified, with positive words used 132 times (52% of emotive words) and negative words used 121 times (48% of emotive words). This reflects something of the bittersweet or melancholy emotions expressed in a lot of the verses, which emphasise both the feelings of loss and grief, but also the relief from pain and troubles, and the hope of a joyful reuniting.

Table 4 Frequency of emotive words in funeral card verses in sample

Emotive Word	Number of Verses	Percentage of Verses
Love (also beloved)	33	33%
Rest (also sleep; repose)	29	29%
Pain (also agony; affliction; illness; aching)	18	18%
Sorrow (also sadness; woe)	14	14%
Tears (also weep)	14	14%
Grief (also grieve; mourn)	13	13%

¹ Synonyms were grouped, for example the category ‘Sorrow’ included ‘sadness’ and ‘woe’. Full details of coding are given in Appendix B.

Peace (also calm)	12	12%
Suffering (also troubles; cares; trials; ills)	12	12%

6.2.4 Originality

As previously discussed, it is difficult to assess the originality of verses, due to the commonality of themes and ideas contained within verses, as well as the broad range of inspiration on offer to Victorian mourners, with numerous books printed on epitaphs and funeral poetry. However, several verses are repeated with slight variation throughout the sample. The most common of these is the “Farewell” verse, which occurs ten times in the sample of 115 cards with variations:

Farewell, dear wife, my life is past,
Truly thou loved me to the last,
Grieve not for me nor sorrow take,
But love our children for my sake (FC8)

The “Weep Not” verse occurs six times:

Weep not for me, my children dear;
I am not dead, but sleeping here,
I was not yours, but Christ's alone;
he loved me best, and took my home (FC53)

The “Affliction Sore” verse occurs four times:

Afflictions sore long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain;
But death gave ease when God did please,
And freed me from my pain (FC77)

These verses are all very common epitaphs, appearing on gravestones and memorials across Great Britain in the post-mediaeval period, as such, it was not possible to source their origin. These three verses are all commonly written as if from the deceased's perspective, which is interesting as this potentially indicates that the bereaved or the printer were less comfortable deviating from standard form when using the ‘voice’ of the dead.

6.2.5 Summary

Overall, funeral cards tended towards a common form, but with scope for personalisation in terms of the verse chosen, and biographical information provided. There also appeared to be several ‘standard’ verses which could be chosen. Verses often included explicitly emotional language, with a largely even proportion of positive and negative words. Though the majority of verses were

addressed from, and directed to, a general audience, a significant minority were written from the explicit perspective of the bereaved or the deceased, in some cases engaging in dialogue with each other.

6.3 Analysis of Gravestones

Comparative data for stone memorial inscriptions is taken from All Saint's Church, Childwall, compiled by Merseyside Archaeological Society, and deposited with the Archaeological Data Service. In total, 66 legible monuments² were analysed from the period 1865 to 1914, which commemorated 170 individuals, an average of 2.58 people per monument, compared with 1.01 people per funeral card. Age at death ranged from 3 days to 91 years, and represented 84 (49%) individuals with masculine names and 86 (51%) with feminine names. For the purposes of dating, and because the dating of inscriptions is often uncertain, the date of death of each individual was taken, rather than an assumption of the date of inscription based on position on the stone. For example, an individual with a date of death pre-1865, who was inscribed on a stone beneath an individual deceased post-1865, would not be included as part of this sample.

Of 170 individuals commemorated, 34 (20%) had verses, broadly defined, associated with their inscription, in comparison with 87% of individuals on funeral cards. Of the stones, 26 of 66 (39%) included at least one verse, again in comparison with 87% of funeral cards. Methodologically, the same analyses were undertaken on the gravestone inscriptions as were undertaken on the funeral cards.

6.3.1 Verses

The verses inscribed on gravestones often took the form of singular lines referencing longer biblical verses, similar to those found on funeral cards, for example:

Thy will be done
(Paraphrased from Luke 22-42, variations found on Memorial 3547, 3529 and 3608)

Until the day dawns/Until the morning dawns
(Paraphrased from 2 Peter 1:19 or Song of Solomon 4:6, variations found on Memorial 2983, 3146, 3203, 3772)

² Memorials assessed within the 'Mainly legible', 'All legible' and 'Mint' categories on DEBS.

Other stones include longer verses, such as 3763, which was inscribed with the last stanza of the hymn, *Farewell to a Friend Departed*. Less commonly, gravestones used non-religious poetry, such as the quatrain found on George Smart Wood's grave, which is also found on FC93:

I was so long oppressed with pain
It wore my strength away
It made me think of heavenly rest,
Which never can decay (Memorial 3540)

The vast majority of the verses, as quotations from the Bible or from hymns, were directed to, and from, a general audience, accounting for 74% of verses, compared with 29% of funeral card verses. There were also proportionally more verses which were directly from a general perspective towards God (18% compared with 6% of funeral card verses), reflecting the popularity of the phrase “Thy will be done”. Overall, the verses on the gravestones displayed less variety in terms of perspective and stated audience. No dialogues were present.

Table 5 The direction of verses in gravestone inscriptions from All Saints', Childwall

		Directed to			
		Bereaved	Deceased	General	God
Written by	Bereaved		2.94%	0.00%	0.00%
	Deceased	0.00%		2.94%	2.94%
	General	0.00%	0.00%	73.53%	17.65%

6.3.2 Thematic Analysis

An inductive thematic analysis identified eight themes present in the gravestone verses, indicating less variation in terms of themes than in funeral cards, however, one theme “resurrection” was identified on memorial stones which was not present on funeral cards (Figure 38). This often refers to ‘living again’ or, more abstractly, waiting for ‘the dawn’. In contrast, funeral card verses more often referred to reuniting in the afterlife. The concept of resurrection may represent something more embodied and physical, which made the burial ground a space in which faith in the resurrection could be affirmed, in contrast with the rather more nebulous concept of heavenly reunions.

Table 6 Themes identified in the gravestones from All Saints, Childwall

Theme	Number of Verses	Percentage of Verses
Religion	23	35%
Resurrection	8	12%
Will of God	8	12%

Peace	6	9%
Rest	4	6%
End of Suffering	2	3%
Love	1	2%
Praise for the Dead	1	2%

As with funeral card verses, religion was the most commonly seen theme present in 68% of verses found on stones, compared to 67% of card verses. Reference to the will of God, and the resurrection of the dead occurred in 24% of memorial stone verses each, while peace and rest were also common themes, found mostly in phrasing such as 'At rest' and 'Peace, perfect peace'. Absent from memorial stone verses, however, are references to more emotive themes such as grief, comfort, loss, and farewell. This, however, may correspond with the lack of memorial stone verses from the perspective of the deceased (6% of verses) and the bereaved (3% of verses), as it is these verses which included more of these emotive themes. Overall, verses on funeral cards demonstrated more varied themes.

6.3.3 Emotive Words

Memorial stone verses were also assessed for emotive words, under the same criteria as funeral cards. Thirteen emotive words were identified across the sample, with nine appearing on both memorials and funeral cards (Table 4). Peace and rest were the most common emotive words found in memorial stone verses, largely for the same reason that these were common themes.

Table 7 Comparison of emotive words found in verses on funeral cards and stone memorials

Emotive Word	% of Funeral Cards	% of Stone Memorials	% of Verses (Funeral Cards)	% of Verses (Memorials)
Peace	10%	9%	12%	18%
Rest	25%	8%	29%	15%
Love	28%	2%	33%	3%
Hope	7%	2%	8%	3%
Suffering	10%	2%	12%	3%
Pain	16%	2%	18%	3%
Mercy	3%	2%	4%	3%
Trust	2%	2%	2%	3%
Safety	2%	2%	2%	3%

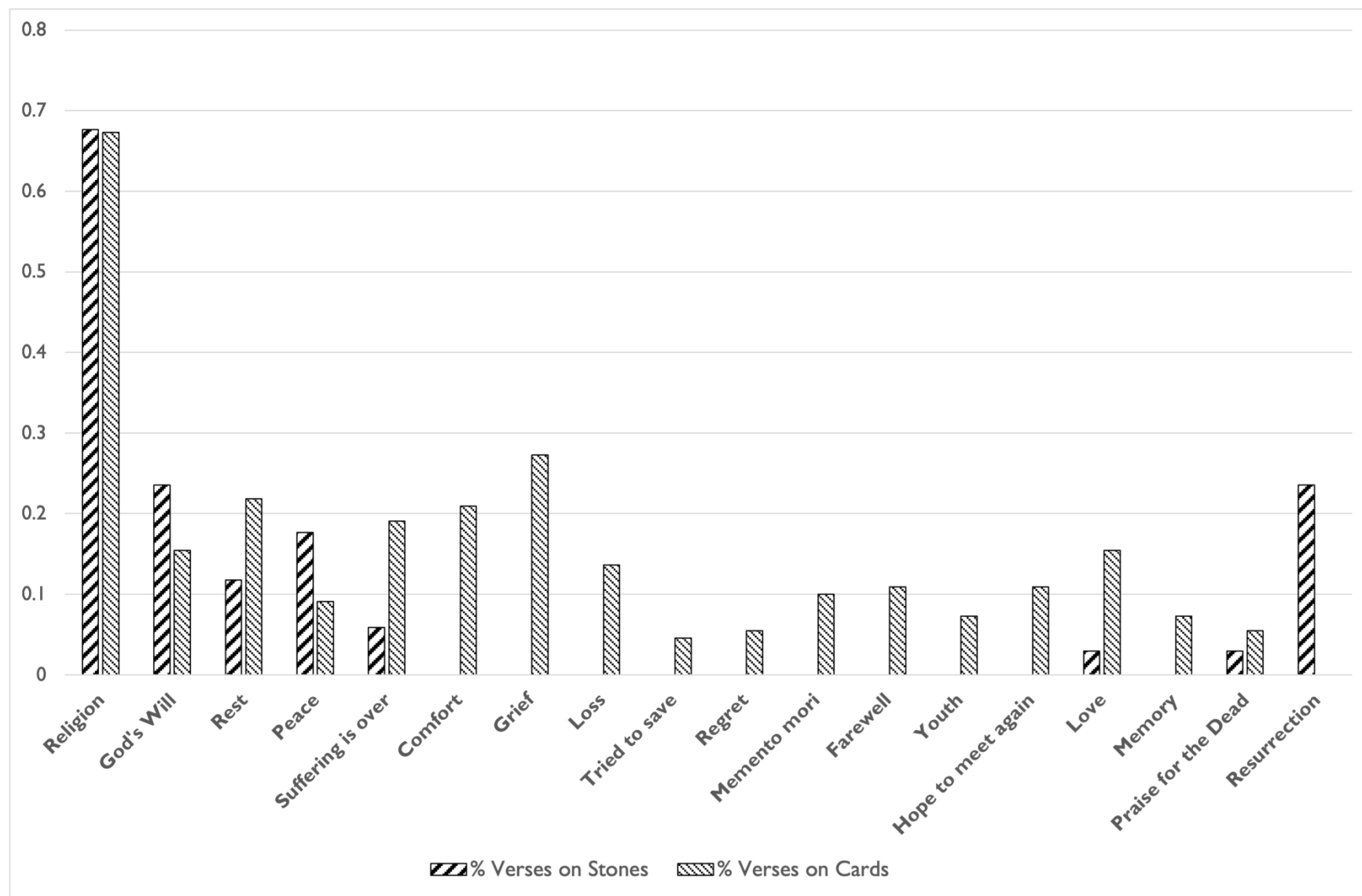


Figure 38 Graph showing a comparison of the percentage verses on funeral cards and gravestones which were coded thematically

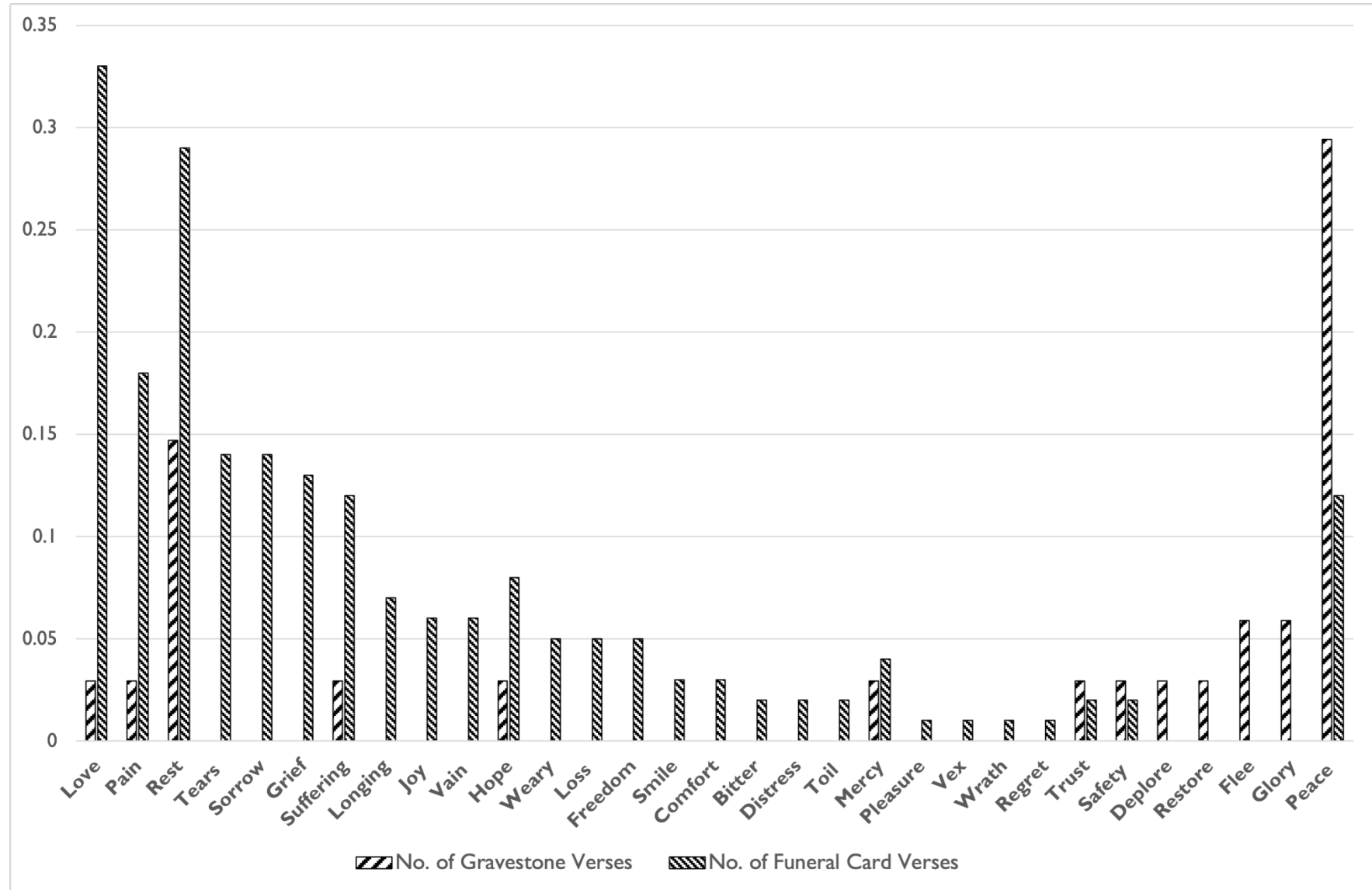


Figure 39 Graph showing comparison of percentage of verses on funeral cards and gravestones which included emotive words

All other words were found in lower frequency in memorial stone verses than in funeral card verses (Figure 39), most strikingly, the word 'love' which occurred in 33% of funeral card verses and only 3% of memorial verses. When the verses were coded for positive emotions and negative emotions, the emotions expressed on memorial stones were overwhelmingly positive (82%), in comparison with funeral cards (52%).

6.3.4 Originality

Like funeral card verses, the verses on gravestones were often reused. The most commonly reused were also the shortest and most generally appropriate epitaphs. "Peace, perfect peace" appears four times across 66 gravestones, and "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" and "Thy will be done" each appear three times. Variations of "the day/morning dawns" appear on four stones. The longer psalms were not repeated, though this may reflect the small sample size from All Saint's, and the amount of relevant biblical text to be chosen from.

6.3.5 Summary

Overall, verses, in addition to biographical information, were much less common on stone memorials than on funeral cards. Memorial stones contained less variance in terms of emotive words, less frequency of emotive words, and a trend towards expressing positive rather than negative emotions.

6.4 Paper Monuments?

Writing in 1866, Margaret Gatty (1866, 109) described funeral cards as "monuments for those who cannot afford brass or marble, wherewith to commemorate their dead". Gatty goes on, in rather patronising verbiage, to extol the importance of the "apparently useless old custom" to her peers, because the lives of the working class had "so little of the intellectual to exalt it" (Gatty 1866, 109). This view, of the funeral card, as a quaint old tradition, through which the working class mimicked something of stone memorials in their cottages, and allowed a bit of the "poetical" (Gatty 1866, 109) into their lives, is perhaps typical of much of the middle-class response to the activities of the poor.

Augustus Hare, in the preface to his list of epitaph inscriptions, bemoaned the inclusion of "pagan trash" (1856, iv) on memorials, in particular the "Affliction sore" verse which appears on four of the funeral cards analysed here:

This is only one of many Epitaphs of the same kind, which are among the chief favourites in our country villages, and are often repeated over and over again in the same churchyard. In many places the poor are in the habit of bringing a book, which contains a collection of these churchyard rhymes, to the rector of their parish, in order

that he may assist them in choosing one for the monument which they intend to set up. In this case, the clergyman has the power of trying to persuade the people with a text of Scripture (Hare 1856, iii)

Hare's assertion that it was 'the poor' who were erecting such monuments is an interesting one, given the high costs of erecting a gravestone in this period, and Gatty's (1866) assertion that working-class funeral cards offered an option for those who could not afford a more permanent memorial. In 1855, stonemasons in Sheffield were offering machined gravestones for a guinea (21 shillings) (Sheffield Independent 1855). Accurate figures for wages in the period are difficult to access, however, Clark (2018) estimates labourers' wages at around 15 shillings per week, and men working in skilled building trades at around 23 shillings per week in 1850. Figures from Bowley (1900, 143) for the same period were 14 shillings per week for agricultural labourers, and from Layton (1908, 518) were six shillings per week for domestic cooks, who were usually women. From these figures, the cheapest gravestones would have cost the equivalent of between a week and three weeks wages for the labouring classes. Wages for the middle classes could be even more varied. Boot (1991, 639) gives the salaries of clerks with the Bank of Scotland as ranging from 25 shillings to 115 shillings per week. It would not, then, be impossible for higher earning members of the working class and the lower middle class to afford a gravestone, particularly if one were to commemorate multiple members of the same family, and could be financed by several working adults. However, as only around 12% of those buried in urban cemeteries were commemorated using gravestones (Buckham 2000, 160), it is likely that the majority of the working- and lower middle-classes did not purchase gravestones. Hare (1856, iii) may have been specifically describing the 'rural poor', who may have represented a different demographic in Hare's mind than urban populations, in terms of both their relationship to place, and their willingness and ability to purchase gravestones.

A similarly sentimental quatrain was found on one of the gravestones from All Saints, Childwall, that of George Smart Wood, dating to 1882:

I was so long oppressed with pain
It wore my strength away
It made me think of heavenly rest,
Which never can decay (Memorial 3540)

George Smart Wood appears in the *Bristol Mercury* in 1878 (*Bristol Mercury* 1878, 5), listed as a Liverpool optician, who had had around £21 stolen by a former employee. Smart Wood likely did not represent one of the rural poor whose relatives Hare blamed for the appearance of such sentimental verses in the churchyard.

Nevertheless, Hare's (1856) association of somewhat maudlin commemorative verses with the 'poor' echoes other contemporary commentators, such as Edwin Chadwick's (1843) criticism of the pageantry of working class funerals. Hare (1856, iii–vi) does not hide his distaste for the use of such "miserable doggrels [sic]", preferring verses which "remind us that the same body is to be raised incorruptible". This characterises working-class emotive sentimentality as inherently below the more staid middle-class piety, and, potentially, hints at a wider cultural antipathy towards potentially inauthentic grief, similar to that levelled at the performative mourning of widows discussed in Chapter 2.

Like Hare, Gatty (1866, 109) suggests that the local clergyman was likely involved in the choosing of a suitable verse, a task which was a "serious consideration", however, Gatty also laments that many of the chosen verses, romantic and familiar in style, failed to prompt families to contemplate their own mortality, "at furthest, only short time hence" (1866, 110). By and large, Gatty's assessment seems to hold some truth, only around 10% of the funeral verses studied included any kind of *memento mori*-type sentiment. In addition, both the thematic analysis and the analysis of the choice of emotive words showed variance between the form of verses on gravestones and funeral cards. It is likely, therefore, that Gatty's assessment of the true purpose of the funeral card, as both paper-gravestone and existential reminder, was not necessarily shared by many of those who commissioned them.

Gravestones, as permanent monuments within the landscape, tied the dead, and by extension, the bereaved living, indelibly to place. Snell (2003) considers gravestones, particularly in rural populations, as articulating notions of belonging, to place, to kin, and in some cases, of the family as rooted within community history. Between 1800 and 1870, as increasing migration uprooted communities, use of phrasing within inscriptions which tied the family to the local parish conveyed a sense of lineage and status, as well as acting as a defiant response to those who had left (Snell 2003, 123). Snell (2003) contrasts this with the periods immediately preceding and afterwards. In the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth centuries, low mobility amongst rural monied classes meant that "there was no need to chip the obvious into stone" (Snell 2003, 124), while later, as even globalised travel became easier, lifelong ties to local place potentially no longer conveyed the same familial status (Snell 2003, 126).

The funeral cards and gravestones within this study were very similar in terms of inscription form and biographical information provided. Generally, the name, age at death, birth and death date were listed, with funeral cards also often providing the burial date and location. As Snell (2003) found, in this later period, location information on funeral cards was often limited to the place of interment, rather than any description of the deceased's ties to the place while alive. However, funeral cards often also did not articulate family ties in the same way as gravestone inscriptions. Stone memorials

were slightly more likely to include an explicit reference to a familial relationship, with 58% of individuals described by a familial connection, in comparison with 53% of individuals on funeral cards. This is, however, an underestimation, as many of the memorial inscriptions indirectly state a relationship (eg. “Ann Webster, wife of John Webster, died 1878. ALSO John Webster, died 1882”). In these cases, the deceased individual is referred back to the initial familial connection. Memorial stones also often commemorated individuals with the same surname, so that lineage is implied even when not explicitly stated. The exact nature of the relationship is unclear without context, but the individuals’ familial connection is evident. Of 170 individuals commemorated on stones, only 8 (5%) are commemorated with no implied familial relationship. This is not true of funeral cards. When no familial connection is given, there is no connection that can be inferred at all, meaning that 47% of funeral cards studied display no familial connection. Memorial stones also represent a greater range of relationships than funeral cards, such as grandson and granddaughter relationships, as well as being more likely to give specificity in relationships, such as “third son of NAME”.

The funeral card, with its place in the domestic sphere and its ephemerality, could not reach the same audience as the gravestone. Cards would be sent to those who knew the deceased, and though there is some evidence of the funeral card serving the purpose of a more formal notification of a death to an organisation or newspaper, largely there was no need to provide extensive additional information – either the reason for the notification would be evident, a name needing simply to be removed from a roll, for example, or would require more extensive explanation than the few lines of a funeral card could provide. Even if the card was displayed on the wall of the home, only those with close enough ties to the household were likely to be invited in to see it – family, friends or neighbours, who would likely already be aware of the loss the family had suffered, and potentially know or remember the deceased. As Snell (2003, 124) suggests, there was little value in conveying the obvious.

Funeral card verses were more varied in their themes than gravestone verses. This could have been influenced by several factors. Clergy, or cemetery managers, may have had increased influence over acceptable choices for gravestone inscriptions. Gravestones, erected with the expectation of serving multiple family members, may also have been more limited by space and by the cost of engraving. Funeral cards, though taking a standardised form, may have been less limited, allowing more opportunity to combine or adapt verses. However, like gravestones, and indeed postmortem photographs (Chapter 5), the impact of the professional, either clergy or printer, on mediating the style and form of the funeral card, is difficult to unravel, and there was potentially a tension between the wants of the bereaved, and the willingness of the printer.

There is evidence that funeral card verses could have been chosen or written prior to death, sometimes by the dying. In her memorial book to her sister, Ellen, Annie Webster wrote that, on hearing her illness was untreatable:

[Ellen] asked for the hymn book, pen and ink, and wrote the verse for her funeral card; then took up the hymn book to mark the hymns she would like to be sung at her funeral (Webster 1880, 125)

William Stafford, a mill overlooker, and later stationer, wrote the following verse for his funeral card, published in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* in 1861:

My feeble frame so long oppress'd,
Has now obtained a lasting rest,
My soul, through Christ, has gained the shore,
Where griefs and cares are felt no more (Stafford 1861)

This verse is in quatrain form and makes use of many of the themes common in funeral cards, including the 'oppressed' body finding peace in death. There is also the use of language commonly seen in hymns and biblical texts, such as the metaphor of the soul reaching the 'shore' of Heaven. In the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a fashion for books to be published giving examples of common epitaphs, funeral verses and hymns, for the use of those choosing inscriptions for monuments or cards (eg. Hare 1856; Palliser and Palliser 1872; Fairley 1873; Box 1892).

Gatty (1866, 109) suggests that the choice of verse was one which was given importance by families:

A suitable quatrain — a quatrain nicely adapted to the character and circumstances of the individual deceased, is a subject of serious consideration, an importance being attached to the choice, which might make people living in what they consider the essential business and bustle of this world's life, smile.

Again, Gatty's word choice implies that the importance of getting the words correct in these overtly sentimental verses may have been considered quaint or provincial by Gatty's peers. Sentimentality, and Sentimental art and material culture, has not proven easy to define, and was the subject of much debate in the second half of the nineteenth century (Fletcher 2009, 459). Fletcher (2009, 460) uses contemporary critiques to discuss what was considered to be Sentimental art in the Victorian period, arguing that to be an example of Sentimentality, art needed to arouse a "mingling of pleasant and painful emotion". Sentimental art, also described as narrative art, and often a type of genre painting, was required to tell a familiar story which allowed viewers to feel for the subject, while remaining distanced enough from reality that the viewer can enjoy the feeling (Fletcher 2009, 459). Contemporary critics argued that Joseph Noel Paton's *In Memoriam*, depicting women and children hiding in fear during the Indian War of Independence in 1857, was too dark a subject, and too recent

a tragedy, to be a successful example of Sentimental art (Fletcher 2009, 459). Paton apparently agreed with the criticism, as he later replaced the Indian soldiers bursting through the door with British troops come to rescue the women (Fletcher 2009, 459).

There has been focus on Sentimental art as comprising the 'lowbrow' in comparison with the high art showcased in exhibitions and galleries. Solicari (2007) argues that what became Victorian Sentimental art, emerged as 'fancy pictures' in France in the 18th century, which were usually comprised of beautiful working class or rural women, a style popularised in Britain by Philippe Mercier (1689-1760) (Einburg and Egerton 1988, 176–177). These 'fancies' were "designed to be pleasing to look at and intellectually undemanding" (Solicari 2007). Sentimental art was accessible, and the feelings displayed were generic, standardised, and easily reproduced (Solicari 2007). Often they focussed on the innocence of childhood, or on universal themes of life, such as romance and separation, homesickness and domesticity, or marriage, birth and death. Overwhelmingly the focus was on emotion, whether joy or despair, and the universality was part of the wider appeal (Solicari 2007).

The popularity of Sentimental themes in Dickens shows the spread of the tropes throughout Victorian popular culture. When George Baxter patented his new colour printing process in 1835, the cost of art prints, both in publications and as decoration, dropped dramatically (Solicari 2007). Framed art prints, often picked to match the decor of the room, rather than for their content, became increasingly common in middle-class households, and copies of Sentimental works could be found on the highstreet, on the covers of novels, anthologies, and sheet music, and inside periodicals (Solicari 2007). In 1862, the publishers, the Dalziel Brothers commissioned artist Frederick Walker to produce ten engravings which could be used and reused in their poetry compilations, with imagery that was generic enough to be recycled if needed (Solicari 2007). Walker then used those images to create watercolour paintings on the same themes, substituting adult women for the children portrayed in his original engravings, to create 'more mature' works, which were then exhibited and sold to collectors (Solicari 2007).

The production of Sentimental works could therefore be lucrative, even if it risked the reputation of the artist. Charles West Cope, in his *Reminiscences* (1891), wrote of his realisation that he needed to sell paintings and prints, rather than simply exhibit at galleries, and after failing to find financial success with 'socially themed' works, began employing a more Sentimental style (Solicari 2007). The commercial potential of this style is perhaps best exemplified by John Everett Millais's *Bubbles* (1886), which was famously sold to A&F Pears Ltd. (Figure 40), to the consternation of the artist, for £2200, around £290,000 in 2019, and was used in advertisements for Pears Soap (Regis 2007, 322; Solicari 2007). Both Cope and Millais were accused by contemporaries of sacrificing artistic integrity by allowing their works to be produced commercially, despite Millais, having sold the copyright to his



E.224 - 1942

Figure 40 Advertisement for Pears Soap, c.1888, using *Bubbles* by John Everett Millais (1886) (V&A)

work, not benefiting financially from its use (Solicari 2007). However, such is the disdain for Millais's later Sentimental style, that in modern research papers have referred to *Bubbles* as exhibiting "cloying sentimentality" (Polhemus 1994, 435).

This contrast between the popularism of Sentimental works and the critically acclaimed 'real art' showcased in galleries and exhibitions could be said to reflect a class conflict in aesthetics. The critiques levied at Sentimental artworks, that they were tacky, vulgar and mawkish, are the same as that seen in critiques of other lower-class fashions, notably the increasingly elaborate funeral processions of the working class, which Chadwick (1843) critiqued so forcefully. These critiques of perceived inauthentic emotion, which were common in the nineteenth century, have sometimes been replicated in contemporary research, with a tacit value judgement. In her analysis of postmedieval memorials, Tarlow (2005), potentially inadvertently, echoes Augustus Hare's critique from almost 150 years earlier:

We are not generally looking at high culture in post-medieval graveyards. Most gravestones of the 19th century are mass-produced and highly formulaic; often the poetry on them is *excruciating doggerel*: the 19th-century mortuary equivalent of those birthday cards with kittens on the front and a rhyme about a special niece inside. (Tarlow 2005, 167, emphasis added)

This dismissal of the low, repeated, and unoriginal in funerary material culture, raises interesting questions about how enculturation affects readings of the artistic value of such material, but also, perhaps more interestingly, the authenticity of the emotion conveyed.

6.5 Authenticity and Encultured Emotional Languages

Gatty (1866, 109) suggested that, for some, the choice of verse was very important, as was the applicability and pertinence of the chosen verse. The majority of verses analysed in this project were not original, and were either common funerary epitaphs, stanzas of poetry, or verses from songs or hymns. Some verses do appear to be original, such as this verse found on the funeral card of a 66-year-old woman from Lancashire, written in 1890:

The world is all in vain,
I nothing in it crave,
I've laboured through ten thousand cares,
For nothing but the grave (FC36)

This verse is uncharacteristically nihilistic compared with other verses, and makes little reference to religion, or to the hope of resurrection. It seems to offer little in the way of comfort either for the dead or the bereaved. Such apparently original compositions offer glimpses into the personal

experience of very private tragedies; however, it is perhaps the choice of prewritten verses that offers glimpses into the care which went into the choice.

One funeral card for a five-year-old boy who died in 1877 included the following verse:

I am a little soldier,
Only five years old,
I mean to fight for Jesus,
And wear a crown of gold.
I know he makes me happy,
And loves me all the day,
I'll be a little soldier,
The Bible says I may.

This verse comes from a book of poems by Margaret Child-Villiers, Countess of Jersey, published in the early 1870s (Julian 1892, 579). It was written for children, and appears in several children's hymn compendiums in the period (eg. van Rensselaer Ford 1891; Paddock 1879; Phillips and Bunyan 1872). It does not, however, tell the story of a dead child, but is rather a small poem urging children to live with Christian values. The second stanza of the poem makes this more apparent:

I love my precious Saviour,
Because He died for me;
And if I did not serve Him,
How sinful I should be!
He gives me every comfort
And hears me when I pray;
I want to live for Jesus,
The Bible says I may (Phillips and Bunyan 1872, 78)

The transformation of the context of the verse also transforms its meaning. Though the language of the verse remains applicable to a young child, the child speaking through the epitaph no longer provokes imagery of carefree play, rather granting the child some agency in the decision to go and fight for Jesus.

Card 13 transforms Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's (1874) poem in memory of his friend, Charles Sumner, into an epitaph for a 21-year-old woman in 1890:

Death takes us by surprise,
And stays our hurrying feet,
The great design unfinished lies,
Our lives are incomplete.

Sumner, an American, was a lifelong abolitionist and civil rights campaigner, who died in 1874, while the country was still in the midst of rebuilding, both politically and socially, following the Civil War. Sumner was 63 years old when he died, and still serving as Senator for Massachusetts. As such, Longfellow's poem speaks to the death of a 'great man' (as Sumner is described in the final stanza)

with work still to do. As a well-known writer, the poem appeared in numerous compendiums of Longfellow's work, as well as becoming a relatively popular choice in the obituaries of other 'great' men, particularly in North America, for example, in the memoir to, Missouri minister, Constans Goodell, who died "in the midst of his earnest labors [sic]" aged 56 (Currier 1887, 482). In selecting this poem for a 21-year-old woman, the line "our lives are incomplete" takes on poignant meaning, and draws a direct, if potentially inadvertent, link with the perceived loss of Sumner to Longfellow, and to the wider world.

The funeral card can be considered part of the wider culture of greetings cards in the nineteenth century, following a similar popularisation as mechanically-produced cards emerged after 1850 and opened up the market from the expensive personalised, handmade cards seen before. Solicari (2007, n.p.) locates the emergence of greetings cards with the rise of interest in, what she terms, "emotion in the ephemeral", linked with the sentimental movement in art and literature. This 'ephemeral sentiment' has been linked by others to the commodification of folk traditions and emotional relationships (eg. Schmidt 1995; Holloway 2020). Barclay (2022, 451) identifies this as a shift in values, precipitated by the gift industry, in which the financial outlay was itself considered a symbol of love and investment in the relationship. The emotion itself is made material through the object, and the object, its creation or purchase, becomes part of 'doing' that emotion properly (Barclay 2020, 316; Holloway 2020, 308). Consumption is integral to emotional expression, but also to the feeling of that emotion. This links to research which argues that marketing and social pressure can result in the purchasing of certain goods becoming synonymous with love and care (see Dillard 2015, 152). Power (2005, 654) draws on Miller (1998) to show that often the act of consuming, of buying the right clothes or food, was felt by the purchaser to be a demonstration of familial care, and this has most often been researched in regard to parents, and in particular, mothers (See Lustig 2004; Pugh 2004; Power 2005; Ponsford 2011).

Applying this to funeral cards would imply that though the cards were invested with the symbolism, and language, of grief, the cards themselves were simply part of the correct way of 'doing grief'. The funeral card was part of the accepted material culture of mourning, and not only a way to demonstrate love to the wider community, but fundamental in the consciousness of the feeling of love. We buy because we feel, and we feel through the buying. This has led to the widespread critique of consumption, and in particular, in the media, of gift-buying, as an inauthentic and materialist form of love – one inferior to more authentic expressions. This may have an impact on the way the consumption of the past has been studied.

Holloway (2020, 300) argues that Valentine's Day began to be commercialised at the end of the eighteenth century, as stationers and printers began to sell pre-made cards and verses. This also precipitated a revival in the creation of handmade, personal cards, in response to the perceived

impersonal printed cards, drawing on the nostalgia of old folk traditions (Holloway 2020, 301). For some, the handmade was imbued with an “additional emotional value” (Holloway 2020, 302), while for others, the anonymity of the printed cards was enough (Holloway 2020, 304). West (2010, 452) suggests that critiques of the commodification of emotion, from the nineteenth century to the present day, are based on a Western and middle-class interpretation of the concept of ‘authenticity’ (Jaffe 1999, 120, 139; West 2010, 452). The emotions expressed in pre-printed greeting cards are ‘inauthentic’ because they are ‘unoriginal’ (West 2010, 452). West (2010, 452) further argues that many critiques also include some aspect of elitism, with the idea that those who buy greetings cards are too lazy, lacking in words, or self-awareness, to be able to put language to their emotions (Jaffe 1999, 139; West 2010, 452).

In FC13, the deceased is described as a “much-loved Wife”, and her nickname of Jeannie is given in parentheses alongside her given name. The transition of the context of Longfellow’s verse, from the floor of the US Senate to Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, sixteen years later, demonstrates not only the applicability of the sentiment, but resituates the death of a young woman, just about to begin married life, in line with the lives of ‘great’ men, and with the poignancy of wordsmiths such as Longfellow. If the words were authentic and meaningful when Longfellow wrote them, then they were as authentic and meaningful when they were chosen for her. For her, and for her loved ones, her incomplete life was as much a loss as Sumner’s. The interpretation of the quatrain verse, as representing ‘authentic’ emotion, or as ‘miserable doggerel’, is likely highly influenced by the enculturation of the reader, and there is likely to be a fundamental difference in the construction of emotional expression between both researcher and subject, and between different individuals in the past. Therefore, it is potentially more productive to consider the funeral card verse more in terms of the purpose, value, and relationships they served amongst the communities they were exchanged in.

Strange (2002, 144) argues that working-class emotion was ‘othered’, in both their own, and in middle-class, perception in the late-nineteenth century. Strange (2002, 145) argues that working-class emotional expression often remained apparently dispassionate, and that pragmatism was prized. Discussions around death were often open, and blunt, which has been noted as the working-class having an inadequate vocabulary with which to express their grief (Strange 2002, 147, drawing on Vincent 1981). Woods (2018, 6) however, argues that this was changing, and that from the 1880s, increasing literacy and access to wider written material, meant that working people were familiar with popular literary culture, a familiarity which allowed them to adopt ‘Romanticised’ language into their own writing. This, Woods (2018, 6) argues, can be seen in the increasing emotional introspection found in late-nineteenth century working-class autobiographies. Woods is particularly interested in the reflexive ability of language to produce and influence the experience of emotions,

though the discussion raises whether earlier working-class people lacked the language to articulate their emotions, or whether emotional enculturation prevented them from articulating that emotion through the written word in the same way as ‘Romantic’ writers. Hare’s (1856, iii) critiques of working-class poetry choices predates the Elementary Education Act of 1870, which has been credited with the rapid increase in literacy amongst the working class. Prior to this, literacy amongst the working class, while by no means universal, was not uncommon, with penny dreadfuls and cheap periodicals a popular choice for working people from the 1830s (Yan 2017, 321). Increasing mobility and diversity of experiences may have increased the possible expressive schemas working people found to be acceptable in autobiographical writing, rather than providing knowledge of figurative language that the working class were previously unfamiliar with.

The reading habits of the working class, and by extension, their interactions with affectivity and expression, were considered vulgar and lowbrow by the more monied classes (Yan 2017, 326). In particular, it was the popularity of melodrama, sentimentality and passionate emotion in literature, which the middle class contrasted with their own lofty, more intellectual tastes (Yan 2017, 328). In the written word, the working class preferred a lack of emotional subtlety. Taken with the working class’s preference for restraint and suppression in verbal and bodily emotional expression, this may provide context for some of the accusations of the lack of authenticity of working-class funerary behaviour, in comparison with their outward expression of grief. This again, speaks to the interpretation of working-class funerary practices, such as wakes and avrils (discussed in 2.2), as an excuse to carouse and drink, rather than as an authentic expression of grief and loss. Because such traditions were unfamiliar to, and in some cases, an antithesis of, middle-class emotional expression, there may have been a mismatch in the way activities such as wakes and writings such as funeral card verses were read by different communities.

Funeral card verses were often explicitly emotional, in a way which could be read as excessively morbid, such as this verse from the card of a four-month-old boy in 1910:

Oh, how we grieved to see him suffer,
All was done to soothe his pain;
But with Jesus watching for him,
All our efforts were in vain.

We saw him waste and fade away,
We saw him pant for breath;
We saw upon his sunken cheeks,
The fatal sign of death (FC97)

There is little hope or comfort to be found in the verse, and the description of the child’s death is in no way understated. Though the reference to Jesus’ watchful eyes imply that heaven is the boy’s final destination, it is not stated, and God’s taking of the child is not depicted as glorious, but rather as a

force which was unstoppable despite the parent's best efforts. Similar themes are found in other verses, in which the bereaved are eventually "forced to yield" (FC6) or their prayers "denied" (FC60).

In the verses, explicit emotion, and in particular, negative emotion, was frequently included in a way which seems deliberately affective. This seems particularly true in expressions of parental grief, which often emphasise both the inability to understand God's will, and the desperation of efforts to care for and heal the child in their final illness, such as in this 1888 card for a 4-year-old boy:

"Taken!" we could not give him,
We tried to hold him fast,
But it might not be;
Then in agony,
We were forced to yield at last.

"Taken!" ah, yes! God took him,
To his own bright home of joy;
And our spirits yearn,
As they homeward turn,
To behold again our boy (FC6)

Some of the verses chosen, though reproduced from popular poems or hymns, include variations which seem to subtly alter the intended meaning. The following verse, included on the funeral card of an eight-year-old boy in 1913, reproduces a stanza of the poem *The Bereaved Mother* (C.P. 1858, 42):

And shall I weep, my precious one,
That thou hast reached thy home so soon;
Or mourn the lot thy God has given,
Little of earth and much of heaven-
Mourn that a port was found for thee
When scarcely launched on life's dark sea. (FC70)

In its original publication, the stanza ends with a question mark. When read in context with the rest of the rest of the poem, this question is answered in the following verse:

No! Faith shall raise her drooping eye,
And wing her way to worlds on high,-
Hope shall no longer languish here,
But breathe her own pure atmosphere:
Why should I linger at the tomb
When *thou* art in thy Father's home? (C.P. 1858, 42)

In isolation, and reproduced not as a question but as a statement, the verse reads much less triumphantly hopeful. The bereaved mother will weep, the loss remains a loss, though her son has gone to be with God.

The verses for children are not universally negative, however:

Oh! Not in cruelty, not in wrath,
the reaper came that day;
"Twas an angel visited the green earth,
and took the flower away. (FC52)

The above verse on the funeral card for an eighteen-year-old woman is the last stanza of another poem by Longfellow (1886, 22-3), one which personifies death as a kindly reaper, who regrets the need to reap flowers amongst the grain, but does so because "My Lord has need of [them]". Death in this poem is gentle and apologetic, and through her tears, the bereaved mother gives up her flowers willingly into his care.

Overall, taken with evidence such as Gatty's (1866, 109) observation that the choice of verse was one which the bereaved took extensive care with, the variation in verses, and the adaptation and merging of some verses, suggests an appreciation of metaphor and the stylistic form of the verses, in line, potentially, with their own personal tastes in literary style and affective language. The interpretation of the use of prewritten verses as indicative lack of sophistication and linguistic ability potentially reproduces historical conceptions of the intellectual and aesthetic capabilities of the working class. It is important then to consider the use of prewritten sentimental verses as a choice rather than as indicative of a lack of ability to come up with 'authentic' original words.

West (2010) and Jaffe (1999) both position greetings cards as part of a culturally comprehensible social code, termed ritualised communication by West (2010, 453). In other words, the card itself, and the words on it, make use of common linguistic and symbolic phrases in order to place emotion and relationships within a culturally derived framework (West 2010, 453). For Jaffe (1999, 132), this renders the actual words of the card insignificant - the materiality of the card, and its existence as a card, do the work of communication. The card itself is a "commodity coupon for emotion and relationships" (Jaffe 1999, 132). However, this belies the fact that contemporary consumers report that they do spend time and energy on selecting a card with the right words, which reflect both their own personality and the specifics of the relationship (see West 2010, 459), similar to that described by Gatty (1866). Rather, pre-written verses draw on a social code of acceptable, emotional language (West 2010, 466). Emotions and relationships may be fraught and messy, and a pre-printed verse is reassuringly correct, while our own words may fall short, be misconstrued or rejected (West 2010, 466). The slightly distanced aspect of pre-printed words may also allow for the expression of feelings or ideas which would feel awkward or mawkish if handwritten or spoken (West 2010, 466). This may be particularly true of working-class communities in the late-nineteenth century, which tended towards restraint in physical emotional expression. The familiar pre-printed words of poetry and hymns were 'safe' (West 2010, 466), socially.

Gilderdale (2016) applies this idea to the Edwardian postcard, particularly those sent between families and friends separated by emigration. Gilderdale (2016, 2) identifies Edwardian British and British migrant culture as one which “fostered both stoicism and sentimentality”, and argues that the pre-printed emotional messages on postcards allowed for a comfortable distance from overt emotional language. Gilderdale (2016) also explicitly links this to the context of Edwardian communication and its limitations. Letters sent between working migrant communities in this period were similarly emotionally restrained, and Gilderdale (2016, 4) attributes this to the awkwardness of written communication. It is difficult to read tone in writing, and this can add an additional constraint to emotional writing (Gilderdale 2016, 4). People were keen not to distress their loved ones with negativity, particularly when an answer to a poorly chosen or emotive word choice may not arrive for days or weeks (Gilderdale 2016, 4). In this way, the simplicity of a simple ‘thinking of you’ acts as a stand-in for messy, complex, potentially painful emotions, which is easily understood by both sender and recipient (Gilderdale 2016, 13). Gilderdale (2016, 4) draws on Strange’s (2002, 149) assertion that language is inadequate to express the depth and complexity of emotion. Because of this, the use of pre-written words is an acceptable referent, drawing on a socially understood metonym for an indescribable, but recognised sentiment.

Many people may not be great poets or wordsmiths and may struggle to articulate those messy feelings on paper, however, using pre-printed sentiments, or poems, hymns and epitaphs allows for that expression in a way that may feel less emotionally vulnerable than writing something new, even though the verses chosen may be effusive in their emotional language. In the present day, and potentially in the nineteenth century, the use of such “miserable doggrels” (Hare 1856, iii) may be considered trite and inauthentic (Jaffe 1999, 120, 139; West 2010, 452). This may, however, be rooted in a classist narrative, which stereotypes the use of pre-printed cards as tacky, and prioritises originality. Nevertheless, the unoriginality of the pre-printed funeral card verse does not necessarily mean that the sentiments expressed were inauthentic, or that the decision-making around them was less involved. Rather, the use of a socially codified expression of loss, which was ‘safe’ but also easily read by family, friends, and community, may have had the effect of drawing the bereaved closer to a support network who, due to their own enculturation, easily understood with the emotion conveyed by the verse.

The sending of a funeral card, then, strengthens the emotional relationship between sender and receiver, and the exchange of funeral card and condolence card, formed part of the social code of mourning. However, the pre-printed verse, whether written or chosen by the deceased or the bereaved, offered a way to express difficult emotions in a more distanced way than a handwritten letter. They also may have allowed people who were struggling to know how to appropriately express the way they felt, to choose words which spoke to them, based on their literary tastes, but

also the emotional language with which both they and the recipient were familiar. This may have been particularly important in the case of cards which were being sent to inform of a death, which can be a stressful experience, in which the bereaved also feel a need to care for the feelings of the recipient. The funeral card was, in this way, part of the ritual of informing of a death. The arrival of the card, in its black-edged envelope, was an immediate warning of the news that was inside. The card's form was familiar, a name and a date clearly visible, and a verse which expresses grief, and, sometimes, hope, in solidarity with all those grieving.

Funeral cards may have acted as a 'safe' way to express and sort through the messy complex emotions of grief, and to imagine or express a final dialogue or words between bereaved and deceased. They also potentially act as a way for the bereaved to make a statement, to their community, but also just in general, about their own reaction to the death. Funeral cards, primarily, were a statement to the recipient, however, it is also necessary to consider them as objects of importance for the bereaved who commissioned them, and who may choose to display them within their own homes. The memorial stone primarily focuses on commemorating the deceased, and acting as a focus for memory, construction of ideas around the afterlife, and familial legacy. In contrast, funeral cards are perhaps better understood, not simply as a cheap option for commemoration for those without the means to commission a stone monument, or the intellect to articulate their grief organically, but as a distinct cultural response to death and grief, which drew on the linguistic traditions and preferences of largely Northern, working-class emotional communities.

7 Hairwork and Griefwork: Crafting through Grief

In the late nineteenth century, domestic crafting was a fundamental in the lives of many women, both as a practicality and as a leisure activity. Women may have created or altered clothes for their families, took up needlework for relaxation and leisure, or embarked on complex projects to test their skill and ingenuity. For many women who found satisfaction in crafting, this was an interest that ran through the entirety of their lives, and for the majority of women, the important events of their lives – weddings, christenings, funerals – were marked, at least partially, by their own crafts – the sewing of a wedding dress, the altering of a christening gown, the creation of a mourning veil. Like many women's activities, sewing and needlework has often been overlooked and dismissed as either simply symbolic of women's unpaid labour in the home, or as an idle pastime of the rich and bored – a way of successfully performing womanhood and femininity. However, for some women, the act of creation itself may have held meaning, particularly when tied to these important and transformative life events.

This chapter explores how some women may have utilised their familiarity with crafting to undertake a project associated with the memorialisation of the dead, focusing on the creation of hairwork – braids, brooches, and other jewellery, produced from the hair of the dead. Initially produced by jewellers and specialists, moral panic over the potential for fraud and hair substitution, led to the publication of many how-to guides in books and magazines. This meant that the production of hairwork joined the ranks of embroidery and other domestic crafting completed by middle-class women in the late-nineteenth century. There has, however, been little analysis on the domestic production of hairwork, and even less on how the production of hair jewellery may have factored into women's mourning behaviour and grief.

The hairwork case study within this chapter takes the form of an experiential archaeology, in which hairwork is produced utilising the techniques published in nineteenth century books and magazines, to suggest how creating hairwork compares to more traditional textile materials, which women would likely have been familiar with, and to consider how the sensory and kinaesthetic experience of hairworking may have acted as an affecting and connecting experience when undertaken following bereavement. This is augmented by a review of contemporary research into the effects of crafting on grieving, and on crafting as a form of griefwork. The main aim of this chapter is to offer an alternate interpretation of bereavement hairworking, which recontextualises it from an activity bounded in practicality, protecting the hair and allowing it to be worn, to one in which the process of creation was itself meaningful.

7.1 Hairwork in the Nineteenth Century

Hairwork, and other jewellery such as locketts, which contained the hair of the dead, were a common part of Victorian mourning practice, and form the primary case study within this chapter. In contrast to jewellery which contained an unworked lock of hair, hairwork refers to objects made from, or decorated with, human hair, which is either braided, plaited, or adhered to a surface in order to create an image (called hairwork devices). Though produced from the medieval period in Europe, hairwork saw an increase in popularity from the late eighteenth century, and remained common until the turn of the twentieth century. Hairwork tended to broadly follow the fashions of other jewellery throughout this period, and here a brief overview of the changing styles and types of hairwork is discussed in order to provide context for the domestic crafting of hair in the late Victorian period.

While hairwork was heavily associated with death and mourning, it was not exclusively produced as an object to be used in bereavement. The inclusion of hair was common in sentimental jewellery, and could be gifted to spouses, parents, or friends (Figure 41). Hair jewellery was also considered aesthetically pleasing, and hairwork bracelets were worn as fashion items in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. These may have been associated with sentimental jewellery, but were also worn without any personal link to the hair. Hind (2020, 57) uses the example of Emily Shore's diary from 1838, in which she writes of her embarrassment at admitting when asked, that the hair she wore was "nobody's". This appears to have been less common later in the nineteenth century, when the majority of hairwork jewellery was associated in some way with the sentimental jewellery fashion.

From the 1780s, hairwork within mourning jewellery was often set behind glass in rings, locketts, and brooches, and took the form of flattened plaits of hair. Jewellery was often circular, ovoid or marquise shaped, and hair plaits took up a large space on the front face of the jewellery. These plaits were often surrounded by thin bands of seed pearls or enamel, and monograms commemorating the dead were also sometimes included. Hairwork devices, depicting classical imagery was also common in this period, reflecting the fashion for romanticism and classicism in both jewellery, art and funerary monuments. In these devices, cut hair is used to form the images, including foliage, but also pillars, columns and urns. Around 1800, jewellery such as rings began to get smaller, and bezels more commonly ran perpendicular to the finger, rather than taking up the majority of the space between the first and second knuckle. The proportion of the bezel taken up by plaited hairwork, was also commonly smaller than in prior decades, with the stones, pearls, or enamel which ringed them taking more of the focus (see Figure 42 for comparison).

From around the 1820s, there was a fashion for wearing wide bracelets, and these also took the form of hairwork plaits (Figure 43). These, however, were designed to be worn directly against the

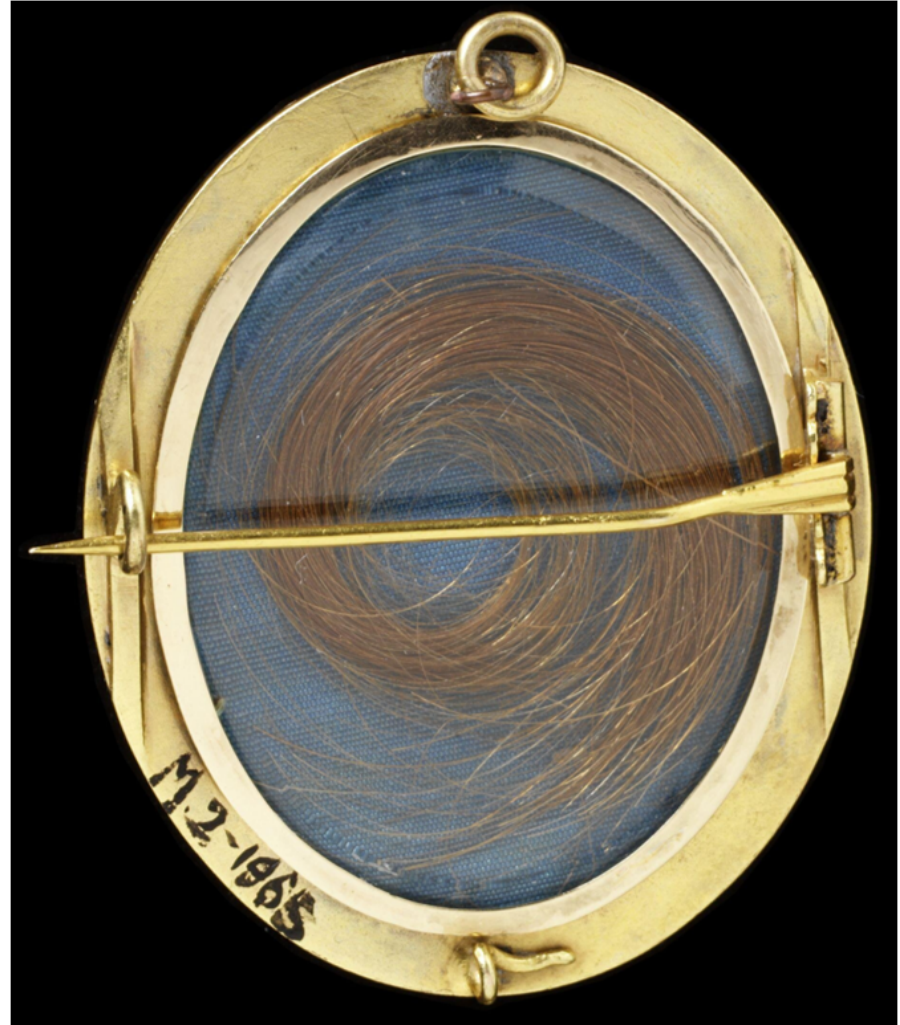


Figure 41 Gold sentimental brooch, c.1860, likely representing romantic love, and including a lock of hair on its reverse (V&A)



Figure 42 Comparison of a) late-18th century hairwork ring, with b) early-19th century hairwork ring (both V&A)



Figure 43 Wide hairwork bracelet, c.1820-1850 (V&A)

skin, rather than encased behind glass. The hair here was both in direct contact with the skin or clothes of the wearer, and also able to be touched directly by others. It is therefore both more subject to potential damage, but also more publicly displayed than in the small rings of the early part of the century. In contrast to these heavy styles, more delicate-looking openwork became more common around the mid-century (Figure 44). Openwork was designed to look more like net, and often had a circular profile, rather than sitting flat against the skin. Openwork could also be used to produce brooches as well as beads, which could be strung together, or worn as earrings. Both bowstyle openwork brooches, and acorn-shaped earrings were common forms. The tighter braids seen in the early part of the century remained popular, and numerous examples are seen in Campbell's (1867) *The Art of Hairworking*, however, this style became more commonly associated with fob watch chains and rings. Hair rings took the form of both plaited loops, worn directly in contact with the finger, and plaits fitted onto a metal loop. Later in the period, the hair plaits fitted to rings were more likely to be enclosed in some way, with windows in the metal displaying flashes of the plait. Others incorporated mechanisms, in which the plait could be concealed, or revealed, by twisting or opening the ring (Figure 45). These types of hairwork jewellery are much more subtle than other styles, and require interaction with the wearer in order to view the hair.

Despite the relative speed with which fashions changed, it is likely that hairwork in these styles remained in circulation, either as heirlooms or pawned items, in the second half of the nineteenth century, as indeed they do today, to some extent. Other mourners may have continued to commission jewellery in these styles due to personal preference, or repurposed jewellery with new hair. All of this means that the dating of specific uninscribed pieces is likely to be uncertain.

Hairworking was traditionally undertaken by specialists and jewellers, who produced commissioned pieces for patrons. There emerged, however, a fear that unscrupulous jewellers may be substituting the hair provided by customers for hair which was better quality or easier to work, and that premade pieces were being sent back instead. Speight, writing in 1871, summed up this fear:

Now to the lasting disgrace of those who practice it, there are persons whose greed of gain leaves them no regard for the finer feelings of the living, no respect for the dead. The hair of a departed friend is taken to a tradesman to be worked up into some little device, and what is frequently done is this—the hair may either be too short or not of sufficient quantity for the purpose intended—the tradesman knowing this, does not as he ought to do, suggest another design, but dishonestly matches the hair with other hair perhaps already worked up, and the unhappy dupe lives on in the delusion that he possesses the hair of a friend whose memory he cherishes, whilst he in fact has that of some person whom he has never either seen or heard of. (Speight 1871, 84)



Figure 44 Openwork brooch, in the shape of a crescent, with three openwork drop beads, c.1855-1865 (British Museum)



Figure 45 Gold ring with concealed hairwork, 1865. The clasp mechanism is opened, displaying the hairwork enclosed around the ring (British Museum)

In an 1850 issue of *The Lady's Newspaper*, women are encouraged to take up hairworking as a hobby, “to obtain the means of adding to her income while apparently working for amusement” (*The Lady's Newspaper* 1850, 125). While it was suggested that she might weave the hair of a loved one, it was also suggested that “hair [was] to be purchased for a few pence”, having been sold by the poor on the Continent (*The Lady's Newspaper* 1850, 126). This was phrased so as to disavow women of the notion that the hair that was being sold in vast quantities was from the dead (*The Lady's Newspaper* 1850, 126). The sale of hair was big business, largely due to the fashion for large and elaborate hairstyles, which for many women were impossible using only their natural hair. Hair pieces could be bought, which could be worn beneath hair to increase the apparent volume of hairstyles, or styled pieces could be attached to buns, where the length of natural hair was not enough for elaborate styles. This meant that hair for hairworking was reasonably widely available to purchase for women with disposable income, and women were encouraged to practise on hair which held no sentimental value, before embarking on crafting with the hair of the dead. Working the hair of the dead was not taboo, however, the idea of buying hair, harvested from the dead appears to have been off putting.¹ It is unclear, however, from the article, whether this distaste came from the idea that the hair was from an unknown body, perhaps influenced by worries around cleanliness and disease, or whether it was the commodification of human remains, for which consent could not be sought, which was taboo. This, however, highlights the complexity of the liminal space in which hair, as both body and object, sits.

Numerous publications – newspapers, magazines, and books – began to include patterns for home hairworking, so that women could be certain that their loved ones' hair remained out of the hands of swindlers. It is from two of these publications – *The Lock of Hair* (Speight 1871) and *The Art of Hairwork* (Campbell 1867) – that the patterns worked in the experiential project are drawn.

7.2 Methods

The aim of the experiential hairworking was to consider three questions related to the material aspects of working with hair:

- a) How does working with hair as a material compare with more ‘traditional’ handicraft materials (eg. wool, cotton, etc.)?
- b) What is the process of completing the patterns provided (eg. is the process time intensive? Labour intensive? Are patterns straightforward?)
- c) What is the sensory experience of working with hair as a material?

¹ The exploitation of poor French and German women was evidently not a concern, though the emphasis that the hair was largely European introduces an interesting question as to whether the hair of the British poor would have been so readily purchased. This is discussed further in Morris (2025) [Forthcoming].

The results of this project are then used as the basis of an interpretive discussion for how working with the hair of the dead may have influenced, and been influenced by grief emotions, with reference to present day accounts of grief-focused crafting. Finally, domestic hairworking is discussed in relation to the cultural feminisation of both crafting and mourning in the nineteenth century.

7.2.1 Sensory archaeology and the intersection of the experiential

Experiential archaeology has been defined as focused on the replication of materially-based human experience, concerned with answering questions about the sensory, kinaesthetic and affective (Gheorghiu 2021, 629). This contrasts with experimental aims, which are often focused on questions of material, technique and method (Ch'ng 2009, 458). For this reason, an experiential, rather than experimental approach was utilised, in order to answer questions more effectively regarding these sensory and emotional actions. Nevertheless, an experiential research project is, by necessity, removed from the original historical and emotional context, meaning that the experience of the researcher can only ever act to elaborate on the sensory experience in order to improve interpretations, rather than acting as an analogy for the affective experiences of past people.

Skeates (2020, 360) argues that sensory archaeology has received increased interest due to the sensory turn within the social sciences. Though it has received many of the same critiques as phenomenology, of being largely subjective, it has been suggested that at least considering the sensory and emotional aspects of the material past may help to create a 'fuller narrative' (Skeates 2020, 372). A focus on the sensory has also been well used in funerary archaeology (eg. Avery 2013; Nillson-Stutz 2020; Williams 2004), however, many of these studies have been focused on the sensory experience of the funerary ritual and the corpse. This archaeology of hairwork then, though concerned with the materiality of the dead body, in this case the hair, perhaps draws more methodologically from experiential archaeologies of crafting and making.

Thomas (2013) analysed the sensory experience of volunteers engaging in the replication of Neolithic slate plaques. The sensory experience of creation, including the discomfort of repetitive movements, the way sensory engagement proved part of the skill building process, and the way tactile, auditory and olfactory stimuli triggered reminiscences about past crafting experience, all formed a major part of exit interviews with participants (Thomas 2013, 344). In the context of this project, however, the most salient part of Thomas' (2013) analysis is his discussion of critiques around sensory-experiential archaeologies. The main critique of this approach is that sensory experiences are inherently embodied, and therefore, the sensory experience of the world is inherently variable and complex (Thomas 2013, 346). Using present day participants as analogies to the 'general experience' implies a 'universal body', which is reductive of physical, biological and experiential difference (Thomas 2013, 346). Secondly, sensory, embodied experience is partially based on enculturation, therefore, a present-day participant cannot necessarily be considered a

direct analogy for past experience (Thomas 2013, 346). Nevertheless, Thomas (2013, 346) argues that a specific individualised experience can still provide an indirect analogy to prompt interpretive discussion, rather than attempting to document a definitive sensory experience.

This experiential project aims primarily to provide a material and sensory context to the crafting of hairwork, in order to allow for an alternative interpretation of the activity through the lens of contemporary grief theory. Patterns published in the late nineteenth century were recreated using hair donated by a friend of the researcher – a proxy of ‘sentimental’ hair.

7.2.2 Hair as a Material

Hair is a keratinous organic material, composed of three layers, the cuticle, cortex and medulla (Schlake 2007, 268), which are largely responsible for most of the physical properties of hair, including texture and visual appearance, strength, pliability and static properties (Harrison and Sinclair 2003, 181). The structure and morphology of the cortex determines hair shape, namely the amount of wave or curl (de Sá Dias *et al.* 2007, 3), and the relative proportion of melanin and eumelanin within the cortex cells determines hair colour (Harrison and Sinclair 2003, 181). The cuticle forms a protective outer layer to the cortex, and consists of overlapping cells with “free edges” (Harrison and Sinclair 2003, 181). This means that hair strands are somewhat unidirectional. In practical terms, this means running fingers down an individual hair from root to tip generally feels smoother than from tip to root. Individual hairs rubbing against each other tend to cause friction, which can increase their static properties, causing individual hairs to repel each other. The structural integrity of the cuticle tends to weather with age, creating a rougher surface or structural damage like split ends (Sinclair 2007, 3). As an organic material, hair can vary, not only between individuals, but also between hairs on the same individual. This variation can include differences in texture, colour, and hair thickness. A lock of hair taken from an individual may therefore contain strands of a range of thicknesses, textures, and colours, which may affect how the strand can be used in hairwork. It is important to note here the cultural significance of hair texture in relation to constructions of race, and discrimination, which is as prevalent and relevant in the present day as it would have been in the nineteenth century (see Rooks 1996 for discussion). There is not scope here to explore the subject in the depth that it would deserve, however, there is a need for future research, particularly in a North American context, of how people who were part of Black and Indigenous communities interacted with, and were affected by, the fashion for hairworking.

A final variation to consider in terms of using hair as a productive material is the length of hair. Hair grows within a cycle of three phases, anagen, catagen and telogen, the length of which varies between individuals depending on multiple factors, including genetics and age. The length of the anagen phase of an individual determines the maximum length of hair growth. The anagen phase of the adult scalp hair varies between one and ten years (Bernard 2003, S122), with an average of

around a 2.5 year cycle (Whiting 2001, S84). Hair grows at around 1 cm per month (Nissimov and Das Chaudhuri 2014, 724). For the average person then, terminal hair length falls at around 27cm, with some variation on either side (Whiting 2001, S84), correlating to between shoulder- and waist-length hair when pulled straight. Finally, hair follicles are asynchronous (Bernard 2003, S122), meaning that individual hairs within a workable strand will be of varying lengths when cut.

This is relevant to studies of late nineteenth century hair use, as late Victorian women rarely cut their hair, and would therefore likely have hair approaching terminal length. In contrast, the fashion for men's hair tended towards short, often chin length or shorter. This meant that length of hair was likely a factor in pattern choice for the producing of hairwork. The hair utilised in this experimental project was undyed, and predominantly dark brown in colour, with a loose wave (Figure 46). The hair had reached terminal length at around 65cm, though exact length was difficult to determine due to the wave in the hair, and variation in hair growth phase when cut.

7.2.3 Hairworking Patterns

Patterns for hairworking were available both as published books and also within the regular columns of periodicals aimed at women. The patterns worked from in this project were taken from Campbell's (1867) *The Art of Hair Work*, and Speight's (1871) *The Lock of Hair*, as these provided more in-depth description of the preparation and process than the shorter magazine patterns. Campbell (1867) provides patterns for chains and openwork braids, to be produced using a braiding table, while Speight (1871) gives patterns for flat plaits and pictorial devices, intended for enclosing within a locket or brooch. For the purposes of clarity, going forward 'plait' will be used to describe lattice-style hairwork, produced with the intention of laying flat, while 'braid' will be used to describe hair worked in three-dimensions, with a spherical profile. Three patterns were reproduced in this project (Figures 47, 48 and 49) – A) a lattice-work plait for enclosing in a brooch from Speight (1871) (7.3.1), B) a bracelet style braid and C) a ring-style braid, both from Campbell (1867) (7.3.2). Due to the similarity in these two braids, and the process of making them, they are discussed together.

7.2.4 Equipment and Preparation

For the creation of hairwork, some equipment and materials were required, for which contemporary recipes were used, or proxies were found. Hair is initially required to be cleaned of oils, for which Speight (1871, 87) suggested using a hot water solution of borax and baking soda. Little practical difference was observed with hair washed in water compared with a borax solution, either in workability, or in the form of the end product. Therefore, it is likely that solutions such as borax and soda acted as a cleaning agent only, rather than the alkali solution affecting the material properties of the hair. Campbell (1867), in contrast, gives no instructions for cleaning hair prior to use.



Figure 46 Photograph of the hair used in experiential project, showing colour and wave pattern, approx. 5cm in length (Author's own)

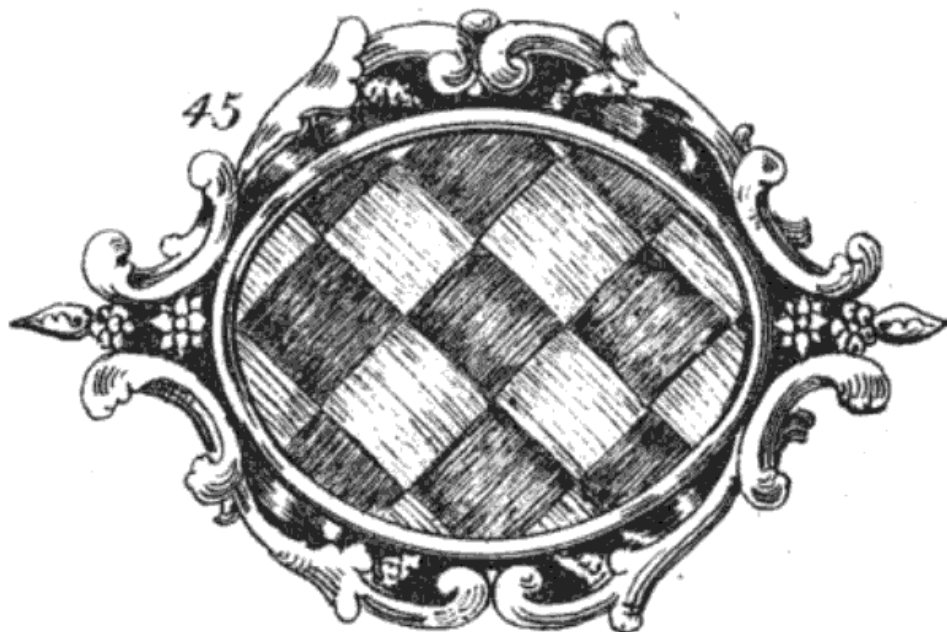


Figure 47 Lattice-style plait from Speight (1871, 105), recreated in 7.3.1



Figure 48 Bracelet braid from Campbell (1865, 20), recreated in 7.3.2



Figure 49 Ring braid from Campbell (1865, 83), recreated in 7.3.2

Gum bandolines were used to improve the workability of the hair. Bandolines were a common household item in the late nineteenth century and methods of preparation can be found in numerous household guides (e.g. Beeton 1861). They were used both to fix hairstyles in place, and smooth frizz in hair (Fenner 1889, 1131). The bandoline utilised here was made from gum tragacanth and water, and was made to the recipe found in Mrs Beeton's *Book of Household Management* (1861, 981). Gum glue was also utilised where a stronger adhesive was required, produced from gum arabic (3 parts), glycerine (1 part) and water (to thin the glue). This gum glue was primarily used in the creation of hairwork plaits as a means of securing the hair onto the backing.

The backing material suggested in Speight's (1871, 102) lattice pattern was gold-beater's skin, a thin membrane taken from the intestine of cattle. In this project, thin craft paper was utilised as an alternative. Gold-beater's skin would likely produce a less fragile and more flexible result, as the membrane is likely stronger and thinner than a paper alternative. However, as the experimental hairwork was not intended for longevity, paper provides an adequate analogy.

Campbell's (1867, 29) braiding patterns require the use of a braiding table, weights and a 'mold' around which the braid was constructed (Figures 50 and 51). This project utilised a Japanese *kumihimo* table, and iron washer weights. The 'mold', which keeps the strands from crossing incorrectly as the braid is completed, would have been wire in the nineteenth century. Here, a 2mm size tapestry needle was used as a proxy.

7.3 Experiential Hairworking

This section describes the process of working the patterns from Speight (7.3.1) and Campbell (7.3.2), before discussing the experience of working with hair, and following the patterns, overall (7.3.3).

7.3.1 Speight's (1871) Lattice Plait

Plaits for enclosing within brooches or other jewellery, require relatively short lengths of hair, in correspondence with the size of that jewellery. Therefore, to begin, the donated hair was cut into strands of around 5cm in length. After cleaning the hair, Speight's (1871, 103) process begins:

take some strong gum, and by means of the camel-hair pencil, gum the edge of the skin. Then take a small portion of the cleansed hair, and lay it carefully along the gummed line [...] After which, having carefully arranged the hair in its proper place, press it firmly down upon the skin with the fore finger of the left hand, and then with the flat side of the knife scrape it down flat and even along the skin.



Figure 50 Plate from Campbell (1867, 125) showing a nineteenth century hair-braiding table.

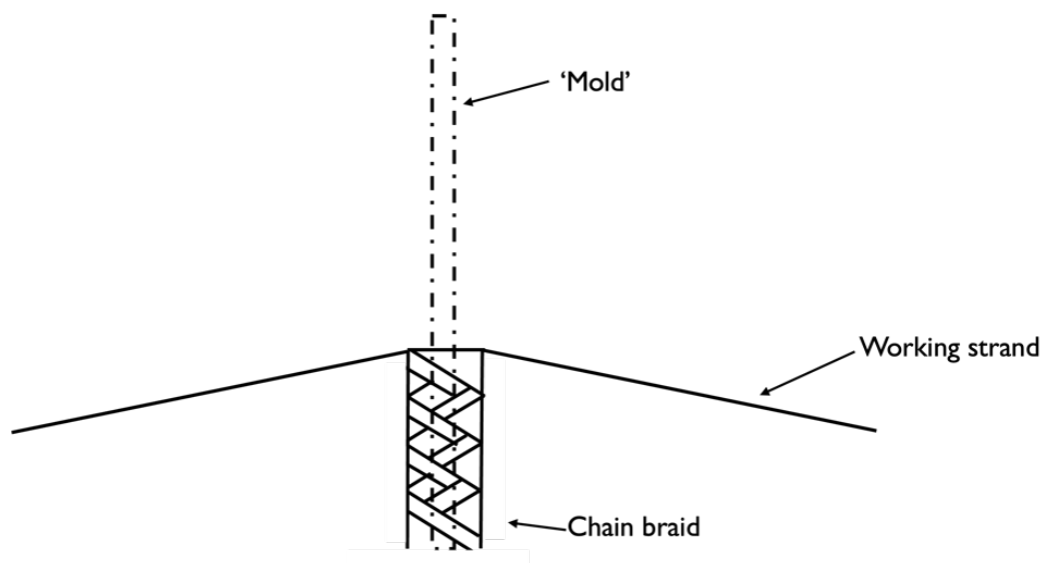


Figure 51 Diagram demonstrating the use of a mold during braiding (Author's own)

Gum arabic glue functions well as a viscous adhesive, and is not quick drying, meaning that it is possible to rearrange the hairs after they are tacked to the base.

The hairwork must then be left to dry, a process which is dependent on the amount, and consistency, of gum glue used. To fully dry will likely take several days. Hair fully saturated with glue is surprisingly robust after drying, and will remain intact even if the backing fails to adhere. It is also possible at this point to begin to cut hair strips into the desired shape and size. It is in this way that Speight proposes shapes like flowers can be produced (Figure 52). Here, however, a plait was produced, and as such, the hair strips were cut into thinner pieces to allow the basket plait to be formed (Figure 53).

Speight (1871, 104) describes the next step in creating a basket plait:

Then take a certain number, say seven of the strips, and with some strong gum attach the left ends of the strips to a sheet of writing paper, leaving the other or right ends free [...] Then leave the strips until the gum has become dry, and they have become firmly attached to the writing paper.

This once again requires a period of waiting before proceeding to complete the plait. The addition of the horizontal strands requires a steady hand to place the strips without dislodging already glued portions. The plait is then, again, left to dry for several days, before it can be cut to size and mounted within jewellery.

Overall, the process of producing a hairwork plait is summarised in Table 8 below:

Table 8 Process of completing a hairwork plait

Step	Approx. Time
Cleaning and drying hair	2+ hours
Cutting to rough length	15 minutes
Preparing backing	10 minutes
Gluing hair to backing (and smoothing)	1-3 hours (depending on project size)
Drying	1-4 days
Trimming to size	15 minutes
Gluing vertical strips to paper	Up to an hour (depending on project size)
Drying	1-2 days
Adding horizontal strips	1-2 hours (depending on project size)
Drying	1-4 days
Cutting to size and fitting to jewellery	30 minutes

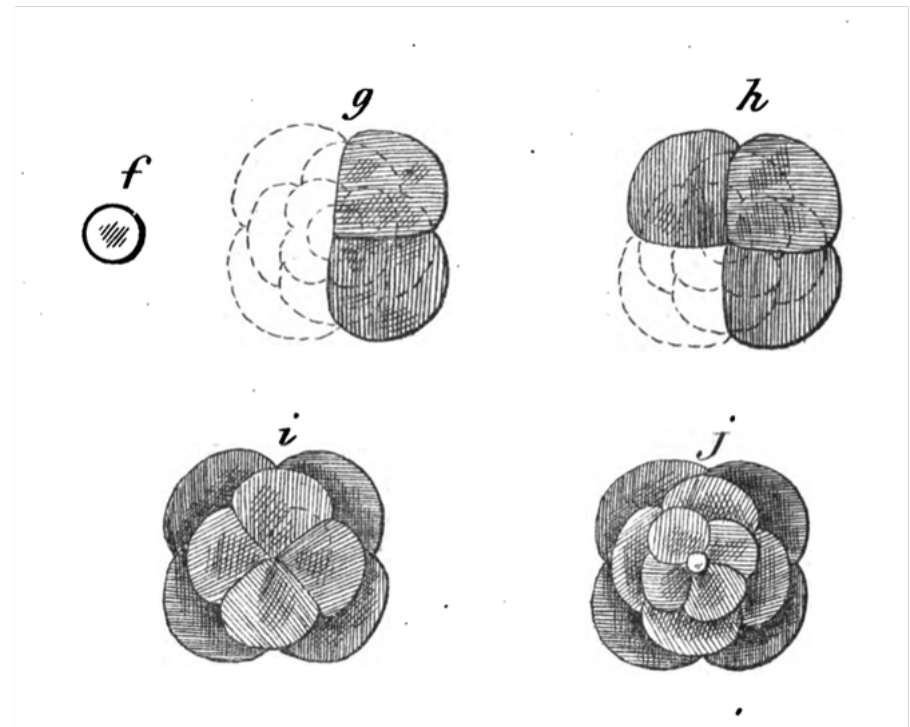
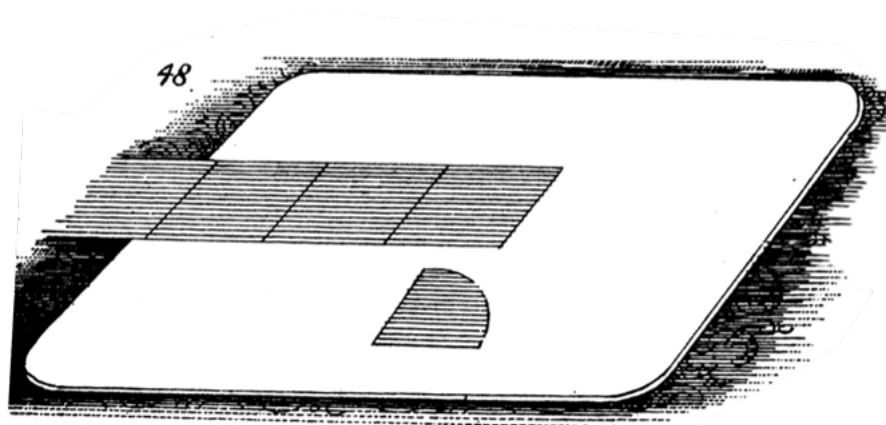


Figure 52 Figures from Speight (1871, Plates 14 & 16) showing the creation of hairwork flowers

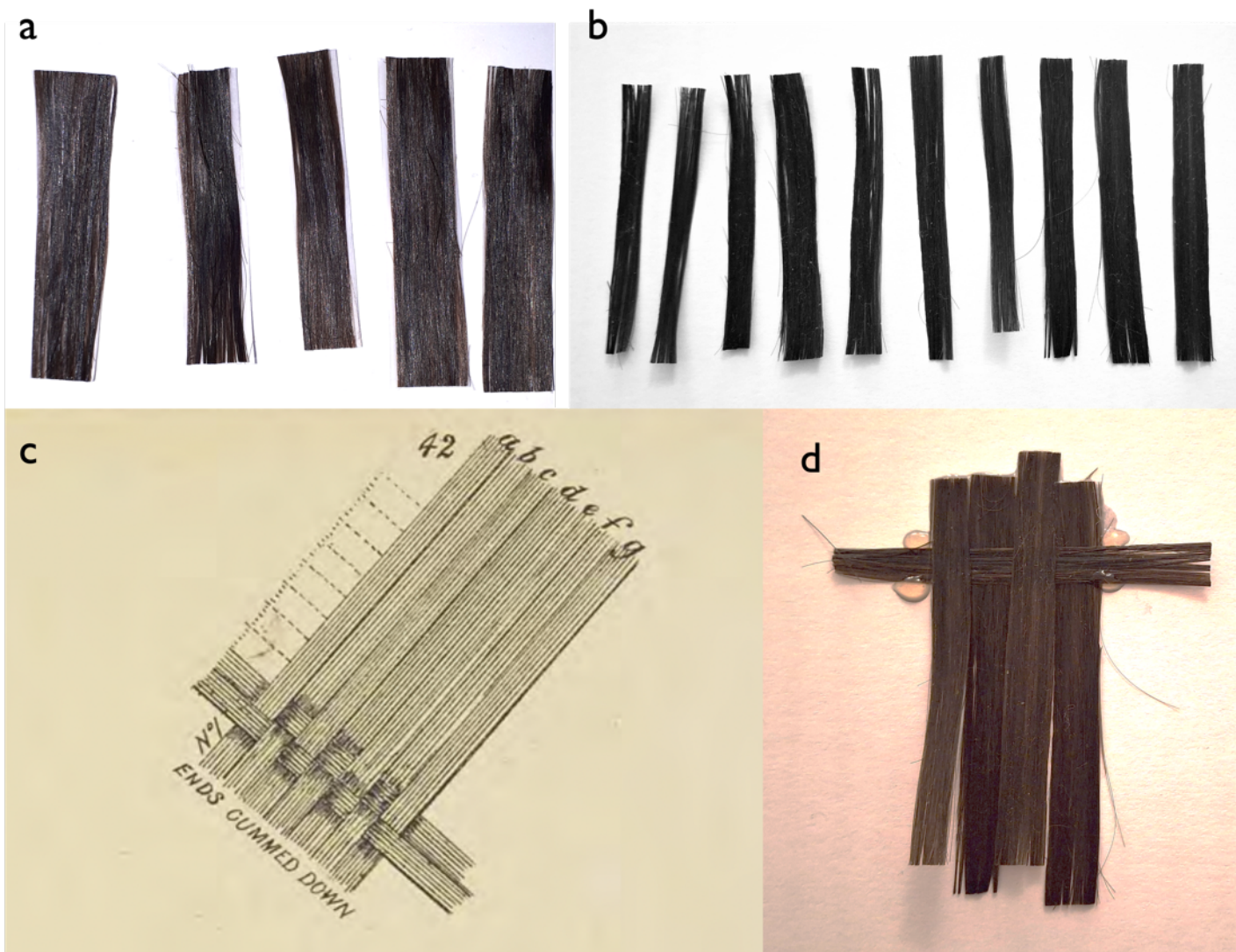


Figure 53 Process of completing basket plait, a) initial strips of hair adhered to backing; b) strips of hair after trimming to size; c) figure from Speight (1871, plate 13) showing process of assembling basket plait; d) hairwork during assembling stage

The construction of the plait is relatively straightforward, with few specialist tools required, however, the unfamiliar properties of the hair mean that the first attempt may involve trial and error or experimentation, in order to achieve a neat looking result. Speight (1871, 103) emphasises the importance of ensuring the hairs lay 'side by side' rather than crossing (Figure 54). This step greatly affects the overall finish of the hairwork piece, and how professional the result appears. This is, however, a difficult step due to the propensity of hair to repel itself and tangle. As such, the presence of many crossing hairs may indicate less experience on the part of the hairworker. The thickness and viscosity of the gum arabic glue affects both the robustness of the plait, and the drying time of the piece. In addition to this, it is important to use enough hair to create a solid strand of colour without the backing showing through the fine hairs, but also create a thin enough layer that the hair can successfully adhere. These judgements are largely experiential, and become easier when more familiar with the process and the material properties of the hair, glue and backing. This difference can be seen in Figure 55, comparing a first attempt at a hairwork plait with a second attempt. This may explain the prevalence of advice within patterns and articles, to practice on bought hair, before attempting to work the hair of loved one.

7.3.2 Cambell's (1867) Chain Braids

Due to the increased length of hair required for chains and openwork, and the method of construction, Campbell's (1867, 7) instructions placed more focus on equipment, and on the preparations of individual hair strands for braiding. This preparation begins with choosing a strand of hair:

The hair to be used in braiding should be combed perfectly straight, and tied with a string at the roots, to prevent wasting. Then count the number of hairs for a strand, and pull it out from the tips, dip it in water and draw it between the thumb and finger to make it lie smoothly; then tie a solid, single knot at one end, the same as you would with a sewing thread. (Campbell 1867, 122)

This strand needs to be considerably thicker than the resulting workable strand, as hair strands contain hair in different stages of their growth cycle. Each individual hair within the strand is a different length. Figure 56 demonstrates this, and the photograph on the right shows both the shorter hairs in the strand curling away from the longer hairs, and that the strand is noticeably thinner at the tip end than at the root. Therefore, it is necessary to remove all the individual hairs which are shorter than required for the completed piece, in order to maintain an evenly sized profile size all the way down the chain. Campbell (1867, 122) recommends counting the individual hairs in order to keep each strand even - in the case of some of the larger braids this could amount to over 1200 individual hairs. This preparatory step therefore takes up the majority of the time to create the chain braid. If the preparatory steps are completed ineffectively, the finished product is notably



Figure 54 Mourning ring (1809) commemorating Anna Seward, and detail of hair plait, showing crossed hairs (V&A)



Figure 55 Comparison of hairwork plaits, created experientially. Left: first plait created; Right: second plait created. (Author's own)

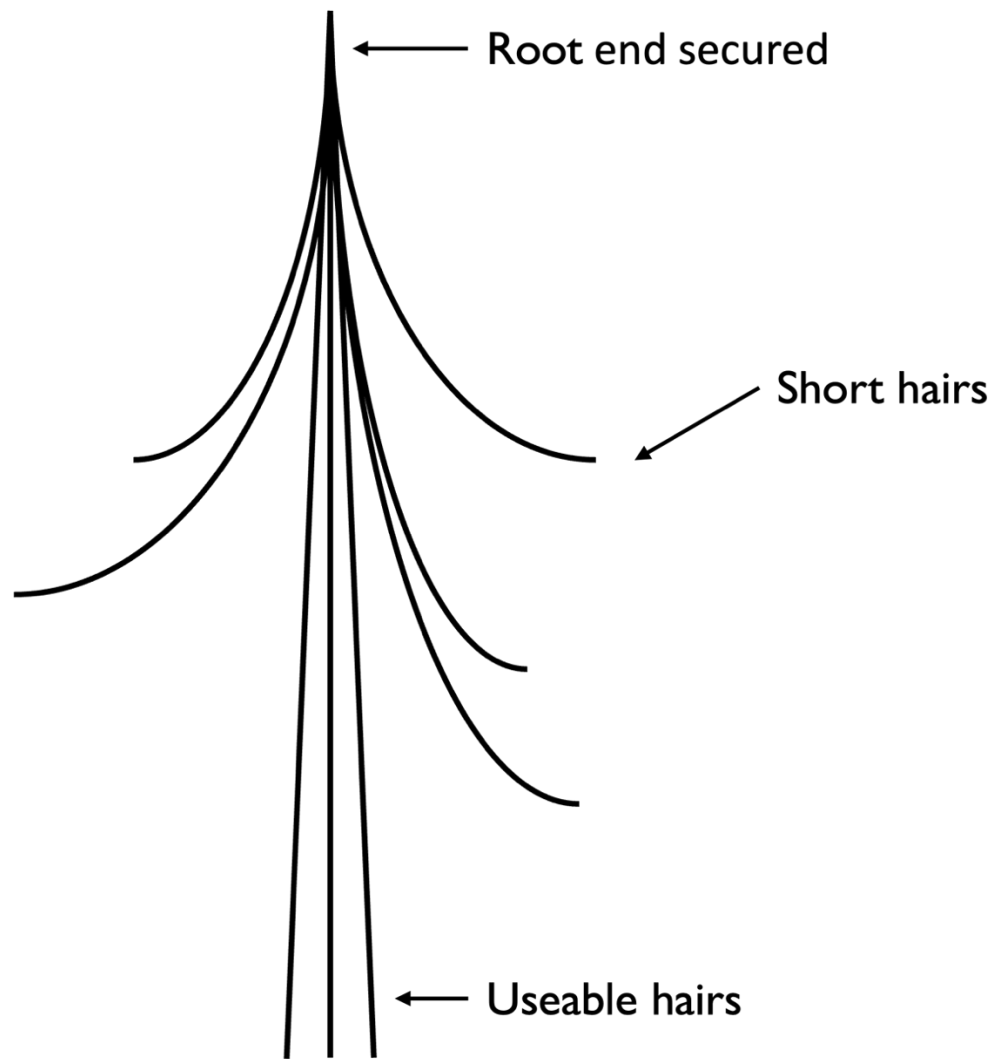


Figure 56 (left) Diagram demonstrating the method for separating useable hair described by Campbell (1867); (right) Photograph of hair strand prior to this step, showing the shorter hairs in the strand (Both author's own)

poorer quality, with many broken and unsecured hairs (Figure 57). This variation can also be seen in historical hairwork (Figure 58).

The hair strands are secured with weights, and then hung across a braiding table. The braiding table method involves crossing strands over each other in an ordered pattern, keeping the ‘mold’ in the centre of the chain. This stage of production can proceed relatively quickly, with a bracelet-sized braid taking around 30-45 minutes to produce. Following this, the braid can be removed from the braiding table, and the ‘mold’ removed from the braid. The braid is then placed in boiling water, and dried in the oven for a few minutes, before the ends are sewed and secured with shellac or gum glue (Campbell 1867, 29). The braid can then be mounted with a gold clasp if desired (Campbell 1867, 133).

The process of creating a hairwork chain braid is summarised in Table 9 below:

Table 9 Process of creating a hairwork chain braid

Step	Approx. Time
Cleaning and drying hair	2+ hours
Preparing workable hair strands from locks, including counting hairs	2+ hours (depending on project size)
Securing workable strands to weights and setting up braiding table	1+ hours (depending on project size)
Braiding	30 minutes – 1 hour (depending on project size)
Removing and securing finished braid ends	20 minutes
Boiling and drying	30 minutes
Securing into a loop	10 minutes

Compared with the production of a basket plait, the chain braid involves more labour, but requires less waiting time in between steps. After some practise, it is possible to finish a large braid within a day, while the small ring braid produced in this experiential project was created in a single afternoon (shown in Figure 59).

7.2.3 The Experience of Hairworking

Hair as a material is very different from traditional crafting materials, including thread and yarn. Individual hairs are fine. They repel each other due to static, or tangle tightly together. Hair strands



Figure 57 (Above) Photograph of the first hairwork chain produced, demonstrating increased fraying due to ineffective preparation of hair strands

(Below) Photograph of the second braid, showing neater result with effective preparation (Both author's own)



Figure 58 (Above) Photograph of hairwork bracelet consisting of six individual hairwork braids, c.1820-1850;

(Below) Photograph of a hairwork bracelet, consisting of three individual hairwork braids,c.1820-1850. This bracelet displays noticeably more individual hair breakage than the top photograph (Both V&A)

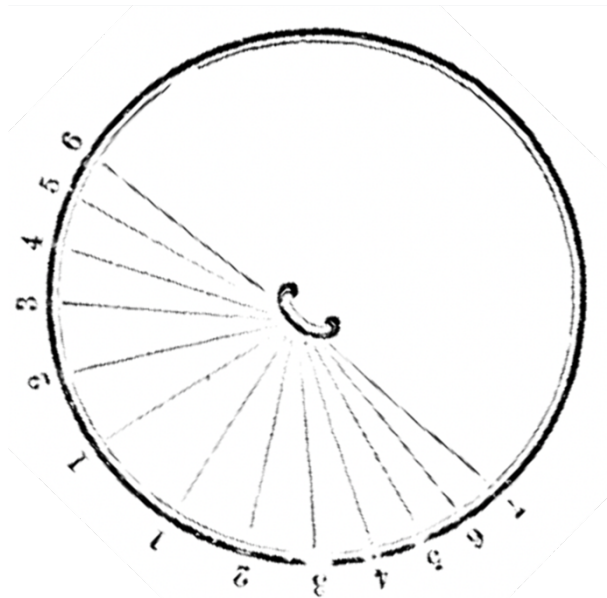


Figure 59 (Left) Ring pattern from Campbell (1867, 83); (Centre) *Kumihimo* table set up for ring pattern, showing unevenness in strand thicknesses caused by breakage; (Right) Completed hairwork ring (Author's own)

are also not spun, like other threads, and therefore tend to fray and lose coherence (Figure 46). Hair's unidirectional smoothness also makes it difficult to tie and secure, either to the braiding weights, or to itself. Traditional textile materials tend to hold a knot using friction, though very smooth thread such as some types of spun silk are an exception to this. Hair, like silk, slips over itself and unravels, making the preparation of strands for braiding very time consuming and sometimes frustrating. The use of a bandoline greatly improved the workability of the hair, by reducing its static properties, and preventing strands from splaying. Campbell (1867, 122) suggested using water, rather than bandoline, and this was also effective, though it dried more quickly than bandoline, and therefore required the braiding to be completed more quickly. The bandoline itself is viscous, clear and smells faintly of gum, though women in the nineteenth century were likely using the same bandoline as they used to fix their hairstyles, and often these bandolines were scented with almond or other oils (e.g. Beeton 1861, 981).

The experience of hairworking differed markedly depending on the type of project that was being undertaken. Basket plaits, like those intended for lockets or brooches, likely took the form of an extended project, undertaken in short phases of work between periods of letting the gum glue dry. The glued strips could be stored for months if desired, within an envelope or pressed between the pages of a book, and would likely need at least a few days to dry fully. The creation phases would have been relatively undemanding, but would have required a delicate hand to produce a neat product.

In contrast, the production of a chain braid was much more labour intensive, particularly in preparing the hair for braiding. This preparatory stage required a high level of concentration, in order to effectively count hairs for each strand and ensure that the length was appropriate for the intended braid. The use of bandoline rather than just water would keep the hair strands from fraying more effectively, reducing the impact of the strand being unspun. These prepared hair strands would be difficult to store, even with shellac securing the ends, due to the fragility of the individual hairs within a strand. Therefore, it is not likely that there was a pause between preparation and braiding. It is likely that the production of a chain braid took place over a short window – potentially a single day. Campbell (1867, 133) also describes the production of more complex braids, which require the subsequent braiding of completed chains, for example, Figure 58, which shows two bracelets produced of six, and three, individual chains. The production of bracelets like this likely took multiple days of intensive labour, however, these would not need to be consecutive, and the project could be left and taken up again if needed, provided the completed hairwork was stored safely.

The instructions in both Speight (1871) and Campbell (1867) were difficult to parse. A critique which was levied at other hairworking guides in the period:

we own at once that, critics as we are, and tried as our tempers often are, we cannot sufficiently admire the patience of those Ladies who are able to surmount the difficulty of understanding this book. There must be some, or it would not be published. But we have not the necessary key to the mystery. We are puzzled at the labyrinth of figures and letters which beset our path on entering the intricacies of ornamental hair-work (The Athenaeum 1856, 488)

The writing style, particularly of Campbell (1867), makes it clear where some of this confusion may have stemmed from:

Commence at A, change the Nos. 1 across inside of Nos. 1 at B, and bring back Nos. 1 from B to A; then take No. 2 at A change over in place of Nos. 2 at B and bring back Nos. 2 from B to A; then go to C, and change the Nos. 1 from C to D, and bring back

Nos. 1 from D to C; then take Nos. 2 at C and change over in place of Nos. 2 at D, and bring back Nos 2 from D to C; then go to A and begin as at first, repeating until the braid is finished (Campbell 1867, 29 referring to the braid shown in Figure 57)

The pattern itself is not difficult, as it is largely repetitive, however, it does require counting and tracking rows in a way which is similar to that needed for other textile arts like traditional braiding or knitting, and as such, the process of completing a hairwork braid was likely familiar to nineteenth century women. As discussed above, however, the physical properties of hair as a crafting material makes it very different compared to other types of thread.

In the experiential production of hairwork, I had initially anticipated that my own enculturation would have affected my sensory and emotional experience. In particular, I anticipated experiencing a response of disgust. However, the sensory experience of handling the hair was not unpleasant. Within its envelope, the hair felt slightly cool, and largely soft, with a few areas where the texture of individual strands was rough. The hair also smelt familiar, though not strongly enough to be reminiscent. I doubt that I would have been able to identify my friend by the smell alone. Prior to working the donated hair, I had practised briefly using purchased hair extensions, and while neither experience was unpleasant, I preferred working with the hair of my friend, and I felt more disappointed when the 'sentimental' hairwork I produced was not aesthetically satisfying. This particular area of the project was very subjective, and though the concept of experiential affective research such as this has potential in specific circumstances, in this instance, I did not find the affective outputs to be insightful.

In contrast, the sensory changes which working the hair creates were very transformative. The use of bandoline or water changes the texture of the hair, and tacks strands together. It also straightens kinks and waves, and other idiosyncratic features of the hair. During working, the hair feels like a

crafting material, however ill-suited to the task. The finished product also feels very different both sensorially and cognitively. When a lattice-plait is created, the completed piece, while fragile, is no longer malleable, and the crosshatch of the design feels rough. Once enclosed behind glass, this hardening and preservation feels complete. While chain braids are more akin to hair in its natural state, they feel more solid, and lack the wave, frizz and variable texture of natural hair. Once completed, the hairwork evokes something aesthetically perfected, but in some way removed or distant from the bodily, living thing. This links to Junge's (1999, 202) description of grief-focused crafting as a bounded pseudoritualised activity, in which a 'talisman' is created, which in turn echoes Van Gennep's (1909) transformative *rites de passage*. The creation of hairwork transforms the lock of hair from bodily remains to 'secular relic' (Lutz 2011).

7.4 Symbolism of Hair

In the nineteenth century, the lock of hair had 'romantic' connotations, gifted by lovers and family members as symbols of their relationships (Sheumaker 1997, 422). Hair was also the only part of the body which would not decay, which allowed for comparisons with the eternal soul (Lutz 2011, 136). Hair represented the idea of permanence (Pointon 1999, 53), a bond between two people which could not be broken even by death (Tarlow 1999, 131). This ability of hair to bridge the gap between Earth and Heaven was made explicit in nineteenth-century texts, such as this passage written by Leigh Hunt (1876, 145):

Hair is at once the most delicate and lasting of our materials; and survives us, like love. It is so light, so gentle, so escaping the idea of death, that with the lock of hair belonging to a child or friend, we may almost look up to Heaven, and compare notes with the angelic nature; may almost say, "I have a piece of thee here, not unworthy of thy being now."

The imperishability of hair, particularly once it had been transformed into hairwork, and enclosed behind glass, made it particularly suitable for mourning jewellery, by speaking to a very Christian denial of the permanence of death (Pointon 1999, 52). Representative of love, and also of the eternal soul, hairwork reified both the transformation of the dead into heavenly being, and the permanence of the bond between bereaved and deceased.

In partaking in the transformation of the hair, the hairworking women may also have been embarking on an activity which allowed them space to articulate the transformation of both the deceased, and their relationship with them. Feelings like this have been articulated in contemporary research and accounts. Describing his participation in the creation of a panel for the AIDS Memorial Quilt, one of Kerewsky's (1997) participants remarked that he felt compelled to do something that "honored [sic]

the knowledge that [the deceased]’d been there and that he had gone” (Kerewsky 1997, 437). He continued:

“We don’t know what to do with our emotions and we don’t know what to do with ourselves. So it’s good to put aside something and say, “This is mourning. This is it, I’m going to do this, and I’m going to do it in honor [sic] of this death that has happened.” (Kerewsky 1997, 437)

Kohner and Henley (2001, 92) echo this, suggesting that creating something gives weight to a loss. The time set aside to grieve the loss of that person, guiltlessly and intentionally, and to consider deeply what death and loss means, can allow people to feel that they done something to honour the importance of the deceased’s life and death.

The crafting of hairwork, particularly from the hair of the dead, is a bounded task, with a clear aim and result. This is similar to the way Kerewsky’s (1997) participant discussed their crafting. It is an activity which specifically commemorates a loss, which demands that the crafter pays attention both to the task, and to that loss. It gives the opportunity for the crafter to think meaningfully and guiltlessly about the loss, about being bereaved, about what death means, philosophically and tangibly. Hair itself works well for this task, due to its status as part of the ‘body’, its mnemonic and sensory properties, and its roots in symbolism, metaphor and folklore. The transformation of hair into jewellery symbolically mirrors the belief in the transformation of the living body into something angelic and everlasting.

The cultural symbolism of hair, as well as the other markers of mourning jewellery such as seed pearls, is well trodden ground (eg. Pointon 1999; Lutz 2011, 2015; Harmeyer 2014, 2015; Sheumaker 1997, 2007; Ledger-Lomas 2016; Hind 2020; Ofek 2009; Cole-Kink 2018). There is, however, a question as to how cultural constructions of femininity, care, and nurturing were articulated through the crafting of hairwork.

7.5 Cultures of Victorian Crafting

Women’s production has often been overlooked in study, reduced to subsistence work, or, particularly in the case of middle-class women, dismissed as an idle leisure activity. Whether out of necessity or boredom, textile crafting and needlework were likely among the skills a majority of nineteenth-century women would have acquired. It has been argued that sewing and creating acted as a way for women to live up to feminine ideals, and demonstrate maternal love and care, particularly amongst the middle- and upper-class, who did not create clothes out of necessity (Gordon 2009, n.p.; Thompson 2022, 2). Mothers and wives were expected to be ‘angels of the house’ (Thompson 2022, 2), and ideas around femininity and womanhood were heavily influenced by the conception that women engaged in acts of nurturing care in the domestic sphere. Despite

employing servants or having the disposable income to employ seamstresses, women may have undertaken dressmaking and sewing in order to show familial care, and creating things for family members could be a demonstrative act of love (Gordon 2009, n.p.).

The invention of the Singer Sewing Machine in 1851 had a large impact on both the clothing industry and domestic sewing. Rather than purely selling fabric to produce clothing at home, drapers began to take advantage of the availability of the Singer sewing machine to both display made-up dresses and open their own dressmaking departments to sew up outfits, and make alterations on the same day. It was possible to buy clothes ready-made and alter them, to commission custom clothing from stores in-house dressmaking departments, or to simply buy fabric and home-make clothing. Sowerby, Drayson and Co. were offering “ready-made silk, bareges, ball and evening dresses” in 1853 (The Court Journal 1853, 759), while Jay’s crepe trimmed mourning dresses were “kept made up” (The Saturday Review 1867, 65). There were apparently benefits and costs to all options. Ready-made clothes were often considered overly expensive, and less well made than custom-designed. However, buying ready-made was convenient if time or skill was lacking (Anon. 1860, 133). The final look of homemade or seamstress-made clothes was entirely dependent on the skill of the dressmaker. Buying partially-made, to finish the fit at home, was also an option, and may have been a good option for skirts requiring lots of stiffened or delicate fabrics, which were “difficult and unsatisfactory to work upon” (“Sylvia” 1876, 114–15).

Sewing machines were also a growing presence within the home, with sales of the Singer rising sharply, from just over 10,000 in 1871 to 150,000 in 1890 (Godley 2001, 9). Burman (1999, 8) suggests that for some women who could afford to buy dresses straight out of the store, concerns about quality led them to continue to make their own clothes well into the twentieth century. The majority of women throughout the late nineteenth century would have had some skill with a needle and thread. While those that could afford it would likely have passed on some of the practical work to servants or seamstresses (see Sayer 2002 for discussion), it is likely that the majority of women engaged in at least some of the sewing and repair work it took to keep a family supplied in clothes.

In contrast to this, fancywork, referring to the crafting of decorative items, was a popular pastime for middle-class women. Although, often taking the form of needlework or crochet, other forms of fancywork, using paper, card, wire, and wax, were also popular (see Schaffer 2011 for discussion). Schaffer (2011, 8) characterises Victorian women’s fancywork as ‘embracing commodification’. Fancywork was designed to be easy to reproduce, regardless of the skill level of the crafter, quick to complete and disposable once fashion moved on (Schaffer 2011, 8). Schaffer (2011, 8) largely dismisses the value of Victorian handicraft, characterising the works as something produced by the “unskilled”, and which were valueless even to the women who made them. Through the creation of cheap tat, those women “could imagine themselves akin to medieval ladies embroidering tapestries”

(Schaffer 2011, 9). This representation may not be without truth, but fails to take into account the level of skill that was still often found within women's crafting, not least in terms of needlework skill. It may also reify an unfair contrast between men's 'art' and women's 'handicraft', particularly in the assumption that just because something was ephemeral or disposable, it was intrinsically of less value. Finally, this implies that difficulty and skill level are the only criteria used when determining the value of an object, and may minimise women's reasons for creating fancywork. People take pleasure in idle acts of creation, regardless of the quality of the object, or its utility. For these reasons, it may be more accurate to characterise fancywork as part of what Bronner (1985, 143 cited by Yocom 1987, 116) calls "the human drive for [...] form and feeling, beauty and expression, that culminates in creativity".

While undoubtedly, skill level, gratification and pleasure must have varied, many women appear to have enjoyed fancywork as a pastime. For some women, activities like embroidery upon net did "not requir[e] any particular skill" and might "fill in odds and ends of time" (Browne 1873, 38), while others preferred to undertake complex projects which would allow for creativity and innovation. Needlework patterns were common in ladies' magazines, offering advice on complex patterns and novel techniques. Throughout its run, between 1848 and 1863, the Ladies' Newspaper and Pictorial Times ran a weekly column providing patterns for embroidery, knitting, crochet and other techniques. Fancywork was shown at the International Exhibition in London in 1862 (The Ladies' Treasury 1862, 218), and was frequently the subject of charitable bazaars, organised by wealthy ladies for philanthropic causes (The Lady's Newspaper 1861, 317).

A large material culture existed around women's domestic textile production, including small items such as pins and thimbles, but also including items of furniture such as worktables, which included deep sewing baskets underneath, in which to store ongoing projects. These tables were designed to be light and movable, to allow women to transfer them between rooms. Matilda Browne, in her regular column, discussed the usefulness of lightweight worktables, with sewing baskets, for manoeuvring between the practical sewing machine in the morning, and the drawing room to engage in lacework and other "excuses for idleness" in the afternoon (Browne 1873, 38). In this way, the material related to the crafting women did spread and inhabited most of the home.

Making and creating is often heavily linked with memory and emotion. Black and Idle (2013), in their research into home dressmaking in the mid-twentieth century in Australia, discuss their memories of the clothing made for them by their mothers, through photographs of their childhood, including the sensory experience of wearing the clothes and the large hems indicating that the dresses had been altered from wrongly sized patterns (Black and Idle 2013, 34). Other clothing had several lives – one skirt made by a mother for herself, later became a pinafore for her children (Black and Idle 2013, 26). This demonstrates the idea that objects which have been domestically crafted are filled with "tactile memories", and evoking familial and personal history (Wachowich 2016, 128). The physical

and tactile process of making imbues objects with additional meaning and value, even when the circumstances are mundane (Edwards 2009, 38).

In more significant life events, such as a wedding or funeral, the creation itself adds another layer of memory and emotion. This presence of women's production at key moments in the lifeway was important in both constructing a familial memory, and centring those objects at key moments of bonding amongst family and friends. The christening gown becomes an object which embodies both the welcoming of new kin into the family, and the familial bonds of love which motivated that labour. This may have been equally true in families which could produce new clothes for every occasion, and those for which clothes were repurposed. When clothes were worn for events by several family members, those clothes became even more heavily imbued with familial memory; memory which could be triggered by the handling and transformation of those clothes.

In this way, a death may have become tied up inherently with very personal and unique rituals around women's labour and production. Death may have been intimately linked with the tasks of altering and refitting old clothes, or of a trip to the mourning warehouse to buy new. The physical task of dyeing clothes black may have, for some, been inextricably linked with the sharp ache of new grief. Mourning clothes, potentially altered several times to accommodate bodily changes, or to be passed between relatives and siblings, may have become palimpsests of bereavement, carrying with them the memory of multiple losses, and multiple griefs. This serves to highlight how the production of textiles and wearable items by women may have formed part of the family rituals of bereavement, as well as being imbued through their creation with memory, emotion and meaning. Objects created within the home, particularly bereavement objects, must by their nature become part of messy, complex assemblages – become affectively 'sticky' (Ahmed 2004).

The production of hairwork in the nineteenth century was discussed as one of many 'feminine' crafting projects. In the 1860s, *The Sixpenny Magazine* ran a regular column titled 'Parlour Occupations', which consisted of instructions to women in crafting and art techniques which they might not have previously considered, for example, making imitation stained glass out of paper (diaphanie) (*The Sixpenny Magazine* 1865). Hairworking appears in an 1864 issue:

And the dainty and very tasteful handling hair-work requires, renders it as truly feminine an occupation as the finest crochet or the richest embroidery (*The Sixpenny Magazine* 1864, 136)

In promoting hairworking within their pages, periodicals and books aimed at women were positioning hairwork alongside more traditional women's work, and the skills required to complete it effectively as demonstrative of the ideals of womanhood. In crafting hairwork following bereavement, women were drawing on familiar schemas of behaviour through which both their

femininity, and their grief and love could be articulated – fancywork as symbolic of care and the curation of the familial household, and hair as symbolic of love, loss and Christian belief.

Hairworking could have formed part of a suite of other crafting behaviours which women personally associated with grieving, such as altering or dyeing clothing, something undertaken as part of the pseudorituals of mourning.

7.6 Hairworking, Griefworking and the Wearing of Hair

As discussed in 7.1, in the second half of the nineteenth century hairwork in jewellery tended towards the small. This is contrast to the fluctuation of other jewellery fashions, such as the brief fashion for very chunky jet, or jet-effect, jewellery (Figure 60). In contrast to these very performative and noticeable pieces, mourning hairwork was often hidden from obvious view by a passive observer. The hair was concealed, within a locket, or on the reverse of a brooch. Some rings featured sliding mechanisms, which allowed hairwork to be hidden or displayed at will. When the hair was placed on the front of jewellery, it was often small, requiring close inspection to be examined. One possible explanation for this is the sheer quantity of hair required to produce large pieces. *The Sixpenny Magazine* (1864, 136) gave the estimate of around a 24 inch length of hair to complete a large bracelet – a length on the upper limit of ‘normal’ terminal hair growth. In a cut lock, many of the individual hairs would not be a suitable length, due to the asynchronous growth of the hair. Smaller pieces of hairwork, such as lattice-plait may maximise the use of short lengths of hair.

It was also possible to use the construction of hairwork jewellery to accommodate joins between different chains, for example in this hairwork necklace held by the British Museum (Figure 61), or to use hair to create small beads which could be strung together to create a larger piece. This greatly increased the utility of shorter lengths of hair. There is also some evidence that large hair plaits or braids, such as those used in bracelets, were created from hair purchased from the hairdressing industry, when an individual’s hair may have been prohibitively short, thin, or in poor condition. In many mourning or sentimental pieces which utilise large braids, a locket or compartment is also present, which contains a single lock or small plait, such as those found in the necklace shown in Figure 61. This may have been a useful compromise if the look of broader braids or openwork was preferred, but the wearer still wanted to wear a small sentimental lock. In *The Wedding Breakfast*, a short story published in 1852 (H. 1852, 170–71), a hair bracelet is described, which also has a locket of this kind attached, with a lock of hair inside. Discussing the bracelet with the owner, the protagonist is told, explicitly, that it is the lock of hair inside the locket which “both my daughter and myself value more than all the jewels” rather than the bracelet itself (*Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine*, 1 Oct 1852, 171). This implies that the hair from which the bracelet is constructed is not from anyone close to the family, in contrast to the enclosed hair. As plaits are considerably easier to construct domestically than chain braids, it is possible that this allowed for the best of both worlds.



Figure 60 Jet jewellery in the chunky style popular in the 1870s and 1880s, c.1870 (V&A)



Figure 61 Photograph of a hairwork necklace, 1852, and detail of the gold caps which join two lengths of hairwork chain together and holds a pendant consisting of three small locket hair plaits (British Museum)



Figure 62 Brooch, gifted to Queen Victoria, from her daughter, Alice, and son-in-law, Louis, in 1873 (V&A)

A fashionable and complex hairwork bracelet could be produced by a jeweller, and the precious hair of a loved one could be added to the locket without risking it being replaced by an unscrupulous business owner.

A final note to make here is that not all bereaved may have wanted hair to be transformed through production of plaits and chains, and that a simple lock of hair seems to have been a very common inclusion in lockets and brooches. This can be seen in this brooch (Figure 62) produced in 1873, and gifted to Queen Victoria by her daughter, Alice, and son-in-law, Louis.² The hair in the reverse of the brooch was tied in a simple loop. This appears to have been a personal choice rather than a necessity due to skill level or funds, and may reflect that for some, elaborate hairwork was not preferred over a 'traditional' lock.

Hind (2020, 162–163) notes that in hairwork mourning jewellery, often explicit naming or identification of the deceased was not included materially. Though some have specific inscriptions, often in examples held by museums, it is not possible to identify the original donor of the hair (Hind 2020, 162–163). Along with the concealing of the hair, this suggests that pieces were not made to display hairwork to a wide audience, or for the hairwork to be viewed from a distance. In some pieces, the hairwork could only be seen once the jewellery had been removed by the wearer. In these pieces, the audience for the hairwork could only be the wearer, and potentially, the wearer's close family and friends, for whom, the wearer may well act as intermediary for interaction with the hairwork. Obvious identifiers were not needed, because for the wearer, the identity embodied was obvious, and not necessarily for public consumption.

It is clear that the identity of the hair's donor was important, however, as seen through the anxiety around the potential for jewellers to switch hair during manufacture. The hair, physically and literally, was the dead, in the same way that cremation ashes are, and therefore the identity that hair is imbued with is both intrinsic and integral. That it is the *identity* of the hair donor that is important, rather than its status as a bodily material, is exemplified by the use of bought hair, both for hairworking practice and for hairdressing. This is seen in the assurances that the hair which could be bought had not been harvested from the dead, but sold by poor women from the Continent. Bought hair from a living donor was simply a crafting material, easily replenishable and without identity *because it was easily replenishable*. Bought hair from the dead, the last physical remains of an unknown person, was finite, it retained its identity because it was finite, because it was now something, in Pointon's words, 'sacred'. This made it no longer suitable as a simple crafting material, because by buying it, it was being removed from its context, removed from the people who knew

² Though this brooch dates from the same year as the death of Alice's son, Friedrich, it is engraved "24th May 1873" (V&A), five days prior to Friedrich's death. It is therefore not likely to have been mourning jewellery.

the identity of the donor. This complexity recalls Gibson's (2010) discussions of objects related to the dead occupying, potentially oscillating, statuses as 'abject' and 'sacred', as well as Büster's (2021) discussion on 'problematic stuff'.

The value ascribed to mourning hairwork therefore had a twofold source, the first being that the identity of the donor was known to the crafter, and the second, that the donor was now dead. The knowledge of the identity of the donor turned the hair from crafting material into body, and the death of the donor transformed it from body to relic. This may have represented a conflict for some people, in which the hairwork's sacredness was a barrier to everyday use. In this poem by Sarah Mower, the braided hair of the dead is so holy, that wearing it feels 'sacrilegious':

I'll weave a bracelet of this hair, -
Although these locks so hallowed are,
It seems like sacrilege to wear
Such relics of the dead. (Mower 1854, 46)

This again speaks to Gibson's (2010) discussion of sacred objects as conceptually different from the mundane world, and requiring specific conditions for interactions with them. Though hair was often set in jewellery, that does not necessarily mean that it was worn.

In choosing to craft hairwork themselves, women were participating in the transformation of the lock of hair into a relic. The act of making hairwork could not have been undertaken on a whim, regardless of women's familiarity with crafting. The patterns were often written in a way that was not easy to follow, and the specific materiality of hair made it fundamentally different to work than other thread that women may have been familiar with. Preparation was required, particularly before working the hair of a lost loved one, where failure might destroy that last artefact. This might include several rounds of practise, using purchased hair, to understand the instructions, and also to get an aesthetic result. The actual crafting of the hairwork itself may be spread over as little as an afternoon, or picked up sporadically with several days wait in between. Nevertheless, it was a bounded, and not ongoing, task. The artefact produced could function as a kind of 'talisman' (Junge 1999) which facilitated active remembering, memorialisation of, or interaction with, the dead.

This is not to suggest that domestic hairworking was a major part of grieving behaviours, that it was considered a social requirement in the same way as the wearing of mourning wear was. A steady number of advertisements for professional hairworking over the period indicates that fears over unscrupulous business dealings did not lead to the majority of women turning to hairworking at home. It was, if anything, likely a niche practice. However, for a certain number of women, the personal circumstances, the fear of fraud, and the social construction of crafting as feminine care, came together to lead them to decide to produce hairwork at home. The experience of doing that hairworking may have acted similarly to how some people describe grief crafting as 'ritual-like', a

bounded activity focused on the deceased, out of which a commemorative object is created. In partaking in the transformation of a lock of hair into a hairwork relic, the resulting jewellery may have evoked an additional layer of affect for the wearer or creator, that of the sensory and emotional memory of the hairworking experience.

8 Grief Memoirs and Stories of the Dead

Pathographies, accounts of illness and dying, are a literary genre which remains common in the present day, however, in the nineteenth century, pathographies drew on the tradition of life-writing amongst nonconformist populations. In contemporary research, autobiographical narratives around illness, dying and bereavement are termed pathographies (Hawkins 1999, 127; Wiltshire 2000, 409; Turley and O'Donohoe 2012, 1336). Pathographies can be further typified into a) first person accounts of illness (eg. Hawkins 1999); b) third person accounts of illness (eg. Wiltshire 2000); and c) first person accounts of the experience of palliative caring and grieving (eg. Dennis 2008). Wiltshire (2000, 412–413) argues, evocatively, that the purpose of these kinds of narratives is not simply to chronicle, but to make sense of the 'unmeaning', 'chaotic' and 'incoherent' experience of dying. Pathographies do not represent a desire to retell an active life story, but rather chronicle events that have happened to individuals without their expectation and against their will (Wiltshire 2000, 414). This grants the pathography a markedly different tone and aim than more 'traditional' life-writing – or, as Wiltshire (2000, 415) describes it, they “confront[] the reader with the banalities of our condition”.

It may also provide an opportunity to seek external validation and acceptance throughout the process of renegotiation of the bereaved's identity, and their relationship with the deceased. The importance of the relationship may be in some way ratified by the communal discussion. The creation of a written memoir for dissemination could, in this sense, be considered part of the expansion of this external validation process. This is described by Dennis (2008, 817–818) as affirmation. Through the memoir, the author may be tacitly asking for acceptance of the presented relationship narrative, and providing persuading evidence to justify their amended identity construction to both themselves and others. Positive reception to the memoir may acknowledge to the author the depth and validity of the grief felt, and reaffirm the bereaved's presence with the family and community.

The pathography has been argued to be primarily focussed on sense-making and meaning-making¹ (Hawkins 1999, 129; Wiltshire 2000, 413; Dennis 2008, 806–807). As the writing of a narrative necessarily emplots events, the production of a causal-narrative may help to order that narrative in the mind of the bereaved. This draws on extended-mind theory (Clark and Chalmers 1998), which focuses on the idea that internal thinking is done through interaction with the material outside world. There is no one way to write, but by and large, writing is not a linear process in which

¹ Using Castelli Dransart's (2013, 323) definitions – sense-making as the comprehension of the events; meaning-making as the significance of the events.

sentences appear fully-formed in the mind and are transcribed as they will appear in their finished form. Writing is an iterative process, consisting of planning and note-making, drafting, revising and editing. As Ingold (2013) describes thinking is coproduced through the action of creation. The writing informs the thinking, and the understanding at the end of the process is not the same as at the beginning. In this way, we can consider the writing of a pathography to be a material activity through which narrative is constructed and meaning is made.

However, these analyses of pathographies focus on the psychological impact of the writing on the bereaved, without necessarily considering how wider cultural narratives and belief influence the form that the pathography takes, the narratives which are produced through it, and the reflexive influence of such pathographies in the construction of belief. In the nineteenth century, pathographic, - or death-, memoirs have been interpreted as evangelical, extolling the faith and piety of the dead, and the guiding hand of God in the fates of the devout (Riso 2016, 29). While these memoirs may fall into the genre of the *ars moriendi*, and offer an insight into the beliefs and deathbed rituals undertaken by non-conformists in this period, this chapter argues that these memoirs may also be considered through the lens of narrative meaning-making and legacy. Through these narratives, in the creation and sharing of them, meaning and sense is made of the world.

These memoirs draw on an encultured and familiar form of writing, which allows for the reconstruction of the deceased's biography in a way which is in concert with recognisable religious lifeways. Important in these memoirs is the recontextualising of events as meaningful in the wake of a death, which allows for the positioning of the deceased in context with the other elect. In this way, the process of writing is itself important in the construction of a legitimised memory of the deceased which can be used in the reintegration of the dead into continuing life, but also in the reification of cultural constructions of belief and faith.

8.1 Life-Writing and Death-Writing in the Nineteenth Century

Life-writing is a broad term, encompassing autobiographies, biographies, letters, diaries, memoirs and journals – any written work which is focussed on a non-fictional representation of the self, life history, and personal thoughts and feelings (see Kadar 1992 for discussion of the term). The breadth of life-writing as a category, however, means that there is a great variation in the tone and audience of the writing – a diary intended only for the writer; a letter with a single recipient; and an autobiography destined to be published are likely to all have very different representations of the self. It is important to remember however, that all will be curated in some way. Life-writing as a term has been argued to encompass the fluidity of this form of writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in which the autobiography and the biography often merged (see Culley 2015), and private letters and diaries may later be posthumously published, with or without commentary

and editing from family members and friends (see Gates 2005)². Stewart (2018, 5) argues that, among other cultural factors, the form of post-medieval life-writing emerged out of the religious strife of the Reformation. This religious focus, and the particularly Protestant focus on individual faith, remained a driving force in life-writing through the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries. Though other subgenres, such as the “Lives of Great Men” (see Peltason 2014), and the “scandalous memoir” (see Culley 2014) were common in the period, it is these spiritual life-writings which are most relevant here.

A subgenre of spiritual life-writings are obituaries or death memoirs, which were particularly common amongst non-conformist populations in the early nineteenth century. Arguably, the most common form of these writings were found in denominational magazines, and took the form of brief biographies followed by a ‘death narrative’ (Riso 2016, 29). Riso (2016, 29) identified the common form which magazine obituaries tended to follow – description of early life and conversion to the faith, discussion of the deceased’s spiritual life and place amongst the congregation, and then a description of the death event. Even the shortest of these obituaries include reference to piety and to the death event (Riso 2016, 31). Riso (2016, 29) characterises these as explicitly evangelical in nature, relating the life of the deceased with reference to their faith, the ways that faith informed their behaviours and beliefs, and culminating with the narrative of the ‘good death’ (discussed in Chapter 2) – one in which their final moments were peaceful and focused on their salvation. The obituaries stated multiple aims, perhaps most importantly, to provide consolation to those left behind, and to arouse religious conviction amongst readers, as well as to exemplify the form of a ‘good death’ (Riso 2016, 35). The good death was longed for, prepared for, anticipated, and as such, memoirs and obituaries offered an example to follow, while reinforcing the piety and, assumed, salvation of the deceased. Riso (2016, 192–198) identifies several of the themes associated with a ‘good death’ within obituaries in denominational magazines – readiness for death, an idea of already being part of heaven, and the bearing of suffering with constancy are all themes which frequently reoccur. Death itself is described as peaceful and calm, in contrast to whatever illness and distress came before, and the dying are happy and content to take their place with God (Riso 2016, 199–200). For these reasons, Riso (2016, 187) considers these obituaries as a continuation of the idea of *ars moriendi*, both instructional and evangelical.

The death memoir could take the form of short obituary-biographies to be published in denominational magazines, or longer form books. Others likely took the form of handwritten manuscripts which were not sent for publication, or which were left unfinished. The audience for denominational magazines was relatively large, with *The Evangelical Magazine* and *The Wesleyan*

² Stanley (1992, 3) coined the term ‘auto/biography’ to describe the complexity of defining this type of writing, and this term is common in literature studies. However, for consistency, ‘life-writing’ is used here as a broad term for this style of writing.

Methodist Magazine jointly selling 20,000 copies per month in 1820 (Topham 2004, 69, cited by Riso 2016, 33), and obituary-biographies accounted for up to a quarter of the total monthly content of magazines (Riso 2016, 34). However, the brevity needed, and the formula required by magazines, meant that obituaries in denominational magazines were subject to editing by both denominational leaders, and magazine editors (Riso 2016, 40-1). Longer-form death memoirs, which were published as books, were also relatively common in the early to mid-nineteenth century, and as these offer a more in-depth narrative than the few paragraphs afforded in magazines, they therefore form the core evidence for analysis in this project. Nevertheless, as the primary function of such books were to create capital for the author, publishing house and printer (Gettmann 2010, 12), it is likely that they were also subject to editorial interference. It seems that authors of memoirs aiming to publish as a book may have specifically sought out nonconformist publishers – with Henry Dymond (1857) publishing with the Quaker, William and Frederick G Cash and Philip Gosse (1857) publishing with James Nisbet & Co., who were described in the *Saturday Review* (1857, 558) as “strictly Evangelical”. In the preface to her memoir for her husband, Charlotte Hall (1861, vii-viii) emphasises that though she was not a professional writer, the book had not been ‘polished’ by an editor:

Even after having prepared the greater part of this biographical sketch, so painfully did I doubt its fitness to appear in print, that I proposed that what I had written should pass through editorial hands. To this a friend replied – “In my opinion it would injure the proposed biography to place it in the hands of any professional writer or author, with a view to having it dressed up. It would thus lose more in freshness and interest than it would gain in the way of polish.”

The input that individual writers had from publishers or ghostwriters likely varied depending on the skill of the writer and the particular publishing house chosen. The majority of research discussing the relationship between publisher and author has focused on large publishing houses, and well-known authors (see Finkelstein 2002; and Gettmann 2010), and therefore analysis of trade records and correspondence between memoir authors and publishers may allow for more understanding of the process, and provide more nuance to the construction of the form of the death memoir, as this, again, speaks to the collaborative relationship between bereaved and professional in the production of grief objects. This raises questions about how much agency the bereaved had over the form of such objects, or if they were constrained by the conventions of the publishers and producers. This, arguably, would have had more of an impact on objects such as memoirs, than on postmortem photographs, funeral cards or professionally-made hairwork, as publishing houses presumably intended to market memoirs for sale. Of course, ‘vanity publishing’ was also an option in the nineteenth century, and Tanzy (1961, 98) suggests that up to three quarters of books published in England in the period were funded by the author. If that were the case, then like commissioned

photographers, printers and jewellers, publishers might have had an incentive to allow authors to maintain creative control over their works. The relationship between authors and publishers, and the impact of varying funding models on the form of books, appears to be understudied in this period, and may offer an insight into the production of grief memoirs, however, such an analysis is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this project.

The audience for these published memoirs were likely considerably smaller than the readership magazines could expect, however, authors often emphasised that they did not expect a large audience for the memoir. Writing in 1907, Edmund Gosse (1907, 274) describes his father's memorial for their mother and wife, respectively, written over three decades earlier as for "an extremely limited circle" of their close friends. Henry Dymond (1857, preface) "hope[d] that it may prove interesting and profitable to those who were once [his sister's] pupils". Several of the authors also suggest that when they had begun writing, they had not intended for the work to be published, imagining instead that it would simply be passed around friends and family. It is unclear how much of this could be considered performative humility. Finished memoirs, whether in magazine, book or manuscript form, were likely of most salient relevance to the local denominational group, family and friends, as both didactic instructional and commemorative memorial. Nevertheless, it is likely that a majority of death memoirs from the period remained in private hands, took the form of diaries and letters, or were never fully realised.

Sanders (1989, 37) discusses the prevalence of life-writing, broadly, to remain incomplete, as interest in the writing trailed off or time was no longer found for it. This is described as a failure to construct meaning around the life-story (Sanders 1989, 37) – if the narrative is not completed, then the meaning of the events remains unclear. It is the completion of the causal events which allows meaning to be found. As the memoirs utilised in this project are all completed and published, this consideration is not relevant here, however, it does raise interesting questions about the prevalence of unfinished death memoirs, and whether the failure to complete the narrative affected the experience of grieving.

Death memoirs were often published very soon after a death (Table 10), meaning that the writing likely took place during the intense period of initial grief, within the first two years of the death, and in many cases, within months. Philip Gosse, in particular, dates his preface to around three months following Emily's death. The memoir was published in the same year.

Table 10 The death dates and publication dates associated with the six memoirs analysed in this chapter.

Deceased	Death Date	Publishing Date
Martha Hoppus (1805-1853)	Jul 1853	1856 – References the upcoming third winter, implying writing autumn 1855
Mary Dymond (1808-1855)	8 Aug 1855	1857 – Preface dated May
Emily Gosse (1806-1857)	10 Feb 1857	1857 – Preface dated May
Marshall Hall (1790-1857)	11 Aug 1857	1861 – Preface dated July
Eliza Murray (1829-1865)	3 Aug 1865	1866
John Graham (1822-1880)	1 Aug 1879	1880

As such, death memoirs offer an opportunity to study an object created during the initial grieving process. In addition to this, the creation of a narrative has been suggested to be fundamental in meaning- and sense-making following bereavement. Drawing on extended mind theory, and methodologies around the study of pathographies, this chapter explores the effects the process of writing may have had on the grieving, through an analysis of the narratives constructed through the creation of death memoirs. Through a thematic analysis, three themes were identified; death as the will of God; suffering as a path to Salvation; the reconstruction of the purpose of the life of the deceased in the wake of death. These themes are discussed in 8.3.

8.2 Methods and Dataset

This thematic analysis drew broadly on Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach, and utilised an iterative and inductive methodology in order to explore latent themes around the writing of memoirs as a grieving activity. Braun and Clarke (2006, 80) emphasise that it is important to acknowledge that thematic analyses (and qualitative analyses in general) do not imply that researchers simply report themes inherent in the data, but rather that the researcher is an active participant in assigning themes based on their aims and research questions. This analysis used an adapted version of Braun and Clarke's (2006, 87), described in 1.3.5, in which a sample of 12 memoirs were identified for

analysis, and initial coding and thematic group was carried out inductively. This was followed by a review of relevant literature, and a review of contemporaneous documentary evidence to refine research questions based on initial thematic coding. Six of the memoirs were then selected for close reading, analysis and interpretation, based on their coding and the revised research questions. As with the other analysis chapters in this project, this thematic analysis did not aim to produce a representative description of the tropes found across the genre. Rather, individual memoirs were analysed reflexively, in more depth, for themes related to reflection on the death and dying process, and on grieving. The analysis took a latent approach, due to the context of the research questions as related to the process of grieving through writing, which necessarily required an interpretative approach. In some cases, however, the authors were explicit in their representation of memoir writing as practical grieving, such as in cases where the authors made reference to the writing process giving them a reason to go through the deceased's papers and letters.

The publications analysed in this chapter were chosen based on their form and content, in order to provide insights into these ideas. All were written by British or Irish authors, and were formally published as books (rather than existing as handwritten manuscripts for personal or familial use, or being published in nonconformist pamphlets or congregational magazines). In order to compile memoirs for comparison, the following criteria were also used to assess the memoir content;

- The inclusion of significant writing contribution from the bereaved
- The inclusion of a biographical aspect of the deceased's life
- The inclusion of a description or discussion of the dying process

These criteria acted to exclude forms of life-writing which comprise similar themes, but which represent a distinct subgenre, such as professional biographies, which were often written by friends or colleagues and limit discussion of the dying process, or posthumously published papers, usually compiled by family members, but including little commentary by them. As there is considerable overlap between these subgenres, these criteria ensured that analysed material was broadly comparable, and written for a similar purpose. Twelve memoirs which met these criteria were analysed thematically, and three overarching themes were identified – the will of God; suffering as the path to Salvation; and the meaning of life. Six of these memoirs, dating from 1856 to 1880, were then selected for close reading based on their illustration of these themes, and the potential for comparison between them. Although this dataset is non-exhaustive, it offers a holistic insight, utilising a qualitative approach, which allows for a deeper discussion on the theme of narrative meaning-making.

Of these memoirs, five were written by men, and one by a woman, and four were written by spouses; two by siblings (Table 11). It is unclear if this gender and relationship bias represents a difference in writing, publication, or preservation of memoirs, or if the criteria used for selection introduced a bias. It was noted, however, that memoirs written by the children of the deceased may have been more likely to be excluded, as these memoirs more often took the form of posthumously published autobiographies written by the deceased, rather than the bereaved commenting on their life and death (eg. Bellett 1889; Blomfield 1863).

Table 11 Overview of the subjects and authors of memoirs discussed in this chapter.

Deceased	Author	Biography
Martha Hoppus (c.1804-1853)	John Hoppus (widower)	Wife of Congregational Minister, John Hoppus. They had two children together. She died aged 49.
Mary Dymond (1808-1855)	Henry Dymond (brother)	A Quaker. She was a teacher at Stoke Newton. She died of a chronic lung disease, likely tuberculosis, aged 47.
Emily Gosse (1806-1857)	Philip Gosse (widower)	A member of the Plymouth Brethren. She was an author of religious publications and verses. She died at home, of breast cancer aged 51, after a distressing and painful experimental treatment.
Marshall Hall (1790-1857)	Charlotte Hall (widow)	A Methodist. He was a physician, and wrote eminent publications on medicine, as well as campaigning for the abolition of slavery in North America. He died of probable throat cancer at home aged 67.
Eliza Murray (1829-1865)	Alexander Murray (widower)	A Dissenter. She was a Sunday School teacher, and mother to five children. She died of tuberculosis aged 35.
John Graham (1822-1880)	Charles Graham (brother)	An Irish Congregational Minister. He worked across Ireland, the UK and Australia. He died suddenly, aged 57, while rescuing his niece from drowning in Cape May, New Jersey.

8.2.1 Form and Tone

The form of the six memoirs are generally similar, consisting of a biography of the deceased written by the bereaved (Table 12). Often, testimonials from friends and colleagues of the deceased are included at the end of the biography. These more often take the form of obituary type writing, which provide recollections of the deceased in order to illustrate their personality. Physician, Marshall Hall's memoir, written by his widow, Charlotte, includes 59 pages of detailed appendices, including Marshall's own notes on his final illness, his autopsy, and commentaries on his most famous work. Extracts of letters and diary entries are often included throughout memoirs, embedding the voice of the deceased throughout the narrative.

Table 12 The length and form of the six memoirs.

Memoir	Length	Form
Hoppus (1856)	243 pages	A collection of letters, diary entries and verses, prefaced by a letter-biography, addressed to the Hoppus children, written by JH (59 pages).
Dymond (1857)	98 pages	Written as a biography, with lengthy extracts from diaries and letters embedded throughout, ending with reminiscences written by a friend describing Dymond (3 pages)
Gosse (1857)	84 pages	Written as a death-narrative, ending with a reminiscence written by a friend describing Gosse (2 pages)
Hall (1861)	518 pages	Written as a biography, with lengthy extracts of letters and diaries embedded throughout, ending with reminiscences by friends describing Hall (37 pages) (includes appendices detailing Hall's own notes on his final illness, his autopsy report, and notes on the importance of his work 59 pages)
Murray (1866)	142 pages	Written as a letter-biography, addressed to the Murray children, written by AM.
Graham (1880)	187 pages	Written as a biography, with lengthy extracts of diaries and letters embedded throughout, ending with reminiscences from friends and colleagues (11 pages)

Emily Gosse's memoir takes a slightly different form, with Philip Gosse writing a death-narrative, rather than a biography, beginning with Emily discovering a lump in her breast, and then detailing her illness and treatment, and finally, her death. John Hoppus and Alexander Murray take a markedly different approach, writing a letter-biography, addressed specifically to their children. In the Murray memoir, this directed tone is present throughout the book, whereas, Hoppus prefaces his compendium of Martha's letters and journals, with an extended letter to their children. These three memoirs also take a markedly different tone than the three more 'traditional' biographies, as they are written with deliberately emotive and personal language – in other words, the viewpoint, emotions, and perspective of the author is inherent throughout. In contrast, the remaining three memoirs, those of Dymond, Hall and Graham, use a more detached authorial voice, which seems to imply fact rather than opinion.

Table 13 The point of view and tone of the six memoirs.

Memoir	POV	Tone
Hoppus	1 st /2 nd person	Emotional
Dymond	3 rd person/occasionally 1 st person	Detached
Gosse	1 st person	Emotional
Hall	3 rd /1 st person	Detached
Murray	1 st /2 nd person	Emotional
Graham	Largely 3 rd /occasionally 1 st person	Detached

Three distinct POVs were apparent within the memoirs (Table 14), 3rd person (which may or may not include occasional first-person interludes, when the writer enters the narrative) in which events are narrated without the implied presence of the narrator; 1st person (in which the writer is continually present within the narration); and a combination 2nd/1st person POV (in which the writer is addressing [a] specific reader[s]).

Table 14 Examples of the point of view used in the six memoirs.

POV	Example
1 st person	"My Emily had no confidence in allopathy" (Gosse 1857, 47)
2 nd person	"Your mother dearly loved her brothers and sisters" (Murray 1866, 15)
3 rd person	"Mary was an active and intelligent child" (Dymond 1857, 2)

There does appear to be a link between chosen POV and the use of a tone which emphasised the emotionality of the writer (Table 13). It may be that the more personal tone, used either to refer to the writer or to directly address the writer's child, felt more natural to writers who intended to convey more of their own feelings. It should also be noted that all memoirs did occasionally use 1st person phrasing (eg. 'my brother' (Graham 1880, 3), however, this was very occasional in the memoirs which used predominantly 3rd person perspective. These memoirs also tend to use the full name of the deceased (eg. "John Graham was an earnest and constant worker" (Graham 1880, 80). Hall's writing falls between the two extremes, referring to "my husband" frequently, and occasionally stating her feelings on events (eg. "The heartfelt pleasure of joining our son, however, prevailed over every other feeling." (Hall 1861, 281)). However, where she gives his name, it is given as 'Marshall Hall' in full (eg. "It was natural that one with Marshall Hall's utter detestation of all injustice and oppression should feel strongly on such a subject" (1861, 281)). This is in contrast with the memoirs which take a more emotional tone. Gosse refers throughout simply to 'Emily', and often with overtly affectionate language such as "my dearest Emily" (1857, 5) or "my beloved wife" (1857, 14). Both Hoppus and Murray refer to "your mother" throughout. Murray also refers to Eliza as "my beloved" (1866, 97), while Hoppus uses "your beloved Mother" (1853, xviii), "your lamented Parent" (1853, viii), "your deceased Parent" (1853, xvii) and "our dear invalid" (1853, xliiv). Neither Hoppus nor Murray refer to their wives by their first names, except when quoting others.

This more personal tone is accompanied by more emphasis on the feelings of the author. In the more detached memoirs, little stress is placed on the emotions of the bereaved. Though the admirable qualities of the deceased are presented, they are presented factually, rather than as the opinion of the writer.

"John Graham had desired to be saved from a lingering illness. God not only indulged His servant's desire, but granted him beyond his request; for his death was not only

sudden but saved the life of another. For others he both lived and died. Benevolence characteri[s]ed his life and shed a halo over his end.” (Graham 1880, 175)

In contrast, Alexander Murray was explicit in the grief and distress he felt during and following Eliza’s death.

“I shivered to think it was the inevitable crisis. But though the fluttering heart was ready to break with acute distress, at the prospect of her departure and our desolation, it was no time to give way to it: making a powerful effort to restrain the outcoming of my secret agony, I administered some cordials” (Murray 1861, 126; original emphasis)

“Very, very dark, however, and solemn, was the shadow which [...] the wings of the angel of death cast over our house- severing the closest and most intimate society on earth; making the earth itself seem a sterile spot, and life a vain and feverish dream. I had a thousand times thanked God for the sanctified wisdom and tenderness, and holy love that had animated that slender, graceful form. Could I now bow to His sovereignty and thank Him for draining them off, by taking her away?” (Murray 1861, 130)

John Hoppus discusses the process of writing the journal emotively.

“This duty has been attended both with solace and with sadness. I have lived the past over again. Its various scenes have been recalled in busy imagination, reviver of bygone happiness, and of anxieties issuing in an event which, to us only, was loss [...] But for yourselves, the past would be to me almost as a dream: you are its living images – you give it reality; and for your good, these pages are designed.” (Hoppus 1853, xlix).

In these memoirs, the emotional experience of the author seems to take equal precedence with the biographical facts.

8.2.2 Aims and Audience

All six authors explicitly state the purpose for their writing, and who the intended audience for the memoir is. Unsurprisingly, both Hoppus and Murray were writing specifically for their children, though with slightly differing aims. Hoppus aimed to reproduce Martha’s words, so that their children could have the “intellectual and moral benefit” lost to them by their mother’s death. He also intended to “represent to [them] what [their] Mother was in mind and heart” (1853, vii). This is interesting, as Hoppus intended the memoir to be read when his children were adults:

“I do not, therefore, in this preface, aim to adapt my language to your present years; I address you for the time to come: indeed I could not say what I wish, if I did not write to you both as past the age of childhood.” (1853, vii)

This potentially represents a concern, or sadness that their children will not be able to have an adult relationship with their mother – or, that they will never have the opportunity to understand her reasons, feelings, or personality from a more mature perspective.

In contrast to Hoppus, Murray takes a more biographical approach, relaying events more than descriptions of Eliza's personality. For Murray, memory seems more important, the giving of an object through which to re-experience memories which may have faded from childhood, and: "to set a higher value on your mother's worth as time goes on, and to grave the memory of it on your hearts in a way that the tear and wear of life cannot efface." (Murray 1866 v-vi)

That these memoirs, however, were published for a public audience during the writer's life provides an interesting second audience for the books. The intimate tone used was intended also for a public audience, which likely indicates that the language chosen was intended to represent the fathers' relationship with their children, as well as articulate the lives of their wives. There was not scope in this project to explore how the death memoir interacted with the publishing industry, however, there is future scope for an analysis of the potential audience and the size of the print run for such memoirs.

At the time of her death, Philip and Emily Gosse also had a young son, Edmund (who would go on to write about his father's grief, and the strain it had on their relationship in *Father and Son* (Gosse 1907). Philip did not, however, address or dedicate his book to Edmund, but rather to his and Emily's friends, and, in Philip's opinion more importantly, to the "Saints of God" (Gosse 1857, iv), in order to provide a record "for the stirring up of faith" (Gosse 1857, iii). Dymond, Graham and Hall had similar aims, that their memoirs might be of interest to the deceased's friends, others working in their various fields, and those requiring religious inspiration.

8.3 Thematic Analysis

Three main themes were identified across the death memoirs, all of which included a strong focus on religious belief – the Will of God (7.4.1); suffering as a path to Salvation (7.4.2); and the purpose of the deceased's life (7.4.3). These themes are first analysed in detail, and then the sense- and meaning-making potentially demonstrated within them is discussed (7.4.4).

8.3.1 The Will of God

The will of God is a common theme in the memoirs, and, as all the writers hold strong religious convictions, the life-course is frequently framed as fulfilling this divine will. This idea of providence was a foundational aspect of Protestant belief (discussed in 2.2), and in the case of death memoirs, refers to the attribution of God's guiding hand in the lives of individuals (see Hardwick 2021, 119). Often, in such memoirs, the events of the deceased's life were reframed to situate them as indicative

both that God took an active interest in the course of the deceased's lifeway, but also that the dead had a meaningful, if minor, role in God's plan. This is particularly evident in Charles Graham's memoir for his brother, John. Both Charles and John were ministers, working together in the same parishes in their early careers, and therefore, shared an interest in theology. Despite this, John and Charles were separated for much of their lives, with John taking a succession of jobs as minister for various churches, before settling in Sydney, Australia. From early in the narrative, God is presented as a figure guiding John's life. In the passage below, John discusses the beginnings of his love of books and reading:

"It was," [John] writes, "an eventful day that I laid my hands on *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The reading of the golden dreamer's enchanting story gave my mind a powerful literary and religious impulse. *My mother had some good and interesting books*; and from about my twelfth year I generally spent a good deal of leisure time in reading such books as struck my fancy, or as I heard praised. Thus I often spent the hours when sent to herd in the fields. Here my taste for books, and habits of reading and thinking, *unconsciously, and to all appearance accidentally*, began to form." It was *thus God, in His providence, was preparing him for his future life-work.*" (Graham 1880, 7; emphasis added)

In the quote from John, the development of his love of reading was caused by the accessibility of his mother's books, and was apparently an accident of chance. Charles immediately reinterprets his brother's account, inserting the hand of God into events. References to God's will are present throughout the narrative, specifically in guiding John's career, and one of John's letters is reproduced, in which he himself described his emigration to Australia as "the will of God" (Graham 1880, 109). Importantly, John's acquiescence to God's will is treated as unambiguously the correct choice throughout the narrative.

A second narrative theme present throughout the Graham memoir is reference to John's frequently poor health, beginning in his early twenties, and attributed to his 'weak heart' (Graham 1880, 174). Charles writes "God gave my brother at this period heavy ballast in repeated and often severe attacks of illness" (Graham 1880, 12). Ballast, and in particular 'spiritual ballast', is a common religious metaphor, referring to the acknowledgement of God's grace as a counterweight to balance and help weather life's storms. In this case, Charles appears to be interpreting the metaphor as the implementation of a stabilising force. This builds on John's own interpretation of the illness as God teaching humility and obedience – "Never did I [John] feel myself such a weak, dependent creature as in the few days past. God has been teaching me that without Christ I can do nothing" (Graham 1880, 13). John seems to interpret these periods of ill-health as more of a reprimand than Charles:

It has taught me [John]- oh that I could fully learn the lesson! - that I am nothing in the sight of God [...] My depraved, worthless, proud heart would say that I am something; but, O my God, by permitting temptation and sickness to come upon me, thou hast shown me that I am only a mass of weakness and corruption! (Graham 1880, 24)

In contrast, Charles is more charitable about his brother's perceived missteps, characterising them as part of God's training for his calling, granting John both faith in God's grace, and empathy to minister to people equally filled with doubt and temptation, stating "John Graham could not have become the pastor and minister of Christ that he was, had he not passed through protracted and severe temptation and trial" (Graham 1880, 22-23). Importantly, this recasts John's heart condition as part of God's plan, rather than a reprimand for wrongdoing, an idea which returns in order to explain John's relatively early death.

John Graham died while on a trip to New Jersey, at the age of 57, after swimming out to rescue a niece who had got into trouble in a rip current (Graham 1880, 171-173). It is repeatedly emphasised in the narrative presented, that John did not drown, but rather experienced heart failure:

I will now simply state that all who saw it were certain *he did not die of drowning*. No one ever suggested the possibility of such a thing; and the post-mortem examination showed conclusively that such was not the case. The powerful effort he made was the immediate cause of death. His heart was not able to control the unusual quantity of blood forced upon it. It became over-distended, and he died in an instant. But a similar effort on land would have affected him almost as injuriously (Graham 1880, 174, emphasis added)

In addition to this, John is said to have expressed that he did not want to die of a long illness, but rather suddenly. Thus, John's death is not explained as an accident, but rather as the direct consequence of the body given to him by God, as both part of His plan, and as a method of fulfilling John's wish to be spared long illness and to be taken swiftly to God's side:

These scientific opinions forbid our thinking that John Graham died before his time. God gave him his physical, as well as his mental and moral, constitution, and formed that physical constitution to endure for a certain period, doing a certain amount of work; and when that work was done, fulfilled his repeatedly expressed desire and took him to Himself. (Graham 1880, 174-175)

John's death is further contextualised as instrumental in saving his niece, Gussie, as she floated, clinging to his body.

“Gussie believes,” adds my nephew's letter, “that she should have been lost if he had not gone to her assistance; for, as she cannot swim, it was only when she forgot self altogether, and was absorbed in the one idea to save him, that she lay perfectly still, and so floated with the current.” (Graham 1880, 174)

The end result of all this is the creation of a life narrative which is intimately entwined with God's purpose, in which John's every moment was lived by the will of God. This interpretation of John's life is summed up neatly by Charles' closing words of the biography section of the memoir.

John Graham had desired to be saved from a lingering illness. God not only indulged His servant's desire, but granted him beyond his request; for his death was not only sudden but saved the life of another. For others he both lived and died. Benevolence characterized his life and shed a halo over his end. (Graham 1880, 175)

8.3.2 Suffering as the Path to Salvation

Henry Dymond's memoir for his sister, Mary, follows a very similar narrative structure to Graham's, in which her professional life as a teacher is described as her calling and her 'duty' (Dymond 1857, 84), her faith is emphasised (Dymond 1857, 28), and her “delicate health” is referenced throughout (Dymond 1857, 30). However, the Dymond memoir does not seem to associate the illness with divine punishment or preparation, but rather emphasises Mary's faith in the grace of God as a source of hope and resilience:

For many years Mary Dymond had been in a delicate state of health; but she bore her bodily infirmities with cheerfulness and quiet resignation [...] she has often been heard to say, “We must strive to be careful for nothing; but in everything to give thanks. We need only live one day at a time we have been helped hitherto; and doubtless shall be to the end.” (Dymond 1857, 84)

Mary's ill-health is implied to simply be part of the suffering inherent in life, and God gave her the strength to weather that suffering until she was released from her earthly body. Emphasis is given to the idea of being ready for death, an idea which Riso (2018, 192-8) identified as one of the requirements for a 'good death' in non-conformist ideology. Mary is quoted, referring to her sister's death, “Death, with her, appeared to have lost its sting; and we may crave that our end may be like hers” (Dymond 1857, 40-1). This acceptance of death is then mirrored in the description of her own dying, with her final goodbyes to her sisters quoted as “I shall soon be in Heaven. Jesus is waiting for me. You must not hold me back” (Dymond 1857, 96). In all of the memoirs, the deceased is described as giving themselves to God willingly on their deathbed.

As with the repeated references to poor health in these two memoirs, death is often foreshadowed, or rather, the deceased person is depicted as having some foresight of their death. Before his fateful trip to New Jersey, John Graham wrote to a friend “You and I have most of our friends in heaven now. I trust we shall in God's time meet one another there” (Graham 1880, 168). There can also, however, be depicted a certain dramatic irony in God's timing, as John is quoted as saying, a few hours before his sudden death, “I am good for ten years' work in His service still, if nothing happens” (Graham 1880, 170). This sense of dramatic irony is also present in Philip Gosse's memoir for his wife, Emily. Philip writes that following Emily's death, he read her journal and found an entry written on her last birthday, prior to her breast cancer diagnosis, “May this year be a year of much blessing – a year of jubilee!” (Gosse 1857, 2). Philip goes on to lament “How little do we know in what way the Lord will answer our petitions!” (Gosse 1857, 2). Nevertheless, this theme is returned to at the close of the narrative, as Emily says “[t]o a friend, who called a few days before her departure, [...] “This will be the happiest year of my life; for I shall see Jesus!” (Gosse 1857, 63).

The Gosse memoir is particularly interesting as Philip's narrative appears to depict his struggle to make sense of two contradictory beliefs. In 1856, Emily Gosse found a lump in her breast, and after seeking medical advice, she and Philip decided to avoid the advised mastectomy (Gosse 1857, 6). Croft (1994, 145) attributes this decision to the poor outcomes of surgery in this time period – without antiseptics and standardised sanitation techniques, infection was a major cause of death following surgery. Chaloner *et al.* (2001) found that the mortality rate for limb amputations in the 1850s was almost half. Recurrence of cancerous tumours was also high, with few methods to ensure complete removal (Croft 1994, 145). The choice of treatment was not an easy one, and both Emily and Philip prayed “that wisdom would be given [them]” (Gosse 1857, 10). They eventually decided to pursue an experimental treatment invented by Dr Jesse Fell, which involved the insertion of nitric acid in incisions in the breast, in order to kill the cancerous cells (Croft 1994, 153). Fell at this point had relocated to London, to escape investigation by the Committee for Medical Ethics in New York, and to part the populous with their “surplus ‘brittish [sic] gold”” (Croft 1994, 149). What Fell was offering seemed miraculous when compared to surgical intervention, a safe, painless treatment with an 80% chance of success (Gosse 1857, 8), and at first, Emily and Philip seem to have been certain in their decision, and of God's hand in their decision making (Gosse 1857, 12):

We knew that the same Spirit could not lead two minds waiting on Him for one matter to opposite conclusions; and therefore we did expect that we should be united in judgment, whatever that judgement might be. And it was agreed on between us, that no treatment should be resorted to, unless we were both of the same mind concerning it.

After much prayer then, we were perfectly agreed that the American's mode of treatment seemed to promise best. (Gosse 1857, 12)

The treatment was, in Philip's opinion, a mistake. Emily endured almost constant pain for around six months, during which the tumour was treated with caustic substances daily, until sections began to necrotise and fall away. The tumour, however, had continued to metastasise, requiring ever more treatment. In the memoir, Philip describes the process in unflinching detail and is clear in his opinion on the effects of the treatment on Emily's health and quality of life, writing, following the commencement of the second round of treatment:

Nearly four weeks more of the grinding wearing agony were now to be borne; by which time the continued pain, the sleepless nights, and the violence done to the whole system by the destruction of so large a portion of tissues, had accomplished a work but too perceptible. Her strength was greatly reduced; to the last she crawled in every morning from her lodgings to Dr. F's (Gosse 1857, 36)

Philip writes emotively about the turbulence of hope and despair which came with each new round of treatment, until Emily lost faith in Fell's treatment, and the two sought palliative care:

We looked it in the face; we well knew no blessing, no strength, was to be gained by concealing it from ourselves or from each other, and we talked of it freely. To me the prospect was dark indeed (Gosse 1857, 52)

Though he apparently remained convinced of Fell's good intentions, Philip was clear in his opinion of the treatment offered:

"[I]ts value in cases of real cancer, I feel assured, has been much overrated" (Gosse 1857, 46)

"[T]he treatment resorted to did really (as I believe to be the case) aggravate my beloved's sufferings, and hasten her death" (Gosse 1857, 10)

However, this realisation may have introduced a conflict into Philip's belief system. He and Emily were convinced that God had guided their decision-making regarding the correct treatment, and that treatment, Philip believed, had hastened her death. This may have precipitated a 'crisis of meaning', similar to those suggested by Wheeler (2001), and Philip did in fact leave the Plymouth Brethren in 1857, the same year as Emily's death and the publishing of the Gosse memoir (Croft 1994, 159).

Evidence of these crises, in which the bereaved's central beliefs about the world may be shaken, are found in other memoirs. Alexander Murray wrote movingly of his doubt following his wife, Eliza's death:

I had a thousand times thanked God for the sanctified wisdom and tenderness, and holy love that had animated that slender, graceful form. *Could I now bow to His sovereignty and thank Him for draining them off, by taking her away?* Oh, it did seem the consummation of earthly discomfort; and shivering as if alone in a lonely world, with the heart torn and bleeding, *I did hesitate to take the cup of sorrow which He presented to me*, and drink it, for it was bitter. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," was not echoed by the overcharged heart (Murray 1866, 180-1, emphasis added)

That Philip had considered these questions is evident in his writing:

[I]t is not the part of faith to say, if the result turn out according to my wish, "I was surely guided by heavenly wisdom;" but if otherwise, "I was left to myself." (Gosse 1857, 11)

Philip, therefore, reconciles these conflicting beliefs through the narrative, introduced on the second page of the memoir, that the decision to undergo Fell's treatment was God's answer to Emily's prayer for a 'year of much blessing':

I believe my beloved's prayer was fully answered, and that this was the best year of her life; but through much tribulation, through great agony of body, was her spirit made ripe for the glory (Gosse 1857, 2)

Philip justifies this belief, repeatedly, through the idea that God's ends and purpose are beyond human understanding, and that they had been foolish in assuming the answer His wisdom would provide:

[W]e asked to be guided with infallible wisdom, and we thought that the wisdom would be shown by leading us to choose the most effectual mode of cure. But God had not promised this: He had promised to give wisdom, and I must believe that He did give it; that the treatment we selected was the one which, *in this particular case*, He saw really best for us. He had his own end in view, and that was the removal of his beloved child to his own presence in Paradise (Gosse 1857, 10-1, original emphasis)

He has nowhere promised to grant his children all their foolish hearts would like, but what He judges best for their real welfare. He has promised *wisdom*, but not *success*. (Gosse 1857, 12, original emphasis)

With the knowledge we afterwards attained, we should no doubt have decided far otherwise; but it was not the Lord's will that we *should* decide differently, and therefore He saw fit to withhold from us that knowledge. (Gosse 1857, 12-3, original emphasis)

Philip justifies the suffering caused by this choice, as a way for God to make her ready for heaven, and to cleanse her of sin:

Amidst all, from first to last, her quiet, patient, cheerful submission to the will of God never failed. Throughout her illness, even in the very worst agonies, I never heard an approach to a murmur [...] I had made a few remarks on the grace of the Lord in purging his own from defilement, and on the various modes in which He effects it; and turning to her, I said, "Jesus is washing your feet now, love!" This little observation was used to her great comfort and refreshment, [...] and thenceforth it became one of her favourite words until the last (Gosse 1857, 61-2)

This central narrative, that the cancer, and the traumatic treatment undertaken, was part of God's plan, is evident and explicit throughout the memoir. Also inherent throughout the memoir is the idea of failing to understand initially, but through meditation and reflection, coming to understand God's overall purpose.

This idea of recontextualisation is apparent throughout the memoirs discussed here, as events which were not understood at the time are re-evaluated and re-interpreted in the wake of the death. John Graham's congenital heart problems were re-interpreted by his brother as evidence of God's purpose in placing him at a beach in New Jersey, ready to swim out and save his niece; his letter to a friend expressing his hope that they would meet the friends they had lost 'in God's time' became a grim prophecy. Mary Dymond's wish to die as peacefully as her sister was granted in time, a reward for fulfilling her life's work. The decision of the Gosses, to put their faith in an experimental treatment, was God cleansing her of sin so that she might go to Him before the year was out.

All of these memoirs, explicitly or implicitly, raise the question 'why did God take this person?', and a narrative is constructed, which answers this question while retaining the idea that God is benevolent, wise, and omniscient. In order to achieve this, the death itself must be reconstrued as a good thing – as an answer to a prayer, or a reward for bearing suffering well. This divine purpose is assigned to the life course, and events are then reconsidered as evidence for that purpose.

8.3.3 The Purpose of the Deceased's Life

The idea of terrestrial purpose (Yalom 1980) refers to the sense that an individual's life is significant – that there was purpose and meaning behind that life and relationship, even though it ended. This can be focused on the idea that the life of the dead person held significance to the world in and of itself. Within the memoirs, this idea is most easily illustrated through Charlotte Hall's memoir for her husband, Marshall, in which she emphasises the importance of his work as a physician, in particular his method for resuscitation. She emphasises repeatedly throughout the narrative that the

method had saved lives, and that “[Marshall] he had the gratification of hearing, through the journals, of life after life being saved by his happy idea” (Hall 1861, 362). The majority of the memoir relates the work Marshall undertook, in both medicine and abolitionism, and seems to try to emphasise the impact of his life on the world. Marshall Hall lived, and he impacted the world positively by living.

Many of the memoirs are, necessarily, more narrow in scope. The dead did not necessarily change the world at large, but they did change the worlds of their friends and loved ones. There may, therefore, be more focus on the significance of the deceased to the bereaved, and the impact that relationship had on the bereaved’s life. Within the memoirs analysed, this seems to most often take two forms, firstly, the narrative of inspiration – that the bereaved has been inspired by the personal qualities of the deceased. This idea is sometimes stated explicitly, for example in Henry Dymond’s memoir, which quotes a letter from a friend:

“The remembrance of her sweet spirit continues to be encouraging and animating to me. She has fought the fight; and through faith, she has, I feel assured, obtained the crown of everlasting life.” (Dymond 1857, 98, emphasis added)

This idea of the dead as inspirational relates back to the aims of many of the memoirs, and in particular, Hall’s, Dymond’s and Graham’s. These memoirs characterise the life and work of the deceased as exceptional, and worthy of emulation, either professionally or in piety:

Whilst it is believed that the following Memoir affords an instructive addition to the cloud of witnesses to the sufficiency of Divine Grace, the Compiler would not have ventured to publish it, but for the solicitations of many who loved and valued his deceased sister. He hopes that it may prove interesting and profitable to those who were once her pupils, as well as encouraging to some who are engaged in the work of Education ; and especially does he desire, that in perusing this record of her life, the words of our Holy Redeemer, "Without me ye can do nothing," to the truth of which she often bore testimony, may be the abiding impression on their minds. (Dymond 1857, Preface)

In this way, the narrative constructed is of the deceased as inspiring, noteworthy, and laudable. Their life held significance, and in writing the memoir, the author is evangelising that significance, even to those who may not have known them.

The second form is the narrative that the relationship between bereaved and deceased was significant, and positively impacted the life of the bereaved. This, certainly within the memoirs written by spouses, seems to most often take the form of the depth of love between the two, seen in Gosse’s memoir:

“[h]er loving heart deeply tasted the bitterness of the cup which she saw I should soon have to drink. It was but a day or two before her departure that she said to me, with a look of unutterable affection [...], now embalmed in my inmost heart: “I love you, - better than on my wedding-day” (Gosse 1857, 52-3, original emphasis)

All of this is often focused around the idea that the bereaved, their lifeway, or loved ones, were changed by their relationship with the bereaved – and this connection was valuable and important, even though it ended. Hoppus and Murray relate this specifically to their children, and the fact that they were influenced and shaped by their respective mothers. For Hoppus, his and Martha’s children were the “living images” of his life with her (Hoppus 1856, xlix), while Murray considers his and Eliza’s children as their “hope” (Murray 1866, 20), and explicitly references that Eliza was instrumental in forming their personalities and characters:

“You have passed from under the watchful care of your mother; but you have not - you *cannot* pass from her precious influence. Your father believes it will come over you, as that of his parents came over him, in scenes of temptation and trial, like the visits of a strengthening angel. Indeed, he knows no joy equal to that of believing, that with God's blessing, your mother's beautiful life will photograph itself on your spirits, and reproduce itself in your characters. (Murray 1866, 139, original emphasis)

Love is an important theme in all of the memoirs written by spouses, though the tone of the writing affects how this is communicated. Of the four memoirs written by spouses, Charlotte Hall’s takes the most detached form, with most of the emphasis being on his career. This appears to have been a deliberate choice, as she feared, being a widow, she may be “suspected of undue partiality” (Hall 1861, viii), and throughout the memoir, Charlotte’s introspection on events is notably absent, in comparison to the writing of the other bereaved spouses. Nevertheless, their domestic life does take up two chapters of the book, in which Charlotte paints a narrative of an amiable but industrious man, and their domestic life as a close family unit:

My husband did not enjoy anything unless I and “the boy” partook of his pleasure. On the other hand, if we were his companions, all was happiness. Simple in his pleasures, he loved to rusticate for a few hours, when his busy life admitted of it, gathering wild flowers, watching the inhabitants of some pool, or perhaps swinging on a gate with his little boy. (Hall 1861, 223-4)

General invitations were declined, and not reciprocated, which of course soon narrowed our circle of acquaintance, though it by no means precluded much delightful society among friends who, like ourselves, enjoyed quiet, intellectual, unceremonious intercourse.” (Hall 1861, 225)

She also seems to create a narrative of them as a partnership, as he helped her pick dresses when she was feeling indecisive (Hall 1861, 218), and she copied out his terrible handwriting when he needed to send a letter:

His writing was so rapid as to be frequently somewhat illegible, and, aware of this, he used to give it me to “make it plain.” As this was not always possible, I often made a fresh copy. [...] Often have I jokingly said— “My writing will be handed down to posterity as your autograph!” (Hall 1861, 222)

She also emphasises his love for her, though she seems to try to portray herself as embarrassed to share these “effusions of the warmest and tenderest of hearts” (Hall 1861, 256), and she seems to feel the need to justify their inclusion in the narrative she creates:

I have some difficulty in persuading myself to lay before my readers a very precious scrap which he one day gave me, written in pencil, when unable to bear the agitation and fatigue of speaking. Nothing but the most intense desire to place in its true light every trait of my beloved husband's character could have induced me to quote the following sacred expression of his feelings towards myself:

Dear, dear, dear Charlotte — I love thee more dearly, more tenderly, more fondly than ever. I can sometimes scarcely look at thee and watch thy care of me without tears. And my prayers in the night are for thee. - Ever, ever thine, entirely thine, MARSHALL HALL.“ (Hall 1861, 411)

In this way, she may be attempting to curate an image of herself which maintains the modesty, privacy, and distance from her own emotions, which she seems to want to display, while also serving a desire to depict something of his love for her.

This relational focus, demonstrated by Hall and Murray, and present in some form in most of the spousal memoirs, is largely absent in the two memoirs written by siblings. It is possible, therefore, that this focus reflects something of the importance of the bereaved-deceased relationship in identity construction. In siblings, particularly siblings later in life, sense of identity may be less likely to be heavily rooted in sibling relationships. Siblings may not be living with, or even near each other. Indeed, John and Charles Graham spent much of their lives in different countries, and therefore, the loss of that sibling, though sad, may have little impact on day-to-day life. The loss of a sibling is also less likely to disrupt major bases of identity construction, for example, profession, marital status, or parenthood. There may, therefore, be less need to legitimise and evidence the importance of that relationship following its severing.

What is interesting, is that the love discussed, is often justified from the perspective of the deceased towards the bereaved. This makes sense, as for the writer, their own feelings are obvious, there is no need to justify their grief, because they know that it is real, however, with the deceased absent, it may be necessary to set down in words evidence of the deceased's love. What makes this interesting from a research perspective, however, is that the purpose of the memoirs does not seem to be to emphasise the grief and mourning of the bereaved. There is little evidence therefore that their primary purpose was that of polite mourning which showcases the respectability of the mourners. Though grief is mentioned, it is not the purpose of the memoir, the memoir explicitly documents the lifeway of the deceased, their personal qualities, and perhaps most importantly of all, recontextualises that lifeway in a way which makes explicit the significance of life in general, and the significance of this life in particular.

All of this works to begin to reconstruct a purpose and sense of self that may have been rocked by loss. By finding meaning in the relationship and its finiteness, it is possible to begin to rebuild life. This can be particularly important where a significant sense of self has been constructed around the lost person, for example, in the case of a spouse or child, however, this can also happen with any loss in which there has been an emotional investment. The occasioning of a loss can begin to bring up questions around purpose and meaning related to the bereaved's life and relationships. By contextualising the relationship and connection as something inherently meaningful and worthwhile in and of itself, it can be easier to come to terms with the loss of it. In other words, the relationship was, and remains, important, though it is now one-sided. Love is never wasted, even though it must end.

8.3.4 Meaning-making in Memoirs

The term 'meaning-making' has been interpreted in multiple ways – meaning in an existential or religious sense; the meaning of an individual's life; comprehension and significance of the death event; and future-focused meaning around the bereaved's life and identity. In the memoirs analysed for this project, discussions around existential meaning are by far the most commonly represented. As the memoirs were all written by prominent non-conformists, and as religion formed a central role in both society and private life in the period, this is likely related to the relative importance of these existential questions in everyday life. Non-conformist Christianity in particular often emphasised the importance of personal faith and individual connection with God, rather than ritual religious practice. Particularly interested in the case of these memoirs, however, was the enmeshment of these existential meanings with other sense-making narratives.

These existential constructions of meaning were generally constructed around the idea of the will of God as a driving force in an individual's life story. This is perhaps most clearly shown in the memoirs

to Mary Dymond and John Graham. Dymond's calling was the teaching of the faith to the next generation, and when "her work was done" (Dymond 1857, 97), her release from earthly suffering was her reward. Graham's life is re-evaluated by his brother as having been guided by God throughout, and his purpose as being to spread the word of God and act as a good Christian example. This example is particularly interesting as through Charles' narrative it is implied that John did not interpret his life this way, though obviously, this is a depiction of John curated through Charles' perception. Nevertheless, Charles reinterprets his brother's self-perceived failings as his struggle to contend with God's trials. His perceived missteps were in fact evidence of his godly nature and his triumph over temptation – the experience of which gave him the understanding to become a shepherd to his flock. Marshall Hall and Eliza Murray were depicted as having the most 'secular' life purposes – Hall's calling as a physician and Murray's legacy in her children. Nevertheless, faith and religion form a central part of their narratives; a base on which their other successes were constructed.

The Gosse memoir and the Graham memoir were focused on the sense-making of the death event, likely because of the traumatic nature of Emily's final illness, and the suddenness of John's death. The reframing of these events, particularly the decision by Philip and Emily Gosse to try Dr Fell's experimental treatment and its subsequent failure, grants a divine importance to what is otherwise senseless suffering. The ill-health that John Graham experienced throughout his life is recontextualised as a gift, which allowed him to avoid the protracted dying process he had feared, and to die saving another.

The use of meaning-making narratives in order to reconstruct identity is a common theme of contemporary research into grief, and in supporting the bereaved to find stability following a death. The importance of self-identification does not appear to be replicated as strongly in nineteenth century memoirs. There are few examples of identity reconstruction, or indeed references to the bereaved at all, save where they enter the deceased's narrative or give emotional context to an event. This raises questions as to whether the focus on self-identity in contemporary grief research and discourse is the product of present-day cultural pressures. The debate on the applicability of 'modern Western' definitions of identity to past populations is too nuanced to address here (see Sökefeld 2001 for introduction to the debate), however, it may be that culturally there was little emphasis on personal identity and self-actualisation (a term which would not be coined until the twentieth century). Alternatively, the bereaved in the nineteenth century may have similarly felt the instability of a transition from wife to widow, but not have considered a grief memoir an appropriate place to discuss those feelings. Nevertheless, Charlotte Hall does focus on the spousal relationship in Marshall's memoir. Marshall's love for is explicitly stated, using his own quoted words, and Charlotte constructs and reifies a narrative in which she is partner and wife. They may be an example of emphasising an aspect of the self that has been shaken by a loss.

Both the Hoppus and Murray memoirs have a focus on legacy and securing a narrative for the future. The children are explicitly described as the “living images” of the future John and Martha Hoppus had imagined, and he aims to document their mother’s writings so that they might find some of the wisdom she might have offered in life as they grew. Alexander Murray feared that his young children may not remember their mother, or specific moments they shared as a family, so produced the memoir “to grave the memory of it on [their] hearts” (Murray 1866, vi). These two memoirs, in particular, were concerned with providing an object which could be used as a mnemonic, with or without the author’s input, in the years to come.

8.4 Cultural Constructions of Meaning in the Grief Memoir

What is striking about these memoirs is their similarities, indicating a social convention in their form, which likely indicates a reflexive cultural construction. This is true across denominations, which potentially indicates that memoirs were not insular within communities, but reflective of a pan-denominational genre that non-conformists were likely familiar with. It may also, however, indicate the influence of wider cultural ideas on the writer’s conception of the form of the death memoir, and also on the form that meaning making took in the aftermath of a death. In other words, a Quaker and a Methodist may not necessarily need to be familiar with the tropes common in each other’s death memoir traditions to be influenced by encultured conversations about how the will of God manifests in the lives of the faithful.

Memoirs also, however, demonstrate significant variance in tone, audience and affectivity. This is perhaps evidence that the writing of them was affected by the emotional state of the author, as well as their own struggles with meaning-making following bereavement. Many of the authors refer to the process of writing as one which involved going through the deceased’s letters, diaries and objects with a purpose, and often describe the process as comforting. Alexander Murray describes the letters he received from Eliza during a brief trip apart:

How hallowed are those letters now! How bright their thoughts; how true their sympathy; how soothing their friendship! The eye, the ear, fancy with its softening touch, memory with its array of upturned facts, combine to invest those letters as they now lie before me, with an unearthly colouring, and a deathless interest (Murray 1866, 84)

While Charlotte Hall ended her preface by describing what the task of writing the memoir has meant to her:

The task has been to me truly a labour of love, and I dismiss it with reluctance. Gladly would I spend the remnant of my life in writing of one who rendered the larger portion of that life so happy (Hall 1861, ix)

In this way, the process of writing the memoir may be considered cathartic, as well as softening the difficult task of sorting through the possessions of the dead.

Although they perhaps seem to be a largely solitary action, the act of a singular grieving relative, the six memoirs analysed often contained both letters and communication written before the death event, but also comments and communication with other friends and relatives of the deceased. Barney and Yoshimura (2021, 1) argue that open familial and communal communication can be important during the bereavement process, however, this open communication can be hindered by social codes around the display of emotion or the discussion of death and dying. They therefore suggest that mourning activities or tasks which promote this kind of communication may act as prompts to facilitate the kind of productive grief conversations (Barney and Yoshimura 2021, 3). The example given is the 'clearing out of the closet', a task in which objects prompt memories and invite discussion over retention or disposal (Barney and Yoshimura 2021, 3). Importantly, however, the task itself facilitates appeals for emotional support and the sharing of memories (Barney and Yoshimura 2021, 9). The task may be emotionally fraught, and therefore offer opportunities for shared emotional expression and support, perhaps more importantly here though, the sharing of stories may offer the opportunity to create communally legitimised and validated narratives for the deceased. When the dead are memorialised in a communal sense, these stories become part of a curated legacy, in which some aspects of the deceased's life and personality become reified, and others are de-emphasised (or even tacitly erased). Reminiscing like this also serves to create points of connection which serve as nodes around which the bereaved can create their new renegotiated relationships.

The writing of memoirs may have functioned similarly to the communal mourning activities identified by Barney and Yoshimura (2021). Charlotte Hall quotes these letters frequently throughout her memoir, and while it is often unclear whether she is quoting letters of condolence, as in the case of the letter of an "inestimable friend" which "was never intended for the eye of the public" (Hall 1861, 242), others were responses to requests:

I have lately seen a former patient of his whose expressions on the subject of his kind physician struck me so much, that I requested him to write, as briefly as possible, what he had verbally related to me. (Hall 1861, 240-1)

In addition to this, the phrasing of some of the writing, as well as the sometimes rather formal openings, seem to imply that they may have been replying to a request for reminiscences to include in the book:

No matter when or at what time I saw Dr. Marshall Hall, he was always in the same charming mood (Recollections from Mrs. C, Hall 1861, 231)

I well remember the circumstances of my first personal introduction to Dr. Marshall Hall. (Recollections from Dr. Noble, Hall 1861, 228)

Dr. Marshall Hall gave me the idea of as happy a man as it was possible to be. (Recollections from Mrs. W, Hall 1861, 234)

Such requests seem to have been common. Henry Dymond (1857, 49) includes similar “Loving Recollections”, and Charles Graham wrote to several of his brother’s friends in order to receive testimonials to include within the memoir:

I am glad to hear you are writing a memoir of your dear brother John, my life-long friend. I gladly accede to your request in sending you a 'few jottings' conveying the impressions our intercourse made upon me. (Letter from Josias Alexander, Graham 1880, 176)

This also highlights the differences in cultural expectation following a bereavement. Barney and Yoshimura (2021) identified a trend in contemporary populations of coming together to clear out the belongings of the dead. In a period in which an overwhelming number of objects are often left in the wake of a death, much of which is low quality and mass-produced, the sorting of those objects is a task in which structured help is appreciated. In contrast, a request for a written account of your memories and relationship with the deceased would potentially be emotionally overbearing, particularly as letter writing and handwritten communication has fallen out of common practice. Nevertheless, it seems that the writing of a memoir may have facilitated the kind of sharing of reminiscences which allowed for the process of communal emotional narrative-making referred to by Barney and Yoshimura (2021), providing a task through which the requesting of shared memories was made natural.

Importantly, as well, however, is the materiality of the memoir. The sharing, curation and preservation of memories is made simpler with a material component. The finished memoir provides an ongoing object through which to both promote communal memory sharing, as the book is read and reread, or passed between friends and family. The sharing of verbal memories is important for renegotiating social bonds with the living and the dead following a death, but verbal stories are

ephemeral and transient, and liable to shift and change with the telling. By writing these narratives in physical form, they become lasting and legitimised. Prah (2004, 139) describes these written life-narratives as a type of 'public memory', the legacy the community of friends and family have chosen to create for the deceased. One which creates a sense of belonging amongst the community and facilitates new shared connections between them, but one which also emphasises the deceased's part of the community in the idealised and curated image of them perpetuated through the writing. While the dead may not be perfect, their foibles are endearing, and the stories of them are curated in order to emphasise the qualities the community and family value. In these non-conformist memoirs, the quality most often praised is religious piety, but these memoirs are not simply evangelised lives of saints. Marshall Hall is remembered for his quick wit and amiability, Eliza Murray for her steadfast strength, John Graham for his selflessness and devotion to his calling. The biographical aspect of the memoirs, the materialisation of specific memories facilitates the sharing of more of these communal, legitimised narratives, which both cemented the living and the dead as a continuing part of the bereaved community, but also constructed the lifeway of the deceased in confluence with an encultured religious ideal.

9 Conclusion

The main aim of this project was to investigate the use of objects in the second half of the nineteenth century, through a model of grief as an encultured construct. The project was exploratory, as though funerary culture and mourning have been well studied in the period, an approach which applied an explicitly cultural model of emotion, which drew on topical debates on the historiography of emotion, had not been explored in the material context of grief objects. This concluding chapter considers the outputs of this project, both in terms of the insights into late-Victorian cultures of grieving (9.1), and in terms of a reflective evaluation of the exploratory methodologies applied in this project (9.2 ad 9.3). Future directions of this research are considered in regards to embedding materiality more firmly within these analyses (9.4), and finally, the wider significance of the project and its outcomes are considered (9.5).

9.1 Victorian Cultures of Grieving

This thesis drew out themes relating to the impact of wider cultural tropes on schemas of grieving. Prior research into this topic particularly focused on the form of gravestones and memorials, a form of material culture which was intensely familiar and ever-present within the landscape. Both the parish churchyard and the garden cemetery were spaces which people were encouraged to use as spaces for respectable leisure, as well as a focus for grieving behaviours, as such historic and contemporary monuments and inscriptions formed a cultural foundation through which the 'correct' style for memorialisation was constructed. This can be seen in the similarities between the information displayed on both funeral cards and gravestones, and the iconography of their imagery, though as discussed in Chapter 6, funeral cards and stone memorials also developed specific cultural standards through their articulation with different groups and different purposes.

This cultural and visual language was reinforced by the proliferation of published examples of common graveyard epitaphs and funerary poetry in both books, and articles in popular periodicals. An interesting example of the spread of these cultural tropes is found in the Dove verse, which appears to have originated on the grave of two sons of Nicholas and Frances Dove, c.1710, in Spalding, Lincolnshire:

The great Jehovah full of love
An angel bright did send
To fetch these little spotless Doves
to joys that never end (Pursglove and Pursglove 2005, 4)

This verse plays on the family name, and the connotation of doves with innocence and purity, in order to memorialise their young children. This verse, however, spread beyond its initial context,

subsequently appearing on graves for the rest of the eighteenth century, and to a lesser extent into the nineteenth century. The verse was particularly popular in Leicestershire (though this may be a false prevalence due to the extensive recording of monument inscriptions by Great Glen Family History Group) but also appears on children's graves in Herefordshire and Manchester (Table 15).

Table 15 Examples of the Dove verse found in burial grounds across England.

Location	Surname	Date	Age at Death	Reference
Spalding, Lincolnshire	Dove	1710	Unknown	Pursglove and Pursglove 2005, 4
Stroughton, Leicestershire	Spencer	1760	2 years	Moelwyn-Hughes and Smith 2008, 17
Stroughton, Leicestershire	Silvester	1764	4 years and 1 year	Moelwyn-Hughes and Smith 2008, 37
Hoby, Leicestershire	Alsop	1773	2 years	Horsfield 2019, n.p.
Stroughton, Leicestershire	Jelley	1776	6 years	Moelwyn-Hughes and Smith 2008, 31
Burton Overy, Leicestershire	Franks	1794	4 years	Moelwyn-Hughes and Smith 2007, 33
Little Stretton, Leicestershire	Iliff	1795	11 years	Smith 2003, 15
Hoby, Leicestershire	Toon	1801	2 years	Horsfield 2019, n.p.
Great Whelnetham, Suffolk	Reeman	1816	7 years	Hervey 1910, 170
Sowerby, West Yorkshire	Salt	1828	1 year	Bull 2022, n.p.

Abbey Dore, Herefordshire	Morgan	1843	2 years	James 1861, 197
Cross Street, Manchester	Temperly	1845	6 months	1897 Memorial Inscriptions Book, Cross Street Unitarian Chapel (Provided by CFA Archaeology for Morris 2017)
Leckhampton, Gloucestershire	Turner	1870	1 year and 2 years	Leckhampton Local History Society, n.d. 278–279
Cotgrave, Nottinghamshire	Thurman	1870	7 years	All Saints Church Cotgrave 2019, 6

Inscriptions sometimes include variations on the verse, including the substitution of the word 'spotless' for 'harmless', and changing between singular and plural, to reflect the number of children. One other notable change is the removal of the capital letter of the word 'Dove', reflective of the lost pun on the family name. With the removed context, only the metaphor remained relevant, but nevertheless, the verse remained in use until at least the 1870s, 160 years since it was, apparently, originally written. The inscription appears in at least two publications, the first being the weekly periodical *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* in 1824, listed as an epitaph from Clapham, London, for a three-year-old child (Limbird 1824, 48). It appears again in 1872 in *Mottoes for Monuments or Epitaphs* by Palliser and Palliser (1872, 19), listed as an epitaph for a child, found in Tideswell, Derbyshire. The verse also made it over to America, appearing in a lithograph by New York based printers, Currier and Ives, *The Mother's Dream*, likely dating to the early 1870s (Figure 63).

Although this is a single example, it demonstrates the proliferation of cultural tropes in this period, across British society, but also potentially globally. Though the verse was stripped of its original context, due to its placement on multiple graves, and the easily understood, and emotive language used, the Dove verse came to commemorate lost children more widely.

Compared to earlier periods, relatively high literacy levels, particularly amongst the working class, meant that cultural schemas could spread more rapidly, leading to potentially less local variation. However, this could also potentially have fostered differences in the ways that groups utilised the available schemas, based around their own cultural norms in the expression and experience of emotionality. This can potentially be seen in the dichotomy between views on highly sentimentalised language, with men like Augustus Hare (1856, iii) roundly criticising the 'pagan trash' which was popular amongst 'the poor'. Hare's criticism also has religious motivations, however, it was beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss in depth the effects of the broad church movement and the



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THE MOTHER'S DREAM.

The great Jehovah full of love;
An Angel bright did send,

And took my little harmless dove;
To joys that never end,

Figure 63 Colour-lithographed print, *The Mother's Dream* by Currier and Ives, c. 1870s, using the Dove verse (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

evolution of the Anglican church into the second half of the nineteenth century. This thesis has also broadly described the division as being along class lines, drawing on Hare's (1856) and Gatty's (1866) assertions that such language and verses were popular amongst the working class and disdained amongst the middle class. The division was considered from the perspective of social class for ease of comparison and discussion, and because of those contemporary opinions on the verses, however, casting either group as a monolith is a disservice to the variance seen in communities and in individuals. As the analysis performed in chapter 6 was largely inductive and exploratory, examining only 115 cards from across England, Wales and Scotland, it was not possible here to consider how regional, social, local and familial enculturation may have affected the how individuals interacted with funeral cards and their verses. Nevertheless, variation was seen in the funeral cards, including those which included only biographical information, and no verse. A broader analysis may access more nuance which better articulates the complexity, plurality and personal agency seen in enculturated emotional expression.

This is potentially complicated by the reflexive relationship between professional producer and bereaved customer in the production of grief objects. The production of grief objects studied within this project often required mediation with a professional, in some cases a professional who may have been familiar with the deceased or the bereaved. In the design of funeral card verses, the bereaved may seek advice from the printer or from local clergy and religious leaders. Those writing memoirs for publication either as books or denominational magazines may have been submitting manuscripts to friends or acquaintances within their religious community. Other people, such as those commissioning a photograph or mourning jewellery, may be interacting with professionals who have more technical or specialist knowledge than them. All of this potentially introduces a complex web of relationships, in which there are inherent power imbalances which may introduce tension into the relationship. An example of this can be seen in the anxieties that photographers expressed around the production of postmortem photographs (5.3). They were technical specialists who were called to work outside their usual studio, in the space of clients who may be in an emotional or distressed state, and who may dictate rules which prevent them from producing their best work. Their clients may also withhold payment if the photographs produced are not of the quality expected. In contrast, the bereaved were potentially allowing a stranger into their home, and allowing them to touch and interact with the body of their loved one. This could have created an uncomfortable tension between photographer and client, in which their usual boundaries were being stretched. This tension that interior spatial contexts can engender between consumer and producer has been explored in other contexts (see Morris 2023), and may offer nuance to the exploration of the experience of both photographer and client in the production of post-mortem photographs.

This conception of the reflexive interactions and potential tension between bereaved and professional have been articulated by Buckham (2000; 2002), Mytum (2015; 2018) and Hoile (2018;

2020) in the context of coffin furniture and gravestone manufacture. Hoile (2018, 216) shows that coffin furniture design may have been less innovative and temporally varying than the motifs which decorated gravestones. This has been interpreted as indicative of the different relationship between undertaker and bereaved, and stonemason and bereaved, as well as the difference in the length of time between bereavement and the purchase of the objects (Mytum 2015, 277; 2018, 76; Hoile 2018, 217). As the coffin decoration was purchased quickly and at an emotional time, and would only be on display temporarily, the bereaved may have left it to the undertaker to suggest something appropriate (Mytum 2018, 76). In contrast, Buckham (2000; 2002) found that customers may have engaged in more dialogue with stonemasons over the form and style of gravestones. By examining the gravestone pattern book for York Cemetery's stonemason, Buckham (2002, 205) showed that by laying the patterns out in a non-intuitive way, and keeping key information such as price behind codes, the choice of gravestone must have been mediated through interaction with the seller. In addition to this, Buckham (2002, 212) showed that some gravestones which were erected in York Cemetery showed variation from the pattern book, indicating that the dialogue between stonemason and bereaved may have allowed the bereaved more agency in choosing the design. A productive line of enquiry may be more closely examining the relationships, power dynamics and tensions between producers and bereaved in the creation of grief objects using similar methodologies.

A second major theme which arose was the openness with which the realities of the dying process were discussed. Both funeral cards, and death memoirs were often explicit about the suffering which occurred before, in a candidness which would feel inappropriate today. Philip Gosse's memoir to Emily is deeply uncomfortable reading today (which may speak to our own enculturation in dealing with our own and others' emotions). Within the objects analysed in this project, the 'suffering' appears contrasted and the peace of eternal rest. This was made explicit in death memoirs, in which the suffering of dying could be explicitly recontextualised as *necessary* for that eternal rest, and in funeral cards, in which the peace of being with Jesus was offered as some consolation for the loss. In postmortem photographs and in hairwork this contrast may speak more to beauty than peace, though postmortem photographs also articulate the metaphor of death as sleep in their composition. In death, the soul is transformed into something angelic, and both the postmortem photograph and hairwork appears to aim to capture the brief moment of that transformation and fix it in time. The power of the photograph to preserve a moment, 'to rescue a likeness', unconsciously echoes contemporary descriptions of hairwork as reflective of the permanence of the soul, in contrast with the ephemeral body.

The death of children and the death of adults seem to have been met with a different emotive response. This can be seen in the variance between objects created in response to adult and child death. There are a much higher frequency of postmortem photographs of children compared to

adults, and the composition of child photographs more often reference the sleeping child seen in art and effigy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (5.4). In comparison, postmortem photographs of adults tend to position the body as it would have been laid out, either in the deathbed or in the coffin. Photographs of children often seem more artfully posed, with the children tucked up in sheets with toys, or laid surrounded by flowers. These photographs represent a parental intimacy, which is not seen in photographs of living children in the period, and seem to almost recreate the view of the caring, or sometimes grieving, parent, seated at their children's bedside.

In contrast, the death memoir was almost exclusively reserved for adults (8.3). This may reflect the stylistic necessity to represent the death as in line with religious ideals, and the deceased as embodying particular Christian virtues in their dying moments. Certainly, the majority of death memoirs include a specifically evangelical aim (Riso 2018). They may also, however, speak to the need to record a biography of the deceased which details their lifeway, and also their uniqueness as an individual. Though children undoubtedly were loved and missed for their individuality and personality, the predominantly nonconformist groups which wrote death memoirs memorialised public action, and intellectual religious enquiry. These death memoirs often articulated aspects of the conception of the 'good death' by recontextualising the impact of the deceased's life, the reinterpretation of life events in view of sense-making narratives, and the articulation of the deceased's last moments as indicative of their piety and their love for the bereaved.

In child death, these consolatory factors may not have been available. The markers of a life lived well and righteously, such as familial or professional responsibility and impact, or religious evangelising, were not available to through which to construct sense- and meaning-making narratives. In young children, there was also little chance for the exchanging of goodbyes or other leave-taking activities, in which the dying person showed their acceptance of their fate and submission to God's will. In these cases, the attributing of unchildlike wisdom and understanding through funeral card verses (6.5), or the production of a photograph of the child in heavenly rest (5.5), may have served as a way of reproducing those important cultural markers after death.

9.2 Approaches and Methodologies to the Study of Historical Grief

The study of emotion in the past represents significant methodological challenges, discussed in Chapter 3, however, study of nineteenth century emotion also offers unique opportunities, due to the cultural ubiquity of funerary, mourning and grief materials, and to the comprehensive amounts of documentary evidence which allows for the investigation of experimental and exploratory methodologies. This project aimed to utilise an approach which treated grief as a cultural construction, a methodology which by necessity creates a divide between researcher and subject, due to the difference in the enculturation of the two. In Chapter 3, I detailed my intention to avoid discussing my own emotional responses to the objects researched, and to avoid utilising my

experiences in an autoethnographic sense. This was, on the whole, achieved, however, in analysing past objects, it became apparent that my own emotional enculturation necessarily affected my analysis. This manifested in two main ways, in the effect of my enculturation on my interpretation, and on my emotive response to the material. These two factors are discussed here.

Issues of personal experience on the interpretation of past material is a concern that has been prevalent in discussions of archaeological theory almost since the discipline's inception, as have questions of whether it is possible, or even desirable, to negate these. There is not scope here to explore the nuances of the history of this theoretical debate here, however, in posthumanist approaches, which this thesis broadly applies, there is a general acceptance that as we are the product of our experiences and culture, it is not possible to take an entirely objective stance in research. An approach investigating the effects of enculturation necessarily centres these questions. The effects of this issue on interpretation were particularly highlighted in one specific example during this project.

In analysing postmortem photography, it was necessary to explore the effects the invention of the photograph had on grieving and memorialisation. The photograph was revolutionary. Prior to the invention, only the very wealthy had the chance to immortalise the image of the dead. For the majority of history, for the majority of people, the likeness of the deceased existed only in the minds of the bereaved. The photograph transformed the possibilities for commemorative practice for the majority of people. This inevitably led to the thought of how difficult it must have been, to lose someone and know that you would never again see that person's face. It was my instant reaction, to transpose my emotional response on to people in the past. Interrogating this assumption, however, led me to critique its validity. If the loss of the visual likeness of the deceased was both inevitable and ubiquitous, would people recognise it as a loss? For people who are born now, growing up in a world in which video is easily captured on devices we carry around every day, it might be equally inconceivable that in the past people would not have a video of the dead, or be able to hear their voice. That is not something that I have ever thought of, I have no videos of any of the people I have grieved, and, importantly, I never perceived of that as a loss, or that my grief was in some way incomplete without it. With video now readily available, I still do not perceive it as a loss, video of the dead is not within any of my schema of grief, any more than other forms of digital commemoration, which are nevertheless becoming common (see van Leeuwen 2025; Arthur 2014);

The methodological acknowledgement of enculturation as a biasing effect on the researcher improves our interpretation of the past by encouraging an exploration of our interpretations, and how those interpretations may be culturally influenced. There is an inbuilt reflectivity to the analysis, which with the application of a more robust framework could prompt greater criticality in the study of the emotional past.

9.3 Archaeological Analyses of Written Objects

This project included thematic linguistic analysis on both funeral cards and death memoirs. The use of such evidence and analyses is unusual in an archaeological evaluation, and indeed, may be critiqued as erring too far into the dimension of the historical. However, these analyses aimed to consider the objects, and the language used in them from an object focused perspective. The usual form of such an analysis would be a focus on the materiality of the object, the ephemerality of paper and the transportability of the objects - this was drawn out in analysis to some extent, the fact that funeral cards could be sent physically across the globe, and displayed relatively cheaply within the home is central to their purpose.

This project, however, aimed to suggest a different approach to archaeological analyses of written material, in which the language itself is treated as material. Both funeral cards and memoirs were created with the purpose of being handled, interacted with, and interpreted by others. The words printed on them were placed there materially, and constructed in order to have a specific impact on the object's audience. Towards the end of this project, it became apparent that the methodology adopted treated the printed word in a similar way to a printed image. The language used drew on familiar tropes, in the same way that postmortem photographs based their stylistic choices on those seen in effigy and portraiture. The translation of those elements had the power to transform their meaning, for example the isolation of a single stanza from a longer poem, or the change of a question mark to a full stop. To subvert or to reify the convention had a similar effect to subverting or reifying visual symbolism in the object's ability to affect an observer. If pictures can be read as a text, then in this project, language was analysed iconographically.

This approach applied, particularly in chapters 6 and 8, was inductive and experimental, as such, its methodological foundation was potentially underdeveloped in these chapters. The approach may benefit from a greater articulation of and engagement with methodological and theoretical approaches from disciplines such as art history and literature studies, however it does potentially add nuance to the material study of objects which may have traditionally been overlooked by archaeological analysis.

9.4 Materiality and Future Work

Due to the decision in this work to engage primarily with digital collections and archives (1.3.1), material and materiality have perhaps been explored only tangentially in this project. An exception to this is the discussion on domestic hairworking (chapter 7), which focused on the cognitive and sensory experience of creating hairwork through both an experiential project, and consideration of the material properties of human hair. This provided additional nuance to a topic area which has traditionally been approached from the perspective of cultural symbolism and meaning. The aim of

this experiential project was to explore the emotional, sensorial and haptic aspects of physically working the hair of the dead, and how that may have affected the choice of pattern used. The methodology used in this phase of the project drew on experimental, sensorial and phenomenological techniques, and future work could be articulated within a more robust theoretical framework. Theoretical positions such as textural theory, which utilise the metaphor of fabric weaving to explore the interaction between external surface, internal structure and the reflexive agency between human and non-human agents (see Silver 2020 for introduction to textural theory), may provide a fruitful framework for this type of analysis. Textural theory has subsequently been applied on this project's hairworking data to articulate an experimental methodological approach to analysing material with inherent tactile, sensory and emotional dimensions to its use (Morris, in press).

Materiality also forms an important part of the analysis of photographs and funeral cards, as their nature as portable, but fragile ephemera necessarily impacts how people interact with them. There was not scope to examine this in detail in this project, however, there is future potential to adapt the rich literature and theory around photographs (eg. Sontag 1977; Barthes 2000; Hirsch 1997) to a British grief context. An additional area of study may been the material study of surviving postmortem photographs and funeral cards in contrast with other comparable forms of ephemera such as portrait photographs or greetings cards. This may help to elucidate differences in preservation and survival rates of material, as well as trends in the interactions of people with the objects, for example, whether they were likely to be folded and carried, or stored pristine, rarely handled and away from potential UV damage. This would complement the research undertaken in this project by extending the analysis beyond the production event.

In the analysis of memoirs, studies of materiality may add nuance to the interpretation of the writing of books during grieving. Scholars such as Wiggins (eg. 2016, chapter 2) have employed methodologies which emphasise the physicality and practicality of writing manuscripts, such as the spatial aspects of the writing space and the tools used in writing. Other scholars (see Schilhab and Walker 2020 for discussion) have focused on the materiality of reading manuscripts and printed books, drawing on theories such as embodied cognition (Menary 2010) and extended mind theory (Clark and Chalmers 1998). Simplistically, these theories propose that the activity of thinking takes places, not only in the brain, but in concert with the rest of the body, the external environment and the material objects around us. In this way, they propose that the action of reading, including the reading space, the physical properties of the book, and how we go about reading (Schilhab and Walker 2020, 2-3). Therefore, the process of engaging with the finished memoir may offer insights into the experience of those engaging with it, for example, whether reading grief memoirs was a solitary activity or if they were used in denominational discussion, or whether the memoirs were gifted to children to read when they were old enough, or whether they would be read to them by a

family member. Future research which engaged with these questions would enhance the research done in this project by adding a holistic analysis which took into account the whole environment around the writing and reading of grief memoirs.

This leads on to one of the themes which emerged tangentially through this project, but which was largely beyond its scope to explore – the control of access to grief objects. This was a theme that was present in the context of all of the object types studied within this project, and which provides a contrast with the traditional interpretation of performative Victorian mourning, as a method of social display. The grief objects studied here were impacted by different levels of control of access, some of which seem unclear or complex. Documentary evidence suggests that photographs and funeral cards were displayed in the home, which represents a level of private display – only those admitted to the home could view them. However, it is unclear whether this extended to postmortem photographs, or whether these were generally concealed within albums or envelopes, providing another layer of control of access. In contrast, the funeral card could be posted to distant family and friends, who could display the card as freely as they wanted, removing a level of control from the bereaved. Hairwork and memoirs may also require a level of mediation from the bereaved in order for others to interact with them. This is most clearly seen in the material properties of hair jewellery, which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, tended towards the small, tended to face the body of the wearer, and may be concealed behind twisting or clasping mechanisms. Finally, as discussed above, the death memoir, particularly those published professionally, were subject to interesting dichotomies of control. The memoirs may be available to purchase by anyone, but the act of writing the memoir itself controls the narrative of the death, and creates a legitimised biography for the dead. These questions of access and control may provide a fruitful extension of the work begun in this project.

9.5 Research Significance

Overall, this project is significant due to its exploratory methodology, and the insights provided into how enculturation provided a framework through which people in late-nineteenth century Britain produced, used and interacted with objects in order to express, experience and communicate their grief.

Using a methodology which explores enculturated aspects of emotion promotes an exploration of emotion in the past which considers how local community and wider cultural influence coalesce to create the variation seen in emotional material in the past. It creates a model of emotional expression and communication which is dynamic and plural, and considers how people adapted, and responded to, wider trends. It also highlights the role of culture in the reading of emotion, and encourages a framework which recognises that different groups in the past may not have read each other's emotionality in the same way. This is a way of considering variation in responses and

experiences of emotion, which does not imply biological essentialism, but rather that differences are encultured, and then reified through their reproduction by encultured people.

Drawing out the enculturation of grieving counters some of what Keen *et al.* (2013) and Bennett and Bennett (2000) noted about contemporary Western grieving being explored in terms of psychological frameworks in comparison with non-Western research often attributing cultural factors. An exploration of the cultural factors which affected past grieving provides nuance in the understanding of our own grieving. This process is reflexive, and in turn improves understanding of the past.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the realities of dying without access to many of the aspects of modern medicine, and often within the home, meant dying was synonymous with suffering, which, with the increasing rates of cancers and chronic health conditions, may have lasted months. This may have meant that compared with today, there was also more of a cultural acceptance of grieving which acknowledged the trauma of witnessing a loved one die. However, this unflinching way of approaching and experiencing the dying process may have been matched by an overtly sentimental construction of death and the afterlife, in which the preceding suffering is antecedent to the peace and beauty which follows.

There appears to have been a difference in the way the death of children and young people was experienced, compared with the death of adults, which can be seen in the differing material culture associated with each. This difference in grief for children and grief for adults may have roots in the cultural importance of children and the domestic, or perhaps the inability of children to partake in schemas of leave-taking and sense-making around their own death. This particular line of enquiry would be interesting to follow further, building on the work done by Baxter (2019, 2013) into the commemoration of children in cemeteries.

Perhaps the most salient output of the project is the emergence of evidence that the globalisation of media in the second half of the nineteenth century, also globalised something of grieving culture in the English-speaking world. The transmission of verses, like Longfellow's (1875) elegy to US Senator Charles Sumner appearing on a rural Nottinghamshire funeral card fifteen years later, demonstrates the power increasing literacy rates had to spread potential schemas of grieving. Equally, the spread, and continuing relevance of the Dove verse, over at least 160 years, illustrates how historic grieving schemas could be readopted, drawing on the idea of traditional verses to situate contemporary grief. However, the varying responses to some of these schemas, such as the divided opinions on overtly sentimental language demonstrates the continuing importance of differing social and cultural experience on grieving.

This project explored how the use of objects following bereavement may have been influenced by enculturation, focusing on the study of postmortem photographs, funeral cards, domestic hairworking, and death memoirs. The project adopted a methodology in which texts were analysed iconographically, and treated as material culture in and of themselves. This methodology was experimental, and while it could benefit from augmentation with a more robust methodological framework, it allowed for the analysis of objects not previously considered archaeologically, and added another layer of nuance to their interpretation. Overall, this project found that the globalisation of media, and the increasing literacy rates amongst the working classes in the second half of the nineteenth century, allowed for the spread of encultured ways of thinking about, and marking death and grief. This gave people in all strata of society new and traditional cultural schemas to draw on when grieving, which both increased the incidence of common themes, and allowed for increased choice in how to adapt those themes to personal grief. This project also identified scope for future research, namely around the investigation into the impact of personal identity on the adoption of cultural themes, such as regional variation or affiliation with different religious denominations. The project also identified a potential variance in the way child death, and parental grief, was experienced and conceptualised, which would provide fruitful ground for future study. In examining the effects of culture on the past experience, and expression of, grieving, it perhaps also offers a window to examine our own enculturation. What was striking about the material examined in this project was its relatability, though the circumstances, the experience and the cultural norms were removed from the present day. In describing “the dismal and desolate *after feeling*” (Murray 1866, 132 original emphasis) to children who may not remember their mother’s death, Alexander Murray (1866, 130) describes a familiar feeling:

Of course things went on as usual in the *outer* world, that summer's morning: there was no accordant pause in the music that pervaded the surrounding air; and there was no slackening of the sun's haste to strike the meridian [...] Very, very dark, however, and solemn, was the shadow which [...] the wings of the angel of death cast over our house, [...] making the earth itself seem a sterile spot, and life a vain and feverish dream.

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Appendix B – Causes of Death, 1850-1900

	1857 ¹	1874 ²	1892 ³
Total Deaths	419,815	526,632 ▲	559,684 ▲
Cause of Death			
Smallpox	3,936	2,162 ▼	431 ▼
Measles	5,969	12,255 ▲	13,553 ▲
Scarlatina	14,227	24,922 ▲	5,618 ▼
Diarrhoea + Dysentery	22,887	21,888 ▼	14,898 ▼
Cholera	1,130	596 ▼	438 ▼
Typhus	18,249	1,762 ▼	85 ▼
Cancer	6,201	11,911 ▲	20,353 ▲
Tuberculosis	58,067	59,042 ▲	63,015 ▲
Diabetes	482	882 ▲	2,011 ▲
Lung Diseases	56,881	88,686 ▲	108,341 ▲
Heart Diseases	14,784	29,956 ▲	49,648 ▲
Kidney Diseases (Nephritis + Brights)	1,251	4,026 ▲	9,2441 ▲

¹ H.M. Stationery Office. (1858). *Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England*. H.M. Stationery Office. pp132-5

² H. M. Stationery Office. (1876). *Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England*. H.M. Stationery Office. pp160-5

³ H. M. Stationery Office. (1894). *Annual Report of the Registrar-General for England and Wales*. H.M. Stationery Office. pp136-159

Appendix C – Funeral Cards

CARD	Date	Age	Gender	Verse
1	1917	74	M	Yet again we hope to meet thee, When this day of life is fled, And in heaven we hope to greet thee, Where no farewell tears are shed. My weary limbs are now at rest; Suffering and pain with me are o'er; I go to meet the friends whom Christ hath blest In heaven to part no more.
2	1878	52	M	My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine. For thee all the pleasure of sin I resign; My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art thou, If ever I loved thee, my Jesus 'tis now.
3	1900	11	M	Bitter the cup, the stroke severe, To part with one we loved so dear, Though great our loss, we murmur not, But breathe the prayer divinely taught, Thy will be done. Weep not for me, nor wish me back, I now from pain am free, And in my Jesu's arms I rest Where I have longed to be.
4	1898	80	M	My weary limbs are now at rest, Suffering and pain with me are o'er; I go to meet the friends whom Christ hath blest, In heaven to part no more.
5	1885	73	M	His end was peace.
6	1888	4	M	"Taken!" we could not give him, We tried to hold him fast, But it might not be; Then in agony We were forced to yield at last. "Taken!" ah, yes! God took him

				To his own bright home of joy; And our spirits yearn, As they homeward turn, To behold again our boy.
7	1897	81	F	"Be ye also ready, for ye know not the hour when the son of man cometh." Farewell the cross 'neath which so long I've watched and fought below, And welcome now the harp and song That wait me where I go; Yet, Oh, that cross must still be dear. Though borne through many a sorrow here.
8	1901	29	M	Farewell, dear wife, my life is past, Truly thou loved me to the last, Grieve not for me nor sorrow take, But love our children for my sake.
9	1874	63	F	None
10	1901	69	M	Sleep on, beloved, and take the rest, Lay down thy head upon thy Saviour's breast; We love thee well, but Jesus loved thee best, Good night! Good night! Good night!
11	1900	44	F	A loving wife, a mother dear, A faithful friend when she was here, she lived in Hope, she died in peace, and now her joys will never cease. A precious one from us has gone, a voice we loved is stilled, a place is vacant in our home which never can be filled.
12	1900	19	F	Farewell dear friends, a long farewell, For we shall meet no more. Till we be raised with Christ to dwell On Zion's happy shore. You watched beside my bed, I now must watch for you,

				And when you reach the golden gate, I'll come and lead you through.
13	1890	21	F	Those whom the God's love die young. Death takes us by surprise, And stays our hurrying feet, The great design unfinished lies, Our lives are incomplete. But in the great unknown, Perfect their shadows seem, Even as a bridge's arch of stone Is rounded in the stream.
14	1886	52	M	For ever with the Lord
15	1906	70	F	Gone, but not forgotten
16	1910	10 + 9	M + F	"Asleep in Jesus." "And he took them in his arms and blest them."
17	1894	34	M	Affliction sore, long time I bore, physicians were in vain, till God did please to give me ease, and free me from my pain. "Sleeping in Jesus."
18	1906	61	F	We're left to mourn the loss of one We did our best to save; Beloved on earth, regretted gone, Remembered in the grave.
19	1895	31	F	Her last words were "Rest, Peace". "When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day." Job. VII., 1.
20	1890	19	F	At Rest

21	1871	70	F	"Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." - Philippians i. 23.
22	1913	43	F	She is gone to her rest and her sorrows are o'er, She is done with her trouble and pain; The ills of this life which she patiently bore Shall never distress, they shall grieve her no more, No, never shall vex her again.
23	1897	59	F	Day by day how much we miss her, words would fail our loss to tell; but in heaven we hope to meet her, evermore with her to dwell. Through all pain at times she'd smile, A smile of heavenly birth; And when the angels called her home She smiled farewell to earth. Heaven retaineth now our treasure, Earth the lonely casket keeps; And the sunbeams love to linger Where our sainted mother sleeps. Farewell, dear mother, sweet thy rest, Weary with years and worn with pain, Farewell, till in some happy place We shall behold thy face again. "Tis ours to miss thee all our years, And tender memories of thee keep; Shine in the Lord to rest, for so He giveth his beloved sleep.
24	1898	23	M	No room for mirth or trifling here, Or wordly hope, or wordly fear, When life so soon is gone.
25	1911	31	M	His work on earth had scarce begun, Ere he the final race had run, A faithful son with noble mind, Is missed by those he's left behind.
26	1910	72	F	To part with dear mother was a trial severe, although she is better in yonder than here, our loss is her gain, she's an angel above, she drinks perfect bliss at the fountain of love O may our dear mother be a link in the chain

				that will bind us to heaven till we meet her again.
27	1896	44	F	"In the midst of life we are in death." From our happy home and circle, God has taken one we love; borne away from sin and sorrow, to a nobler rest above. Do not ask us if we miss her, there is such a vacant place; can we e'er forget the footsteps and that dear familiar face.
28	1908	73	F	"For ever with the Lord." There the tears of earth are dried, there its hidden things are clear, there the work of life is tried by a juster judge than here. Father, in thy gracious keeping, leave we now thy servant sleeping.
29	1906	44	F	n/a
30	1912	55	M	n/a
31	1912	56	F	"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadows of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Psalm XXIII., 4.
32	1892	82	F	"None but Christ to me be given, None but Christ in earth and heaven." "The memory of the just is blessed."
33	1889	33	F	"With Christ, which is far better."
34	1900	55	M	Sleep on dear Father thy toil is o'er, Thy willing hand shall toil no more. Life was desired, but God did see Eternal rest was best for thee.

35	1914	38	F	Afflictions sore, long time I bore, Physicians were in vain; Till God did please to give me ease, And free'd me from my pain.
36	1890	66	F	This world is all in vain, I nothing in it crave, I've laboured through ten thousand cares, For nothing but the grave.
37	1894	26	F	The cup was bitter, the sting severe, To part with one we loved so dear, The trial is hard, we'll not complain, But trust in Christ to meet again.
38	1898	62	F	"Not my will, but thine, be done."
39	1897	24	F	Loved one gone, but not forgotten The lamb is in the fold, In perfect safety penned; The lion once had hold, And thought to make an end; But one came by with wounded side, And for that lamb the shepherd died.
40	1889	65	F	God's will be done
41	1907	61	F	Farewell, dear husband, my life is past, truly thou loved me to the last, weep not for me, nor sorrow take, but love our children for my sake.
42	1901	38	M	Farewell dear wife, my life is past, May you and I unite at last; Mourn not for me nor sorrow make, But love my children for my sake. In blooming youth he was cut down, No longer could he stay; It was his blessed Saviour's will To call him hence away.
43	1891	n.a	M	The memory of the just is blessed

44	1891	32	F	"And yet he came to give the weary and the heavy-laden rest."
45	1893	28	M	Death has taken many a loved one From our homes and fond embrace, But the hour of joy is coming, When we'll meet them face to face. O, we laid them there in sadness, While our hearts were filled with pain, But we know that in the morning We shall meet them once again. Where the Angels bright are singing, Where no sorrow e'er can come, We shall meet our cherished loved ones In that bright eternal home.
46	1905	36	F	Weep not for me husband and children so dear, I am not dead but sleeping here, I was not yours but Christ's alone, He loved me best and took me home. Had he ask'd us well we know We should cry, "O spare this blow!" Yes, with streaming tears should pray "Lord, we love her, let her stay."
47	1903	16	F	She sings among the Angels now Beside the Crystal River The light of God is on her brow, For ever and for ever. We cannot, Lord, thy purpose see, But all is well that's done by thee.
48	1894	72	M	A father is dead, beloved and dear, and nature weeps the tender tear; - children farewell, my life is past, may you and I unite at last.
49	1903	60	F	I heard the voice of Jesus say "Come unto me and rest; lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast." I came to Jesus as I was, weary, and worn, and sad;

				I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.
50	1908	83	F	n/a
51	1871	10	M	Like blooming flowers frail mortals stand, Fresh in the morning light; The flowers beneath the mower's hand, Lie withering ere 'tis night.
52	1896	18	F	Oh! Not in cruelty, not in wrath, the reaper came that day; "Twas an angel visited the green earth, and took the flower away. Hush! Be every murmur dumb; it is only till he come.
53	1905	43	M	Farewell, dear wife, my life is past, truly thou loved me to the last, weep not for me, nor sorrow take, but love our children for my sake. Weep not for me, my children dear; I am not dead, but sleeping here, I was not yours, but Christ's alone; he loved me best, and took my home.
54	1875	17	M	Death with its dart did pierce my heart, When I was in my prime; Mourn not for me my parents dear, "Twas God's appointed time."
55	1914	58	F	When a mother breathes her last farewell, The stroke means more than words can tell; This home seems quite another place, Without a smile of mother's face
56	1908	9mon	F	Weep not for me my parents dear, Nor yet be over sad, The fewer years I lived on earth, The fewer faults I had. My pains were great, no tongue can tell What I endured when I was ill; The Lord in mercy thought it best To take me to my heavenly rest.

57	1905	25	F	Mother, we miss thee when the morning dawns, We miss thee when the night returns; We miss thee here, we miss thee there, Dear Mother, we miss thee everywhere! A light is from our household gone, A voice we loved is still; A vacant chair is in our home, Which none can ever fill.
58	1896	60	M	Thy will be done
59	1896	74	M	He will never be forgotten, Never from our memory fade; But our thoughts will ever linger Round the grave where he is laid.
60	1899	15	F	Weep not, dear parents, but be content, for I was only to you lent; In love we lived, in peace I died, you asked my life but was denied.
61	1907	22	M	Father, into Thy hands we commend his Spirit
62	1914	24	M	A little while and ye shall see me. - John 16., 16. It is enough; earth's struggles all have ceased, Jesus has called him to his perfect peace. "So he giveth his beloved sleep."
63	1868	8mon	F	n/a
64	1905	72	F	n/a
65	1885	78	F	n/a
66	1877	15	F	But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example

				to those who were to believe in him for eternal life - Tim 1.16
67	1906	29	F	She has gone from this world of trouble, She has gone from a life of care; She has gone to that far off heavenly land To be a bright angel there.
68	1905	52	M	No more shall we see him by our side, No more his voice shall hear, For death has been and borne away The one we loved so dear.
69	1896	78	F	"Gone to be with Christ, which is far better."
70	1913	8	M	Peace, perfect peace. And shall I weep, my precious one, That thou hast reached thy home so soon; Our mourn the lot thy God has given, Little of earth and much of heaven- Mourn that a port was found for thee When scarcely launched on life's dark sea.
71	1896	32	F	n/a
72	1913	71	F	The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, He makes me down to lie In pastures green: He landeth me The quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again: And me to walk doth make Within the paths of righteousness, Ev'n for his own name's sake. Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, Yet, will I fear none ill, For thou art with me: and thy rod And staff me comfort still. My table thou has furnished In presence of my foes; My head thou dost with oil anoint, And my cup overflows. Goodness and mercy all my life Shall surely follow me:

				And in God's house for evermore My dwelling-place shall be.
73	1902	19	M	Mourn not for me, my race is run - You've done for me what could be done; Prepare to meet thy God in time, For I was taken in my prime.
74	1887	44	M	Farewell, my wife and cildren dear, God has called me, do not fear; My end you know, my grave you see, Prepare yourself to follow me. Farewell, dear wife, my life is past, My love was true while life did last, And now for me no sorrow make, But love my children for my sake.
75	1869	34	F	Her end was peace
76	1865	66	M	n/a
77	1880	57	M	Afflictions sore long time I bore, Physicians were in vain; But death gave ease when God did please, And freed me from my pain.
78	1908	62	F	She suffered much, she murmured not, We watched her day by day, Grow less and less with aching hearts, Until she passed away. A loving wife true and kind, She proved to be in heart and mind; A tender parent, too, as well, When she on earth with us did well.
79	1908	54	M	Not gone from memory, not gone from love But gone to his Father's home above. Farewell dear wife and children! I must go, And leave you in this world of woe; Mourn not for me, nor sorrow take, But love each other for my sake.
80	1890	65	M	So he giveth his beloved sleep

81	1864	46	M	With God will doing service. - Ephes. VI. 7. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house; and the place where thine honour dwelleth. - Pa. XXVI. 8.
82	1881	66	M	"His end was peace."
83	1896	3	F	Day by day we all do miss her, words would pain our love to hell; but in heaven we hope to meet her, evermore with her to dwell.
84	1896	1	F	This lovely flower nipp'd in the bud, no grief nor sorrow knew; came but to win her parents love, and then to heaven withdrew.
85	1899	64	M	He's gone to his rest, his troubles are o'er, He's done with his sorrow and pain; The ills of this life, which he patiently bore Shall never distress him again. Farewell, my weeping children, farewell, My dearest friends, adieu. Ere long I hope in heaven to dwell, And then I'll welcome you.
86	1907	41	M	n/a
87	1912	63	M	Why should our tears in sorrow flow, when God recalls his own, and bids them leave this world of woe, for an immortal crown? We cannot, Lord, thy purpose see, but all is well that's done by thee.
88	1908	80	F	Her toil is o'er, her work is done, Her long dark night is past; Her battle's fought, her crown is won, She's reached her home at last.
89	1912	86	M	I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in

				Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.
90	1877	5	M	I am a little soldier, Only five years old, I mean to fight for Jesus, And wear a crown of gold. I know he makes me happy, And loves me all the day, I'll be a little soldier, The Bible says I may.
91	1906	64	F	"Life's race well run, Life's work well done, Life's crown well won; Now cometh rest." "She hath done what she could."
92	1895	55	M	In the midst of life we are in death
93	1901	35	M	Rock of ages, eleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee. Farewell, affectionate father and mother dear, Brother and sisters kind, And my companions whom I loved, I leave you all behind. I was so long with pain oppressed, That wore my strength away; It made me long for endless rest Which never can decay.
94	1914	40	M	How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadows of thy wings. Psalm XXXVI., 7.
95	1898	32	M	A light is from our household gone, A voice we loved is stilled,

				A place is vacant at the heart Which never can be filled.
96	1907	23	M	Gentle he was sleeping, He did breathe his last; Gentle we were weeping, He to heaven did pass. In the midst of life we are in Death.
97	1910	4mon	M	Oh, how we grieved to see him suffer, All was done to soothe his pain; But with Jesus watching for him, All our efforts were in vain. We saw him waste and fade away, We saw him pant for breath; We saw upon his sunken cheeks The fatal sign of death.
98	1889	73	F	"Asleep in Jesus blessed sleep, From which none ever wakes to weep."
99	1901	82	M	"A calm and undisturbed repose, Where pow'rless is the last of foes."
100	1866	I	M	We o'er our dying children mourn, We rather should rejoice; The innocent to God return, And escape a world of vice.
101	1893	58	F	A loving wife, a mother dear, A faithful friend while she was here; She lived in hope and died in peace, We hope her joys will never cease.
102	1887	47	F	Affliction sore long time she bore, Physicians were in vain; 'Till God thought best to give her rest, And ease her of her pain.
103	1893	54	M	"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." - Psalm XXIII, 4.

104	1907	96	F	"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." - John, XIV., 1.
105	1895	79	F	"And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is even in Thee." Psalm XXXIX. 7.
106	1901	25	F	Farewell, my husband & parents dear, I am not dead, but sleeping here; Prepare for death, for die you must, And with your wife sleep in the dust. O Lord how sudden was my death, Unlooked for came to me, Therefore prepare thou looker on For it may fail to thee.
107	1911	n.a	F	"That they may rest from their labours." The Saints of God! Their conflict past And life long battle won at last, No more they need the shield or sword, They cast them down before their Lord; O happy Saints! For ever blest, At Jesus' feet how safe your rest!
108	1897	36	F	Her end was peace
109	1908	39	M	Mourn not for him whom God has blest And taken to his heavenly rest; Free from all sorrow, grief, and pain, Our loss is his eternal gain.
110	1886	52	F	Weep not for me my time is past, You faithful loved me to the last; But mercy show and pity take, And love my children for my sake. Why do we mourn departed friends, Or shake at death's alarms, Tis but the voice that Jesus sends, To call them to His arms.

CARD	Verse	Emotive Words
1	Yet again we hope to meet thee, When this day of life is fled, And in heaven we hope to greet thee, Where no farewell tears are shed. My weary limbs are now at rest; Suffering and pain with me are o'er; I go to meet the friends whom Christ hath blest In heaven to part no more.	Hope; Tears; Weary; Rest; Suffering; Pain
2	My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine. For thee all the pleasure of sin I resign; My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art thou, If ever I loved thee, my Jesus 'tis now.	Love; Pleasure;
3	Bitter the cup, the stroke severe, To part with one we loved so dear, Though great our loss, we murmur not, But breathe the prayer divinely taught, Thy will be done. Weep not for me, nor wish me back, I now from pain am free, And in my Jesu's arms I rest Where I have longed to be.	Bitter; Love; Loss; Weep; Pain; Free; Rest; Longing
4	My weary limbs are now at rest, Suffering and pain with me are o'er; I go to meet the friends whom Christ hath blest, In heaven to part no more.	Weary; Rest; Suffering; Pain
5	His end was peace .	Peace
6	"Taken!" we could not give him, We tried to hold him fast, But it might not be; Then in agony We were forced to yield at last. "Taken!" ah, yes! God took him To his own bright home of joy; And our spirits yearn, As they homeward turn, To behold again our boy.	Pain; Joy

7	"Be ye also ready, for ye know not the hour when the son of man cometh." Farewell the cross 'neath which so long I've watched and fought below, And welcome now the harp and song That wait me where I go; Yet, Oh, that cross must still be dear. Though borne through many a sorrow here.	Sorrow
8	Farewell, dear wife, my life is past, Truly thou loved me to the last, Grieve not for me nor sorrow take, But love our children for my sake.	Love; Grief; Sorrow
9	None	None
10	Sleep on, beloved, and take the rest, Lay down thy head upon thy Saviour's breast; We love thee well, but Jesus loved thee best, Good night! Good night! Good night!	Rest; Love;
11	A loving wife, a mother dear, A faithful friend when she was here, she lived in Hope, she died in peace, and now her joys will never cease. A precious one from us has gone, a voice we loved is stilled, a place is vacant in our home which never can be filled.	Hope; Peace; Joy; Love
12	Farewell dear friends, a long farewell, For we shall meet no more. Till we be raised with Christ to dwell On Zion's happy shore. You watched beside my bed, I now must watch for you, And when you reach the golden gate, I'll come and lead you through.	None
13	Those whom the God's love die young. Death takes us by surprise, And stays our hurrying feet, The great design unfinished lies, Our lives are incomplete. But in the great unknown, Perfect their shadows seem, Even as a bridge's arch of stone Is rounded in the stream.	Love

14	For ever with the Lord	None
15	Gone, but not forgotten	None
16	"Asleep in Jesus." "And he took them in his arms and blest them."	Rest
17	Affiction sore, long time I bore, physicians were in vain, till God did please to give me ease, and free me from my pain. "Sleeping in Jesus."	Vain; Free; Pain; Sleep
18	We're left to mourn the loss of one We did our best to save; Beloved on earth, regretted gone, Remembered in the grave.	Grief; Loss; Love; Regret
19	Her last words were "Rest, Peace". "When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day." Job. VII., I.	Rest; Peace
20	At Rest	Rest
21	"Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." - Philippians i. 23.	
22	She is gone to her rest and her sorrows are o'er, She is done with her trouble and pain; The ills of this life which she patiently bore Shall never distress, they shall grieve her no more, No, never shall vex her again.	Rest; Sorrow; Suffering; Pain; Distress; Grief; Vex

23	Day by day how much we miss her, words would fail our loss to tell; but in heaven we to meet her, evermore with her to dwell. Through all pain at times she'd smile, A smile of heavenly birth; And when the angels called her home She smiled farewell to earth. Heaven retaineth now our treasure, Earth the lonely casket keeps; And the sunbeams love to linger Where our sainted mother sleeps. Farewell, dear mother, sweet thy rest, Weary with years and worn with pain, Farewell, till in some happy place We shall behold thy face again. 'Tis ours to miss thee all our years, And tender memories of thee keep; Shine in the Lord to rest, for so He giveth his beloved sleep.	Longing; Loss; Hope; Pain; Smile; Love; Rest; Weary
24	No room for mirth or trifling here, Or wordly hope, or wordly fear, When life so soon is gone.	Smile; Hope
25	His work on earth had scarce begun, Ere he the final race had run, A faithful son with noble mind, Is missed by those he's left behind.	Longing
26	To part with dear mother was a trial severe, although she is better in yonder than here, our loss is her gain, she's an angel above, she drinks perfect bliss at the fountain of love O may our dear mother be a link in the chain that will bind us to heaven till we meet her again.	Suffering; Loss; Joy; Love
27	"In the midst of life we are in death." From our happy home and circle, God has taken one we love; borne away from sin and sorrow, to a nobler rest above. Do not ask us if we miss her, there is such a vacant place; can we e'er forget the footsteps and that dear familiar face.	Love; Sorrow; Rest; Longing

28	"For ever with the Lord." There the tears of earth are dried, there its hidden things are clear, there the work of life is tried by a juster judge than here. Father, in thy gracious keeping, leave we now thy servant sleeping.	Tears; Rest
29	n/a	None
30	n/a	None
31	"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadows of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Psalm XXIII., 4.	Comfort
32	"None but Christ to me be given, None but Christ in earth and heaven." "The memory of the just is blessed."	None
33	"With Christ, which is far better."	None
34	Sleep on dear Father thy toil is o'er, Thy willing hand shall toil no more. Life was desired, but God did see Eternal rest was best for thee.	Rest; Toil
35	Afflictions sore, long time I bore, Physicians were in vain; Till God did please to give me ease, And free'd me from my pain.	Pain; Vain; Freedom;
36	This world is all in vain, I nothing in it crave, I've laboured through ten thousand cares, For nothing but the grave.	Vain; Suffering
37	The cup was bitter, the sting severe, To part with one we loved so dear, The trial is hard, we'll not complain, But trust in Christ to meet again.	Bitter; Love; Suffering
38	"Not my will, but thine, be done."	None
39	Loved one gone, but not forgotten The lamb is in the fold, In perfect safety penned; The lion once had hold, And thought to make an end; But one came by with wounded side, And for that lamb the shepherd died.	Love; Safety

40	God's will be done	None
41	Farewell, dear husband, my life is past, truly thou loved me to the last, weep not for me, nor sorrow take, but love our children for my sake.	Love; Tears; Sorrow
42	Farewell dear wife, my life is past, May you and I unite at last; Mourn not for me nor sorrow make, But love my children for my sake. In blooming youth he was cut down, No longer could he stay; It was his blessed Saviour's will To call him hence away.	Grief; Sorrow; Love
43	The memory of the just is blessed	None
44	"And yet he came to give the weary and the heavy-laden rest ."	Weary; Rest
45	Death has taken many a loved one From our homes and fond embrace, But the hour of joy is coming, When we'll meet them face to face. O, we laid them there in sadness , While our hearts were filled with pain , But we know that in the morning We shall meet them once again. Where the Angels bright are singing, Where no sorrow e'er can come, We shall meet our cherished loved ones In that bright eternal home.	Love; Joy; Sorrow; Pain;
46	Weep not for me husband and children so dear, I am not dead but sleeping here, I was not yours but Christ's alone, He loved me best and took me home. Had he ask'd us well we know We should cry, "O spare this blow!" Yes, with streaming tears should pray "Lord, we love her, let her stay."	Tears; Rest; Love
47	She sings among the Angels now Beside the Crystal River The light of God is on her brow, For ever and for ever. We cannot, Lord, thy purpose see, But all is well that's done by thee.	None

48	A father is dead, beloved and dear, and nature weeps the tender tear ; - children farewell, my life is past, may you and I unite at last.	Love; Tears
49	I heard the voice of Jesus say "Come unto me and rest ; lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast." I came to Jesus as I was, weary , and worn, and sad; I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.	Rest; Weary;
50	n/a	None
51	Like blooming flowers frail mortals stand, Fresh in the morning light; The flowers beneath the mower's hand, Lie withering ere 'tis night.	None
52	Oh! Not in cruelty, not in wrath , the reaper came that day; "Twas an angel visited the green earth, and took the flower away. Hush! Be every murmur dumb; it is only till he come.	Wrath
53	Farewell, dear wife, my life is past, truly thou loved me to the last, weep not for me, nor sorrow take, but love our children for my sake. Weep not for me, my children dear; I am not dead, but sleeping here, I was not yours, but Christ's alone; he loved me best, and took my home.	Love; Tears; Sorrow; Rest
54	Death with its dart did pierce my heart, When I was in my prime; Mourn not for me my parents dear, "Twas God's appointed time."	Grief
55	When a mother breathes her last farewell, The stroke means more than words can tell; This home seems quite another place, Without a smile of mother's face	Smile

56	Weep not for me my parents dear, Nor yet be over sad, The fewer years I lived on earth, The fewer faults I had. My pains were great, no tongue can tell What I endured when I was ill; The Lord in mercy thought it best To take me to my heavenly rest.	Tears; Pain; Rest
57	Mother, we miss thee when the morning dawns, We miss thee when the night returns; We miss thee here, we miss thee there, Dear Mother, we miss thee everywhere! A light is from our household gone, A voice we loved is still; A vacant chair is in our home, Which none can ever fill.	Longing; Love
58	Thy will be done	None
59	He will never be forgotten, Never from our memory fade; But our thoughts will ever linger Round the grave where he is laid.	None
60	Weep not, dear parents, but be content, for I was only to you lent; In love we lived, in peace I died, you asked my life but was denied.	Tears; Love; Peace
61	Father, into Thy hands we commend his Spirit	None
62	A little while and ye shall see me. - John 16., 16. It is enough; earth's struggles all have ceased, Jesus has called him to his perfect peace. "So he giveth his beloved sleep."	Peace; Love; Rest
63	n/a	None
64	n/a	None
65	n/a	None
66	But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life - Tim 1.16	None

67	She has gone from this world of trouble, She has gone from a life of care; She has gone to that far off heavenly land To be a bright angel there.	Suffering
68	No more shall we see him by our side, No more his voice shall hear, For death has been and borne away The one we loved so dear.	Love
69	"Gone to be with Christ, which is far better."	None
70	Peace, perfect peace. And shall I weep, my precious one, That thou hast reached thy home so soon; Our mourn the lot thy God has given, Little of earth and much of heaven- Mourn that a port was found for thee When scarcely launched on life's dark sea.	Peace; Tears; Grief;
71	n/a	None
72	The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, He makes me down to lie In pastures green: He landeth me The quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again: And me to walk doth make Within the paths of righteousness, Ev'n for his own name's sake. Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, Yet, will I fear none ill, For thou art with me: and thy rod And staff me comfort still. My table thou has furnished In presence of my foes; My head thou dost with oil anoint, And my cup overflows. Goodness and mercy all my life Shall surely follow me: And in God's house for evermore My dwelling-place shall be.	Suffering; Comfort
73	Mourn not for me, my race is run - You've done for me what could be done; Prepare to meet thy God in time, For I was taken in my prime.	Grief

74	Farewell, my wife and children dear, God has called me, do not fear; My end you know, my grave you see, Prepare yourself to follow me. Farewell, dear wife, my life is past, My love was true while life did last, And now for me no sorrow make, But love my children for my sake.	Love; Sorrow
75	Her end was peace	Peace
76	n/a	None
77	Afflictions sore long time I bore, Physicians were in vain; But death gave ease when God did please, And freed me from my pain.	Pain; Vain; Free;
78	She suffered much, she murmured not, We watched her day by day, Grow less and less with aching hearts, Until she passed away. A loving wife true and kind, She proved to be in heart and mind; A tender parent, too, as well, When she on earth with us did well.	Suffering; Pain
79	Not gone from memory, not gone from love But gone to his Father's home above. Farewell dear wife and children! I must go, And leave you in this world of woe; Mourn not for me, nor sorrow take, But love each other for my sake.	Love; Sorrow; Grief;
80	So he giveth his beloved sleep	Love; Rest
81	With God will doing service. - Ephes. VI. 7. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house; and the place where thine honour dwelleth. - Pa. XXVI. 8.	Love
82	"His end was peace ."	Peace
83	Day by day we all do miss her, words would pain our love to hell; but in heaven we hope to meet her, evermore with her to dwell.	Longing; Pain; Love; Hope
84	This lovely flower nipp'd in the bud, no grief nor sorrow knew; came but to win her parents love, and then to heaven withdrew.	Grief; Sorrow; Love

85	He's gone to his rest, his troubles are o'er, He's done with his sorrow and pain; The ills of this life, which he patiently bore Shall never distress him again. Farewell, my weeping children, farewell, My dearest friends, adieu. Ere long I hope in heaven to dwell, And then I'll welcome you.	Rest; Suffering; Sorrow; Pain; Distress; Tears; Hope
86	n/a	Peace
87	Why should our tears in sorrow flow, when God recalls his own, and bids them leave this world of woe, for an immortal crown? We cannot, Lord, thy purpose see, but all is well that's done by thee.	Tears; Sorrow;
88	Her toil is o'er, her work is done, Her long dark night is past; Her battle's fought, her crown is won, She's reached her home at last.	Toil
89	I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and be- lieveth in Me shall never die. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.	None
90	I am a little soldier, Only five years old, I mean to fight for Jesus, And wear a crown of gold. I know he makes me happy, And loves me all the day, I'll be a little soldier, The Bible says I may.	Love

91	"Life's race well run, Life's work well done, Life's crown well won; Now cometh rest." "She hath done what she could."	Rest
92	In the midst of life we are in death	None
93	Rock of ages, eleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee. Farewell, affectionate father and mother dear, Brother and sisters kind, And my companions whom I loved, I leave you all behind. I was so long with pain oppressed, That wore my strength away; It made me long for endless rest Which never can decay.	Love; Pain; Longing; Rest
94	How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadows of thy wings. Psalm XXXVI., 7.	None
95	A light is from our household gone, A voice we loved is stilled, A place is vacant at the heart Which never can be filled.	Love
96	Gentle he was sleeping, He did breathe his last; Gentle we were weeping, He to heaven did pass. In the midst of life we are in Death.	Rest; Tears
97	Oh, how we grieved to see him suffer, All was done to soothe his pain; But with Jesus watching for him, All our efforts were in vain. We saw him waste and fade away, We saw him pant for breath; We saw upon his sunken cheeks The fatal sign of death.	Grief; Suffering; Pain; Vain
98	"Asleep in Jesus blessed sleep, From which none ever wakes to weep."	Rest; Tears
99	"A calm and undisturbed repose, Where pow'rless is the last of foes."	Peace; Rest

100	We o'er our dying children mourn, We rather should rejoice; The innocent to God return, And escape a world of vice.	Grief; Joy
101	A loving wife, a mother dear, A faithful friend while she was here; She lived in hope and died in peace, We hope her joys will never cease.	Hope; Peace; Joy
102	Affliction sore long time she bore, Physicians were in vain; 'Till God thought best to give her rest, And ease her of her pain.	Pain; Vain; Rest
103	"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." - Psalm XXIII, 4.	Comfort
104	"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." - John, XIV., 1.	Suffering
105	"And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is even in Thee." Psalm XXXIX. 7.	Hope
106	Farewell, my husband & parents dear, I am not dead, but sleeping here; Prepare for death, for die you must, And with your wife sleep in the dust. O Lord how sudden was my death, Unlooked for came to me, Therefore prepare thou looker on For it may fail to thee.	Rest
107	"That they may rest from their labours." The Saints of God! Their conflict past And life long battle won at last, No more they need the shield or sword, They cast them down before their Lord; O happy Saints! For ever blest, At Jesus' feet how safe your rest!	Rest; Safety
108	Her end was peace	Peace
109	Mourn not for him whom God has blest And taken to his heavenly rest; Free from all sorrow, grief, and pain, Our loss is his eternal gain.	Grief; Rest; Free; Sorrow; Pain; Loss

110	Weep not for me my time is past, You faithful loved me to the last; But mercy show and pity take, And love my children for my sake. Why do we mourn departed friends, Or shake at death's alarms, Tis but the voice that Jesus sends, To call them to His arms.	Tears; Love; Grief
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Appendix D – Gravestones

Memorial	Date	Age	Gender	Verse
2983	1894	12	F	The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.
2983	1899	57	F	Until the morning dawn and the shadows flee away.
2983	1909	63	M	Now the labourer's task is o'er.
3112	1865	46	F	Unto thee O Lord I commit my spirit
3112	1891	72	M	His end was peace
3129	1869	62	M	[B]eneath this stone doth lie [As] much good nature as could die A loving husband a father dear [...] friendly neighbour lies here.
3146	1910	37	M	Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away
3203	1891	91	M	UNTIL THE DAY DAWN
3244	1908	52	F	PEACE PERFECT PEACE
3286	1879	76	F	Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
3331	1914	74	M	Peace Perfect Peace
3399	1867	79	F	May she rest in peace
3457	1911	36	F	Thy will be done
3505	1904	62	F	ASLEEP IN JESUS "TILL HE COME"
3512	1883	57	F	THY WILL BE DONE
3512	1899	75	M	PEACE, PERFECT PEACE
3513	1870	83	M	JESV MERCY

3515	1880	80	F	IHS WHO SO DWELLETH UNDER THE DEFENCE OF THE MOST RICH SHALL ABIDE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY I WILL SAY UNTO THE LORD, THOU ART MY HOPE, AND MY STRONGHOLD; MY GOD IN HIM WILL I TRUST.
3515	1905	78	M	I LOOK FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME O LORD, SAVE THY PEOPLE AND BLESS THINE HERITAGE. MAKE THEM TO BE NUMBERED WITH THY SAINTS IN GLORY EVERLASTING
3527	1892	55	M	GOD'S FINGER TOUCHED HIM AND HE SLEPT
3527	1882	39	F	IF SO BE WE SUFFER WITH HIM THAT WE MAY BE ALSO GLORIFIED TOGETHER
3528	1882	71	F	BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD
3529	1882	38	M	GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART AND MY PORTION FOREVER" P'S IXXIII.26
3529	1906	40	M	THY WILL BE DONE
3531	1877	n/a	F	As we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly

				All is well I was so long oppressed with pain It wore my strength away It made me think of heavenly rest, Which never can decay
3540	1882	65	M	
3540	1901	86	F	The Lord is Shepherd
3541	1881	1 month	M	ALIVE FOR EVERMORE
3583	1906	63	M	AT REST
3608	1901	67	F	Thy will be done
3617	1906	45	45	PEACE, PERFECT PEACE
3763	1869	12	F	Thou art gone to the grave but we will not deplore thee Whose God was the ransom, thy guardian and guide He gave thee, he took thee and he will restore thee And death has no sting for the Saviour has died
3765	1881	14	F	Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
3772	1912	85	F	Until the day dawns

Memorial	Verse	Emotion Words
2983	The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.	
2983	Until the morning dawn and the shadows flee away.	Flee
2983	Now the labourer's task is o'er.	
3112	Unto thee O Lord I commit my spirit	
3112	His end was peace	Peace
3129	[B]eneath this stone doth lie	Love
	[As] much good nature as could die	
	A loving husband a father dear	
	[...] friendly neighbour lies here.	

3146	Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away	Flee
3203	UNTIL THE DAY DAWN	
3244	PEACE PERFECT PEACE	Peace
3286	Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord	
3331	Peace Perfect Peace	Peace
3399	May she rest in peace	Rest; Peace
3457	Thy will be done	
3505	ASLEEP IN JESUS "TILL HE COME"	Rest
3512	THY WILL BE DONE	
3512	PEACE, PERFECT PEACE	Peace
3513	JESV MERCY	Mercy

3515	IHS WHO SO DWELLETH UNDER THE DEFENCE OF THE MOST RICH SHALL ABIDE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY I WILL SAY UNTO THE LORD, THOU ART MY HOPE, AND MY STRONGHOLD; MY GOD IN HIM WILL I TRUST.	Hope; Trust
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3515	I LOOK FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME O LORD, SAVE THY PEOPLE AND BLESS THINE HERITAGE. MAKE THEM TO BE NUMBERED WITH THY SAINTS IN GLORY EVERLASTING	Safety; Glory
3527	GOD'S FINGER TOUCHED HIM AND HE SLEPT	Rest
3527	IF SO BE WE SUFFER WITH HIM THAT WE MAY BE ALSO GLORIFIED TOGETHER	Suffer; Glory

3528	BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD	
3529	GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY HEART AND MY PORTION FOREVER" P'S IXXIII.26	Heart
3529	THY WILL BE DONE	
3531	As we have borne the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly	
3540	All is well	Pain; Strength; Rest
	I was so long oppressed with pain	
	It wore my strength away	
	It made me think of heavenly rest,	

	Which never can decay	
3540	The Lord is Shepherd	
3541	ALIVE FOR EVERMORE	
3583	AT REST	Rest
3608	Thy will be done	
3617	PEACE, PERFECT PEACE	Peace
3763	Thou art gone to the grave but we will not deplore thee Whose God was the ransom, thy guardian and guide He gave thee, he took thee and he will restore thee And death has no sting for the Saviour has died	Deplore; Restore
3765	Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord	
3772	Until the day dawns	