A Pre-history of Grief: Conceptualising Emotional Responses to Death in Victorian Britain

Edgar Gerrard Hughes

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

This work was supported by a Wellcome Trust PhD studentship, awarded as part of collaborative award 108727/Z/15/Z: 'Living With Feeling: Emotional Health in History, Philosophy, and Experience'.

Contents

Introduction

When Paul Ekman wrote his critical edition of Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (a volume in which he editorialised quite freely about Darwin's supposed oversights and intended meanings), he was puzzled by an unfamiliar use of the term 'grief'. 'The words for closely related feelings can be confusing,' Ekman wrote. He continued: 'In the next paragraph Darwin uses the term *grief* (which the dictionary defines as sorrow or anguish in response to a loss) as a general term for two more specific emotions: distress and sadness.'[1] Ekman advised readers that the chapter in question is better understood if Darwin's idiosyncratic deployment of the term 'grief' is set aside and mentally substituted for 'distress'.

In one respect, this is just one example among many of Ekman's contentious and widely-discussed tendency to gloss over the peculiarities of Darwin's thought that are more puzzling to modern ideas and less compatible with his own interpretation of 'basic emotions theory'. Ekman's unshakeable faith that emotional expressions are reliable and legible symptoms of an internal, universal and hard-wired reality have made him the prime representative opponent of those who wish to emphasise the social and cultural nature of emotions – including, of course, historians.[2] In the case of 'grief', however, the quibble over terminology is revealing. Darwin did indeed use the word in a way that is odd and unfamiliar to a twenty-first century reader. Although there are moments in the chapter in question when 'grief' explicitly refers to bereavement, at other points he used the same term to describe a more trivial,

[1] C. Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals: Definitive Edition*, ed. P Ekman (London: Oxford University Press: 1998), p. 176.
[2] For instance R. Ablow, *Victorian Pain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017) pp. 101-102; R. Boddice, *Historians and Emotions*; B. Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions', *Passions in Context*, 1 (2010), pp. 1–31 (especially pp. 2-7).

ephemeral feeling. A child who has been unsettled by an aggressive dog;[3] a woman frustrated at being spoken over in an animated conversation;[4] a man forced to sell his favourite goat;[5] a mother pleading for a doctor to save her dying child:[6] all these diverse subjects apparently exhibit a similar facial expression with the same basic features and evolutionary roots. To this spectrum of feeling – which must radically differ in its intensity and its duration, and to Ekman seems to amount to a fundamentally different set of emotions – Darwin applied the label of 'grief'. Occasionally Darwin used the compound phrase 'grief and anxiety', combining emotions that most twenty-first-century psychologists would take to be quite distinct. The reason why Darwin did not use the term in the way it came to be understood over the twentieth century is that, in the Victorian era, 'grief' had not yet come to carry the primary connotation it tends to hold today: an emotion triggered by a momentous loss, and especially an intimate bereavement.

The word 'grief' originally derived from the French word '*grever*', meaning to burden or encumber; it is a sense we have retained in phrases like 'to give grief' or the related word 'aggrieved', entering the language in the thirteenth century.[7] It soon shed its association with literal, physical encumbrance and warped into a term for emotional and psychological harm, although the Oxford English Dictionary continues to list instances in which grief refers to the *cause* of hardship rather than the *experience* of it right up to the nineteenth century. Even after 'grief' became primarily a term for an emotional, psychological experience, the feeling it described was not necessarily related to death. The first mention of loss or death in the OED entry for grief comes in the seventh

[3] C. Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: Penguin, 2009 [1872]), p. 176; this rather than Ekman's 'definitive edition' is the edition I use for future citations, following Darwin's own example of using one-word abbreviations to refer to his works ('*Expression*', '*Descent*' and so on).
[4] Darwin, *Expression*, p. 172.
[5] Ibid. p. 173.
[6] Ibid. p. 165.
[7] 'grief, n.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2020. Web. 7 August 2020; 'aggrieved, adj.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2020. Web. 7 August 2020.

definition, noted as a 'particularly modern' usage.[8] In the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, published in 1901, grief was primarily defined in terms of 'hardship, suffering… hurt, harm, mischief' – a range of emotions, many of which were less weighty and more commonplace altogether.[9] It is for this reason – as I discuss in further detail below – that I describe this thesis as a 'pre-history of grief': it is the history of the phenomena in the period immediately before ideas about the emotional responses coalesced underneath the label that they were more consistently given in the twentieth century.

This thesis takes as its starting point the same discrepancy between twentieth-century and Victorian usage that prompted Ekman to substitute Darwin's 'grief' for 'distress' or 'anxiety'. But instead of resolving the puzzle with a straightforward translation, I aim to explore in detail the questions that arise from this shift in meaning. I take this to be less a wrinkle in the easy interpretation of Darwinian ideas than the sign of a conceptual shift that carried important changes in the way we think about emotions, and particularly the emotional response to death and loss. The adoption of 'grief' as the dominant concept for understanding the emotional response to death was more than just a semantic trend. Indeed, since the word itself existed long before it became a core psychological category in this way, this is a case of a subtle linguistic shift indicating a much more drastic change in the way that mortal emotions were shaped. If the idea of 'grief' as an emotion specifically related to death and great loss was a twentieth-century development, what did it replace? What language was used to make sense of the emotional response to death, and what attitudes did this language convey? How different were nineteenth-century ideas about the emotional response to death from those that emerged from twentieth-century psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry? And how might normative ideas about grief have affected the way that Victorian mourners experienced and interpreted their feelings?

---

[8] 'grief, n.' *OED Online*.
[9] J. H. Murray (ed.), *A New Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901) pp. 415-416.

While the Victorian culture of death has been the subject of many important studies in social and cultural history, the history of concepts of nineteenth-century emotional responses to death has not been systematically explored. By tracing normative accounts of the emotional response to death, this thesis examines the political, moral and spiritual implications of the ways in which mourners were understood and expected to manifest their feelings, and what the expression of those feelings meant about the mourner in question. This is a history of the idea of grief and its antecedents as it was elucidated in didactic, scholarly works written by elite authors. For a breadth of perspectives, I focus in particular on four genres of writing: firstly, religious texts such as consolation manuals; secondly, novels addressing manners and emotion; thirdly, writing on evolution and animal emotion by men of science; finally, medical texts by doctors and psychiatrists. Such sources are limited in what they can convey about the lived experiences of any but the most privileged members of Victorian society. But they do illustrate the ways in which emotional norms were developed and codified to justify and maintain hierarchies of class, race and gender. By construing some modes of emotionality as more virtuous or healthy than others, the writers I consider consistently portrayed the emotional encounter with death as an arena for the expression of social and political identity.

The historiography of death and the intervention of this thesis

This thesis brings together two areas of historical research that were neglected until the past three decades but have since developed into major areas of research. The first is the history of death and dying. The second is the history of emotions, which informs the way in which I understand the political and ideological dimensions of emotion and the interactions between emotions, cultural norms and private experiences.

Up until the 1980s the Victorian culture of death was heavily influenced by Dickensian caricatures and based on the assumption that nineteenth-century

mourning was unusually florid and sentimental. In some cases historians explicitly commended the 'Victorian celebration of death' and lamented the supposed loss of a common cultural vocabulary for bereavement. James Curl's 1972 book contrasted the 'dark gloom of romantic Victoriana' to a twentieth-century 'conspiracy to pretend that death does not exist,' and focused on the intricate details of funeral architecture and deathbed imagery.[10] John Morley's *Death, Heaven and the Victorians* started from the same premise of funereal extravagance and romanticism, but took a less admiring view. Morley's book was a coruscating attack on the nineteenth century as a 'singularly wicked' time when 'the gap between pretension and performance was great, hypocrisy was a vice without glamour and misery, where it existed, was great.'[11] In Morley's narrative, mourning customs exemplify the sins of Victorianism, distorting heartfelt sentiment into a pompous theatre of manners, encouraging hypocrisy while impoverishing the already destitute bereaved by insisting on lavish funerals and uniforms of mourning. In contrasting ways, both books exemplify the idea that the Victorian culture of death was a demonstratively romantic and artistic one.

The historian who most influenced this sense of nineteenth-century cultures of mortality as sentimental and theatrical was the French historian of *mentalités* Philippe Ariès. Until the 1990s Ariès was frequently invoked by researchers (often from disciplines other than history) seeking a framework for understanding the long history of attitudes to death.[12] *The Hour of Our Death* traces a history of death in multiple stages: from a preoccupation with one's own certain mortality exemplified by the Medieval tradition of *ars moriendi* (the art of dying), to a gradual shift of focus to the death of loved ones, and finally to

[10] J. S. Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, (London: David & Charles, 1972), p. 20.
[11] J. Morley, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press: 1970).
[12] The idea of the 'tamed' death is particularly emphasised in this earlier, shorter work. Cited for for instance in C. Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 15-17; E. Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), especially pp. 76-94.

the wilful denial of death with which he diagnoses his own contemporaries. While ground-breaking in its engagement with mortality as a historically mutable experience, Ariès's narrative is now widely recognised as flawed in the broad conclusions it draws from a narrow and in some respects eccentric range of sources – and particularly in its application to majority Protestant cultures such as Great Britain.[13] Like other historians of France (including John McManners in his writing on the eighteenth century), Ariès's interpretation of the evolution of attitudes to death hinged on the progression of Catholic beliefs about the destination of the soul after death, in particular of ideas about purgatory.[14] To the extent that Ariès did address Victorian Britain, his source material was limited almost exclusively to the correspondence of the Brontës.[15] While this is a fascinating and perceptive case study of an idiosyncratically romantic attitude to death and bereavement, it is clear that these letters were not as representative of 'mentalities' in 'the West' as Ariès indicated.

It is accounts such as these that David Cannadine had in mind when, in 1981, he pointedly noted the 'impressively uniform' account of death and dying in Britain which historians, sociologists and psychologists had colluded in producing.[16] His call to drain the 'puddles of ignorance' surrounding grief was answered by several historians over the 1980s, including Michael Wheeler, whose studies of death and heaven in Victorian literature and theology offered a multifaceted view of intellectual and imaginative engagements with the afterlife in late-nineteenth-century thought. This went some way to counteracting the essentially Catholic slant of Ariès's narrative, although Wheeler was primarily

[13] P. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (London: Penguin, 1982); P. Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975); the idea of the 'tamed' death is particularly emphasised in this earlier, shorter work.
[14] J. McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).
[15] Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, especially pp. 431-498; for a summary of the main criticisms of Ariès's approach, see R. Porter, 'The hour of Philippe Ariès', *Mortality*, Vol. 4, Issue 1 (August 1999), pp. 83-90.
[16] D. Cannadine, 'War and Death: Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', *Mirrors of Mortality*, ed. J. Whaley (Routledge: London: 1981), pp. 187-242.

concerned with theological debates rather than the material facts of death or subjective experiences of grief. Pat Jalland's *Death in the Victorian Family* and its sequel *Death in War and Peace* were the first comprehensive social and cultural histories of death in modern Britain to offer an account grounded in the details of middle- and upper-class experiences.[17] Heeding the call for a history less reliant on familiar tropes of black crepe, saintly Little Nell and the mourning Queen Victoria, and more attentive to the lived experience of death, Jalland scoured the diaries and letters of the Victorian and Edwardian middle and upper classes for accounts of their public behaviour and private thoughts in their encounters with death and grief. The assembled portrait gives a textured sense of the emotional lives of nineteenth-century mourners.

In unearthing the varieties of nineteenth-century mourning, Jalland's account also dispelled some important misconceptions. Far from being a distinctive feature of the Victorian period, Jalland demonstrates, ornate and expensive funerals were in fact declining in the nineteenth century after having been a feature of life for the privileged classes for several preceding centuries.[18] Similarly, sentimental expressions of ecstatic grief infused with romanticism and evangelical zeal were already in decline in the second half of the nineteenth century: 'the age of open emotional expression was already passing in the 1870s and 1880s with the decline of Evangelicalism and Romanticism, accelerated for men by the ethos of the public schools with their cult of manliness and masculine reserve.'[19] Thirdly, even at the peak of the Evangelical revival, 'rapturous triumphalism' including evocations of heavenly light and the voice of god were almost exclusively found in didactic literature rather than private accounts. Instead of histrionic and theatrical performances, Jalland identifies the sentiments expressed in letters and diaries as 'honest attempts' to

[17] P. Jalland, *Death in War and Peace: A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914-1970* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996); P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2006).
[18] Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, pp. 194-209.
[19] Ibid. p. 18.

'communicate sorrow, love and faith.'[20] Finally, Jalland brings to the fore the importance of gender in shaping experiences of bereavement. Women whose husbands died, she shows, were hit particularly hard because of the financial precariousness that widowhood could bring, and because they lacked the vocational outlets in which their male counterparts frequently found solace.[21]

Jalland is committed to what she describes as 'experiential history' – the conviction that 'people from the past must first speak to us in their own words, if we can retrieve them, and that their most significant texts are often those in which their innermost lives are revealed'.[22] She confined those inner lives to Victorian middle- and upper-class subjects, 'in the hope that other scholars will examine working-class families,' and her invitation was taken up in 2005 by Julie-Marie Strange. Strange's source material is similar to Jalland's in the sense that it focused on personal accounts, although the comparative scarcity of contemporary sources describing bereavement from a working-class perspective means that she relies more heavily on autobiographies written many years after the deaths they concern. Structuring her study around the stages of nineteenth-century bereavement – sickness and death, the laying out of the corpse, the funerals, burials and subsequent visits to the grave – Strange uncovers 'a kaleidoscope of feeling: despair, relief, sorrow, pecuniary anxiety, horror, hope, incomprehension and love.'[23]

Strange's approach builds upon a previous historian of working-class autobiography, David Vincent, who was struck by the rarity with which death was mentioned in working-class autobiographies. On Vincent's reading, 'pure' grief is a luxury afforded only to the privileged few; those afflicted by material hardship were unable to indulge too deeply in any sense of loss, due to the grinding persistence of misfortune and the gruelling demands of their everyday

[20] Ibid. p. 4.
[21] Ibid. pp. 230-264.
[22] Ibid. p. 2.
[23] J-M. Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2005), p. 65.

life. Vincent argues that among the working classes, whose life was dominated by hardship and precariousness people had the 'capacity to survive experiences which one imagines would have a shattering effect on the personality and family life of anyone thus afflicted in our own society.' Only the rich could 'afford the luxury of investing so much emotion in a child that its death, and its death alone, could have such a devastating psychological effect.'[24] Strange gives nuance to this perspective by arguing that the silence surrounding grief is a part of working-class culture – both a coping mechanism for those whose responsibilities did not allow them to collapse under the weight of sorrow, and a result of the value placed on dignity and stoicism, especially for men. This interpretation involves a slight shift away from Jalland's 'experiential history'. Instead of taking articulations in letters and autobiographies as full expressions of inner feeling, Strange rejects hard distinctions between the private and public self and treats mourning rituals as cultural 'scripts' that are interpreted in particular ways depending on the community, the individual and the particular context. 'The working-class culture of death was a social forum for mediating private discourse of grief and condolence.'[25]

Throughout this thesis I am indebted to the work of both Jalland and Strange and echo many of their themes: the contested nature of nineteenth-century mourning, the mediating role of religion and the social importance put upon the values of emotional mastery and control – archetypally masculine, although also at times employed by women – that were contained in ideas of respectability and imparted by public school education. Given the almost exclusively middle- and upper-class nature of my source material, it is Jalland's work that my own most closely resembles. Where Jalland is primarily concerned with individual accounts of illness, death and bereavement, though, I turn my attention back towards normative and 'didactic' texts, where it is possible to find explicit analysis of emotional responses to death and their

[24] D. Vincent, 'Love and Death and the Nineteenth-Century Working Class', *Social History* Vol. 5, No. 2 (May, 1980), pp. 223-247 (quotation on p. 245).
[25] Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*, pp. 1-26.

meanings. Jalland and Strange both rightly identify didactic sources as problematic and partial when they are uncritically taken to represent the generality of lived experiences. As Jalland shows in her comparisons of didactic memoirs narrativising the 'good death' with private diaries, theory did not always translate neatly into practice.[26] Yet, as both Jalland and Strange show, descriptions of what the emotional response to death was or ought to be were nevertheless instrumental in defining emotions like grief or sorrow and setting the boundaries of their expression in terms of propriety, morality or health. I focus on the role that normative descriptions played in the formation of cultural scripts that defined and gave shape to emotional responses to death. How did nineteenth-century authors, religious commentators, try to make sense of the emotional response to death in general terms, as it related to religious and political commitments as well as questions of personal identity?

The array of attitudes I identify echo many of those that Jalland describes: I address the romantic Evangelical attitude to death in Chapter 1 and concur that it was especially prominent as a feature of the early- and mid-Victorian periods. Similarly, my research concurs with Jalland's argument that religious funerals were on the decline in the second half of the nineteenth century. The 'masculine reserve' that Jalland identifies with the rise of public schools, and which Strange identifies in a different form among working-class men, is a key feature of all of the discourses I trace. In one sense this is unsurprising, since the authors of these sources are predominantly middle-class men.

But in examining these male-authored concepts of grief, I identify commonalities and continuities between the idealized Christian response to death and the secular emotional categories that replaced it in science, psychology and psychiatry. This continuity has perhaps been under-acknowledged by previous historians because of the stress that has correctly been placed on the extent to which Christian beliefs about the destination of the soul shaped experiences of death. Yet, important as the differences between a

[26] Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, pp. 17-24.

committedly Christian and a more agnostic worldview may be, the masculine ideal of emotional mastery shows how they are more closely connected than they might initially appear. Within both paradigms, grief could be conceived as a struggle between emotion and the will, a noble struggle in which there was value in both the feeling and one's ability to resist it. Although I am writing a conceptual rather than a social history of death and the emotional responses it provoked, I believe that these insights can help to further illuminate the way in which cultural models shaped sorrow and grief.

My principle intervention in this thesis, then, is to identify several distinct but related strands within Victorian intellectual culture in which the emotional response to death was understood as a test of the mental, spiritual and moral character of the sufferer. The cause and meaning of 'sorrow' and 'grief' were widely discussed and debated, and judgments of the expression of loss were frequently treated as tokens of the essential nature of the sufferer. Writers adjudicated expressions of grief with explicit or implicit value judgments: judgments about the authenticity of emotional displays, about the individual's capacity for feeling or their capacity for resisting that feeling, about the healthy or pathological nature of particular manifestations of grief or sorrow. Above all, this was a code of mourning created within the framework of a tradition that valorised masculine modes of emotional expression (and suppression) and took other affective stances to be evidence of a weaker mind. To a large extent this involved emotional mastery and stoical resistance.[27] But it might also be inflected with a romantic idea that great passions were the mark of a great mind. There were in fact multiple emotional modes of Christian mourning, with differences that sometimes reflected theological debates but could also indicate alternative conceptions of more worldly relationships. I identify not one Christian idea of the good death (and good mourning) but several, expanding

[27] R. Smith, *Inhibition: History and Meaning in the Sciences of Mind and Brain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); G. Stedman, *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in Victorian Discourses on the Emotions, 1830-1872* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); P. White, 'Darwin's Emotions: the Scientific Self and the Sentiment of Objectivity', *Isis* Vol. 100, No. 4 (December 2009), pp.195–213.

the historical understanding of the range of emotional responses available to bereaved Victorians. This was particularly the case when these passions involved death, since death represented an encounter with mortality and the nature of the human condition within a cosmic order. It was the most primal encounter with the nature of being, and represented a challenge to non-believers and believers alike. The result was one that celebrated both strength of feeling and the ability of the sufferer to resist fully succumbing to it.

Several scholars have previously noted the existence of a code of private, stoical grief typically coded as male. Jalland and Strange both address gender divides in responses to death, as I discuss above. Paul White, analysing attitudes to death among nineteenth-century men of science, identifies a combination of sentimentality and 'manly reserve' in the consolation letters of late nineteenth-century naturalists and medics.[28] Åsa Jansson's consideration of melancholia draws on similar themes.[29] But no previous study has been devoted to an examination of this reification of archetypally male, middle-class and white emotional styles as it was expressed in distinct but recognizable forms in a number of different discourses. In doing so, this thesis is also an attempt to consider the work those theories of grief, sorrow and mourning did in sustaining (or occasionally disrupting) hierarchies of race, gender and class.

The idea that expressions of grief, sorrow or mourning could be mobilised as expression of political and social identity has recently been explored by other historians of the nineteenth century. As two recent studies have shown – one by

[28] P. White, 'Darwin Wept: Science and the Sentimental Subject', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 16 (2011), pp. 195-213 (quotation on p. 199); see also P. White, *Thomas Huxley: Making the Man of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); P. White, 'Darwin's Emotions: the Scientific Self and the Sentiment of Objectivity', *Isis* Vol. 100, No. 4 (December 2009), pp. 811-826.
[29] Å. Jansson, 'Mood Disorders and the Brain: Depression, Melancholia, and the Historiography of Psychiatry', *Medical History* Vol. 55 (2011), pp. 393-399; Å. Jansson, 'From Statistics to Diagnostics: Medical Certificates, Melancholia, and "Suicidal Propensities" in Victorian Psychiatry', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 46 Issue 3, (Spring 2013), pp. 716-731; A. Jansson, *From Melancholia to Depression: Disordered Mood in Nineteenth-Century Psychiatry* (London: Macmillan, 2021).

Manon Nouvian, the other by Lydia Murdoch – Chartists and anti-vaccination activists deployed ritualistic expressions of mourning as acts of political protest.[30] The idea of mourning and elegy as a political and ideological statement is also a feature of literary scholarship that focuses on the textual dynamics of mourning. Esther Schor (among others) has examined the development of elegy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, suggesting a move from social 'mourning' to an individualised psychology of 'grief'.[31] Dana Luciano has traced the shifting status of grief in America over the course of the nineteenth century, as it gradually became 'something to be cherished rather than shunned'. Once a rebellion against God's will, it came to be seen instead as 'the body's spontaneous and natural testimony to the importance of interpersonal attachment'. Luciano sees this as a form of revolt against modernity: 'Grief's pain… appeared as tolerable, even as desirable, in the face of a new order of time frequently described as mechanical and impersonal.'[32] My analysis similarly emphasises the way in which mourners oriented themselves within their spiritual and social worlds in the forms taken by emotional responses to death, understanding correctly expressed grief as an expression of social and political identity, whether in conformity or rebellion with social expectations and conditions.

Sources for a conceptual history of Victorian sorrow and grief

Ubiquitous though representations of death and dying were in Victorian Britain, there was no equivalent to the twentieth-century canon of grief literature. Histories of psychological theories about grief conventionally begin with

[30] M. Nouvian, 'Defiant Mourning: Public Funerals as Funeral Demonstrations in the Chartist Movement', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 24, Issue 2 (April 2019) pp. 208–226; L. Murdoch, 'Anti-vaccination and the Politics of Grief for Children in Late Victorian England' in *Youth, Childhood, Emotions and Modern History*, ed. Stephanie Olson (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), pp. 242-260.
[31] E. Schor, *Bearing the Dead: the British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1994); and more recently but on a similar theme, M. Sandy, *Romanticism, Memory, and Mourning* (Farnham: Routledge, 2015).
[32] D. Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Time and the Sacred Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), p. 2.

Sigmund Freud's 1917 essay 'Mourning and Melancholia'.[33] As I have touched on at the beginning of this introduction, the term 'grief' was not widely used to describe the emotional response to death until after Freud (as partially attested by the fact that Freud's *Trauer* was translated as 'mourning' rather than 'grief', despite the German term carrying the connotations of both internal emotion and social practice).[34] In the absence of a single arena in which a widely understood and accepted theory of grief can be easily distilled, I have sought places in which the emotional response to death was in one way or another treated as a subject in the abstract (rather than an account of personal feelings). I have identified four genres or fields in which the idea of the emotional response to death was frequently characterised, debated and discussed. Each chapter of this thesis is devoted to one of these fields. The four fields are as follows:

1. Religious advice literature: texts written by Christian writers of various denominations, providing an ambiguous combination of instruction and consolation.
2. Critiques of mourning contained within debates over funeral reform, narrative descriptions of mourning in Victorian novels, and satire.
3. Descriptions of grief within broader scientific accounts of emotion, particularly in the tradition of evolutionary thought, but also among more orthodox Christian writers drawing on an earlier understanding of emotion within the framework of natural philosophy.
4. Accounts of grief as a pathology or a cause of pathologies in medicine and psychiatry.

---

[33] For instance L. Granek, 'Grief as a Pathology: the Evolution of Grief Theory in Psychology from Freud to the Present', *Journal of the History of Psychology* vol. 13,1 (February 2010), pp. 46-73; N. Small, 'Theories of Grief: A Critical Review' in S. Earle, C. Komaromy, C. Bartholemew, *Death and Dying: A Reader* (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2009), pp. 153-158. See also Geoffrey Gorer's claim that 'Mourning and Melancholia' 'dominates all the psychoanalytical and most of the psychiatric and sociological studies of grief and mourning written since': G. Gorer, *Death Grief and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (London: Cresset Press, 1965), p. 118.

[34] S. Freud: 'Mourning and Melancholia', *Collected Papers* vol. 4, trans. Riviere, Joan, (London: Hogarth Press, 1925); for a discussion of the German meanings of *Trauer*, see Fiorini, Glocer, Leticia, Bokanowski, Thierry & Lewkowicz, Sergio: *On Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia'* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

The nature of these sources shapes what questions can be answered by them in two crucial ways. Firstly, my primary focus is on the idea of grief and other emotional responses to death. The sources I use are for the most part published works by authors from the most privileged, literate classes of Victorian society, those who typically published religious tracts, novels and scientific texts. As such they are predominantly male, exclusively white and largely from the upper- and middle-classes. This thesis, then, is a portrait of the emotional responses to death as they were conceptualised by a cultural and economic elite. They starkly convey the prejudices of this elite while drawing conclusions that buttress their claim to superiority. In many cases they can even be read as a self-conscious construction of a middle-class masculine identity. These sources frequently discuss the grief of women, and frequently of other non-hegemonic subjects, including those identified as 'savage', 'primitive' or 'insane'. But observations about these diverse subjects are overwhelmingly the descriptions of an external observer, not accounts of the actual meaning of their expressions of sorrow or grief. They are useful not primarily because of what they reveal about the mourners described, but as attempts by an elite to codify and naturalise a particular typology of emotional styles, in service to a pre-existing emotional hierarchy. They demonstrate how and why some varieties of sorrow and grief were prized as demonstrations of strength and virtue while others were taken to be degenerate or weak.

Secondly, I have chosen these discourses because they are arenas in which the nature and origin of the emotional response to death were for various reasons brought into question. In the cases of (1), (3) and (4), this is because of its relationship to a broader ideology/epistemology, in the case of (2) because it involved an interrogation of the authenticity of the emotional display, and therefore an inquiry into what characterised the underlying emotion (as distinct from the performance). In either instance, questions about the nature and meaning of the emotional response to death are most likely to arise at the point when there are questions over its boundaries or a sense of deviance from an ideal or norm. In religious advice literature, writers were concerned with what

expressions of mourning implied about belief in the afterlife, as well as what effect unrestrained grief might have on faith. Authors of novels and satires regularly worried about discrepancies between outward display and internal feeling, and the hypocrisies that this might reveal. Scientific writing inquired about the reason for emotions and emotional expression, partly as part of a broader debate about the distinction between animals and humans. Grief's relationship to madness and its status as a pathology in medical discussions also unveil attitudes to 'normal' and 'abnormal' emotional responses to death.

One consequence of this analysis is to put greater emphasis on points of tension over the correct emotional response to death: expressions of grief that were considered to be marginal or criticisms of common practice. These were not necessarily the dominant social attitudes – many Victorian mourners, as previous studies have shown, found established vocabularies and rituals more than adequate to convey their feelings on the death of a loved one. But an analysis of these points of tension is nevertheless useful because of the way in which these perceived abnormalities can work as a foil to reveal what is assumed to be normal or desirable. Examining the cases where grief was considered to be dangerous, immoral or pathological can throw into relief the assumptions that were made in the Victorian age about the healthy, virtuous or normal response to loss.

The terminology the sources that I address use when discussing emotional responses to death in the Victorian period varied in revealing ways depending on the genre, the context and the identity of the writer. This is part of the reason why the thesis cannot be called a 'history of grief'. As demonstrated by the discrepancy between Darwin and Ekman's understanding of 'grief', this term could apply to anything from bereavement to a fleeting vexation. 'Mourning' could be used to refer to an emotion or emotional process, but it was (as it is today) more usually a broader term for the social rituals surrounding death. The term 'sorrow' was commonly used in discussions of bereavement, especially in religious contexts, as in the widely quoted biblical phrase, 'sorrow not even as

others which have no hope' (as translated in the King James Bible).[35] But while it often had a particular spiritual valence, 'sorrow' was also a more generic term for all kinds of sadness and emotional suffering – it was not the Victorian equivalent of today's more particular 'grief'. For much of the nineteenth century, people did not in fact have a word that functioned similarly to the way that 'grief' is used today.

Nevertheless, there are notable parallels in accounts of grief in the scientific and religious discourses this thesis addresses. Broadly, those common features are:

1. First and foremost, the idea that emotional responses to death involved an internal struggle, a test of will.
2. Arising from this, the idea of grief as a process involving struggle or work – sometimes composed of multiple stages.
3. The pathologisation of expressions of the emotions of bereavement that did not fit the idealised version of grief mastered by a strong and steadfast mind.
4. The idea that emotional responses to death were a test of both health and character.

It is striking that many of these characteristics mirror the idea of 'grief' developed in twentieth-century psychoanalysis and experimental psychology, despite the fact that the discourses I analyse predate the emergence of these disciplines by several decades. Assumptions about the value and meaning of religious sorrow were translated into secular ideas about grief in a manner that allowed the emotional response to maintain much of its moral and evaluative qualities – and which still influence assumptions about death today. This is why I have framed this thesis as a 'pre-history of grief'.

[35] *KJV,* Thessalonians 4:13

From sorrow to grief? Semantic change and the idea of 'pre-history'

Pre-histories look for germinal seeds of concepts and cultural developments in the periods before they have been formally constituted as concepts: they are the 'signs of a future story,' as Richard Scholar and Anna Holland put it in the introduction to a volume on pre-histories, occurring 'at the limits of their authors' awareness or understanding'.[36] This is not to affirm a teleological account of history in which the past serves only as a prelude to a pre-determined future, with all possible avenues rejected unless they can be conceived as the beginnings of a road that culminates in the present. Instead, it is a way of recognising that historians are living with the residues of the histories they have studied, including flotsam from periods before the terminology of a concept becomes recognisable.

As Neil Kenny has shown in *Pre-histories and Afterlives*, the project of seeking these signs of a future story is bound up with emotional experiences, both those of the researcher and of their subjects. The researcher's emotion may often be one of discomfort when, on beginning to examine a topic, they realise that the terms in which they are thinking about that topic do not match those in which the subjects they are studying think about themselves (such as non-chivalric romances in the sixteenth century, whose own authors did not recognise them as 'novels' despite their anticipation of many innovations that would categorise the emergent genre).[37] But emotions can also be the *subject* of a pre-history. One of Kenny's own examples comes from his work on curiosity in the early modern period: often the authors he examines describe an emotion that we might recognise as curiosity but which for them is perceived as something akin to dismay or unease.[38]

---

[36] A. Holland and R. Scholar, *Pre-Histories and Afterlives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 5.
[37] N. Kenny, 'Passions, Emotions and Pre-Histories' in *Pre-Histories and Afterlives*, ed. R. Scholar and A. Holland, pp. 15-28.
[38] N. Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (Oxford University Press: Oxford: 2004).

My experience in researching the concept of grief in the nineteenth century parallels Kenny's description in both these respects. When I started to look into nineteenth-century accounts of grief, I was troubled by the disjuncture between the emotion that is such a familiar part of the twenty-first century English lexicon, and the emotions being described in the texts. Religious sorrow and social mourning were shaped by a very different set of assumptions, structures and trajectories to those of twentieth-century grief, and the familiar arc of the 'grief process' was rarely to be seen. When the term 'grief' was used, meanwhile, it often seemed to imply a perplexing range of emotional experiences that do not translate easily into a category recognisable to a twenty-first century reader. Yet amid the ostensible foreignness of nineteenth-century sense-making of the emotional response to death, it also seemed possible to identify in scientific and in medical discourses an emergent concept that had much in common with the 'grief' that forms such a fundamental element in twentieth-century psychology. It is of course true that these discourses were not the only intellectual framework that ordinary Victorians used in order to structure and make sense of their emotional experience, nor necessarily the dominant one (despite the increasing professionalism of the sciences and their growing viability as an adjunct or alternative to religion).[39] But developments in the pages of medical journals and ethnographic accounts are significant despite their marginality, because within them can be found the stirrings of an alternative way of thinking about emotional experience.[40] They offer an illuminating prequel to the twentieth-century science of grief, while also drawing on much older structures of feeling. Thus they form a bridge between bygone, somewhat alien emotional regimes and recognisably contemporary ones.

---

[39] See for instance H. McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (London: Macmillan, 1996), chapter 4: 'The Religious Crisis'.

[40] Fay Bound Alberti makes a similar point with regard to her recent work on loneliness: although science did not *replace* religion in the simplistic sense that some earlier historians implied, it did provide an alternative means of structuring knowledge and experience: F. Bound Alberti, *A Biography of Loneliness: the History of an Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 30-39.

In the case of 'grief', I argue in this thesis, some historians have used twenty-first century vocabulary, models and concepts as an analytical framework while simultaneously presenting the Victorian culture of mortality as fundamentally alien to the death culture that followed it. This thesis remedies that confusion by drawing attention to the terms in which the emotional response to death was described and theorised by Victorians themselves but also drawing attention to continuities between nineteenth- and twentieth-century ideas in this realm. It cannot be described as a 'history of grief', since this term comes with a dense twentieth-century baggage and was not consistently used to discuss bereavement. But it is a history of the ideas and attitudes from which grief emerged; and hence, in the terms outlined by Holland, Scholar and Kenny, a 'pre-history of grief'.

Grief and the historiography of emotions

The histories of mortality discussed above are the principle works that this thesis responds to in terms of historical content. In more methodological and philosophical terms, I am also drawing on a second body of scholarship that has become a more intensive focus for historians over a similar time period to these histories of mortality. Until the 1990s, historians engaged only intermittently with the genealogy of emotions, feelings or sentiment. The most frequently-cited of these earlier excursions into the history of emotions is Lucien Febvre, whose 1941 essay on sensibility addressed emotions as 'a sort of institution'.[41] Many of the ideas that Febvre developed in this essay are at the core of the history of emotions, and the foundational assumptions of this thesis. Firstly, that they are not straightforwardly organic phenomena but cultural 'contagions' channelled by rituals and conventions and varying from one group to the next in the way they are produced, elicited and expressed. Secondly, Febvre firmly warned

[41] Lucien Febvre, *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre*, ed. Peter Burke, trans. K. Folca (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

against treating psychological categories as fixed objects and assuming that the emotions of the present could easily be identified in the past.[42]

Setting aside this and other isolated sallies into the history of emotion, however, it was Carol and Peter Stearns who kick-started its development as a major area of scholarship. They believed that actual emotional experiences were inaccessible to historians, and that the scope of practicable historical research into emotions was therefore limited to the study of texts designed to manage and control emotions. They proposed the term 'emotionology' for this approach, and their own emotionological research focused on anger management, using popular advice manuals as models of an emotional ideal.[43] In a sense my approach in this thesis is not dissimilar to this. The texts they consider act as restraints, exhorting emotional control, keeping anger within acceptable bounds. Much of the religious and secular literature that I consider can also be understood as attempts to keep expressions of grief within acceptable boundaries and stop it from becoming unruly.

In the sense that many of my sources are instructive texts encouraging particular emotional norms, my approach is similar to that of Stearns and Stearns. However, I am also informed by the work of subsequent historians who have endeavoured to reach beyond a model in which culture can serve only to inhibit or enhance the flow of 'natural' feeling. More recent historians of emotion reject this binary model of the mastery of feelings versus their expression and impart a more active and constructive role to culture in shaping

---

[42] For instance between Catholics and Protestants – Lucien Febvre, 'Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past', in Burke (ed.), *A New Kind of History*, pp. 12–26.

[43] C. Stearns & P. Stearns, *Anger: the Search for Emotional Control* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). The Stearns welcomed later developments in the history of emotions that broadened the possible range of approaches and topics that could be addressed. But Peter Stearns nevertheless sought to distinguish 'emotionology', that is, the attitudes or standards governing emotional expression within a society, from 'emotion', which he defined as 'a complex set of interactions among subjective and objective factors, mediated through neural and/or hormonal systems'; see P. Stearns & C. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (Oct., 1985), pp. 813-836.

affective experience.[44] Instead of treating emotion as a biological force to be managed, historians are now more inclined to see emotions as being constructed amid a rich variety of discursive traditions and performed – often in embodied as well as linguistic ways – according to a set of social scripts.[45]

In William Reddy's formulation, for instance, certain speech acts or linguistic formulations act as 'emotives', crystallising the muddled sensations of both speaker and listener into a coherent and recognisable feeling: emotionally-valenced language as a sort of 'focusing' device. When a subject expresses emotions, Reddy argues, their words are not merely imperfect descriptions of a more fundamental internal reality arrived at through introspection; they are constitutive utterances that conduct flows of feeling between participants in an interaction, with the power to conjure sensations in speaker and listener alike.[46] Reddy's approach gives emotional language and terminology a key place in the construction of emotion – not only in keeping emotions in check but determining what they are and what they mean. This has influenced my own treatment of grief as not only an expression of feeling but a 'constitutive utterance' – an emotion manufactured in part by the nature of its expression. I also follow Reddy in trying to identify the larger political implications of these flows of interpersonal feeling: changing modes of emotional expression govern not only intimate relationships but drive major political events and structure social organisation. In Reddy's studies, the changes wrought by shifting 'emotives' included determining the course of the French Revolution or

[44] S. J. Matt & P. Stearns (ed.), *Doing Emotions History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), esp. pp. 17-56, including an essay from Peter Stearns reviewing the developments in the history of emotions since his initial insights.
[45] As well as Scheer, another historian of emotions who has foregrounded both bodies and social scripts in her research is Katie Barclay; for instance K. Barclay, *Men on Trial: Performing Emotion, Embodiment and Identity in Ireland, 1800-45'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), especially pp. 1-14.
[46] W. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: a Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2001). I am summarising an argument developed over a long section of the book, but see in particular pp. 96-111.

restructuring sexual relationships via the invention of romantic love.[47] In this thesis, I similarly consider the way in which norms of emotional expression following bereavement helped to create and affirm or challenge political hierarchies, including those of gender and race.

Since Reddy developed this influential approach to thinking about emotions historically, Monique Scheer has expanded it to accommodate a more bodily dimension. Scheer draws on the Bordieuian idea of scripted 'practices', which are learned and performed by the body that is itself moulded by culture and habitus. [48] Barbara Rosenwein has coined the concept of 'emotional communities', which she defines as 'social groups whose members adhere to the same valuations of emotions and their expression'.[49] Some of the discourses I investigate in this thesis – in particular religious evangelicals and men of science – can be understood as 'emotional communities' with distinct sets of emotional rules governing many interactions. [50] However, I emphasise the overlap between these communities at least as strongly as the features that divide them.

Finally, in its emphasis on the evolution of emotional terminology and the conceptual changes implied by semantic shifts, this thesis also draws on the approach of Thomas Dixon. This is especially the case in his study of the 'emergence of altruism' as (borrowing Raymond Williams's term) a 'keyword', and in his 2003 investigation into the emergence of 'emotion' as the dominant category for describing mental phenomena that previously carried a variety of

[47] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, chapters 5-7; W. Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia and Japan, 900-1200 CE* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012).
[48] M. Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and is that what makes them have a history)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotions' in *History and Theory* Vol. 51, No. 2 (May 2012), pp. 193-220.
[49] B. Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods', p. 1.
[50] B. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006).

labels.[51] The transition I trace in this thesis somewhat mirrors the journey traced by Dixon from often-spiritually inflected categories such as 'passion' to the scientific, materialistic understanding of affect in the form of 'emotions'.[52] In the case of the emotional response to death, the equivalent categories would become 'sorrow' and 'grief'. Yet to describe this as a transition 'from sorrow to grief' would be to suggest a cleaner break than the one I identify in this thesis.

The movement of the thesis

Each chapter of this thesis deals with accounts of grief within a particular genre or intellectual tradition. In this sense it is thematic, although there is also a rough chronology, with early chapters addressing genres in which texts were produced particularly prolifically in the earlier parts of the nineteenth century, while later chapters deal with scientific and medical discourses that were increasingly prominent towards the end of this period. I conclude with a brief outline of the evolution of the twentieth-century concept of grief, highlighting the under-examined ways in which this concept drew on predecessor ideas from the nineteenth century and before.

In Chapter One, I address the dominant intellectual tradition in which emotions were addressed in Victorian Britain: Christianity. Focusing especially on the consolation literature that was published in the mid-nineteenth century, I identify several alternative narrative patterns for the unfolding of an idealised grief – as well as the deviant kinds of grief that this consolation literature warned against. I examine the multiple and sometimes conflicting responses that popular theology could encourage in bereaved people: not as a static and uncomplicated source of solace, but as a structure that could both discipline and console. Ancient patterns of Christian thought that styled sorrow as a holy affect – a devotional mode, even – had long competed with a censorious attitude towards mourning for earthly goods. In the Victorian period, a third

[51] T. Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: the Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[52] Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, pp. 94-134.

element of very personal ecstasy over the promise of heavenly reunions complicated this further, leaving mourners with a puzzling menu of possible responses to death. This multiplicity of narratives for the emotional response to death demonstrate that Christianity offered several competing routes through bereavement, each of them with its own trials and moral connotation. Yet each narrative contained some measure of tension between 'natural' (potentially spiritually dangerous) feeling and the wilful exertion of faith. Christian sorrow was in this sense both an emotion in itself and a triumph over instinctive feeling.

Chapter Two concerns the material and social culture of Victorian mourning and the tensions that emerged within this culture over the course of the nineteenth century. Although many mourners found solace and meaning in mourning rituals, the effusiveness (and expense) of these rituals were also the subject of a steady stream of critique over the course of the nineteenth century. Satirical attacks on mourning dress and funereal customs were common in novels and the popular press, and from the 1870s a popular movement gained traction among middle-class campaigners to curb what were often seen as excesses in public displays of bereavement. Although these attacks on mourning rituals were only one side of the coin, their interrogation of the authenticity of mourning is uniquely instructive about assumptions concerning the nature of real and desirable grief. An important upshot of anti-mourning critiques is a conceptual binary between a doubtfully sincere display of sorrow on the one hand and a necessarily silent and interior emotional truth on the other. This dichotomy tended to vilify the expressions of public emotion that were usually the duty of women, while valorising a stoical attitude to death that aligned with the values of nineteenth-century middle-class masculinity.

Chapter Three investigates the place of grief in emergent sciences informed by an evolutionary worldview: the way in which grief, stripped of its devotional significance, was accommodated into a Darwinian vision of nature. The chapter traces the emergence of what I call a 'hierarchy of suffering', in which grief interpreted as 'lower' or more bestial – frantic, transient and highly visible –

stood in opposition to the grief of supposedly more mentally sophisticated (especially white and male) sufferers, which was characterised by its depth, duration and absence of outward show. The work of naturalists and ethnographers is discussed alongside more popular accounts of grief in animals and supposedly 'lower' races. It also looks at the place of suffering in the context of an evolutionary cosmology and temporality: I argue that emotional suffering, after being shorn of the devotional significance afforded by Christian theology, did not only become 'medicalised' but also took on new meanings related to the metaphysical implications of an evolutionary worldview. Although this grief was ostensibly a distinct phenomenon to Christian sorrow, with alternative meanings, origins and connotations, it adopted many of the characteristics that I determine in previous chapters: a celebration of both deep feeling and mastery of that feeling, and a sense that a hierarchy of feeling was evident in the way humans and other animals encountered the experience of loss.

Following on from this, Chapter Four addresses the way that grief was treated in the adjacent discipline of medicine. Contradicting the familiar assertion that grief was medicalised in the twentieth century, I unearth a rich if diffuse literature of grief within Victorian psychology and psychiatry. Widespread belief in the dangerous and even deadly effects of grief existed throughout this period; but towards the end of the nineteenth century (and in particular with Henry Maudsley) a secular framework emerged for understanding grief. This was partly an attempt to bring emotion into scientific discourse, but in the process it also gave medical and moral meanings to the emotional response to death. This discussion also highlights the central yet ambiguous role of the will in discussions of emotional health: pathological variants of grief could result either from a failure of the will to discipline and suppress violent feeling, or an over-exertion of the will leading to the build-up of 'toxic' or 'anti-vital' emotion. But while its over-application might carry risks, psychiatrists consistently portrayed the wilful struggle against grief as necessary and desirable, in many respects mirroring the struggle between sorrow and faith.

Finally, I conclude with an epilogue tracing the development of the grief concept in the twentieth-century and highlighting the ways in which it drew on the motifs explored in preceding chapters. Tracing the evolution of Freud's concept from this brief essay through several decades of psychological thought, through Melanie Klein, John Bowlby, Colin Murray Parkes, Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and, eventually, Judith Butler, I show how the idea of grief has become integral to a post-Christian notion of personal identity and character. This grief concept, however, is not purely a creature of twentieth-century psychoanalysis and experimental psychology: it has also inherited much from models of grief, sorrow and emotional suffering in earlier science, which in turn take cues from Christian models of loss.

The idea of grief as a process emotion composed of several stages and requiring mental 'work' can in many ways be seen as a continuation of the intellectual trends that I trace in this thesis. This complicates (without necessarily contradicting) the narrative of secularisation propagated by writers such as Tony Walter in the longer history of death.[53] While it may be true that the domain for conceptualising emotions has shifted from the sacred to the secular in the past two hundred years, the scientific notion of grief took on many of the same qualities as Christian sorrow, both in its nature and subjective quality and in the moral, medical and social meanings it could convey.

[53] T. Walter, *The Revival of Death* (London: Rougledge, 1994), especially pp. 69-85 and pp. 157-160; see also T. Walter, *On Bereavement: the Culture of Grief* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2001).

Chapter 1
The Alphabet of Tears: Varieties of Religious Sorrow, c. 1830-1860

In 1849, an anonymous 'V' wrote to *The British Magazine* to elucidate a theory of 'Christian grief and its stages' – a subject on which, they claimed, much had already been written, though they found little of it 'satisfactory'. This theory proposed that religious 'grief' could be understood as a series of 'stages', which, they asserted, have not so far 'been marked, or attended to'. Although 'V' did not feel that the exact number of stages was fixed, the letter identified seven – three more than John Bowlby would fix on more than a century later and two more than those famously identified by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross.[1]

First, in the initial rawness of bereavement, came the stage of alienation from God, in which the bereaved person 'refuses to be comforted' and indeed in their self-erasing desolation wishes for death themself.[2] In the second stage some 'alleviation' was permitted, as the sufferer began gradually to be capable of seeing their personal catastrophe in some perspective: 'not *all* is lost and, although sadness is natural and permitted, "we who are Christians" and live in the faith of a life to come, must not sorrow "as those who have not hope."'[3] In the third stage some glimmer of holier thoughts appeared, and in the fourth, 'God is seen clearly amidst our sorrows,' his intentions glimpsed even in the agony he has caused 'the mourner'.[4] Death may be a rebuke for sin, but it must still be welcomed since it is evidence of God's presence in human affairs. Fifth, woe began to turn into 'good intentions' for bettering the world. The sixth stage is the stage of prayer that grief should have left the bereaved person stronger in

[1] J. Bowlby, 'Processes of Mourning', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* Vol. 42 (1961), pp. 317-340.
[2] 'Christian Grief and Its Stages', p. 412.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. pp. 412-413.

their faith and more capable of good works. Finally, in the seventh stage, that mirrors Kübler-Ross's 'acceptance', Christian grief had run a course that allows the sufferer to turn to God in full 'praise' for the trials he or she has suffered. From total desolation – including a period when God appeared absent even to the pious Christian – grief and sorrow gradually mutated into pious gratitude.[5] The emotional response to death was characterised not by one feeling but several, whose collective meaning could only be grasped and realised when understood as a sequential narrative or journey.

As adumbrated in an anonymous article published in an ecclesiastical journal, these stages of grief are just one relatively obscure account of the emotional journey that a pious Christian might experience or aspire to in the nineteenth century. It cannot of course be taken as a template for understanding the emotions of Victorians of all denominations and social classes. Nor is there evidence that it opened new horizons in theorising about 'sorrow', 'mourning' or 'grief' – or that this was even really its intent, despite the author's claims to novelty. In its basic account of faith overcoming worldly despair it fits a familiar pattern of the nineteenth-century, 'the good death' that has been described by Pat Jalland, Mary Riso and others.[6] But in one particular respect it is an unusual and illuminating document: few Christian writers were as explicit and direct in mapping out a generic account of 'grief' as an emotional process. 'V' was presenting a normative model of 'Christian grief' as an archetypal narrative with an established structure: a staged process involving suffering, redemption and, ultimately, a closer union with the divine. This was not necessarily a unitary emotion – a sensation in the body beyond the control of conscious cognition – but an emotional process in which feelings, judgments, and the will all played a part.

[5] Ibid. pp. 413-414.
[6] P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, pp. 264-283; M. Riso, *The Narrative of the Good Death: The Evangelical Deathbed in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2015), e.g. pp. 174-180

'V' was unusual in their attempt to plot the course of a mourner's emotions so systematically. But the idea that the emotional response to death was comprised of a number of distinct, sequential feelings was implicit in many accounts of advice literature throughout this period. Indeed, though this article ostensibly describes an archetypal emotional process, it could equally have been describing a set of narrative tropes that recur in nineteenth-century accounts of bereavement and mourning. For it was in religious advice literature, more than anywhere else, that the emotional response to death was most abundantly described, debated and discussed. Many of these tropes stretched back to the earliest days of Christian thought, to John Chrysostum and Saint Augustine of Hippo in the fifth century AD. But the nineteenth century in particular witnessed a proliferation of books and pamphlets directly addressing the recently bereaved. These texts took various forms. On the more formal and traditional end of the spectrum were sermons and treatises written by clergymen, offering didactic exposition on scriptural accounts of mourning. Others were more intimate and less academic, often the work of female authors narrating their heart-breaking experiences in a heightened emotional language infused with sentimentalism. In between these poles there were also composite texts: expositions of theology informed by personal narratives or, on occasion, anthologies of mourning that combined theological writing from various historical periods with stylised personal narratives, poetry and even occasionally excerpts from non-Christian traditions.

The broad genre of writing spanning these various texts – which have variously been described as 'consolation tracts', 'consolation manuals' and 'consolation literature' – is the subject of the present chapter. Like 'V', I use this literature to plot the arc of Christian mourning as it was presented in didactic texts. While each individual text has its own unique qualities, it is possible to identify underlying tropes and narrative arcs in many of the accounts they contain. By identifying common features in these various emotional journeys of bereavement, I uncover an emotional process akin to grief in a period before psychoanalysis and experimental psychology fostered a stable canon of

literature systematically mapping the narrative of grief. Whereas 'V' identifies one specific and rigid set of 'stages', my investigation identifies four possible pathways that Christian mourners guided by these texts might commonly hope and expect the emotional response to death to follow. Underpinning each narrative was a sense that the raw emotional experience of a loved one's death was a bleak and perhaps spiritually dangerous sensation. Yet each narrative proposed a way in which this emotional challenge could, by an exertion of will and faith, be converted into something spiritually nourishing or improving. The difference between the narratives lay in where this transformation led and where evaluative meaning was located within the narrative. In brief, the narratives that I identify are as follows:

1. 'Stoical resistance': a narrative that had existed since the early days of Christian thought, in which passions such as sorrow were signs of worldly attachments that only faith could overcome. In this model, faith and feeling were directly opposed, and spirituality was strengthened through this struggle.
2. 'Joy in sorrow': a narrative more distinct to nineteenth-century Christianity, in which, instead of being entirely vanquished and suppressed, sorrow was transmuted into joy at the prospect of a heavenly reunion with the beloved dead. Instead of standing in the way of spiritual conviction, familial love was a shard of divinity and a foretaste of heavenly bliss – not to be mastered and overcome but, rather, sustained beyond the grave.
3. 'Sorrow into sympathy': in this narrative, the sorrow of bereavement must be attended to as a lesson from God. Consolation literature advocating this approach often urged the transmutation of sorrow into 'sympathy' – a means of bringing Christians into closer union with their coreligionists, and by extension with God.
4. 'The school of suffering': a similar narrative to the one described previously, but with a greater emphasis on the self-improvement and perfectibility closely related to a theodicy in which all life on Earth could

be interpreted as a machine for perfecting the state of the soul. As the nineteenth century progressed, some writers began to incorporate into this narrative the language of evolutionary models in which death and struggle were instrumental to progress.

In certain ways these narratives are in tension. In some, emotion is to be mastered or overcome; in others it is to be nurtured for its lessons or transmuted into a more spiritually rewarding feeling. Meaning and evaluative impact might be found either in attention or resistance to the raw feeling, and the ideal journey of Christian mourning implied by each narrative, could vary substantially. Yet all had certain features in common. Firstly, writers on grief and sorrow invariably stressed the need for despair to be transmuted into another, more productive, emotion. Secondly, they all included some element of internal struggle between feeling and will, in which an exertion of faith was required to shape the narrative in a positive direction. Sorrow was a trial that could ultimately prove productive and meaningful, but required time and mental labour. Finally, it is worth noting that these narratives could often overlap, or mourners could follow several simultaneously. By tracing these narratives, it is possible to discern the parameters of the emotional response to death as it was understood in the context of Victorian Christianity: what emotional responses to death consisted of, what it was for and the proper boundaries of its extent and expression.

Consolation literature and the Evangelical revival

In Europe, Christian scripture and theology has been the chief vehicle for expressing mourning for over a thousand years. Gary Kuchar, in his research on sorrow in the literature of an earlier period of British history, has gone as far as to claim that the entire religion is in essence a 'vast technology of mourning'.[7] But it is also important to consider the particular character of Victorian Christianity in understanding portrayals of mourning in the nineteenth century. In particular, the early- and mid-Victorian period are generally acknowledged to be the high water mark of the influence of the 'Evangelical revival' in Britain – both within the Anglican Church and within denominations often grouped together as 'nonconformist'.[8] In the nineteenth century, certain elements of Evangelical doctrine were heavily influential on culture and society.[9] Chief among these, as David Bebbington has shown, was an emphasis on salvation by

[7] G. Kuchar, *The Poetry of Religious Sorrow in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2008), p. 5. For devout and educated early modern writers, 'religious grief is not simply one or another affective state; it is a set of discursive resources which allow writers to express the implications that theological commitments have on the lived experience of faith. 'The conceptions of sorrow and its various meanings that are encoded in these texts were 'far more subtle than anything we are likely to encounter in contemporary discourses of grief'. In Christianity, grief has often been 'a way of being oriented towards God, rather than a purely subjective feeling-tone… Devout sorrow is less an emotional state than it is a language – a grammar of tears, so to speak.' Another, more recent study of sacred sorrow in early modern Britain was Erin Sullivan *Beyond Sorrow*. Sullivan identified holy sorrow as one of four discourses of sadness in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England; it is the only one of the four traditions that cast sadness as an intrinsically beneficial phenomenon; see E. Sullivan, *Beyond Melancholy: Sadness and Selfhood in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2016), pp. 81-127.

[8] The precise meaning of the term 'Evangelicalism' was not easy to pin down for contemporaries and has remained a subject of debate for historians to this day. See for instance D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Britain: A History From the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 1-19. Bebbington quotes Lord Shaftesbury: 'I know what constituted an Evangelical in former times… I have no clear notion what constitutes one now' (p.1).

[9] On the influence of Evangelicalism on Victorian society see for instance B. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

faith, a belief that earthly experiences could be understood as a series of trials of this faith, and a consequent interest in the inner life of the faithful.[10]

As Bruce Hindmarsh explored in his 2008 book *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, one outcome of this emphasis on inner struggle and the subjective experience of faith was a proliferation of spiritual autobiography. Since religious faith was for Evangelicals a highly personal and emotional experience, self-writing was a means of bearing witness to holy struggles and epiphanies and of expressing and developing a Christian identity.[11] The profusion of consolation literature in the Victorian period may partly be an outcome of this similar trend. Few trials of faith were as challenging and intense as the death of a loved one, and the emotional details of these dramas took on a heightened importance in a context in which these internal dramas were the fundamental stuff of religious life. It is certainly the case, as Pat Jalland has shown, that Evangelicalism was among the most important influences on the middle-class culture of death in Victorian Britain. Evangelicalism was 'the religion of the home as well as the heart,' Jalland argues, and mortality was the domain of both. Religious notions of the good death were 'widely disseminated through Evangelical journals and tracts… designed to demonstrate the earnest piety, upright character and resigned deaths of those dying as "saints".'[12]

Much of Jalland's analysis of such religious advice literature is concerned with this portrayal of the Evangelical 'good death', both on behalf of the sufferer and their surviving family. In this context Jalland identifies consolation tracts as less reliable when it comes to understanding the actual experiences of Victorian mourners, since private accounts gave a more equivocal and less theatrical impression of emotional responses to death than those intended for publication.

---

[10] D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Britain*, especially pp. 141-150; Bebbington identifies the period from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the beginning of the First World War as 'the Evangelical century'.
[11] D. B. Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[12] P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1996), p. 21.

Instances of communing with God and deathbed visions of heaven and hell were almost exclusively confined to 'didactic literature' and rarely noted in letters and diaries. This is particularly evident in Jalland's comparison of Emily Leakey's memoir of her sister's death (produced years after the event) to Leakey's diaries of the time, which related a completely different set of experiences and emotions.[13]

While Jalland is sceptical about consolation tracts as guides to the experiences of bereaved people, she does use them in two other ways. Firstly, they function in her work as exemplars of an idealised culture of death that Christians might aspire to – even if the diaries of Christian mourners suggest more complexity and diffidence. Secondly, she presents evidence of the real solace that consolation literature provided to Christians suffering from devastating loss. When Catherine Tait, wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury, lost five children over the course of five weeks during an outbreak of scarlet fever, she kept a record of her agonising suffering and of the 'loving resignation to God's will' that sustained her through her unthinkable tragedy. Tait's reflections on the day-by-day 'struggle for submission' in the face of heart-wrenching loss, Jalland shows, were a source of comfort not only to her but to other mourners who wrote to thank her for the role her account played in helping them to recognise that 'all this sorrow is full of tenderness and sweetness and love.'[14] The reliability of consolation literature might be compromised by its status as a genre bound by formulas and tropes as well as religious doctrine; but it was also an authentic solace to those who read it.

I accept Jalland's judgment that private diaries and letters are a more reliable guide than published consolation literature as a guide to the thoughts and feelings of pious mourners as they were experienced in the moment. But whereas Jalland studied these texts primarily for what they could reveal about individual experiences of death and bereavement, I ask a slightly different

[13] Ibid. pp. 22-23.
[14] Ibid. pp. 141-143.

question: granted that the emotional narrative presented in this literature presents an idealised formula rather than a finely-textured sense of individual experience, what can an analysis of consolation literature as a whole teach us about the different ideal versions of Christian sorrow propagated by elite religious writers? The very fact that consolation literature was bound by genre conventions, tropes and doctrinal considerations makes it well adapted to a study of the conceptualisation of emotional responses to death even as it complicates their applicability in the context of social history. At the same time, I argue that consolation literature was itself an important component in the emotional reality of bereavement: the concepts that give emotions moral value are part of the experience of the emotion itself. Leaving aside questions about the reliability of stylised autobiography and memoir, this chapter is concerned instead with the narratives themselves, and the values and identities these narratives promote: the values and identities of predominantly male, predominantly upper- or middle-class writers.

As a genre in its own right, consolation literature has received more attention in the American context than the British. Among the earliest historians to thoroughly analyse these texts was Ann Douglas, whose 1974 study noted a 'literary, and in some part actual, magnification of mourning in America between 1830 and 1880'.[15] Douglas put this proliferation of popular religious texts on mourning into the context of a sentimental and evangelical turn in American Christianity, particularly in the brand of religiosity advocated to and by women in the rapidly industrialising north, affirming an identity of genteel domestic femininity. The texts used by Douglas foreground the family in two separate ways: firstly because the deaths they describe occur in the home, and secondly because the version of heaven they convey is a purified and idealised echo of the middle-class home.[16]

[15] A. Douglas, 'Heaven our home: Consolation literature in the northern United States, 1830-1880', *American Quarterly* 26 (1974), pp. 496-515; quotation on p. 497.
[16] Ibid. p. 502.

Another study of American consolation literature, whose approach is in some respects similar to my own, comes from a chapter on 'mourning manuals' in Dana Luciano's *Arranging Grief*. Luciano explores how mourning structured the bereaved person's experience of the past and future as well as that of the present. Drawing on psychoanalytic theorists such Julia Kristeva, Luciano writes that 'we do not simply wait for the passions to fade of their own accord but, rather, construct the narrative forms in which they may be dispersed.'[17] Consolation literature, looking backwards in memory and forwards in hope of heavenly reunion, becomes 'a site where the longings of "nature" met the future-directedness of the soul.'[18] This sense of narratives of sorrow as a collision between nature and religious faith is also present in my reading of consolation literature, although I intend to interpret these texts according to their own language and terms, rather than through the lens of later theory.

Some of the conclusions reached by Douglas and Luciano are particular to the American context of her writing. Church ministers in Britain did not face the same level of competition and financial insecurity that she identifies and, while the nineteenth century did witness a growth of the middle classes, there was no social flux equivalent to that occurring in the context of the rapidly developing USA. David Stannard, who influenced Douglas's research and was himself a disciple of Philippe Ariès, believed that American Christianity, with its Calvinist influences, was particularly preoccupied by the fate of the individual soul.[19] The

[17] D. Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: NYU Press, 2007), p. 13.
[18] Ibid. p. 28-29.
[19] Stannard was primarily concerned with American Christianity, emphasising the particular strength of Calvinist ideas in the theology across many doctrinal lines; but he also dealt extensively with approaches to mortality among English Protestants, mostly as a comparative tool to highlight what he believed to be particularly distinctive about the trajectory of American religiosity – in particular a greater emphasis on hell and an accentuation of the Calvinist conviction that no individual, however good their life and strong their faith, can trust in their own salvation. This, he believed, only intensified the fact that Christianity was more preoccupied by death than any other religion, and in particular encouraged an unusual degree of introspection about the death of the *individual* and their subsequent fate (as opposed to mortality as a universal condition of human life). See D. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study of Religion, Culture and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). For a useful assessment of

confident promise of domestic bliss in visions of the afterlife, however, was a feature common to Victorian theology on both sides of the Atlantic.[20]

This distinction notwithstanding, scholars of Victorian religion in Britain have noted a vibrant debate within the theology of the period concerning death and the afterlife, in which many of the themes noted by American scholars like Stannard and Douglas recur. Geoffrey Rowell's *Hell and the Victorians* is helpful in understanding the theological controversies about hell, which intensified in the nineteenth century as many theologians and lay Christians alike became increasingly uncomfortable with the idea of a vengeful, punitive God.[21] Michael Wheeler's *Death and Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (along with the revised and abridged edition, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*) developed this theme of a gradual taming of the concept of hell over the course of the nineteenth century, as clergy and theologians increasingly gave way to a popular appetite for a less harsh, more consoling vision of the afterlife.[22] The tension between more austere and traditional visions of the afterlife and the more comforting and domestic vision of heaven had consequences for ideas about the natural course of mourning, which are visible in the possible narratives that I explore over the course of this chapter. In the following section I will briefly address the question of narrative and its relationship to emotion-formation, particularly in the case of religious advice literature such as mourning manuals and consolation tracts.

Stannard's book in its own historical context, see R. Houlbrooke, 'Death, History and Sociology: Stannard's Puritan Way of Death', *Mortality*, Vol. 5 Issue 3 (2001), pp. 317-322. A version of Douglas's article on consolation literature was published in a volume edited by Stannard and featuring Ariès: A. Douglas, 'Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830-1880' in *Death in America*, ed. D. Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975).

[20] See for instance M. Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); M. Wheeler, *Death and Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 1992); P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, pp. 265-283; M. Riso, *The Narrative of the Good Death: The Evangelical Deathbed in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2015), e.g. p. 176.

[21] G. Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1974).

[22] Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*; Wheeler, *Death and Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology*.

Narratives, emotions and mourning manuals

This chapter is organised according to a distinction between several distinct 'narratives' of mourning exemplified by consolation literature. By 'narratives' I do not mean simply the sequences of events related in the text, but the shape and structure imposed on events to give them coherence and meaning – and in particular the progression of affective states that the texts advise or convey.

In his book, *The Mess Inside*, the philosopher Peter Goldie takes grief as the paradigmatic case of what he calls a 'process' feeling, characterised by a succession of attitudes. It involves a shift in the perception not only of present realities but also of past memories and of future expectations. It 'is made up of mental states and events, and… unfolds in a characteristic pattern.'[23] In other words, grief is in essence a narrative; not static but something that is done, over time.[24] In fact, Goldie goes several steps further than this: it is not only grief and other 'process' emotions such as self-forgiveness that are narratives, he claims, but every emotion that is worthy of the name. There are many ways of conceiving of an 'emotion' – and indeed the term is more overburdened with competing definitions than almost any other in the English language – and it seems likely that many of the mental states that fall into this sprawling category might be far less amenable to Goldie's interpretation. But there is a convincing case for thinking about the emotional response to death in the way that Goldie suggests. His clear definition of 'narrative' demonstrates much of what is fruitful about this approach:

[23] P. Goldie, *The Mess Inside: Narrative, Emotion and the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2012), p. 64.

[24] This call to view emotions as actions, doings or verbs, rather than static states, has been repeated by multiple authors, including Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice'; another writer who has urged an emphasis on what emotions *do* rather than what they *are* is Sara Ahmed: rather than a 'singular theory', Ahmed aims to 'track how emotions move between bodies, examining how they "stick" as well as move.' S. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Routledge, 2015), p 4.

> It is more than just an annal of events, but a representation of those events which is shaped, organised and coloured, presenting those events, and the people involved in them, from a certain perspective, and thereby giving narrative structure – coherence, meaningfulness and evaluative and emotional import – to what is related.[25]

Narrativised emotions are 'explanatory, revelatory and expressive'.[26] The course of their unfolding consciously or unconsciously reveals the moral and intellectual universe of the subject, their values and beliefs.[27]

As Goldie describes them, these 'narratives' are composed on an individual basis: no two people hold narratives in mind that are exactly alike. The mourners who turned to the texts discussed in this chapter would not have absorbed the model of loss they represented uncritically, and in some cases may actively have rebelled against them. But narratives follow patterns, and in discerning the arcs of particular narratives, it is possible to examine the set of morals and evaluations that could be derived from the emotional response to death.[28] They offer interpretative models that nineteenth-century Christians had at their disposal to give a structure and meaning to their particular emotional experiences following the death of a loved one.

---

[25] Goldie, *The Mess Inside*, p. 2.
[26] Ibid. p. 32.
[27] I am paraphrasing and integrating arguments from several chapters here, but especially Goldie's discussion of grief, pp. 56-74.
[28] In this respect my use of the term 'narratives' has something in common with the way that the term 'scripts' is deployed to describe emotions in anthropology. Anna Wierzbicka and the psychologist Agneta Fischer employed the term as a rebuke to the idea of emotions as 'primitive or irrational behaviour', beyond the influence of cognitive control or cultural influence: see A. Wierzbicka, *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures* (Cambridge University Press 2009); A. Fischer, *Emotion Scripts: A Study of the Social and Cognitive Facets of Emotions* (Leiden University Press: 1992). The 'scripts' here are typically learned in childhood and they operate on a semi-conscious level at most: they may be 'cognitive' and they can be taught and manipulated, but they nevertheless operate largely without our deliberative input or intervention. They are preconscious reactions to the events of the moment, which are inscribed in our behavioural repertoire during infancy and recalled in appropriate moments as fully formed packages of experience and behaviour.

The worldview conveyed in consolation literature and mourning manuals discussed in this chapter is overwhelmingly that of a fairly narrow section of Victorian society. Some religious writers (such as William Logan, whose story I discuss in detail below) came from working-class backgrounds – particularly those belonging to Nonconformist sects. The overwhelming majority, however, belong to the upper and middle classes. The texts discussed here are also largely (although not exclusively) by men, although occasionally with indications that their primary audience is female.[29] These texts can to some extent be seen as the expression of a model of loss expounded by figures from a religious and social elite. They are unquestionably intended as consolations, but in their advocacy of a struggle against unchecked emotion they can also be understood as attempts to set the boundaries of propriety for potentially unruly emotions such as grief and sorrow. As much as anything else, religious advice literature armed mourners with the intellectual tools necessary to exert their will in a struggle to overcome despair and convert it into one of several varieties of sacred sorrow.

[29] The most obvious way in which this intended audience is conveyed is by the frequent appeal to 'mothers', including occasionally in the title of the text. For instance W. P. Nimmo, *Words of Consolation for Christian Mothers Bereaved of Little Children* (Edinburgh, 1865); Rev. G. Mole, *Consolation for Bereaved Mothers* (Newcastle, 1901).

A miscellany of mourning

In April 1856, William Logan was called away from his work as a missionary and a social reformer by the awful news that his beloved five-year-old daughter Sophia had been taken ill with a severe gastric fever. After three weeks of anxious uncertainty, Sophia seemed to be regaining her health and her liveliness. She ventured out of bed, ate a little food and on one precious day found the energy to play and chatter as she had in the past. But on the following day, when Logan asked his daughter to recite a passage from the Bible, her portentous reply filled him with trepidation: '"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me,"' she said, 'adding, after a pause, and in a whisper – '*The Lord's my shepherd*."'[30]

The implication behind this eerie utterance was clear to Logan and, sure enough, Sophia's illness almost instantly returned with a renewed ferocity. Sensing the approach of 'the solemn messenger' death, Logan asked his daughter for a kiss and she flung herself into his arms 'with all the earnestness and pure affection of a loving child.' As he held her, gripped by pain at the presentiment of her coming death, Logan suddenly heard a voice speak to him from on high: 'Be *still*, and know that I am God!' As a devout Presbyterian, Logan had no doubt about the meaning of this divine interposition in his domestic life: 'submissively, but with a soreness of heart which cannot be expressed in words,' he bid his child a final farewell and so departed, the words of a favourite hymn on the transience of earthly life running through his head, imbued with a fresh and awful significance. A few hours later Sophia died a sweet and saintly death, after reassuring her mother with her final words that they would soon be reunited in the presence of Christ.[31]

---

[30] W. Logan, *Words of Comfort for Bereaved Parents of Little Children* (London: James Nisbet: 1868), p. 53.
[31] Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1868), pp. 53-58.

This narrative of a Victorian Christian death of a child is so strikingly reminiscent of the death of children in Victorian novels that Logan would likely have read, such as that of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (published in book form in 1841) and little Jo in *Bleak House* (1853).[32] It also closely conforms to many of the frequent features identified in autobiographical and obituary accounts cited by Mary Riso in her analysis of the Evangelical 'good death'.[33] What Logan did with the narrative of his daughter's death and his accompanying feelings, though, went beyond what most diarists and memoirists attempted.

Armed though Logan was with an unshakeable faith, his daughter Sophia's death left him desolate. But the letters that soon poured in from his missionary comrades soothed his grief-atrophied heart. The very first one that came to hand was full of words that 'seemed as if they came straight from the "happy land"' that Sophia had often sung about, and where he was sure that she now dwelt: 'It is well with Sophia,' the letter ran, quoting a Bible verse that was popular in consolation letters at the time, 'she is now a safely-folded lamb.' So moved was Logan by the content of these letters of sympathy and Christian reassurance that he decided he would be selfish to keep their counsel to himself, when he reasoned that countless other bereaved parents must be suffering similar agonies, without the fortune of such wise and holy friends. It was for the benefit of such sufferers that Logan edited the letters into a four-page tract, which was published shortly after Sophia's death in the *Juvenile Missionary Magazine*.[34]

---

[32] C. Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* (London: Penguin, 1972), pp. 639-662; C. Dickens, *Bleak House* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), pp. 560-574; for a discussion of the phenomenon caused by Little Nell's death, see T. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 153-168.
[33] M. Riso, *The Narrative of the Good Death*; among the features of Logan's description of his daughter's death that align with narratives analysed by Riso are the importance afforded to pious, calm and uplifting last words (187-208); the Romantic tropes of youthful innocence and clear-sightedness and irresistible onrushes of feeling (pp. 157-186); the spontaneous quotation of Biblical verses in moments of high feeling (pp. 57-76).
[34] Logan, *Words of Comfort*, p. v.

The article received a warm response from other bereaved Christians; encouraged by this, Logan enlarged it into a short compilation of fragments of writing on similar themes, which was published in 1857 with the title *Words of Comfort for Bereaved Parents*. Over the following years, this 'little tractate' was gradually expanded into a compendium, a monument to mourning. By 1874 eight separate editions published, each more expansive than the last. More letters were added, then poetry, hymns and epitaphs. Logan solicited new reflections on sorrow and mourning from clerical friends and he himself wrote a prefatory sketch of his daughter's brief life and godly death, a tragic and sentimental story designed to both move and uplift its readers. By its sixth edition this motley assortment of mournful fragments had grown to over 500 pages. Reflections on contemporary mourning from a variety of theological traditions nestled alongside one another, some sternly admonishing against the dangers of hysterical or luxuriant grief while others poured forth torrents of mingled sorrow and ecstasy in apparent contradiction of such warnings.

In the decade following his daughter's death, Logan became something of a connoisseur of grief, collecting, editing and collating words of sorrow or consolation as other eminent Victorians collected dead beetles or antique pottery. He admitted to taking a 'mournful pleasure' in the task he had set himself; the steady stream of enlarged and tweaked editions bears witness to a slightly obsessive habit of tinkering with his material. For the most part, Logan presented the texts he had selected for *Words of Comfort* without comment, but occasionally he did allow himself to editorialise over the moral, spiritual or aesthetic quality of a particular piece. One passage by Edward Irving, for instance, has an 'elevation and ecstasy of grief,' that Logan can 'scarcely transcribe without tears.'[35] The book became so unwieldy that the *Religious Tract Society* published an abridged version, believing that the profusion of texts prevented the anthology as a whole from being useful to mourners.[36]

[35] Ibid. pp. 194-201.
[36] W. Logan, *Words of Comfort* (Religious Tract Society: London: 1874); this motive is explained in the preface, pp. i-iv.

Yet the sprawling, sometimes contradictory, nature of *Words of Comfort* hardly seems to have inhibited its commercial and critical success. It was widely acclaimed by hundreds of newspapers all over the country as the preeminent mourning manual. 'This book may now be regarded as a standard among books for mourners,' wrote one reviewer in *The Christian Witness*. 'It is, in fact, unique, and has in its own department no fellow or equal.'[37] Another hailed it as 'one of the most comforting, gracious and touchingly-beautiful volumes ever issued from the press.'[38] Reverend John Campbell, an influential London Dissenter, Congregationalist Minister and newspaper editor, proclaimed it a ''Cyclopaedia of Sympathy' and wished that it might calm the tears of literally millions of Christians worldwide.[39] While this ambition was clearly a little bombastic, the book was certainly highly successful. More than 15,000 copies had been printed by the time an American edition was published in 1870, and the book continued to sell in both countries. Half a century after the publication of the final edition, another Christian writer on grief still considered Logan's book the pinnacle of all works addressed to mourners, a collection of 'all the clergy can say' on the question of bereavement.[40] It was certainly Logan's most successful work as a writer, far surpassing his earnest polemics on poverty, prostitution and the demon drink, and its success probably contributed substantially to his wealth in his later years, during which he became known as a generous patron of both philanthropic societies and certain favoured artists and writers.[41] Shortly after his death, Logan was celebrated in a proud work by a Glasgow publishing house memorialising the hundred citizens who had boosted the city's reputation, in which the missionary and his *Words of Comfort* were presented as the crowning glory. Copies of this little book had by then…

---

[37] 'Reviews', *The Christian Witness*, 6 November 1867), p. 4.
[38] 'Words of Comfort', *Domestic Messenger*, 19 March 1868, p. 17.
[39] Quoted on the inside cover of Logan, *Words of Comfort* (Religious Tract Society: London: 1874).
[40] Also quoted on the inside cover of the above edition.
[41] *Memoirs and Portraits of One Hundred Glasgow Men*, vol. 2 (James MacLehose: Glasgow: 1886), pp. 177-181.

> … gone far and wide into houses of mourning and have been stained by blessed tears they have helped to bring. There were thousands he had never seen who felt that they had lost a friend when it was announced that on the 16th September, 1879, William Logan had passed away.[42]

The length and multiplicity of *Words of Comfort* across its various editions makes this an unusually rich document. Each of the narratives I outlined at the beginning of this chapter can be identified here, in various iterations, and their existence side-by-side is clear evidence that Christian mourning and consolation could take many forms, even in a single mourning subject. The success and popularity of this book and others like it imply the existence of a community of readers actively searching for ways to interpret and give shape to their emotions following the death of a loved one: not simply accepting Christianity as an inert doctrine, but seeking for ways its ideas could give 'coherence, meaningfulness and evaluative and emotional import' to death: ways that feelings of despair could be reshaped by an exertion of faith, love, will, or a combination of all three. Logan's sorrowful book of mourning and consolation is a perfect source for the wide array of Christian attitudes to mourning that it offers. Throughout this chapter I will return to it as an outline and a reference point for the four narratives I outline.

Before this, however, I will briefly address the longer-term history of emotional responses to death in Christian theology, in order to better establish the ways in which Victorian consolation literature was a departure or a continuation of the way that sorrow and mourning had been understood by theological writers in the more distant past. I will then take a deeper look at *Words of Comfort* and other, similar Victorian consolation manuals to identify the continuities and discrepancies between these long-established Christian narratives and the emotional valences of bereavement specifically connected to nineteenth-century Britain.

---

[42] Ibid. pp. 177-178.

Christianity and mourning: the longer view

Words of Comfort was very far from being the first book addressed to Christian mourners; Christianity has of course always been much preoccupied with mourning. For devout and educated early modern writers, Gary Kuchar writes, 'religious grief is not simply one or another affective state; it is a set of discursive resources which allow writers to express the implications that theological commitments have on the lived experience of faith.'[43] The conceptions of sorrow and its various meanings that are encoded in these texts were 'far more subtle than anything we are likely to encounter in contemporary discourses of grief'. In Christianity, grief has often been 'a way of being oriented towards God, rather than a purely subjective feeling-tone… Devout sorrow is less an emotional state than it is a language – a grammar of tears, so to speak.'[44]

Drawing partly on Kuchar's work, Erin Sullivan has identified holy sorrow as one of four discourses of sadness in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England; it is the only one of the four traditions that cast sadness as an intrinsically beneficial phenomenon. Medical 'melancholy' or the 'grief' of philosophers were both potentially dangerous feelings that were in severe need of remedy if they were not to be spiritually and even physiologically corrosive. Godly 'sorrow' triggered by reflections on the frailty of human life, on the other hand, was an essential ingredient of the sanctified mind. It might not necessarily have been be desirable for an early modern Christian to suppress their sorrow or even to seek a release from it via the consolations of their faith, since it is itself a manifestation of faith in the face of sin. However, Sullivan draws a distinction between this godly 'sorrow' and the 'despair' that might also arise from a contemplation of the hollowness of earthly life: whereas sorrow was a means of worship that could lead the suffering person towards their God, despair was

[43] G. Kuchar, *The Poetry of Religious Sorrow in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 5.
[44] Ibid. p. 2.

caused by turning away from God, and was a mortal threat to the spiritual safety of the sufferer.[45]

The foundation of Sullivan's 'godly sorrow' and Kuchar's 'grammar of tears' was the conviction that Christian sorrow was fundamentally distinct from its pagan counterpart. The key scriptural basis for this idea was 2 Corinthians 7:

> Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

The idea of grief as a fundamental feature of the Christian worldview, and even as a means of devotion, has always been present in theology since St Augustine of Hippo made this argument, as early as the fifth century, in an exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. Reflecting on Matthew 5:4 – 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted' – Augustine portrays sorrow as the natural state of a Christian convert whose perception of the world has been transformed by the realisation that what had seemed like the entirety of life is in fact merely the Earthly City, not only pallid in comparison to the divine but actually in conflict with it. This 'mourning', Augustine argued, is provoked by the Christian convert's renunciation of the goods of this fallen world. They are bereft of the worldly things that they once held dear, and 'until the love of eternal things be in them, they are wounded by some measure of grief.'[46] The entire Augustinian cosmology, which infused Western Christianity for most of its history, was suffused with a consciousness of worldly loss.

Scriptural ammunition for the idea that mourning was intrinsically holy was plentiful. After all, Christ himself, as he is described in the often-quoted Psalms

[45] E. Sullivan, *Beyond Melancholy: Sadness and Selfhood in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2016).
[46] Saint Augustine of Hippo, *Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*, trans. R. Trench (London 1851).

126.5, was 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief'. The same passage urges good Christians to follow his example: 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.' Similarly, the Biblical Jesus's willingness, in the story of Lazarus, to 'weep with those who wept' was treated as the model for fully-realised Christian sympathy: it implied not only a willingness to condole with the wretched and bereft but to feel along with them, to suffer alongside those who suffered and to weep alongside those who wept. [47] True consolation came with the faith that the earthly misery of bereavement was eclipsed by the miracle of salvation. 'I say unto you that ye shall weep and lament; but the world shall rejoice,' as the book of John 16:19 attested, 'and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.'[48]

Ecclesiastes (part of the Apocrypha but included in the King James Bible until 1885) included an injunction to an almost all-consuming misery (38:16). 'My son, let tears fall down over the dead, and begin to lament, as if thou hadst suffered great harm thyself; and then cover his body according to the custom, and neglect not his burial. Weep bitterly, and make great moan, and use lamentation, as he is worthy, and that a day or two, lest thou be evil spoken of: and then comfort thyself for thy heaviness.'[49] This appears to advocate a period of intense feeling followed by recovery – a course of mourning that closely follows the rituals of traditional Jewish mourning, presumably not by coincidence.[50] Nevertheless, sorrow is clearly advocated here as an emotion that can increase the Christian sufferer's proximity to God.

As always, however, the Bible offered scope for centuries of interpretation and debate: Christ in his compassion may have wept, but human sorrow could be blasphemous as well as holy. Rachel's 'weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted' was often interpreted as a censure against too-desperate grief. A

[47] Romans 12:15 (KJV).
[48] John 16:20, 20 (KJV).
[49] Ecclesiastes 38:16, 17 (KJV).
[50] S. S. Rubin, 'Loss and Mourning in the Jewish Tradition', *OMEGA*, Vol. 70, Issue 1 (February 2015), pp. 79-98.

more well-known verse that makes a similar point appears in Thessalonians 4:13-14:

> I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as them which have no hope.
> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with them.[51]

This injunction – to 'sorrow not, even as them which have no hope' – was a cornerstone of nineteenth-century consolation literature. I will discuss the significance of this particular quote and the way in which it was used later in the chapter. But a more fundamental thing that was inherited from this and other biblical quotations was the very word itself: sorrow.

In the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, the first definition for the term 'sorrow' was 'distress of mind caused by loss, suffering, disappointment etc.'[52] The term 'grief', by contrast, was primarily defined in terms of 'hardship, suffering… hurt, harm mischief.'[53] It is also notable that the dictionary cites multiple examples of the use of the word 'sorrow' from religious texts, including several instances quoting from the Isaiah verse on the Messiah as a 'man of sorrows'. Grief, on the other hand, had very few citations from the Bible. There are limits to the utility of historic dictionary definitions, of course, and in this case it is clear that there is plenty of room for slippage, overlap and ambiguity: each term features prominently in the definitions of the other. Nevertheless, it is clear from these definitions that 'sorrow' in the nineteenth century correlated more strongly with loss, and that 'grief' was more closely adjacent to physical hardships and harms. This also accords with the gloss that Sullivan puts on 'sorrow' in her work on the varieties of sadness in a slightly earlier period of

[51] Thessalonians 4:13-14 (KJV).
[52] J. H. Murray (ed.), *A New Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 9, Part 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919) pp. 448-450.
[53] J. H. Murray (ed.), *A New Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901) pp. 415-416.

British history: of the four emotions she analyses in *Beyond Melancholy*, she identifies sorrow as the one that has the most religious flavour, and also the one that is most commonly related to bereavement.[54]

Another indicator that sorrow was more commonly used to express loss in the Victoria era – and one that is of particular relevance to the material of this chapter – is its precedence in the consolation manuals of the era. In these works, it was overwhelmingly the term 'sorrow', rather than 'grief', which was used as the standard term for the emotions of mourning. For an inexact but nevertheless striking measure of how pronounced this semantic preference was, one metric is the British Library catalogue: a search for books with 'grief' in their title published between the years 1800 and 1900 reveals 43 books, around five of which are sermons or consolation tracts. A search for sorrow, by comparison, yields 265 texts, the majority of which are Christian tracts written for or about the bereaved.[55] Typical titles include *The Discipline of Sorrow*, *Godly Sorrow and the Sorrow of the World*, and *Sorrow: an Address to Mourners*.[56] Many of these titles were derived from Biblical quotations, but even where this was not the case, the term sorrow was consistently preferred for emotions connected with bereavement and mourning.

Some of these publications were part of an older tradition of theological texts written by clergymen, setting sorrow within its rightful bounds and warning against excesses of mourning. Running through all the Christian accounts of

---

[54] E. Sullivan, *Beyond Melancholy*, p. 140-168.

[55] The fashion for mourning manuals and consolation tracts and their proliferation has been more widely noted in America, for instance: A. Douglas, 'Heaven our home: Consolation literature in the northern United States, 1830-1880', *American Quarterly* 26 (1974), pp. 496-515; M. V. Pike and J. G. Armstrong (eds.), *A Time to Mourn: Expressions of Grief in Nineteenth-Century America* (Stony Brook, NY: The Museums at Stony Brook: 1980). The British Library algorithm is a rough and imperfect tool for historical conclusions, but is nevertheless useful as a shorthand for general trends. See https://bit.ly/3uG7M4p (retrieved 2/6/2021); https://bit.ly/3iiICGm (retrieved 2/6/2021).

[56] W. Greenleaf Eliot, *The Discipline of Sorrow* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1867); J. W. H. Molyneux, *Godly Sorrow and the Sorrow of the World* (London, 1866); F. Morse, *Sorrow: an Address to Mourners* (London: Christian Knowledge Society, 1867).

sorrow is the recurrent problem, even paradox: those who have lost loved ones should not sorrow for those who are now free of the pains of the world and are with God; yet at the same time mourning is a godly duty. The regular conclusion was that mourners should feel the right and appropriate degree of emotion without somehow feeling too much. A staple of this genre was a text by John Flavel, a dissident puritan minister in the seventeenth century, famous for the ferocity of his evangelical views.[57] Flavel's *A Token for Mourners*, 'wherein the boundaries of sorrow are duly fixed, excesses restrained,' was first published in 1674 but a steady churn of new editions between 1776 and 1841 testifies to its enduring appeal. The book professed to offer solace to those who mourn – and so in parts it does – but it was framed above all as a guide to the proscribed *limits* of Christian sorrow. 'To be above the stroke of passions is a condition equal to angels, to be in a state of sorrow, without the sense of sorrow, is a disposition beneath beasts: but duly to regulate our sorrows, and bound our passions under the rod, is the wisdom, duty and excellency of a Christian.'[58] That is not to say that sorrow is prohibited, Flavel wrote, since 'Christ would not have his people stupid and insensate; he only prohibits the excesses and extravagances of our sorrows for the dead, that it should not be such a mourning for the dead as is found among the heathen, who sorrow without measure, because without hope.'[59] This sermonising is not consolation in any straightforward sense, but a stern warning against the spiritual dangers of what he calls 'excessive' sorrow. Plenty more dry theological treatises were produced in this period. The Religious Tract Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge both kept up a steady flow of pedagogic pamphlets offering some variation on Flavel's theme, instructing bereaved parents and spouses on the proper Christian mode of grief. Countless clergy, too, offered

[57] J. Kelly, 'Flavel, John (bap. 1630, d. 1691), Presbyterian minister and religious writer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (online ed.)* (Oxford University Press, September 2014).
[58] J. Flavel, 'A Token For Mourners' in *The Complete Works of Mr. J. Rev. Flavel, Vol. 5* (London: J. Matthews, 1799), p. 607.
[59] Ibid. p. 19.

their generally orthodox ideas about how to appropriately deal with death and suffering.[60]

But alongside these learned and theological treatises, there were also works of a more ecumenical nature. William Logan's *Words of Comfort* was only the most successful of several anthologies of its kind. The prolific anthologist Henry Southgate, most well known for *Many Thoughts on Many Things* and several sequels bearing similar names, also produced an 1878 volume collecting reflections on mourning as '*A Manual for the Bereaved*'.[61] Southgate's anthologies (including *What Men Have Said About Women* and *Things A Lady Would Like to Know*) were generally targeted at a female audience, offering instruction on how to behave and how to interpret their feelings; his consolation literature can be seen in a similar light, as an instruction on an approved manner of mourning the dead. 'I have therefore thought,' wrote Southgate in the introduction to his book, 'that if a selection of writings from the wise and the good, of all churches and of all ages, could be put into the hands of the sorrowful on the day of their grief, they might be shown the brighter side of the cloud.'[62]

The anonymous 1875 collection *Voices from the Willow and the Palm* and Arthur Chamber's *The Open Door*, published in 1913, are examples of a similar anthological approach, long works composed of scattered poems, sermons and hymns that were intended to soothe the intensity of mourning and show a

[60] For an overview of these theological disputes over death and judgment, including how this affected ideas about grief, see M. Wheeler, *Heaven Hell and the Victorians*, e.g. pp. 95-99.
[61] H. Southgate, *Gone Before: Being a Manual of Consolation for the Bereaved and a Well of Sympathy for the Sorrowing Filled from Many Sources* (London: Lockwood & Co: 1878); for an overview of Southgate's life and background see T. Seccombe and M. Ord, 'Southgate, Henry', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (online ed.)* (Oxford University Press, September 2014).
[62] H. Southgate, *What Men Have Said About Women: A Collection of Choice Sentences* (London: Routledge, 1865); H. Southgate, *Things A Lady Would Like to Know* (London: W P. Nimmo, 1875).

possible way out of desolation into Christian redemption.[63] The authors of such texts abandoned theological consistency in order to appeal more broadly and directly to the mourner. Besides these anthologies, there were also several collections of poetry on Christian sorrow, such as *Hours of Sorrow Cheered and Comforted* by the popular hymnist, writer and editor, Charlotte Elliott, which featured many general reflections on grief and sorrow along with poems written for specific afflictions – there are poems addressed to grieving widows, to bereaved parents, to 'one bereaved of many relatives', and to 'one who had lost an only sister'.[64] Finally, later in this period, before the First World War, there were book-length expositions of suffering, such James Stark's *Comradeship in Sorrow*, which tend to have more of the tone of a self-help manual, combining sympathy with advice for how to turn grief to good effect.[65]

'Grief at the death of a beloved family member was traumatic for unbelievers and believers alike,' Jalland writes, 'but Christians trusted that their faith offered consolation, support, and hope for the future belief in the resurrection of the soul.'[66] This was undoubtedly the case for many mourners. Yet alongside such consolation, hope and support, many works of this kind echoed the admonitory message that can be found in Flavel, sternly insisting on the 'regulation', 'moderation' or 'mastery' of mourning rather than attempting to simply soothe the pain of bereavement. Faith might of course offer comfort but it offered much else besides. Religious belief did not simply modify or diminish a pre-existing emotional reality, like a file when applied to rough metal: instead, the emotional response to death was guided from its inception by the narratives provided by Christianity. Limits were established, suffering was infused with a moral meaning and a spiritual significance. Christian narratives of sorrow offered an amalgam of comfort and commands, in proportions that depended

[63] Anon, *Voices from the Willow and the Palm: Rhythms of Grief and Hope Selected for the Suffering and the Thoughtful* (London: Strachan & Co: 1874); A. Chamber, *The Open Door* (London: Drane's: 1913).
[64] C. Elliott, *Hours of Sorrow Cheered and Comforted* (London: Booth: 1856).
[65] J. Stark, *Comradeship in Sorrow: Thoughts for the Bereaved* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1907).
[66] Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, p. 296.

on the shape of the narrative in question, and how it advocated that faith, love and the will should encounter the brute force of feeling following the death of a loved one.

'Sorrow not as those without hope': Christian stoicism and the management of feeling

Among the original letters that inspired *Words of Comfort* was a brief note from an A. R. Hamilton, instructing Logan's emotions in a language which, set beside Logan's own effusive prose, seems rather cold and stern: 'Whilst the sorrows felt will be great, we must not sorrow as those who have no hope, but submit to the chastisement, neither despising nor fainting under it.'[67] This attitude of pious stoicism was one of the most ancient and venerable strands in the theology of sorrow, and its wellspring is the text to which both Hamilton and Logan referred.

In its original form, in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, the text is indeed offering a form of consolation: 'I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.' But it has been common since the earliest days of Christian theology to apply a sterner and more moralistic gloss to the text. Writing in the fourth century, the Church Father John Chrysostom compared sorrow for the death of a brother in faith to misery at the absence of a daughter resulting from her happy marriage: the daughter may be 'lost' to the family, but misery over this fact is a narcissistic sort of love, since her absence is only a consequence of her having greater happiness elsewhere. 'I do not condemn dejection,' he wrote, 'but the intensity of it. To be dejected is natural; but to be overcome by dejection is madness, and folly, and unmanly weakness. You may

[67] Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1868), p. 50.

grieve and weep; but give not way to despondency, nor indulge in complaints.'[68]

This nineteenth-century translation appears in a compilation of 'sermons of the great preachers', itself published in 1908: a demonstration that Chrysostom's attitude was still credible in Victorian Britain. It is significant that the variety of 'dejection' condemned here as unchristian is described as 'unmanly', equating the idea of traditionally feminine modes of emotional expression with weakness not only of will, but also of faith. Central to the emotional response to death, in this account, was a struggle between 'natural' feeling and the exertion of a pious will. Both the raw feeling and the ability to restrain or resist this feeling were central to the traditional Christian framework for navigating emotional responses to death. This masculine-coded model, still very much present in Victorian Britain, valorised emotional mastery and made honourable, holy sorrow a necessarily interior emotional experience, in which internal struggle was a key ingredient.

In this and other respects it was the same prescription that Flavel had made in the 17th century and that Hamilton offered Logan in 1856: sorrow is inevitable and human, but excessive mourning betrays a heathen attitude to death. In this interpretation, indeed, the particular course of a more godly strain of sorrow is one of the most fundamental ways in which a Christian differs from the infidel. Another of Logan's correspondents outlined exactly this contrast between those with Christian faith and those without it in their stages of grief: 'Where is she now? We sigh, and then we reply, *She's dead!* Here all feel in common, whether Christian or infidel. But what a difference in the train of thoughts that follow!'[69] The difference Flavel and Hamilton identified, of course, was that the

[68] J. Chrystostom, 'Excessive Grief at the Death of Lost Friends' in *The World's Great Sermons, Volume 1: From Basil to Calvin*, ed. G. Kleiser (London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1908), p. 360.

[69] W. Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1868), p. 49; MacFarlane's writing exemplifies what Bruce Hindmarsh identifies as a particularly Evangelical genre of autobiography, combining theological expositions like his writing on grief and mourning with memoirs: J. MacFarlane, *Memoir* (London: James Nisbet, 1876).

infidel takes physical death as the total sum of reality: the bereavement is absolute; the loss is entire. Boundless grief, this narrative implied, is a reasonable response to boundless loss, and utter abandonment to grief is a faithless emotion. To Christians, on the other hand, this quintessentially mortal emotion is based on an illusion of finality, which is belied by the deeper truth of the permanent soul. Since for Christians death is only a change of state – and the change to an immeasurably better state, at that – succumbing to sorrow betrays the griever's submission to the world of flesh, rather than the word of God. According to a strictly logical reading of Christian doctrine, the bereaved ought not to grieve. And yet even the most patently devout Christians did so. Therefore this grief had to be not just tolerated or forgiven but woven into Christian practice.

The Christian mourning advised in texts based on the injunction to 'sorrow not as those who hope' was not a singular unadulterated feeling but a narrative of the hard and testing conflict between what is intuitively and agonisingly felt to be true and what is known by faith and divine revelation to be the case. Despair at a bereavement is something to be confronted, but finally overcome. Some of Logan's collected 'consolations' explicitly frame the emotions of bereavement as an internal struggle.

One religious contributor to *Words of Comfort* to evince this attitude to sorrow was Reverend John MacFarlane, another Presbyterian who preached in Glasgow and Clapham, who described the process of devout mourning as 'the agitations of memorable conflicts between nature and grace.'[70] This was one of the more explicit statements of religious sorrow as a conflict, although the sense of such an opposition is frequently clear. MacFarlane was himself the author of another work of Christian consolation, *Why Weepest Thou?*, subtitled 'a manual for mourners'.[71] A 'manual': solace may be part of what is offered, but the primary

[70] W. Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1868), p. 156.
[71] J. MacFarlane, *Why Weepest Thou? A Book for Mourners* (London: Thomas Nelson: 1888).

motive here was religious instruction, in order to delimit the proper extent and character of grief. Another contributor to *Words of Comfort* whose prohibition of unmingled sorrow was particularly stern was Logan's close friend and mentor, the Presbyterian clergyman William Anderson. 'Let Christian parents evince their faith by the moderation of their grief,' Anderson commanded. Yet he was concerned not only with the degree of sorrow, but also with its object: although a good Christian must not feel sorrow on behalf of their dead friend (who is after all with God), Anderson allowed that they were right to feel grief for themselves, since their suffering was God's way of drawing attention to any flaw, sin or neglect on their part.[72]

Although this suppression of inappropriately 'excessive' grief was not the stated goal of all works that were addressed to mourners, it was at the very least a significant category within the flourishing genre. In 1839 Edward Berens, an Anglican theologian who published many of his sermons as an Oxford vicar, issued one collection of sermons on suffering that repeatedly stressed this theme of 'natural' sorrow held in check by willed belief. His description of sorrow was highly personal, and indeed – as was often the case in theological writing on grief – it was written as if from his own intimate experience of bereavement: 'We feel an aching void, a sense of loss and desolation, which for a time nothing on earth can fill up, and which throws a sort of gloom upon everything around us. Such sorrow is natural to us.' Yet Berens also insisted that this 'natural' emotion could become ungodly: 'sorrow, like all the other passions and affections of our nature, requires to be kept within its proper bounds… excessive sorrow seems to imply a degree of unbelief, both in the goodness, and the providence, and the mercy of God, and also in the hopes and promises of the Gospel.' Like Anderson, he stressed that the sorrow must not consist of a misplaced pity for those released from the burdens of earthly life. This was not simply a question of conscious belief. Christian trust in the truth of their faith

[72] Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1868), p. 167.

must be deep enough that it extends to our feelings as well as our thoughts: holy mourners must, as Berens put it, 'be actuated by a living principle of faith.'[73]

The narrative of grief as a hard struggle between nature and faith framed a particular type of mourning as a trial of Christian principles. The idea that the experience of sorrow could distinguish a true Christian believer from an infidel was part of the reason why so many missionary writers were preoccupied by the topic to begin with. Yet they quickly realised that there was a danger for Christians here. If despair at death was too strictly defined as a Christian failing then Christians might react to their all-too-real feelings of sorrow by coming to feel that the problem was not with them but with Christian doctrine. Bereavement was notoriously one of the greatest tests of faith, and some consolation tracts explicitly confessed that their principal intention was not in fact to console, but to fight the loss of faith at a moment of such heightened vulnerability. 'The impulse is to 'curse God and die,' wrote one such writer. 'Some in their agony do not care to understand.'[74] To such mourners on the brink of profound spiritual crisis many Christian books on the emotional response to death were addressed. James Stark identified the weeks after a bereavement as the site of the great 'battle… between belief and unbelief,' a battle whose menace to faith he had personally experienced.[75] Tracts such as his – and even those that did not explicitly address the threat that bereavement could present to faith – can be understood partly as a dramatisation of this 'great battle', offering a weapon to those whose faith was at risk of being defeated.

Given that the Victorian age has often been characterised as a period obsessed with mourning, this stricture to control extravagant and excessive sorrow might seem surprising. Yet many of the writers I have addressed were certainly sympathetic to the anti-mourning cause, which I cover in the following chapter, even if they were not quite zealous enough to commit to a card-carrying

[73] E. Berens, *Berens's Sermons on Sickness, Sorrow and Death* (London: Rivington: 1839), pp. 80-92.), pp. 80-92.
[74] B. Hall, *The Mastery of Grief* (London: Andrew Melrose: 1913), pp. v-vi.
[75] Stark, *Comradeship in Sorrow*, p. 3.

membership. One theologian and activist, Bolton Hall, devoted an entire chapter in his 1913 book entitled *The Mastery of Grief* to excoriating the folly and pomp of Victorian funeral rites. 'We should bless the light,' Hall wrote, but instead 'we cherish our grief' by wearing 'depressing' black and dimming the lights of our home.[76]

This, then, was one dominant narrative of Christian mourning in nineteenth-century Britain: a narrative of struggle and constraint, underpinned by a commandment not to 'sorrow as those without hope'. In this construction grief was 'natural' in both the positive and negative connotations of this world: both an authentically human emotion springing from honourable love and affection, and also a product of humanity's fallen nature. Bereavement was a spiritual menace, the frontline of a never-ending struggle between nature and grace, and at the same time it was a test. The consolations offered by scripture were not merely a balm to those with faith but also an instrument to be used on the side of faith. It is a narrative in which emotion has its own powerful agency, on which spiritual and intellectual faculties must be brought to bear in an attempt to vanquish them. The attitude of the idealised Christian mourner posited by the almost exclusively male attitude of the writers who advocated this attitude was one of godly struggle combined with stoical submission to worldly suffering.

Although some aspects of this narrative of grief have been specific to the nineteenth century, its broad contours were already an established feature of Christian theology. Yet the same basic belief came in the nineteenth century to underpin an alternative narrative, with a far more extravagant emotional tone. It was this more effusive narrative that dominated popular mourning manuals like *Words of Comfort*.

[76] Hall, *The Mastery of Grief*, p. 87.

'Not lost, but gone before': Joyful sorrow and heavenly reunion

In the frontispiece of its later editions, *Words of Comfort* featured a series of quotations that were particularly relevant to Logan's notions of Christian grief and Christian comfort. Most of them were taken from the Bible, but one among them is not even Christian in its origin.

> 'Not lost, but gone before' – the almost Christian sentiment of the great heathen moralist, Seneca[77]

This phrase echoes throughout Logan's anthology, as indeed it echoes throughout Victorian religious literature on mourning – poems, letters, sermons and hymns – frequently functioning as a pithy summary of the solace that Christianity can offer to the bereaved. In fact, although the true source is Seneca's *Letters from a Stoic*, it was not by any means a commonplace in English literature until the nineteenth century.[78] Where a source was cited, it was more commonly attributed to the popular eighteenth-century Bible commentary of Matthew Henry. More often it appeared without quotation marks, as though it was in fact a Biblical phrase too commonplace to need any introduction. The phrase first noticeably enters the Google Ngrams Book Viewer in 1807 – a full century after Henry employed it in his exegesis of Matthew 2. This is followed by a huge spike in the 1830s, which peaks in 1862 and then subsides to a low level in about 1904.[79] For almost precisely the period covered

---

[77] Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1868), quoted in the title page.

[78] Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Moral Epistles,* Vol. 1, trans. Richard M. Gummere. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, The Loeb Classical Library, 1917-25), p. 437. The translation in this classic edition runs: 'we shall soon come to the goal which this friend, to our own sorrow, has reached. And perhaps, if only the tale told by wise men is true and there is a bourne to welcome us, then he whom we think we have lost has only been sent on ahead.' I have not been able to find an original source for Matthew Henry's paraphrased version; it may be that the translation was his own.

[79] https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=not+lost+but+gone+before&year_start=1800&year_end=2019&corpus=26&smoothing=3&direct_url=t1%3B%2Cnot%20los

by this thesis, Seneca's phrase became a household idiom that encapsulated an ideal Christian attitude toward death.

What, then, did the apparently simple phrase precisely mean, and why was it so popular in this particular period of Victorian mourning? To glean something of its original intent, it is worth looking back to its first occurrence in Matthew Henry's commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, first published in 1706. The section in question (chapter two, verses 16–18), tells of Herod's pronouncement that the infants of Bethlehem would be slaughtered, and refers back to a verse in Jeremiah: 'In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.' Jeremiah's prophecy, as Henry pointed out, was followed in its original iteration by a divine command: 'Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded.' In the original context, the reward is the return to the Holy Land; but in the light of the New Testament, of course, this signifies a promise of heaven rather than the earthly territory of Palestine. Henry read these words from the Hebrew God as a comfort, but also a chastisement. 'Their sorrow was so great, that they would not be comforted,' he wrote. 'They hardened themselves in it, and took a pleasure in their grief.' The true Christian, on the other hand, would realise that the 'bitter weeping' of a bereft mother is 'but a prologue to the greatest joy'.[80]

Superficially, this narrative seems similar to the stoical one outlined. Yet the final sentence hints at a quite different relationship to sorrow. It is still there to be conquered by determined faith; but instead of godly submission, the result is nothing less than 'joy'. This attitude, this conversion of despair into joy, was abundantly present in Logan's *Words of Comfort*. Again and again, bereaved readers were offered a description of emotional and spiritual desolation, which in a moment transforms into ecstasy with the epiphany that death is only a

---

t%20but%20gone%20before%3B%2Cc0#t1%3B%2Cnot%20lost%20but%20gone%20before%3B%2Cc0 (retrieved 2/6/2021)

[80] M. Henry, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible, Vol. 5* (London: The Bible Tract Society, 1835 [1706]), p. 9.

harbinger of heaven. 'The full confidence that she is now in heaven,' read one of Logan's initial condolence letters, 'exalted to angelic rank, and perfection, and glory, that she is now mingling with the spirits of just men made perfect and beholding the Lamb in the midst of the throne, is sufficient to fill your heart with joy and thankfulness, and your lips with praise.' Grief was not struggled against, mastered and suppressed, but miraculously transmuted into elation; the dead infant was not abstractly 'with God' or 'freed from care', but literally transformed into a divine angelic presence, beholding the holy Lamb, exalted, and almost an object of worship in her own right.[81]

In this alternative narrative of mourning, grief retains the same two constituent emotions of an earthly despair and a steadfast faith undergoing a great test. Yet they do not remain struggling in painful equilibrium within the suffering soul. Instead, an intense and initially unconquerable sorrow is overcome by a wave of elation. Condolence letters thus become letters of euphoric congratulation, sometimes very literally. 'I have in vain tried to tell a lie for your sake, and say, – I *condole* with you,' ran one of Logan's fragments, a sermon in epistolary form from the pastor Henry Rogers (in this case the letter form was a device for conveying general messages about Christian mourning, rather than a letter to Logan himself). 'How *can* I, with my deep convictions that your little floweret, and every other so fading, is but transplanted into the more congenial soil of Paradise, and shall there bloom and be fragrant forever?'[82] For a book that is about infant mortality written to bereaved parents, *Words of Comfort* featured a surprising amount of rejoicing of this kind.

On some occasions authors openly contrasted this more sentimentally permissive attitude with the more austere tradition I have previously described. 'The pang occasioned by the death of a lovely infant is one which only a parent with a feeling heart can understand,' wrote Rev. John Morrison. 'I would not desire to lose such a precious treasure without a struggle. I have no admiration

[81] Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1868), p. 52.
[82] Ibid. p. 177.

of the social affections of some stoical parents. They are inferior in sensibility to most of the brute tribes, and they are anything but an ornament to the Gospel, which breathes tenderness and kindly emotions in all its communications.' Yet he went on to describe how this openness to deep sorrow also allows a greater depth of joy: 'I can truly say I rejoice that my Henry is in heaven.'[83]

Almost universally, the writers in *Words of Comfort* declared a total confidence in their belief that the beloved and mourned child was now in heaven, awaiting the blissful moment when its parents would join it at the foot of the throne of God. In some editions of the book the entire first section is devoted to those fragments which claim to actually prove that 'all infants, *without exception*,' are saved, a far cry from the orthodox Christian doctrine of a few centuries earlier that unbaptised infants would be in hell or, later, in limbo.[84] In total there were 33 extracts focusing on this specific point, many of them repeating the same essential arguments.[85] A few biblical quotations support this optimistic position, most frequently 2 Kings 4:26, for example: 'Is it well with the child? And she answered, it is well.' But more than interpretations of specific parts of scripture, many of the contributors to *Words of Comfort* focused on the general merciful character of God as he is portrayed in the New Testament. The gospels are full of evidence of Christ's love for children, they claimed, referring to the words, 'Let little children come to Me, and do not thou forbid them.' Indeed, according to these nineteenth-century clergy, Jesus was in many ways childlike himself, in his innocence and his holy simplicity. Not only are babies bound for heaven, they argued, but they hold a higher place there than adults: they are the 'brightest treasures' of the heavenly host.[86]

It is perhaps surprising how confidently these theological writers proclaimed universal infant salvation. Until the nineteenth century the doctrine had been

[83] Ibid. p. 105.
[84] For a discussion of the place of limbo in Victorian theology see Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*, e.g. pp. 188, 217.
[85] Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1868) p. 57-134.
[86] Ibid. p. 65.

controversial across denominational divides. But this was only one half of the necessary ingredients for the assurance of heavenly reunions. The other, also explored by Wheeler, as well as by Jalland, was the growing conception of heaven as an essentially domestic environment in which families would be restored to one another, their love only intensified and distilled.[87] A dead infant is 'not lost, even to *you'*, as one of Logan's fragments puts it: earthly relationships survived beyond the grave.[88] Heaven was a 'home' (and 'home' is a metaphor that appears literally hundreds of times throughout *Words of Comfort*), not merely in the sense that it is the domain of God but in the literal, concrete sense that it mimics the values and the affective ties of a typical Victorian household.

This second Christian narrative of grief, then, was an adaptation of the stoical first narrative. It featured the same basic theological assumptions and the same 'consolations' – namely, the inferiority and the impermanence of earthly things – but this was augmented by two significant alterations, one to do with theology and the other with emotional tone. Theologically, the key factor was the growing belief in literal heavenly reunions. Tonally, many clergy appeared to feel more comfortable in expressing and advocating sentimental extremes of joy and sorrow. Whereas writers like Flavel saw in the Bible a promise of future joy that would eclipse mortal pain, many of the contributors to *Words of Comfort* thought that ecstasy was possible even in a fallen world, at the mere expectation of paradise, and in the knowledge that the sorely-missed loved one was not lost but merely 'gone before', to the real home where they would wait for the reunion.

Some writers merged joy and grief into a single and overwhelming emotion. Writers published pamphlets with names like *Joy in Sorrow*, marvelling at the holy paradox that two apparently opposing emotions could be blended into

[87] Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, pp. 265-283; Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*, pp. 122-134.
[88] Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1968), p. 93.

one. But more often the joy was advertised as following the sorrow, growing out of it in an exultant triumph of faith. This was visible in the emotional arc of much religious poetry and hymns about mourning in this period, which often tends to follow a similar formula, beginning as a lament for what is lost before switching into raptures of heavenly joy.

> So, though the grief be mighty, yet the joy
> That Christ bestows is mightier; and this joy
> Is strength – strength for the way that lies before,
> Strength out of weakness, treasure out of loss.[89]

Judging by the volume of such poetry, this idea of a mourner (and especially of a mourning mother) who is torn between extremes of desolation and joy seems to have found an enormous and sympathetic audience. One of the poems in later editions of *Words of Comfort*, in fact, refers to the book itself, and describes a bereaved mother going through exactly these stages of sorrow-turned-to-joy.[90]

It may well be that this view was more emotionally and spiritually satisfying to bereaved parents than the harsher and more stoical alternative: instead of being instructed to keep their grief in check, the more effusive style of consolation fully recognised the depth of the loss that had been suffered but offered a way to transpose the sorrow into hope and even happiness. However, some writers were suspicious of such extremes of sentiment in literature about dead infants. Among them was William Logan's close friend and mentor, the man who had inspired him to become a missionary and to whom his *Words of Comfort* was dedicated, the Presbyterian clergyman William Anderson. Asked to write a prefatory essay on the history of beliefs about infant salvation for the second edition of Logan's book, Anderson offered a vision of steady progress: from the pagan dismissal of children's worth, to the 'atrocity' of Catholic intransigence

[89] S. G. Stock, *Joy in Sorrow* (London: Shaw & Co: 1884), p. 13.
[90] J. Hamilton, *Poems and Ballads* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1873), pp. 59-60.

about the necessity of their baptism, to a Protestant groping towards a more humane view, and finally culminating in the Presbyterian belief that a just and merciful God could not possibly consign innocents to purgatory or to hell. So far, this is all unsurprising and it is in tune with the tone of the book. However, Anderson concluded his 'essay' with a surprising warning that seems to undercut much of the main body of *Words of Comfort*. In the rush to affirm the assuredness of infant salvation, he argued, there was a real danger of transforming the infant dead into idols: to so sanctify the innocence of dead babies and see them not simply as denizens of paradise but as godlike figures in their own right.

> When, in former ages, infant spirits were to such an extent *ignored*, in calculating the glory of the kingdom of the redeemer, there is in our age a tendency to idolise them. Are there not many for whom the principal, if not only, attraction of that kingdom is the company of their restored children? And this book, consisting as it does, from its nature, of Words of Comfort to the bereaved, and therefore especially disclosing to the imagination of these beatified children, may, unhappily, foster the idolatry.[91]

Attached like a health warning before the body of the text, the caution against idolatry is a clear demonstration of a Victorian anxiety over the excessive tributes to dead loved ones. Warnings against luxuriating in grief, like Rachel and like the mothers of Herod's slaughtered infants who 'would not be comforted' by religious truth, were commonplace among the authors in *Words of Comfort*. Yet writers like Logan could be seen to come dangerously close to such maudlin self-indulgence that became, at its most extravagant, a kind of blasphemy. The fact that Logan commissioned such a piece for his work is proof that he himself was aware of this possible criticism, and that he fretted over his project and its potential for idolatrous child-worship. In the preface to later

[91] Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1868), pp. 15-40.

editions he confessed to taking a 'melancholy pleasure' over his decades-long search for touching fragments on sorrow and suffering.[92]

This idea of a literal heavenly reunion, which is often understood as a timeless Christian consolation, was actually particularly characteristic of the nineteenth century.[93] Christians in earlier periods had maintained some scepticism about the idea of heavenly reunions.[94] In fact, those writers whose faith was generally grounded firmly in scripture often had to look elsewhere for quotations when evoking this very human brand of divine ecstasy.

However, there was also a third type of approach to sorrow, a third narrative of sorrow and mourning that can be found in consolation manuals and that might justify this lingering over loss: the idea that, far from being an evil to be vanquished by faith, sorrow was a virtuous emotion in and of itself.

---

[92] Logan, *Words of Comfort* (1867), p. xiii.

[93] The particular hold that ideas of heavenly reunion had on the nineteenth-century imagination have been discussed in detail by many historians, including Aries, Wheeler, and Jalland; in particular P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, pp. 265-283; M. Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*, pp. 119-135.

[94] Philip Almond discusses the idea of heavenly reunions in earlier periods of history and finds some isolated examples of spouses hoping to be reunited in the afterlife, a development he ascribes to the increasing prominence of companionate marriage. However, he ultimately concludes that 'the reunion of spouses was not to become a commonplace in Christian ideas about heaven until the nineteenth century: P. C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 104-105.

'Blessed are those who mourn': sorrow into sympathy and the ministry of suffering

In Jesus's first appearance after his crucifixion, he comes upon Mary Magdalene sobbing beside his tomb. 'Why weepest thou?' he asks her, assuring her of the the miracle of his and of humanity's salvation. Jesus's message is the miracle of resurrection, the promise of future life and the consequent superfluity of sorrow. Yet it is precisely because of her sorrow, and the purity and devotion it bespeaks, that Mary Magdalene is honoured with a visitation from the resurrected Christ.[95]

In another core story of the New Testament, it is Christ himself whose holy tears presage a miracle. This moment in John 11:35 comprises the pithiest verse in the entire Bible, and among the most celebrated: 'Jesus wept.' Nor is he simply weeping in sympathy with the bereaved sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, for he is 'groaning within himself' as they lead him to the grave. He knows that soon he will raise Lazarus from the dead and their tears will turn to joy - and yet Jesus, out of compassion, wept. As the Psalmist affirms, the figure who Christians worship as the son of God is 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' both human and godly. And those who suffer with him share in his holiness: 'Blessed are those who mourn.'[96]

This is the tradition that Augustine initiated, and which Kuchar described as the 'grammar of tears.'[97] One narrative shape that a Christian theology might give to the emotional response to death, then, is to cast it as a form of religious devotion: far from taking the edge off the pain, it serves to accentuate, valorise and even encourage sorrow. In this third narrative, sorrow was construed as an

[95] As Thomas Dixon has written, Mary Magdalene's status as an exemplar for Christian mourning was complicated in post-Reformation Britain by her association with 'excessive, effeminate and ineffectual' mourning identified with Catholicism: T. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 27-30 (quotation on p. 28).
[96] G. Kuchar, *The Poetry of Religious Sorrow in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2008), p. 5 and throughout.
[97] Ibid. p. 2.

appropriate response to a fallen world plagued by wickedness; the expression of a divine element in human nature is an echo of Christ's sufferings and as such is a virtue not simply as an instrument of self-improvement but in itself.

Through the whole history of Christianity, one of the most contested issues has been the nature of Christ's divinity – as divine and as a man. This extends to the nature of his sorrow. Does Jesus feel sorrow like mortals or is it in some sense non-material, even metaphorical? This complex, contested idea of mourning as a fundamental feature of the Christian worldview, and even a means of devotion, has always been present in theology since St Augustine of Hippo made this argument as early as the fifth century, in his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. Reflecting on Matthew 5:4 – 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted'. As I have described, Augustine portrayed sorrow as the natural state of a Christian convert whose perception of the world has been transformed by the realisation that what had seemed like the entirety of life is in fact merely the Earthly City, not only pale and diminished in comparison to the divine but actually in conflict with it. This 'mourning', Augustine argued, is provoked by the Christian convert's renunciation of the goods of this fallen world. They are bereft of the worldly things they once held dear, and 'until the love of eternal things be in them, they are wounded by some measure of grief.'[98] The entire Augustinian cosmology, which so influenced the course of Western Christianity, had at its core this consciousness of worldly loss.

This peculiarly Christian (and perhaps particularly Protestant) construction of grief as a virtue in itself certainly remained prevalent in the writings of nineteenth-century theologians. Among them was Charles Kingsley, a broad church priest, social reformer, friend of Charles Darwin and novelist (he is perhaps best known for his pedagogic children's book, *The Water-Babies, a Fairy tale for a Land Baby)*. Kingsley's variety of 'muscular Christianity' has often been interpreted as a bullish, extroverted and even macho worldview, which curtailed the role of introspection, self-abnegation and negative feeling in

[98] Augustine, *Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*, trans. R. Trench (London 1851).

religious practice.[99] Yet appeals to the benefit of emotional suffering were scattered throughout his work. Indeed, Kingsley published an entire book dedicated to 'troubled souls' and which he addressed to 'the sorrowful', *Out of the Deep* – a popular collection of fragments from his writings and sermons, among whose admirers was Queen Victoria.[100]

> Oh, sad hearts and suffering! Anxious and weary ones! Look to the cross of Christ. There hung your King! The King of sorrowing souls, and more, the King of Sorrows. Ay, pain and grief, tyranny and desertion, death and hell – He has faced them one and all... And since He hung upon that torturing cross, sorrow is divine, godlike, as joy itself… blessed are they who mourn.[101]

In this impassioned reading, sorrow was beneficial not only in instrumental terms, for the teaching and self-improvement it can offer: it is a good and holy thing even simply in itself. To mourn was to be blessed. *Out of the Deep* is full of such paeans to the value of sorrow.

However, it is important to recognise that there was a difference between Kingsley's godly sorrow and the devotional weeping in the early modern period that is discussed by Erin Sullivan and Gary Kuchar. It was subtly different too from the Christian mourning identified by Augustine of Hippo in the fifth century. Whereas the godly suffering of earlier periods was in and of itself a means of becoming closer to God, nineteenth-century writers tended to ascribe a more instrumental value to grief. It was no longer a mode of worship in and of itself so much as a means by which God brings about human betterment. For

---

[99] Whether or not it is fair to characterise Kingsley's worldview as 'muscular Christianity' has been a subject of debate. See for instance A. Bloomfield, '"Muscular Christian or Mystic? Charles Kingsley Reappraised." *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 11 Issue 2 (1994), pp. 172-90; for an introduction to the character and origins of muscular Christianity, including Kingsley's place within it, see N. J. Watson, S. Weir and S. Friend, 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond', *Journal of Religion and Society,* Vol. 7 (2005), pp. 1-21.

[100] Y. M. Werner, *Christian Masculinity: Men and Religion in Northern Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Leuven, 2011), p. 270.

[101] C. Kingsley, *Out of the Deep: Words for the Sorrowful* (London: 1880), pp. 1-2.

Kingsley, suffering was a 'baptism of fire'; a process of 'cleansing' conducted by means of 'secret trials and chastening'.[102] Suffering cleanses sin; but this is not to say that it is a product or a proof of one's particular sinfulness, since the afflicted very often include those who are the closest to godly perfection. Bitter though it may be, grief is ministered to us by a loving God for spiritual improvement. 'He who gives the cup of sorrow will also give the strength to drink it. Blessed news, that chastisement is not punishment, but the education of a father.'[103]

This celebration of emotional vulnerability might at first seem to sit oddly with Kingsley 'muscular' style of Christianity. 'Christian manliness', in David Newsome's summary of Kingsley's thought, was 'an antidote to the poison of effeminacy' that he believed to be seeping into British religious culture via the Tractarian movement.[104] He explicitly celebrated decisive action, physical exertion and the healthy body (particularly the male body) in opposition to introspection, aestheticism and a culture of sensibility. But on closer inspection this combination of hostility to sensibility and celebration of sorrow is perhaps less of a contradiction than it might first appear. In Kingsley's conception of self-improvement, the perfection and resilience of the mind was to be honed in concert with that of the body. Resisting 'effeminacy' did not mean rejecting powerful emotions, turning away from them or suppressing them. Rather they were to be met head on in a spirit of heroic struggle, a 'trial' of 'strength' not unlike the sporting conquests that Kingsley celebrated as a spur to the development of 'whole manhood'.[105] His emphasis on the corporeal over the intellectual dimensions of Christian practice was what distinguished him from theological contemporaries; but there was also an internal, emotional

[102] Ibid. p. 8.
[103] Ibid. p. 42.
[104] D. Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (London: Cassell, 1961), p. 207.
[105] Unlike terms like 'muscular Christianity' and 'Christian manliness', which Kingsley sometimes appeared to reject or resent, 'the divineness of the whole manhood' – the union of the spiritual and the corporeal aspects of the Christian self – was a term that he used liberally and considered central to his thought. See Watson Weir and Friend, *Christian Masculinity*, p. 6; it was also a phrase he used in discussing emotional responses to death and loss: Kingsley, *Out of the Deep*, p. 1.

dimension to the manly he struggle he commended. Emotional responses to great hardship, including death, could be conceived as a counterpart to athletic exertion and virtuous physical activity. Despite opposing the 'feminised' religiosity of the Tractarians, Kingsleyan muscular Christianity nevertheless afforded a similar heroic quality to the internal struggle instigated by sorrow. In either case 'natural' emotion was a test of a person's moral and spiritual faculties: the key difference was whether worldly loss was primarily a test of faith, or of character.

This narrative of suffering as virtue and grief as teacher was not exclusively applied to bereavement. But arguments of the kind *were* frequently used in consolation manuals addressed explicitly to mourners. The provincial Anglican clergyman William Guest authored a whole book on the subject. This book, titled *The Ministry of Suffering*, published in 1882, was a collection of the essays that he had published in various magazines over a period of several years. Guest presented to mourners a severe patriarch of a God, who disciplined and corrected sins by means of sorrow, including the sorrow of bereavement. Guest's goal was not primarily to console those who were in pain, but rather 'to indicate some of the uses of human suffering'. 'Christian consolation carries with it a leaven of correction and restraint as well as of support,' he wrote – and it was the task of his writing to help those who grieve to correctly interpret and learn by their sorrow.

For Guest, life was a 'school of testing' in which souls are tried like gold; the varieties of suffering are like various faculties in a university, each sharpening a distinct set of spiritual and intellectual abilities. His vision of the transformations that bereavement might provoke was startlingly intense: 'Men who have fallen into selfhood, which is the "condemnation of the devil," become restored to the primal law of creation by means of sufferings,' Guest wrote, and in a later section he enumerated the fabulous ways in which suffering can purify the soul:

> It makes a desert round the life when the lonely spirit cries out for its Maker. It devastates and withers the earthly flowers of evil delight. Into the home of worldliness it brings a thought of eternity. It arrests the calculations of avarice, and there is a glimpse of a worthier object, and of a nobler aspiration. It darkens the prospects of ambition, and all selfish plans are extinguished. It rebukes the passions, and brings a healthy shame and self-reproach. [106]

Another useful lesson that could be learned in this school of sorrow, according to many Victorian moralists, was an education in sympathy. James Stark, who wrote his mourning manual *Comradeship in Sorrow* in 1907, spoke of this 'school of sorrow' by which mourners graduate to a higher capacity for fellow feeling. Drawing on his own intimate experience of death and of mourning, he contrasted the 'well-meant effusions of the kindly feeling of friends who, as yet, stood outside the experience which had overtaken him' with the 'perceptible poignancy of expression' displayed by those who 'had stood alongside of him, under the shadow' of death.[107]

In 1876, John Richardson, Archdeacon of Southwark, published a tract arguing that the whole purpose of sorrow was to produce sympathy, whose purpose in turn was to bring the faithful closer to God. By this means, Richardson believed, suffering produces threads of affection that bind us together into a community of generous, godly, deep-feeling men and women. By this means the mourner is brought closer to God.[108] Another book, by the American Elizabeth Prentiss in 1884 but popular enough in English to be published in three editions, took the form of an exemplary fable about the death of the writer's two children: *How Sorrow Was Changed Into Sympathy*. Through a series of letters she wrote at the time of her children's death, she claimed to demonstrate how the 'groans and tears' of her early grief gradually turned outwards and she at last found

[106] W. Guest, *The Ministry of Suffering* (London: The Religious Tract Society: 1882), p. 29.
[107] Stark, *Comradeship in Sorrow*, p. 10.
[108] J. Richardson, *The Connection Between Sorrow and Sympathy* (London: Jackson & Halliday: 1876), p. 125.

expression in a greater compassion for humankind. Infant death, she concluded, is 'one of our Father's chosen methods of best teaching us lessons.'[109] Here, as so often elsewhere as well, the death of children and its effect on parents – perhaps mothers especially – acted as a test case for analysing the purpose of God's providence.

The school of suffering and the work of sorrow

It is also possible to identify a slightly separate narrative, overlapping with the third but in some respects distinct, in which emotional suffering was portrayed as a process of labour towards a higher goal. It was not enough, in this narrative, to simply submit to this religious education: the mourner must engage in it with spiritual and intellectual energy in order to learn its lessons and be moulded by it into a more perfect form.

In some ways this process is reminiscent of the 'grief work' of a later twentieth-century tradition. The ultimate objective of this spiritual grief work, though, is different. In Freudian *Trauerarbeit*, the final objective of spiritual engagement with sorrow was to purge the grief of bereavement and thereby return to a stable and healthy equilibrium.[110] The work advocated by nineteenth-century advice literature was not one of restoration but of moral and spiritual betterment. Only a difficult and superficially negative emotion can possibly fulfil this purpose: happiness is its own reward, but hard work is necessary to justify sorrow and to find its hidden meaning. This 'meaning making' is an essentially human and an essentially moral task. One poem that managed to express all of these ideas about bereavement, and which featured in several mourning anthologies, was 'Heaven's Lesson', by Lydia Sigourney Weaver – a poem that embodies this narrative neatly enough that it is worth reproducing in full:

---

[109] E. Prentiss, *How Sorrow Was Changed Into Sympathy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1884).
[110] S. Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia' [1917] in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* (vol. 14) ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 243.

Heaven teacheth thee to mourn, thou fair, young bride.
Thou art its pupil now. The lowest class,
The first beginners in its school, may learn
How to rejoice. The sycamore's broad leaf,
Thrill'd by the breeze, the humblest grass-bird's nest,
Murmur of gladness, and the wondering babe,
Borne by its nurse out in the open fields,
Learneth that lesson. The wild mountain-stream
That throws by fits its gushing music forth,
The careless sparrow, happy, tho' the frosts
Nip his light foot, have learn 'd the simple lore,
How to rejoice. Mild Nature teacheth it
To all her innocent works.

But God alone
Instructeth how to mourn. He doth not trust
This highest lesson to a voice, or hand,
Subordinate. Behold! He cometh forth!
Sweet disciple, bow thyself to learn
The alphabet of tears. Receive the lore,
Sharp though it be, to an unanswering breast,
A will subdued. And may such wisdom spring
From these rough rudiments, that thou shall gain
A class more noble, and, advancing, soar
Where the sole lesson is a seraph's praise.
Ah, be a docile scholar, and so rise
Where mourning hath no place.[111]

Mourning, Weaver urges, is a school that teaches the 'highest lesson' in an 'alphabet of tears'. It is immeasurably more profound and more useful than joy. Whereas nature is imbued with a sort of praiseful joy, 'God alone instructeth how to mourn'. The sparrow, the babe and the stream are capable only of this

[111] As reproduced in Southgate, *Gone Before*, p. 60.

simple form of joyful devotion; the way in which mourning brings the worshipper closer to God is accessible only to more advanced 'students' (and unlike joy, is apparently experienced only by humans).

The proximity of mourning and tears to a higher humanity was a theme in the writing of several authors. Alfred Mortimer, in his 1907 *Book for Mourners*, made a distinction between pain, 'instinctive rather than moral' – which was ubiquitous among organic life – and sorrow, which was an emotion that is fundamentally spiritual and moral. His proof of this was that sorrow is a time-bound process that requires a certain amount of integrity and self-awareness: 'the sorrow of bereavement, like certain diseases of the body, has its laws and must run its course.' To offer those in mental pain 'cures or remedies' was useless, he believed – the only right course for the sufferer is to focus their whole attention on the pain and learn what lessons it has to offer.[112]

This idea of pain as a purifier and an improver of the human spirit was not itself a nineteenth-century innovation. Some idea of the 'ministry of suffering' is present throughout the history of Christianity, and in fact there was an implication of a similar message in the first of the three narratives described in this essay. If sorrow is the condition of a fallen world, it is also the means of confronting and understanding human imperfection. Stoicism teaches us God's grace. But in the later part of this period, there was an increasing tendency to construe grief as God's means of moulding character into a more perfect form. The internal struggle that grief brings about helps to 'evolve' the spirit; and perhaps the echoes of Darwinian ideas here were not accidental. In a few cases, the language used by Christian writers unmistakably mimics Darwin, or is mimicked by him. For instance, William Guest, writing in 1882, twenty-three years after Darwin first published *Origin of Species*, invoked the idea of evolution through suffering:

[112] A. Mortimer, *Sorrow, Hope and Prayer: a Book for Mourners* (London: Skeffington & Son: 1907), pp. 4-5.

> Creatures of the lowest and highest orders have, in the wisdom of the Creator, been evolved by suffering, or have failed under it. In the records of the progressive course of the lower creatures through the bygone ages, and which have been so marvellously traced by physical investigators, suffering everywhere appears as the germ of a new life… In a similar manner in the experience of man, suffering has a twofold intention. It has been remedial and anticipative.[113]

To those Christian writers who accepted the theory of natural selection, it opened up the idea that God's will might be enacted and embodied through an arduous and unceasing process of struggle. If God was using this principle to gradually improve the natural world, might not a similar process be occurring within the human spirit? This idea of a parallel evolution happening within human psyches, in which emotion played the role equivalent to natural forces, appealed to some of those liberal theologians trying to reconcile startling new developments in science with the Christian narrative.[114]

A particularly interesting case study in this regard is Charles Kingsley, whose struggles with the question of suffering were partially bound with his attempt to synthesise Darwinism and natural theology. In a lecture delivered in 1871, 'The Natural Theology of the Future', he argued that the constant trials to which life in a Darwinian world was inevitably subject were in fact compatible with the God of scripture – a God 'not merely of love, but of sternness – a God in whose eyes physical pain is not the worst of evils.'[115]In Kingsley's interpretation, the idea of natural selection was entirely consistent with a Christian theology in which suffering was an instrument for purification and betterment of the human soul. Any apparent contradiction was simply due to the marvelous complexity of creation: 'The mind of man, as yet stunned and giddy from the vastness of

[113] Guest, *The Ministry of Suffering*, p. 32.
[114] Another who used the language of evolution was Bolton Hall: Hall, *The Mastery of Grief*, pp. 64-72.
[115] C. Kingsley, *Scientific Lectures and Essays* (London 1880), pp. 321-322.

that which has been shown to it,' Kingsley wrote elsewhere, 'is unable to interweave the new facts with that faith in a living God.'[116]

In Kingsley's writing on suffering in a Christian-evolutionary worldview, it is possible to discern both the several competing orthodoxies of Christian sorrow, and the emergence of a new justification for emotional suffering. I return to this question of grief in an evolutionary context in Chapter 3.

Sorrow, struggle and the production of moral meanings

William Logan spent more than a decade of his life poring over formulaic and repetitive poetry of mourning, looking for examples of writers who had found a way to turn their suffering to joy, or to some higher purpose. Why? By his own account, he was attempting to provide a service to good Christians assailed by agony and its attendant doubts. But it also seems clear from the way he framed the project that he conceived it as a sort of memorial to his own daughter, a way of finding a meaning in his pain by hunting for descriptions that could explain, legitimise and valorise it.

What Logan found was a mixture of ways to narrativise the emotional response to death and thereby give it shape and meaning. It could be mastered through submissive faith in a narrative of emotional restraint. It could be overcome by joyful certainty in a narrative of assured salvation. Or it could be cast as an internal struggle that leads to the formation of a more godly character. Each of these four separate but overlapping narratives drew on older Christian traditions, although each had aspects that were particular to the nineteenth century. Together they comprised a menu of options by which scarcely bearable pain could be converted into a morally significant and spiritually productive experience.

[116] C. Kingsley, 'Poems of Matthew Arnold', *Fraser's*, Issue 49 (1854), pp. 144-147.

In this chapter on religion and the role of consolation manuals, I have tried to add nuance to previous ideas about the role of religious beliefs in mediating the Christian response to death. Although faith in heavenly reunions could certainly be a source of solace, it is too simple to think of religion purely as a balm: it could also shape the emotional response to death in other ways. Some of the narratives that Christianity offered could present additional demands on the Christian mourner, rather than straightforwardly offering them sympathy and comfort. There were multiple ways in which theological commitments could shape the emotional arc of bereavement.

The narratives that Christian doctrine offered were not always complementary or even compatible: there were tensions between the varieties of Christian sorrow, which reflected ambivalence about the moral and spiritual significance of death. But one thing all of the narratives I have explored shared is a sense that something must be *done* with the raw feelings involved in mourning in order to convert them into something more productive, more nourishing, more sacred. Everywhere there was a gap between the initial feeling – unruly and dangerously evocative of nihilistic thoughts – and the matured emotion, replete with moral and spiritual meanings. This gap was a gap in time, but time alone was not enough: it took an act of faith and will for the emotional response to death to resolve itself into a narrative shape with what Goldie calls 'coherence, meaningfulness and emotional and evaluative import'. Religious sorrow in its various forms, then, could be understood as a struggle between feeling and will. These narratives were created and advocated by a narrow social group and frequently reflected the values of male, middle-class authors propagating a model of emotional mastery and control. But whereas more traditional Christian stoicism discouraged grief altogether, Victorian clergy and other elite religious writers tended to focus on what could be achieved through engaging the powerful emotions of grief and sorrow in a struggle with faith and the will.

The struggle between faith and sorrow conveyed in Evangelical consolation literature was essentially internal – in line with the conviction that the faith and

the individual relationship with God was an intensely private affair. But it is also clear from the discussion in this chapter that moral value was placed on experiencing the most sacred and virtuous kinds of sorrow. In this light, when the manner of a mourner's emotion was unknowable yet critical to determining the quality of their character, it is perhaps unsurprising that suspicions emerged about the authenticity of public mourning. There were also contradictions *within* nineteenth-century ideas and expectations about the emotional response to death which made it a complex and contested experience. In the next chapter, I will discuss the ways in which these tensions were manifested in public expressions of mourning. Since different emotional responses to death carried different moral and spiritual meanings, mourning acted as a means of expressing aspects of personal and group identity. This in turn led to discomfort about the potentially performative nature of emotional responses to death, and to anxieties about the authenticity of public mourning.

Chapter 2

‘Anti-Mourning’: Authenticity and Interiority in Critiques of Mourning rituals, c. 1840-1880

In 1876, the writer and social reformer Mary Hume-Rothery launched a recruitment campaign for the society whose cause, she believed, amounted to an ‘attack on every stranglehold of error and darkness’. ‘The world, as the phrase goes, may laugh, or sneer, or censure,’ she wrote; ‘but what step in man’s progress towards enlightenment… has the world not laughed at, or sneered at, or censured?’ Building to an impassioned crescendo, Hume-Rothery invited her audience to imagine a society in which ‘every man may be a true man, and not the slave of self and sin, or the puppet of circumstance.’ [1] But for this ‘new and happier state of society’ to dawn, she argued, one great impediment must be overcome, the ‘greatest proof of the failure of Christianity.’

What was this great error that stood on the front line of the struggle for spiritual and political emancipation? None other than the rituals and institutions created for mourning the dead: Hume-Rothery’s essay ‘Anti-Mourning’ was written to promote the ‘Anti-Mourning Association’, a society that she had created ten years previously. Membership cards were available for ‘an optional entrance fee, not less than 6d’, although no fee was asked from the poor. [2]

To some extent, Hume-Rothery’s opposition to mourning was an example of the Christian religious suspicion of ‘natural’ sorrow identified in Chapter One. ‘We drape ourselves in garments of woe,’ she wrote, ‘and cherish and foster our natural – but unspiritual, unchristian – grief for the death of the departed, as if such grief were a sacred duty, instead of a sin against our dear ones themselves,

[1] M. Hume-Rothery, *Anti-Mourning: A Lecture against the Unchristian Custom of Wearing Mourning for the Dead* (London: James Spiers: 1876), p. 16.
[2] Ibid. (back matter).

our faith, and our Saviour-God.'[3] Unlike most theological writers discussed in the previous chapter, though, Hume-Rothery was not only concerned with the *feeling* of sorrow or grief. What concerned her above all was this feeling's customary expression, in the form of widows' weeds, formal funerals and other elements of the Victorian culture of death.

Hume-Rothery's millenarian urgency in this apparently quite mundane cause is striking and idiosyncratic, as she herself acknowledged. To condemn mourning customs as a 'source of all the ills, internal and external, that oppress humanity,' she wrote, 'may seem too grave, perhaps too extravagant.'[4] That she was willing to rail so strongly against a custom 'that many people regard as praiseworthy and venerable' was in part a function of her particular Swedenborgian interpretation of Christianity, in which mourning figured as the archetypal expression of worldly, self-centred emotions that inhibited the march of spiritual enlightenment and the coming of heaven on Earth.[5] But Hume-Rothery's antipathy to mourning rituals was only unusual in its intensity and spiritual urgency: by the time 'Anti-Mourning' was published in 1876, mourning had gone from being the butt of Dickensian satire to the target of a popular reform movement backed by illustrious figures in the political and religious establishment. These critiques interrogated the meaning behind public expressions of sorrow – and the supposed gap between these expressions and a genuine underlying feeling. In this way they are particularly revealing of ideas about emotional responses to death.

---

[3] Ibid. p. 6.
[4] Ibid. p. 3.
[5] For a brief account of Hume-Rothery's life, including her commitment to Emanuel Swedenborg, see, M. Clement, Rothery, 'Mary Catherine Hume- (1824–1885), campaigner for medical reform and author', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (online edition, published 2004). Swedenborg (and Hume-Rothery) believed in ateleology of revelations by which humanity was being brought progressively closer to union with god and a purely spiritual, immaterial existence, a process obstructed by the opposing force of Satan, who operated by means of temporal and selfish attachments and emotions. For an exploration of the culture of Victorian reform movements back to Evangelical abolitionism, see P. Hollis, 'Anti-Slavery and British Working-Class Radicalism' in *Anti-Slavery, Religion and Reform*, ed. C. Bolt and S. Dreycher (Folkestone, 2011), pp. 297-311.

What gave mourning rituals such symbolic potency that they could be construed – as they were by Hume-Rothery – as the front line of an eternal combat between 'error and darkness' on the one hand and 'the sacred rights of free will and action' on the other? This chapter sets out to answer that question through an analysis of critical, polemical and satirical writing on mourning practices, of which copious examples can be found in novels, pamphlets and magazines. In these critical accounts of mourning, the supposed emotional hollowness of customary displays was almost invariably contrasted with a more authentic (and more noble and edifying) emotional process that remained internal and defied easy expression.

Like consolation tracts, this was another field in which writers were proactively trying to identify and interrogate what 'grief', 'sorrow' and 'mourning' were and how they related. Because of this, criticisms of mourning can provide insights into the way that mid- and late-Victorian writers understood the distinction between authentic and inauthentic grief. Developing themes established in Chapter One, I examine the way in which mourning as 'performative' grief acted as a foil to the conceptualisation (and prioritisation) of emotional responses to death as something internal, silent and stoical. Once again, a model of loss emerged in this period that valued the individual over the public, the inexpressible over the performed.

Mourning and authenticity in histories of death

There is no doubt that Victorian Britain had a rich and often lavish material culture of death. Black-lined consolation letters, ostrich-feather plumes, post-mortem jewellery: all were elements in what James Curl famously described as 'the Victorian celebration of death'.[6] Curl's study of monumental cemetery architecture and related phenomena was among the first entries into a rich historical literature on Victorian funeral and burial practices. Ruth Richardson's discussion in an edited volume by Ralph Houlbrooke of why death was 'big in Victorian Britain' focuses on fears of bodysnatching and anxieties over the relationship between body and soul, but finds little reason to doubt the popular perception that the Victorian iconography of death was particularly extensive and ornate.[7] In the same volume Jim Morgan addresses how 'the burial question' was driven by debates over suicide, baptism and public health.[8] Julie Rugg has examined the growth of cemeteries from both an economic and an architectural perspective, focusing particularly on the way in which cemeteries as private enterprises were facilitated by the emergence of joint-stock companies.[9] More recently Thomas Laqueur has made the case that the changing place of the dead in Victorian society was a crucial manifestation of a more general shift in the concept of selfhood and the relationship between the individual in the community.[10] Deborah Lutz's study of 'relics of death' in Victorian Britain uncovers a rich tradition of remembering the dead through mortal remains or their simulacra such as death masks and hair jewellery. Sometimes macabre, sometimes sentimental, but also often humorous or

---

[6] J. S. Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death,* (London: David Charles, 1972).
[7] R. Richardson, 'Why Was Death So Big in Victorian Britain?' in *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, ed. R. Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 77-94.
[8] J. Morgan, 'The Burial Question in Leeds in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' in R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, pp. 95-104.
[9] J. Rugg, 'A Few Remarks on Modern Spulture: Current Trends and New Direction in Cemetery Research', *Mortality*, Vol. 3. Issue 2 (1998), pp. 111-128.
[10] T. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2015); S. Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration: An Archaeology of Mortality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999). See also T. Laqueur, 'Cemeteries, Religion and the Culture of Capitalism' in *Revival and Religion Since 1700*, ed. J. Garnett and C. Matthew (London: Hambledone, 1993), pp. 183-200.

enigmatic, she says, this death-related paraphernalia indicated 'a willingness to linger with death itself, to linger over the evidence of death's presence woven into the living texture of life, giving that life one of its essential meanings.'[11]

Within this wide-ranging and various historiography of Victorian mourning, much debate has focused on the extent to which they reflected the genuine feelings of bereaved people. Canonical commentators on the British culture of death from disciplines outside of history have tended to be fairly positive about the social function of these rituals. In the 1960s, both Geoffrey Gorer and Colin Murray-Parkes lamented the decline of rituals which they believed had provided a conduit for the expression of feelings of loss, which had since dissipated to leave the subjects of grief and death as an unmentionable taboo.[12] Historians, however, have often been more sceptical of the social and emotional value of these rituals. This is particularly true of earlier accounts of mourning, which drew heavily on the literary depiction of mourning in novelists led by Charles Dickens. John Morley and Julian Litten, for instance, have both used Dickens's satirical accounts of mourning to suggest that Victorian death culture was dominated by a parasitic, exploitative 'industry' of death that preyed on the bereaved and corrupted true feeling.[13] Morley goes as far as to characterise the Victorian approach to death as 'a symptom of an age when the gap between pretension and performance was great, hypocrisy was a vice without glamour and misery, where it existed, was great.'[14] David Cannadine's important essay 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', while challenging the previous historiographical consensus in other respects, upholds previous historians' doubt over whether mourning truly provided comfort and whether

[11] D. Lutz, *Relics of Death in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 8.
[12] G. Gorer, *Death, Grief, and Mourning: a Study of Contemporary Society* (London: Cresset Press, 1965), p. 144; C. Murray-Parkes, *Bereavement: Studies of Grief in Adult Life* (London: Harmondsworth, 1979), p. 188.
[13] J. Morley, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press: 1970); J. Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral since 1450* (London: Studio Vista, 1971).
[14] J. Morley, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press: 1970).

formalised customs or rituals could be treated as expressions of authentic feeling.[15]

Since the 1990s, however, historians of death in Victorian Britain have become much more cautious in their treatment of literary depictions of death and mourning, and more sceptical about Dickensian caricatures. Pat Jalland has attempted to move discussion away from a conception of a homogenous, inseparable set of 'mourning rituals' and distinguish between practices that had clear 'therapeutic value' and those that were less 'useful', or even counterproductive. In her judgment it was mourning dress rules that were least well adapted to consolation and the navigation of sorrow or grief. Authorities on mourning etiquette 'were capable of absurd refinements; they could leave the impression that all Victorian widows were either social outcasts, subject to ancient taboos, or superficial and socially ambitious hypocrites.'[16] It was these absurdities that attracted the scorn of 'novelists, notably Charles Dickens', who gave the impression that widows 'were motivated more often by social emulation, convention and vanity than genuine sorrow.'[17] But Jalland rejects the tendency to generalise from these criticisms to a more general cynicism about sincerity, finding much reason to believe that Victorian mourners found much solace in the rituals of bereavement. Even in the case of widow's weeds – where she expresses some sympathy with the idea that they entrapped women in archaic gender roles – she is ambivalent rather than outright condemnatory.[18]

Julie-Marie Strange in some ways takes on a similar task of dispelling misconceptions and distortions inherited from literary depictions of grief: her book opens with a binary between the 'pauper grave and the lavish funeral', which it is the task of the remainder of the book to dispel: 'Dickens excelled in portraying the sordid and proselytising against social injustice... Like many

[15] D. Cannadine, 'War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', *Mirrors of Mortality*, ed. J. Whaley (London: Routledge, 1981), pp. 187-242.
[16] P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 300.
[17] Ibid. p. 302.
[18] Ibid. p. 307.

dichotomies, however, the juxtaposed images of the pauper grave and the respectable burial have lent themselves to oversimplification.'[19] Strange treats funerals and mourning rituals as 'a forum for the creation of expression of loss', while interrogating the ideas of respectability more thoroughly than previous historians had done.[20] The result is a picture of working-class people negotiating mourning customs with nuance and complexity: individuals with distinct sets of feelings and circumstances using rituals to navigate their own particular path through bereavement, in a manner that involved questions of respectability and social status, but also private emotion and the particularities of relationships, circumstances, social identity and disposition.[21] In this context, Dickensian caricatures of obsequious undertakers contribute to the flawed impression of the Victorian culture of death as an interlude of brief flamboyance and expressiveness sandwiched between early modern simplicity and twentieth-century silence. The 'pauper grave' and the 'lavish funeral' are the two archetypal 'symbols' of working-class mourning, each in their own way censorious and both operating to obscure the complexities of working-class experiences of death.

Jalland and Strange (among others) have convincingly demonstrated that critiques of mourning are not the most reliable guides either to the emotions and motivations of mourners, or to the practices and hypocrisies of the death industry. But this does not mean that they lack value as historical sources. In this chapter I focus on controversies over the authenticity of ritually-expressed mourning, which constitute another arena in which emotional responses to death were talked about. Those who found mourning rituals rewarding did not tend to write critical or theoretical accounts of their meanings. Those who did write critically or polemically about them, however, treated the supposedly false and theatrical version of emotion as a foil for an internal emotional experience

[19] J-M. Strange, ''She Cried a Very Little': Death, Grief and Mourning in Working-Class Culture, c. 1880-1914', *Social History* Vol. 27, No. 2 (May 2002), pp. 143-161 (quotation on p. 143).
[20] J-M. Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 3.
[21] Ibid. for instance pp. 1-6, pp. 131-138, pp. 203-208.

that was presented as both more sincere and more laudable. The idea that emotional responses to death were constantly subject to suspicions of falsity or insincerity led to a conceptual binary between authentic emotion and hollow performance. Viewed in this light, displays of sorrow were not only unreliable as evidence of real feeling, but perhaps even provided evidence that the feeling did not exist. In this model, 'true' grief was necessarily inexpressible and interior – a feeling that resided too deep within the sufferer to be easily brought into the social world. It was the demonstration of a pure affection untainted by material considerations. As with the theological examinations of sorrow discussed in Chapter One, this distinction shows the power of the notion that emotional responses to death were more complete and more admirable when they were interior, involving private struggle rather than straightforward expression.

I begin this chapter by addressing the moment Jalland has identified as critical in the move away from ostentatious Victorian mourning practices: the rise of funeral reform movements in the 1870s and 1880s.[22] Taking a lively debate in a local newspaper as a case study, I identify questions about authenticity as central to controversies about mourning culture, alongside the more widely discussed criticisms of alleged working-class profligacy and the profiteering of funeral industries. Pursuing the roots of these attitudes and a fuller elucidation of anxieties around mourning, I turn then to an analysis of satirical discussions of mourning in novels and magazines in the period before the rise of the funeral reform movement. Finally, I return to Mary Hume-Rothery and other advocates of a more radically anti-mourning stance to show how these debates related to politics and gender: who mourns, who is mourned and how.

[22] Jalland identifies the 1870s and 1880s as a moment of turning away from Victorian death rituals in several different respects, including being the moment when ostentatious funerals decisively fell out of fashion: Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, pp. 194- 203.

'To indoctrinate the people': late-Victorian campaigns for mourning reform

In 1880, an exasperated correspondent going by the name of 'A Tory Vicar' wrote in to the *West Somerset Press* to lament the decline of public decency and respect for tradition – a trend, he observed, that was especially evident in the increasingly permissive fashions of women's dress. The vicar related incredulously how women attending his church had started showing up to their own weddings in casual clothing, such as walking dresses or black kid gloves. He had even, he exclaimed, read reports of brides in riding habits. But the most alarming development in this increasing 'unwomanliness of woman' – and the one that had immediately prompted his outcry to the press – was the news of a new movement to 'abolish the wearing of mourning'. 'Really,' concluded the dismayed vicar, 'the customs of our days would make our fore-fathers start with amazement.'[23]

The movement to which the Tory Vicar referred was the Funeral and Mourning Reform Association (FMRA), founded in 1876 with a mission to 'abolish all unnecessary expenditure and ostentation' from the Victorian culture of death. Under the movement's umbrella were gathered a patrician concern for the inability of the poor to afford lavish funerals, the increasing distaste for the profiteering of the funeral industry, and a snobbery about customs that many perceived as vulgar.[24]

But there was also a deeper unease about the potentially corrupting effects of demonstrative mourning. The 'extreme gloom' of the funerals that was

[23] 'Letters', *West Somerset Press*, 4 December 1880, p. 8.

[24] Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*, pp. 108-117; Strange shows that, despite the attacks on working-class funerals as carnivals of conspicuous consumption, 'even a basic burial necessitated extraordinary expense.' She also demonstrates that the funeral industry became increasingly diverse over the course of the nineteenth century, undermining the legitimacy of simplistic portrayals of Victorian funerals as uniform in character or extravagance. I find this persuasive, but in this chapter I am concerned with the contemporary perception of funeral and mourning practices rather than their material reality.

fashionable at the time and their 'cumbersome' trappings were wasteful, spiritually dangerous and 'offensive to good taste'. The people whose good taste was offended were (perhaps unsurprisingly) overwhelmingly from the upper strata of society. The delegates at the first national meeting, in York in 1876, boasted of support from the Archbishop of York, the mayor of York and several other Anglican clergy (somewhat compromising the association's claim to be 'in no way denominational'), alongside several named aristocrats and an unidentified mass of officers, doctors and lawyers. Despite also acknowledging the support of certain 'working men', the campaign was very open about its elitist approach: if the 'better classes' led the way, the chairman declared at the founding meeting, these more understated exhibitions of grief that they were championing would surely diffuse downwards throughout the social hierarchy.[25] Like the consolation literature addressed in Chapter One, the funeral and mourning reform movement can therefore be seen from the point of its first meetings as a paternalistic attempt to impose certain norms concerning the emotional response to death.

The inaugural meeting of the FMRA ended with an appeal for chapters of the society to be established throughout the realm, disseminating more ascetic and more abstinent practices of mourning. The call from the reform movement clearly found a sympathetic audience: communities across the nation answered this call and within the space of a year there were chapters everywhere, from Newcastle to Derry to Kent. Reports of regional meetings generally suggest a widespread conformity with the values and emphasis established at the first meeting of the society. At a meeting of the Derry branch of the FMRA, for instance, delegates were even more blunt in their declaration of their paternalistic and elitist mission than the founders had been the previous year: their declared intent was 'to indoctrinate the people with the notion that simplicity is not shabbiness, and that economy is no dishonour to the dead.'[26]

[25] Letters, *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 15 December 1877, p. 7.
[26] 'Second Annual Report of the Funeral and Mourning Reform Association, *Derry Journal,* 29 October 1877, p. 4.

On the subject of how far this opposition to traditional mourning should be taken, however, divisions were already beginning to emerge. While the progenitors of the mourning reform movement insisted that their intent was only to curb the worst excesses of ritual grief, the delegates at the Derry meeting suggested that there was no reason why the existing customs shouldn't be abandoned altogether. Around the same time, the London correspondent of the *York Herald* reported that the original agenda established in York was being taken to extreme lengths in the metropolis, where 'eminent persons' were advocating and even practicing total abolition of mourning.[27] By 1879, three years after the reform movement had been founded, the Archdeacon of York came close to echoing the same ideas, proposing that public displays of grief should be limited to unobtrusive black armbands (he also proposed that dead bodies should be simply laid in the ground without coffins). In 1878, at the inauguration in Sheffield of a parallel society confined to members of the Church of England, Lord Cathcart was uncompromising: 'I have an absolute horror of the vulgar and dismal prostitution of woe.'[28]

Yet, as the outraged letter from the Tory Vicar indicates, there were many conservatives for whom attacks on mourning constituted a dangerous attempt to undermine the mesh of customs that knitted society's fabric together. Over the weeks following the publication of the vicar's initial letter, a lively debate flourished in the letters pages of the *West Somerset Press* over the virtues and vices of mourning reform. Correspondents ridiculed the 'Tory vicar' and defended the cause by enumerating the local notables who had supported mourning reform. The 'moderate and excellent association', insisted Eliza Boucher, who claimed to be one of the society's most active local members, 'binds its members by *no rigid and particular rules*.' It simply aimed to ease the burden of a social code that coerced bereaved people – and especially

[27] 'From Our London Correspondent', *York Herald*, 19 December 1877, p.6.
[28] 'Meeting of the Funeral and Mourning Reform Association' *Sheffield Independent*, 5 October 1878, p. 3.

bereaved women – into a financially onerous routine.[29] Other correspondents wrote to express their sympathy with the concerns of the Tory vicar, while some sought a middle ground between the extremes of mourning abolitionism and the furious reaction against it. One vicar appeared to think it might constitute a compromise if the colour black was replaced in mourning rituals with 'a shade of violet or blue'.[30]

In debates like this – which were echoed in other newspapers across the country – an impression emerges that the decency, propriety and social meaning of mourning rituals was felt as a pressing issue in middle-class communities across the country. Some of this, of course, was simply a question of fashion and taste. There was also a strong flavour of meddling paternalism, with frequent references to the burden that mourning placed on the poor.[31] To the extent that these questions of fashion and thrift were the ultimate issues at stake, this question has been widely addressed by historians in discussions of funeral reform. Julie-Marie Strange's account of the experiences of the working-class bereaved draws attention to this patronising and paternalistic conception of working-class funerals as either a spectacle of pathetic poverty or an aspirational imitation of opulent middle-class customs, both burdensome and in questionable taste. In Strange's account, the decision of working-class families to spend money that they could barely afford on expensive funerals was a choice that they freely made out of a sense of dignity, pride, duty and love.[32] But other questions besides thrift were also at stake: records of these meetings also suggest that opponents of mourning were uneasy about the relationship between the public expression of emotional responses to death and the feelings of individual mourners – questions that became bound up in politics and identity.

[29] 'Letters', *West Somerset Press*, 25 December 1880, p. 5.
[30] 'Letters', *West Somerset Press*, 15 January 1881, p. 3.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*, e.g. pp. 108-117; pp. 148-154.

It is striking how eager correspondents were to make reference to their political affiliations in these debates: the bullishly Tory vicar meeting with rebuttals from Eliza Boucher and her parade of 'liberal' supporters.[33] Clearly this was to be understood as a debate with a political dimension. Furthermore, although at first the issues raised most frequently were ones of waste, poverty and respectability, critics of mourning practices gradually began to show they were uncomfortable at a more fundamental level with the attitudes that mourning practices appeared to betray. Eliza Boucher's first letter to the *West Somerset Press* in the flurry of letters published in response to the 'Tory Vicar' did open with an appeal to thrift and prudence. But having established this essentially humanitarian and practical case, Boucher concluded by reproducing in full a poem that attacked Victorian mourning conventions from quite a different angle. The poem was 'The Mourner à la Mode' by the American poet and humourist John Saxe, a cynical satire about a beautiful and fashionable woman whose 'lugubrious' fan, 'billowing cape' and 'ripples of ebony lace' advertise a depth of emotion that her behaviour fails to match. Her 'sumptuous sorrow' is treated as an erotic performance, rather than a manifestation of dutiful submission to death and loss. The poem concludes with a caustic aphorism about the 'curious passion' of sorrow, which seems so dark and weighty but appears so lavishly fashionable and so susceptible to shifting cultural tides.

> When *measles* come handsomely out,
> The patient is safest, they say;
> And the *sorrow* is mildest, no doubt,
> That works in a similar way! [34]

Saxe's poem goes further than lambasting ostentatious sorrow as insincere. He seems to suggest that the display of sorrow existed in inverse proportion to the emotion it claimed to portray: the more extravagant the display, the shallower the emotion. The letter-writer who reproduced this poem was a woman whose

[33] 'Letters', *West Somerset Press*, 15 January 1881, p. 3.
[34] 'Letters', *West Somerset Press*, 25 December 1880, p. 5.

concerns included the strain that mourning placed on working women's pockets; yet in buttressing her objection to mourning, she drew on a poem that was shot through with misogynistic mistrust of the motivations of mourning widows. Lou Taylor as argued that the turn against drab mourning dress reflected a more egalitarian view of marriage, with the role of wife no longer seen as subservient to the husband.[35] But poems like the one quoted by Boucher show that there was also a deep strain of misogyny in criticisms of mourning dress, which frequently drew on deeply sexist assumptions about the motivations behind female expressions of feeling.

At the heart of the objections of Boucher and other correspondents was a sense that displays of mourning had become detached from authentic emotional experience. 'Real genuine sorrow,' as a delegate to a mourning reform meeting in Kent put it, did 'not want the ostentation and show of funeral grief.'[36] In scholarly discussions about emotional responses to death, a distinction is sometimes made between ideas about 'grief' and ideas about 'mourning'. Mourning is social behaviour. It is governed by culture and visible in the form of rituals and material remnants. 'Grief' on the other hand, is seen as the internal emotion, which might be mediated and shaped by these communal rituals, but is also essentially separate from them – private and in the end unknowable. Geoffrey Gorer's *Death, Grief and Mourning* makes the distinction from its title onward.[37] It is also a familiar feature of historical literature. Ralph Houlbrooke outlines the distinction particularly clearly: 'Grief is the suffering caused by deprivation and loss, above all of friends and loved ones. Mourning embraces all grief's outward behavioural manifestations.'[38] Grief and mourning need not

[35] L. Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History* (London: Routledge, 1983), pp. 48-64, pp. 120-124.
[36] 'Funeral Reform', *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 12 September 1879, p. 5.
[37] G. Gorer, *Death, Grief, and Mourning: a Study of Contemporary Society* (London: Cresset Press, 1965).
[38] R. Houlbrooke, *Death Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 220. Houbrooke makes particularly this distinction particularly explicit, but it is present too in much if not most historical writing about death. Pat Jalland, for instance, sometimes uses the two terms interchangeably, but at other times appears to make a similar distinction to Houlbrooke. 'The week of the

necessarily be separated by a great gulf, and not all languages and cultures presume any gap at all. But the rhetoric on display in debates over mourning reform suggests that Victorian culture was particularly prone to anxieties over this gap. In criticisms of the material culture of death it is possible to discern a tendency – particularly within progressive, liberal and broadly rationalist circles – to privilege internal experience, and to cast this experience as antithetical to demonstrative public expression.

It is difficult to clearly determine how far the FMRA was an agent of changing customs, or whether its existence was simply a manifestation of attitudes that were already well developed. But it is evident that the society's foundation did coincide with a period of rapid change in late-nineteenth-century mourning customs, its tenets quickly becoming an established orthodoxy. When Archibald Tait, the Archbishop of Canterbury, died in 1882, the restrained nature of his funerary arrangements was widely remarked on by the press. Jalland has analysed Tait's own private response to a heart-breaking series of bereavements in detail, contrasting his slow, tortured struggle to accept his children's deaths with the more eloquent sorrow of his wife.[39] In many ways his response conformed to the 'sorrow not' narrative of grief that I identified in the previous chapter, which emphasised the stoical mastery of emotion above the notion of devotional sorrow, and above the trajectory characteristic to Victorian evangelical theology in which sorrow was transmuted into ecstatic faith.

Given the emotional template adopted by Tait in his own response to death, it is perhaps unsurprising that his own funeral was noted to be markedly unostentatious. There was 'no parade of mourning' for him, and the understated decorations were created and arranged by his family and friends.[40] Two years later, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York became the co-presidents of the

---

funeral began the process of working through grief with the supportive structure of public mourning,' she writes in one instance: Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, p. 210.

[39] P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, pp. 167-172.

[40] 'Notices' *The Guardian*, 4 August 1883, p. 2.

FMRA. In a widely-disseminated letter, they rehearsed the old criticisms of waste and display, and called on good Christians to help those whose fortitude had been weakened by bereavement to 'resist the tyranny of custom or fashion'.[41] Alongside this they placed a particular emphasis on the theological arguments made against conspicuous mourning, declaring that it had contributed to a 'mistaken' understanding of death and a consequently 'impoverished' view of life. Mourning, the two presidents jointly insisted, should aim to buttress the view of death as a 'transition' to a higher state. Again, the changes in mourning practices were not simply to do with fashion, but also debates about the appropriate limits and interpretation of the emotional response to death. As in the consolation manuals I discussed in Chapter One, emotional responses to death became a stage for inner conflict and a struggle for emotional mastery. Again, elite writers exhorted the public to hold their emotions within and to demonstrate the strength of both emotion and will by sustaining the struggle without allowing it an easy outlet in public expression.

By this point in the story of mourning reform, so much had changed that even some of the movement's supporters were voicing their concerns about the extent of the reforms that were being proposed. At a meeting in York in 1892, one speaker praised the successes of the organisation while simultaneously warning against 'going to the opposite extremes'. *Some* socially-enforced mourning routines were necessary, he appeared to argue, since the sobriety of grief could be a useful time for imparting lessons to those who were usually too 'frivolous' to take them on board. It was true that some of the FMRA's supporters had drifted away from their initial, careful insistence that the goal was to counteract social pressures and give individuals a free choice over how to grieve. Lucy Cavendish (the progressive activist and philanthropist and wife of the prominent Liberal politician Frederick Cavendish) distilled the FMRA's

[41] 'Lettters', *Tamworth Herald*, Saturday 19 January 1884, p.6 and elsewhere (this is the earliest version of the letter I have been able to find, but it was printed widely in the local and national press).

message into an austere 'twelve noes', including 'no unusual eating or drinking' and 'no cumbrous tombstone' as well as 'no extravagant mourning attire.'[42]

The changes that the association and similar reform movements achieved were well underway by the 1880s. By the end of the century, the activity of the organisation appears to have essentially ceased. In this roughly twenty-year period, the ubiquity of ornate mourning attire had declined and had become an object of censure. Queen Victoria's own funeral offered evidence of the changing fashions of her long reign: it was in fact far shorter on pomp than those of her most illustrious subjects. Whereas the funerals for Prince Albert and the Duke of Wellington had been famous for their extravagance and solemnity, the queen's was more remarked on for its intimacy.[43]

In 1891, *Punch* was ready to write an epitaph for mourning customs, in a satirical poem called 'Tear for the Funeral Mute': 'More losses we've had than I dare to compute,' the poem begins, 'But the greatest of all is our funeral mute.' This lament does not appear to be particularly sincere, since the remaining lines of the poem smother the mute with unflattering epithets: he is 'greasy', 'seedy' and 'lugubrious', sullying the house of mourning with his slovenly manner, his ill-fitting clothing and a suspicious stench of beer. 'The cup of mock anguish he drenched to the dregs… the more money he got the more wretched he looked.'[44] The much-parodied and now endangered figure of the funeral mute was an emblem of everything that the FMRA opposed: both an expensive extravagance representative of a parasitic death industry squeezing money from people who could least afford it, and a professional purveyor of insincere feeling.[45]

---

[42] 'Funeral and Mourning Reform', *Shields Daily News*, Tuesday 26 July 1892, p. 4.
[43] J. Wolffe, *Great Deaths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2000), pp. 290-310.
[44] 'A Tear for the Mute', *Punch* Vol. 101 (1891), p. 241.
[45] For an analysis of the changes in public grief for figures of state, see J. Wolffe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

This satirical poem could easily be taken as a mocking epitaph for nineteenth-century mourning customs; but the only thing that clearly distinguished it from similar caricatures written earlier in the century is the fact that it was written in the past tense. Various iterations of false and hypocritical grief were abundant in Victorian literature. In the period immediately prior to the eruption of the anti-mourning movement that flourished from the 1870s onward, novels and satirical magazines were peppered with unflattering depictions of characters whose displays of grief are self-interested, insincere and distasteful. By analysing the critiques nested in satire and fiction, it is possible to gain a more detailed insight into the substance of objections to mourning.

'Is this the grief I dare to pry into?' Public mourning, private suffering, hypocrisy and authenticity in Victorian literature and satire

Charles Dickens looms over the discussions of Victorian mourning in two slightly contradictory ways. Firstly, he is remembered for his melodramatic, lachrymose death scenes, often ridiculed by later generations, most famously the protracted death throes of angelic Little Nell, which Oscar Wilde was famously (though perhaps apocryphally) unable to read 'without laughing'.[46] In this sense, Dickens is the paragon of a particular kind of overblown and maudlin Victorian sentimentality – a purveyor of refined and tear-jerking sorrow who made 'the world mourn'.[47] At the same time, however, he is also known as

[46] One historian whose idea of Victorian mourning was particularly heavily influenced by the impression given by Dickens was James Curl: Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, e.g. p. 3, 27. Oscar Wilde's comment was ascribed to him by his friend Ada Leverson, who took him in after his first trial for gross indecency; A. Leverson, *Letters to the Sphinx from Oscar Wilde, with Reminiscences of the Author* (London: Duckworth, 1930), p. 42.

[47] J. Drew, ' Reviewing Dickens in the Victorian Periodical Press', in *Charles Dickens in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), ed. S. Ledger and H. Furneaux pp. 35–42; see also T. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 153-155. On the source of the quotation ascribed to Wilde, Dixon write: 'This famous remark was ascribed to Wilde by his friend Ada Leverson in her account of the time Wilde spent staying with her and husband after his first, inconclusive trial for 'gross indecency' and before the retrial at which he was convicted, in 1895.' (p. 141).

the satirist in chief of the funeral industry, with his cast of obsequious, miserly undertakers and drunken mutes, particularly in *Oliver Twist*.

This dual reputation as both the arch sentimentalist of the Victorian 'cult of death' and the scourge of the death industry is not as contradictory as it might seem: a respect for the sanctity of grief could naturally lead to distaste for anything that appeared to sully or exploit this feeling. Historians have used Dickens 'to conclude that bereavement in the nineteenth century was characterised by consumerism and preoccupation with social status,' Strange writes.[48] But as much as Dickens has shaped modern impressions of Victorian death culture, he and other novelists were also instrumental in shaping the attitudes and opinions of their own time. At the very first annual general (as opposed to regional) meeting of the FMRA, for instance, Dickens was cited as the persuasive reason for most of the delegates' presence. 'Everybody who had read such authors as Dickens,' it was argued, 'must be convinced of the ridiculousness of measuring grief by so many hearses and carriages.'[49]

This suggests an alternative way to envisage the place of literary sources in shaping our understanding of the nineteenth-century death culture. Rather than treating the descriptions in themselves as realistic accounts of death and mourning in the period – the lived experience of bereavement, the character of the funeral industry, the moral status of public grief – Victorian literature can instead be read for what it reveals about a particular set of *attitudes* towards the culture of mourning, especially among middle-class writers who were critical of the social mores of their contemporaries. This goes beyond descriptions of ornate funerals and seedy undertakers. Death and grief are almost omnipresent in Victorian literature. It is interesting to compare the place that death and bereavement have in the works of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens – or, indeed, almost any novelist of the later nineteenth century. In Austen's major works, written between 1811 and 1817, death was almost totally absent, except

[48] Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*, p. 3.
[49] 'Letters', *West Somerset Press*, 4 December 1880, p. 8.

as a looming potentiality. Characters often become dangerously ill, but all recover safely, and even the characters whose lives have been marked by significant bereavements appear almost unaffected by it, except perhaps by the fact of their inheritance, or lack of it. Emma Woodhouse, for instance, who has been motherless from a young age, certainly does not appear to be preoccupied by her loss or marked by trauma.[50] Her whole character relies on her status as a confident, privileged, self-reliant figure untroubled by sorrow or self-doubt.[51] Dickens's many orphans, on the other hand, are scarred and defined by their orphanhood.[52] The dispossessed child's pursuit of the love that they have been deprived of as children provides the central emotional thrust for the narrative arcs of Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Martin Chuzzlewit, Florence Dombey, Philip Pirrip (Pip) in *Great* Expectations, Esther Summerson in *Bleak House*, as well as Little Nell herself.[53]

Even the Victorian writers less obviously given to melodrama than Dickens wrote novels plagued by mourning and haunted by bereavement. Anthony Trollope's Barchester Chronicles are full of death, mourning and unfolding dramas over inheritance. William Makepeace Thackeray, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, any of the three Brontë sisters – it is hard to think of a famous novelist in this period whose works do not contain emotionally-charged plots about death. This observation is too general to yield any particular conclusions. Instead, the next section of this chapter will examine a particular

[50] Strikingly little has been written about death in Jane Austen's works, perhaps because it is plays such a small role. One of the few commentaries I have discovered on this fact is from *The New York Times:* R. Jones, 'In Jane Austen's Pages, Death Has No Dominion, *The New York Times*, 13 July 2017, retrieved online at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/13/books/review/jane-austen-death-has-no-dominion.html (28/05/2020).
[51] J. Austen, *Emma* (London: Penguin 2003).
[52] Discussions of the importance of orphanhood in the work of Charles Dickens include B. Hochman and I. Wachs: *Dickens: The Orphan Condition* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999); L. S. Simon, 'The De-Orphaned Orphan: *Oliver Twist* and Deep Time', *Dickens Quarterly* (Vol. 34, Issue 4, 2017), pp. 306-330.
[53] As well as the commentary cited earlier in Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, other historians who have addressed Dickens include C. Wood, *Dickens and the Business of Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) and Hochman and Wach, *Dickens: The Orphan Condition*.

feature of nineteenth-century writing about death and grief: the trope of insincere mourning and its contrast with true, selfless sorrow. The portrayal of undertakers and other funeral professionals was only one element in a much broader discourse on theatrically insincere mourning.

Again, this is not to imply that all Victorian novelists portrayed public grief as insincere. Mary Elizabeth Holz, for instance, has shown how death and periods of mourning function in Elizabeth Gaskell's novels as an occasion on which social divisions between classes and genders become negotiable, allowing some form of communion or reconciliation between people who usually operated in incommensurable languages and social spheres: the industrialist and the trade unionist, the gentlewoman and the rough working man. Death, Holz argues, 'draws a community of mourners from all ranks and provides an instance in which individuals may be transformed to act in the best interests of society.'[54] It is by attending a funeral, against the advice of her father, that Margaret Hale, the heroine of *North and South*, activates an identity that can give her the authority to bring a middle-class Unitarian ethos of empathetic collaboration and individual self-improvement to the divided community of Milton. Strange, meanwhile, illustrates the inadequacy of the two opposing stereotypes of the 'respectable burial' and the 'pauper grave' with an analysis of George Gissing's *The Nether World*, in which a final funeral suggests a more ambiguous relationship between individual feeling and public ritual.[55]

The question of the nature of mourning as an internal emotional experience, however, came particularly into focus when novelists questioned its sincerity. In casting doubt on the ability of customary mourning practices to convey emotional truth, writers projected an idealised emotional response to death in stark opposition to what they interpreted as hollow performance. In doing so,

---

[54] M. E. Hotz, '"Taught By Death What Life Should Be": Elizabeth Gaskell's Representation Of Death In North And South', *Studies In The Novel*, Vol. 32, Issue 2 (summer 2000), pp. 165-184 (quotation on p. 168).
[55] J-M. Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*, pp. 12-14. Strange also refers to Gissing's commentary on death and grief throughout the book.

many of these writers valorised a silent emotional response to death that resisted the kind of outer expression that they read as cynical and self-serving. Hence, as in the Christian narratives analysed in Chapter One, elite writers propagated a model of loss that prioritised internal struggle. These writers were mostly but not exclusively male, but very often the mourning subjects in their novels were women. Their expressions of their sorrow were not masculine, therefore, despite following a typically male pattern of turning away from any form of emotionality that might be conceived as theatrical. When female writers addressed women's grief, they often displayed ways that women could turn this model to their advantage. Margaret Hale in *North and South* is one example of this: 'Women of our class don't go,' she says in response to her father's protest that it would be improper for her to attend a working-class funeral, 'because they have no power over their emotions, and yet are ashamed of showing them. Poor women go, and don't care if they are seen overwhelmed with grief.'[56] Margaret insists on her ability to restrain her emotions, thus laying claim to a place in the public sphere from which she will be empowered to play a key role in the social politics of her adoptive city.

Martin Chuzzlewit, *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* all feature cynical undertakers, jaded and corrupted by their sordid business of extorting money from the vulnerable bereaved. The first of these characters that Dickens created, and perhaps the one that comes closest to pure caricature, was Mr Mould in Martin *Chuzzlewit*, first published in 1844. With his 'face in which a queer attempt at melancholy was at odds with a smirk of satisfaction,' Mould is a living symbol of the incompatibility of financial gain and true grief. He has grown rich on the profits of his business and he is hardened to the devastation of the poor, honest families with whom he deals. His grotesque 'harem' of daughters are just as callous – it is they to whom the chairman of the FMRA referred when he discussed the wrongs of measuring sorrow by 'so many yards

[56] Quoted in Hotz, '"Taught By Death"', p. 173; the quotation appears in the novel after the death of a working-class woman with whom Margaret has forged a friendship: E. Gaskell, *North and South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 269.

of silk or crape'.[57] Mould's accomplice, the vulgar, drunken and unscrupulous nurse Mrs Gamp, likewise has her made-to-order 'mourning countenance'. Her 'zest and relish' for funerals and births is about equal, but she can summon an appropriate 'face for all occasions'. Occasionally, Mr Mould's mournful mask slips and he must re-enter his role through a procedure of sighing, pacing and gazing plaintively into his hat. His mutes are similarly compromised by the contradiction of experiencing the opportunity to mourn as a small piece of personal fortune: standing outside the house of death, they are 'as mournful as could be reasonably expected of men with such a thriving job in hand.'[58]

Mutes are closer to the centre of the stage in *Oliver Twist*, in which Oliver himself is briefly employed as a mute. In this case, the sorrow is not quite so totally false: the undertaker Mr Sowerberry recognises potential in the orphaned Oliver's natural 'expression of melancholy,' which will make an affecting ornament at the funerals of children of a similar age. His miserable childhood makes him a convincingly desolate presence in funeral processions, although it is about the only authentic aspect of Sowerberry-run funerals: the undertaker himself is thoroughly unaffected and he assures Oliver that experience will before too long make him similarly numb. In the face of the destitute couple whose daughter's burial is Oliver's first commission, Sowerberry is perfunctory and insensitive; while the parents rave in their sorrow and lament the poverty that has led to their child's death, he calmly measures the body and hurries away without even bothering to offer condolences.[59]

In *Great Expectations* Dickens's view of the absurdity of funeral customs is illuminated not so much by the contrast in the behaviour of the true and professional mourners as by the conflicted and qualified nature of Pip's grief for his sister, Mrs Joe, who had terrorised him in his youth. Pip is haunted by his

[57] C. Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* (London: Penguin 1999), also paraphrased in 'Funeral and Mourning Reform Meeting at York', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* Saturday 15 December 1877 p. 7.
[58] Ibid.
[59] C. Dickens, *Oliver Twist, or, the Parish Boy's Progress* (Penguin: London 2002), pp. 35-44.

first serious encounters with death and feels a 'shock of regret' – but not any 'tender' feelings. When he is greeted at the house of mourning by a pair of 'sable' mutes, they fussily attend to his needs as though he is 'too much exhausted by grief' to do anything for himself. The disjuncture between this formal performance of a sombre, respectful melancholy and the complicated nature of Pip's own feelings make the behaviour of the mutes seem ridiculous and crass; an ironic gap opens between what is performed and what is felt. The other mourners are willing participants in this theatre of false grief, even consenting to a choreographed display in which they all simultaneously raise their handkerchiefs to their eyes as though overcome by tears. Only Joe Gargery, the dead woman's devoted husband, seems completely earnest in his mourning, and he reveals that he had wished for a simple funeral for his wife, without any pomp at all (a request roundly dismissed by his companions for the lack of respect it would show).[60]

Dickens's opposition to the funeral industry is well-known and widely remarked upon. Catherine Waters describes it as a 'fascination' – a subject that Dickens was irresistibly drawn to again and again, despite simultaneously finding it repellent.[61] Some biographers and commentators have pointed to Dickens's own personal bereavements as potential reasons for this preoccupation, in particular the death of his sister-in-law Mary Hogarth that affected him profoundly – he wore a mourning ring for her for decades and even claimed that his grief exceeded that of her blood relations. But Dickens's satires on mourning were only the most famous examples of a widely-disseminated stereotype that together suggest a more general growth of public dissent against the culture of mourning and its paraphernalia – the suspicion and disenchantment that Lutz identifies in her account of the physical reminders of death in the Victorian age, and the way that these became less popular as

[60] C. Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 264-271.
[61] C. Waters, 'Materializing Mourning: Dickens, Funerals and Epitaphs', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 14 (2011), pp. 1-20.

Britain moved towards a new century defined by mass production and mass destruction.[62]

A tongue-in-cheek article published in the *Sixpenny Magazine* in 1862 portrayed mutes as 'masses of gloom, stationed in steadfast sadness on either side of the entrance to some human habitation,' exuding an heir of 'lugubrious' solemnity. All this, the article suggested, was a shallow façade to discourage the mawkish excitement, gossip and materialism that otherwise surrounds mortality. The author went on to illustrate the mute's hypocrisy with a morbidly whimsical tale about a happy, prospering young carpenter named Jem who goes to London to make his fortune. On his way his train crashes, killing his children and leaving him disabled. Jem is not only distraught with grief but also destitute. In his desperation to feed and house himself and his pretty young wife, he finally accepts a position offered to him by the owner of a funeral undertaker, whose only expectation is that he 'do his best: – that is look his worst; and if he gave satisfaction to his customers, he might count on 18 shillings a week at the close of winter. Perhaps if the influenza was about, and it proved a good burying season, something might be done sooner.' Fortunately for Jem, his traumatic bereavement has made him a natural. While other mutes 'degraded their scarfs and hatbands, by tossing off a glass of gin or a well-crested pot of porter, with the insignia of their office fluttering about them… Jem was always dumb as death.' His distaste for the seedy business of profiting from death only makes him better at it, since he can't even take pride in his talents and remains suitably glum even when plied with praise and extra pay. Finally, however, success and prosperity get the better of him and he begins to revert to his former happy disposition. He gradually turns into a 'merry mute', and at this point his reputation tumbles and his master's business collapses, leaving him out of a job once again.[63]

[62] Ibid. p. 168.
[63] 'The Funeral Mute', *The Sixpenny Magazine* Vol. 3 Issue 13 (July 1862), pp. 295-300.

Evidently this tale – along with the 'Tear for the Mute' poem published in *Punch* – was intended to convey the corrupting confluence of money on mourning.[64] Performing grief for financial gain is portrayed as tasteless, but it also involves a kind of paradox: to the extent it is authentic, its authenticity is self-defeating. Through their success in conveying an air of misery and self-abasement, the mutes gain pride and prestige, stripping their performance of its authenticity. In this respect the attitudes of these magazine satires echo the ideas in *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *Oliver Twist*. The presence of money makes emotional sincerity unsustainable. This is often portrayed as one ingredient of a broader critique of commercial society, with a distaste for the idea of joint-stock funeral companies at its core.

But unease about mixing money and death went well beyond the funeral industry. Even within the Dickensian scenes that mock the professionalisation of mourning, the professionals were not the only targets. In *Oliver Twist*, for instance, Oliver's visits to the recently bereaved give him an opportunity to witness what Dickens describes with heavy irony as their 'beautiful resignation and fortitude'. The families of wealthy benefactors, 'whose grief had been perfectly inconsolable even on the most public occasions' would become 'quite cheerful and contented' when detached from the crowds. Bereaved husbands' apparent stoicism is often so successful that it teeters on a total lack of concern, while bereaved wives seemed to make their mourning weeds 'as becoming and attractive as possible'. The first of these scenarios – of potential heirs performing false grief at the very moment their fortune is made – was a particularly prevalent trope in English nineteenth-century writing. In fact it is present even in the *Sixpenny* tale described above, when the writer is giving his explanation for the necessity of funeral mutes. They were there, the writer implies, to discourage the gawking commentary from the public about the material consequences of death: how wealthy the deceased man in question was and consequently 'to what heirs his lands and tenements must descend.'[65]

[64] Ibid. p. 299.
[65] Ibid. p. 285.

Sycophants and opportunists hovering at the deathbed are ever-present in Victorian literature. The plot of *Martin Chuzzlewit* revolves around just such a situation: the elder Chuzzlewit is plagued by aspiring heirs to the extent that he is suspicious of everybody's motives, including those of his carer and his son. In this context, appearing particularly stricken during the illness and death of a relative can be a way of making a financial claim. To mourn a person was to assert one's right over them; the more convincingly the mourner grieves, the stronger the claim. Yet at the same time, and in fact in consequence, more mourning implies greater hypocrisy. Hence in *Martin Chuzzlewit* a cousin demonstratively, weepingly laments the sleepless nights she has spent in worry for the health of the rich old man – whose death would give her a chance at wealth. What really sends Mrs Spottletoe into agonies of hypocritical misery, however, is the suggestion that she might have worldly motives for her cares: 'the shock it gave her to be suspected of testamentary designs upon him, do nothing but cry—except moan.'[66] Indeed the promise of inheritance and the way in which this promise ties unscrupulous characters into knots of false emotion is the engine behind the psychological drama of the entire book. 'The desire for inheritance,' one critic has commented, provides 'the novel's essential dynamism and unity.'[67] Larisa Castillo has even made the case that *Martin Chuzzlewit* can be understood as Dickens's own bequeathal, both in sentimental and material terms, and as a commentary on the importance of copyright as a defence of a person's natural rights over their legacy.[68]

But this is not only true in Dickens. Trollope's 'Barchester Chronicles' are also full of inheritance plots in which the performance of mourning is part of a game played for the stakes of both money and an inherited position in the church. *Barchester Towers* begins with the Bishop of Barchester on his sick bed; his son's grief at his imminent loss is mingled with anxious ambition, since his

[66] C. Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 40-57.
[67] K. Wales, 'The Claims of Kinship: The Opening Chapter of Martin Chuzzlewit', *Dickensian,* Vol. 83 (1987), p. 175.
[68] L. Castillo, 'Natural Authority in Charles Dickens's Martin Chuzzlewit and the Copyright Act of 1842', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (March 2008), pp. 435-464.

hopes to inherit his father's title depend on a speedy death, before a new government takes the reins in London. Later the plot of the novel turns on the death of the kindly old dean, which ignites a power struggle that begins while he is still lying in his sick bed. Performances of sorrow are part of these power struggles. They are intended to demonstrate a respectful attitude to the positions to which the competitors aspire, and also to obscure the sordid rivalries that attend the death. Meanwhile, throughout the novel, the rector's daughter is a figure of pure and authentic grief, dressed in mourning weeds that make her irresistibly attractive to the male characters but also mark her out as unworldly and somewhat simple. Her mourning forms the subject of a debate between the sophisticated, dissembling flirt, Signora Madeline Vesey Neroni, and the feckless dilettante Bertie Stanhope. Madeline criticises Eleanor Bold her for obeying a custom that she calls labels a 'shallow, false pretence.' To Madeline the custom seems 'slavish' and reminiscent of rituals in supposedly less 'civilised' cultures: 'It is much a relic of paganism as the sacrifice of a Hindoo woman at the burning of her husband's body,' she says. Bertie Stanhope, on the other hand, finds the idea of a wife prettily honouring him for months after his death quite appealing.[69] The idea of mourning as an act of feminine submission, and its comparison to practices in 'primitive' cultures that Victorians defined themselves in opposition to, is a subject I return to towards the close of this chapter. For now it is more relevant to note the bind that the widowed Eleanor is caught in. Unlike Madeline, she has no capacity for deceit; and yet, precisely because of this, she follows a convention that reflects an artificial, circumscribed gesture towards emotion.

Widows are ubiquitous throughout Trollope's fiction and, as Kaelin Alexander has argued, consistently figure as avatars of social ambivalence.[70] Mrs Greenlow in *Can You Forgive Her?* and Mrs Hurtle in *The Way We Live Now* similarly occupy a troubled dual identity as objects of desire and pity, vulnerability and

[69] A. Trollope, *Barchester Towers* (London: Random House, 2015), pp. 133-135.
[70] K. C. B. Alexander, 'Turning Mourning: Trollope's Ambivalent Widows', *Victorian Literature and Culture* Vol. 43 (2015), pp. 607–620.

worldliness. These widows 'trouble the distinction between affect – the supposedly genuine, more-or-less spontaneous experience of emotion in response to an affective object – and affectation.'[71] Christopher Noble even goes as far as to characterise these widows as paradoxically 'masculine' characters, sexually experienced and legally independent. 'In Victorian society,' Noble writes, 'upper-class widowhood was the closest approximation of male privilege available to women.'[72] Yet in the moment of their independence they were obliged to pay extended tribute to the husband who was now a corpse. Trollope's widows, Noble suggests, play skilfully with this tension and the ambiguous gender status it affords them, in some instances even 'wearing their mourning as drag.'[73] This analysis perhaps overstates Trollope's feminist credentials. But it does support my reading of his widows as ambiguous figures in whose characters visible mourning repeatedly became detached from 'real' expressions of grief.

It is not always widows whose mourning was compromised or disingenuous – although it was disproportionately women. In William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, the conniving antihero Becky Sharp uses the same ruse of performing mourning for material gain. On the death of the wealthy Pitt Crawley, she is discovered busily cutting up black cloth to fashion a serviceable mourning outfit. Cheerfully, flippantly and totally unconvincingly, she announces that she and her companion 'are plunged in grief and despondency for the death of our papa… we have been tearing our hair all the morning, and now we are tearing up our clothes.'[74] The artless Amelia Sedley, by contrast, is so undemonstrative in her all-consuming sorrow for her dead husband that she seems totally absent from herself and unable to look after her own interests. She drifts around with a vague smile on her face and practically cuts herself off from

[71] Ibid. p. 615.
[72] C. Noble, 'Otherwise Occupied: Masculine Widows in Trollope's Novels' in *The Politics of Gender in Anthony Trollope's Novels: New Readings for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. D. D. Morse (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 177-192.
[73] Ibid. p. 197.
[74] W. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair: A Novel Without a Hero* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 519.

the world altogether.[75] Her manner implies such an intense and intimate emotion that it discourages even her friends from social contact. 'Good god,' thinks her steadfast admirer William Dobbin, 'it is a grief like this I dare to pry into?'[76] Even the narrator withdraws from describing Amelia in detail while she is sad. Her own grief – and that of other truly mourning characters – is described as 'speechless', 'inexpressible' and not to be dwelt on. This sort of sorrow is barely legible as grief to those characters who are busily playing a more active role in the materialistic, status-obsessed and hypocritical cut-and-thrust of public life that makes up Thackeray's conception of his contemporary society as 'Vanity Fair'. Grief is real precisely when it is *not* public; meanwhile those who cry at church and make shows of sorrow – such as the malicious Osborne sisters – always have at least half a mind on their own material interests. The contrast even appears in the outfits of the characters: whereas Becky Sharp and the sisters drape themselves in black, Amelia's mourning wear is pure white.[77]

As Kirsty Milne and Julian Jimenez Heffernan have noted, the deaths in *Vanity Fair* – which are in many cases hinge points of the plot as well as pivotal moments of the characters' emotional lives – are almost all withheld from the reader's gaze.[78] Death is 'fenced off from the main narrative,' as Milne puts it.[79] At one point (in the instance of Amelia's grief) it is overtly omitted from the text because it is 'out of the domain of Vanity Fair'. Thackeray was not so jaded that he saw *all* of social relations as cynical play of power, reputation and money: this theatre of disingenuous display is the most visible and powerful factor in the life of the society that he surveys, but beyond it is a world of truer feeling and

[75] Ibid. For instance pp. 373-385, when Amelia's grief renders her completely oblivious to her own interests and prey to the grasping intentions of others, whereas Becky's false grief is a skilful, cynical ploy for material gain.
[76] Ibid. p. 372.
[77] Ibid. p. 270.
[78] K. Milne, *At Vanity Fair: From Bunyan to Milne* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); J. Jimenez Heffernan, 'Lying Epitaphs: *Vanity Fair*, Waterloo and the Cult of the Dead', *Victorian Literature and Culture* Vol. 40, No. 1 (2012), pp. 25-45. Heffernan's focus in this article is particularly on the treatment of the battle of Waterloo, but it also connects to a more general sense of death being outside of the domain of the worldly things that Thackeray identifies with 'vanity fair'.
[79] Milne, *At Vanity Fair*, p. 118.

purer motives, and death above all was the event on which 'Vanity Fair' could not intrude.[80] The tragedy of those who are most enmeshed in 'Vanity Fair' – despite the material rewards that they gain from playing the crooked game – is that they cannot confront their feelings in moments of seriousness and sobriety. When Pitt Crawley dies, his children's cowardice in the face of sincerity and solemnity makes them reluctant to be in the presence of the corpse. Becky's habitual response to difficult emotions is a psychic echo of their avoidance: confronted with thoughts that make her vulnerable, she is 'accustomed to walk around them, and not look in.'[81] Death, and the emotional response to death, are the prototypical cases of the things of human life that cannot be accommodated within the world of performance, commerce, hierarchy and calculation. No wonder, then, that Thackeray presents performances of mourning in *Vanity Fair* as jarring.

One of the towering novels of the nineteenth century, George Eliot's *Middlemarch,* features not just one but three complex inheritance plots. The novel examines the economic, social and moral facets of human relations; lives and marriages are shaped and controlled by wills, the dead having contractual power over the living. Dorothea Brooke makes a grim mistake in marrying the repressed, pedantic Edward Casaubon, believing he will be her noble cause in life. At Casaubon's death, she is trapped by an entail in his will that prevents her from marrying the man she truly loves, his rootless young cousin Will Ladislaw; if she does so, she will no longer inherit Casaubon's property. The characters of Dorothea and Will allow Eliot to explore the ethics of inheritance and social responsibility (Dorothea's choice is a victory for romantic love but a defeat for female independence), whereas in the book's third inheritance plot, centred on

[80] It has even been argued that the solemn, respectful treatment of mortality in *Vanity Fair* functions as a subtle nod to the novel's concealed 'theology', revealing Thackeray as a serious moralist rather than the cynical satirist he often appears to be. See J. R. Perkin, 'The Implied Theology of Vanity Fair', *The Philological Review*, Vol. 77, Issue 1 (1998), pp. 79-106. Mortality, Perkin writes, takes on 'a prophetic dimension, emphasising the emptiness of social status in the face of death, and implying the need for more durable and genuine virtues than the values of Vanity Fair.' (p. 87).
[81] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, p. 533.

the rich miser Peter Featherstone, Eliot satirised the hypocrisy of performed grief where a fortune is involved. Featherstone teases and torments his relatives with suggestions of whom he may or may not remember in his will, holding out and then withdrawing promises of his favour, 'chuckling over the vexations he could inflict by the rigid clutch of his dead hand'.[82] His deathbed scene lasts for weeks; his relatives gather around him as he lies waiting for death, pretending sorrow, but in fact only wanting his money. They 'naturally manifested more their sense of the family tie and were more visibly numerous now that he had become bedridden.'[83] The numerous relatives feel that 'somebody should be on watch' at all times,[84] and this watch, motivated by suspicion and greed and which the dying Featherstone himself venomously describes as 'peeping, and counting and casting up', is in ironic counterpoint to a traditional deathbed vigil.[85] In Eliot's hands, the pathos of a Dickens deathbed scene becomes biting satire. Only when the will is finally read, disappointing all but one of the grasping relatives, does the facade of sorrow shatter.[86]

In this context of property, inheritance and the distortion of feeling by the hope of personal gain, undertakers and mutes appear as only the most visible and blatant instance of a mourning culture plagued by cynical theatrics. For mutes and undertakers were far from the greatest beneficiaries at the death of a person of fortune: inheritance was by a long way the simplest and most commonplace way to earn a fortune. Every death of a person of means was the making of at least one lucky relative. Perhaps this is one example of a phenomenon described by Thomas Piketty in *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, in which he draws on nineteenth-century novels to paint a picture of a world of distorted inheritance. Piketty's primary examples have to do with marriage. In Balzac's *Le*

[82] G. Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 410.
[83] Ibid. p. 303.
[84] Ibid. p. 304.
[85] Ibid. p. 316.
[86] In a recent article, Nancy Marck Cantwell makes a connection between the role of feminine tears in *Middlemarch* and the inheritance plots that structure the drama of the novel: N. M. Cantwell, '"A Mere Victim of Feeling": Women's Tears and the Crisis of Lineage in *Middlemarch*', *Victorian Review* Volume 45, No. 1 (Spring 2019), pp. 28-33.

Pierre Goriot, the ambitious Rastignac makes a cold calculation that however successful a lawyer he might become, nothing will ever be as fruitful as marrying a moderately wealthy woman. The reason for this was that the returns from land ownership in this period of European history – particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century – earned money at far higher rates than work at any skilled profession. Capital gains from fixed wealth grew at a higher percentage than the productivity of the economy, from which wages were drawn.[87]

Writing as an economist, Piketty uses novels to illustrate a point about the impact on broad macro trends. But his insights can also shed light on the emotional ideas and experiences of the people who lived under the economic conditions he describes. At least a part of the reason for anxieties over the authenticity of grief was a result of these economic realities. Death and marriage were the two great economic events in the personal life of almost any Victorian family, and their consequences could determine the course of a life. Even sincere mourning might be diluted or at least its meanings shifted by the awareness that the bereavement implied an enormous windfall; and among the more unscrupulous, that mourning might be performed for entirely cynical reasons. It was not only because of the commercial funeral industry that material concerns interfered with the 'pure' emotion of grief; it was the entire structure of the Victorian economy.

So the anxiety over the authenticity of mourning arose at least in part from the relations of money and power that undermined the idea of mourning as an expression of pure affection. Looking more closely at ideas about grief in Victorian novels allows these literary sources to speak to historians in new ways. If satires about mourning and the funeral industry betrayed a mistrust about the corrupting influence of money on death, a broader analysis of

[87] T. Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Harvard University Press: 2013). The main section of the book that discusses the way that wealth inheritance structures the novels of Austen and Balzac is pp. 132-163, although Picketty refers to examples from literary history such as this throughout.

emotional responses to death in Victorian fiction reveal that this anxiety spread far beyond professional mourners and undertakers. There is barely a novelist in Victorian Britain in whose work some instance of false, self-interested mourning cannot be found. Perceived incentives to perform a particular emotional response to death brought the emotional response to death the forefront of anxieties about the collision between sentiment and worldly concerns.

In the examples quoted above, it is noticeable that many of the most disingenuous mourners are women (Becky Sharp being the prime example). It was primarily female grief whose authenticity these predominantly male satirists were casting doubt upon, and whose boundaries and expression they adjudicated upon. Writers like Thackeray seemed to censure any sort of self-consciousness in the expression of sorrow, approving only of a private sorrow that artlessly betrayed itself because of its depth. The institution of widowhood was frequently criticised as oppressive to women, yet visible signs of a private emotionality were expected of the virtuous widow. Some novelists, like Gaskell found ways of confronting and negotiating this bind and allowing their heroines' mourning to carve out a public position for women in political life. Nevertheless, these dramatisations show how women were placed in the cross-currents of competing pressures: too public a display of emotion after death could be read as crass and self-serving, yet some evidence of private grief was appropriate and admirable. Thackeray's model of the publicly private, unimpeachably sincere sorrow of an Amelia Sedley provided a model of grief that emphasised restraint and interiority, yet was distinctively feminine in its devotional quality and its retirement into the private realm.

In the next section of this chapter, I will discuss the way that anti-mourning rhetoric related to questions about women's emancipation, and why women were particularly vulnerable to suspicions about inauthenticity.

Mourning as female servitude

In the sources quoted throughout this chapter, it is noticeable that much of the discussion of hypocrisy and sincerity in public grief was distinctly gendered. The exchange in the *West Somerset Press*, which was set off by a characterisation of the 'unwomanliness' of modern women, and the letters that followed, repeatedly brought the question back to examples involving women. Some of them were sympathetic, such as the respondent who recited an anecdote about a woman who was so ashamed of her inability to afford full mourning that she didn't leave her house for a month. But often (as in Saxe's poem about the wily widow using her sumptuous mourning as a way of displaying her figure and advertising her availability) cynicism about the sincerity of public grief was embedded in misogynistic tropes about feminine vanity and duplicity. This trope of a widow using her weeds as a way of attracting a new partner rather than honouring her previous one was again commonplace, as evidenced in passages from *Vanity Fair* and *Oliver Twist*.[88]

In these cases the significance of gender is primarily that women's social roles made them particularly prone to being characterised as scheming and manipulative. But even women whose mourning was unquestionably authentic could often be objects of sexual fascination. 'Eleanor Bold! How well does that widow's cap become her,' Trollope wrote in *Barchester Towers*, 'and the solemn gravity with which she devotes herself to her new duties. Poor Eleanor!'[89] In *Middlemarch*, the unimpeachably earnest Dorothea Brooke looks 'even handsomer than ever in her mourning.' Indeed, it seems in this passage that the enhanced beauty lent by her mourning is inextricable from its authenticity: she looks better *because* she is not in any way trying to look better.[90] In Victorian art, too, the figure of the alluring widow was a popular trope, appearing in paintings such as Richard Redgrave's 'The Governess'

[88] Rebecca Mitchell effectively analyses these tropes in their longer historical context in 'Death Becomes Her: on the Progressive Potential of Victorian Mourning', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, (January 2013, Vol. 41, Issue 4), pp. 595-620.
[89] Trollope, *Barchester Towers*, p. 126.
[90] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 32.

(1844). She sits in her heavy mourning clothes, eyes cast down. 'The heavier the mourning,' as Anne Hollander wrote when discussing these paintings, 'the sexier the effect.'[91]

There are many possible reasons for the erotic associations of mourning with women. An ahistorical Freudian analysis might emphasise the psychic proximity of the *eros* and *thanatos* urges.[92] The sex drive and the death drive are the two submerged pillars of our primal, pre-civilised nature, from a Freudian perspective; an awareness of the mortal body is not so far from an awareness of the sexual body. Another perspective – supported by Rebecca Mitchell's analysis of the longer lineage of depictions of widows, including the bawdy figures of Renaissance drama – is that widows could be presumed to be more sexually experienced than other unattached women.[93] But there is also a further possibility suggested by characters like Eleanor Bold: part of the appeal of a mourning woman in a patriarchal society was that mourning could be understood as an act of service and of deference. In publicly honouring their former husbands, in withdrawing from society in order to grieve for them, women were dutifully fulfilling a subservient role in which they advertised their aptitude for the role of devoted partner.

On the fringes of the British mourning reform movement from 1876 onwards, was an argument with a different emphasis and often more radical implications.

---

[91] A. Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes* (Berkley: University of California), p. 377.

[92] This is not to deny that there is some fundamental relationship between sex and death or sex and grief; only to say that we cannot make assumptions about any universal application of a particular relationship. An interesting approach to this intersection is J. Dollimore, *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2001). Dollimore does not simply apply Freud's famous idea about the proximity of eros and thanatos back into earlier periods of history, but traces earlier writers who 'entertained the attractiveness of death almost as scandalously as he did'. 'The seductiveness of the idea of this death of the self has always been a part of Western individualism.' (pp. xx-xxi) However, Dollimore's analysis is very much framed around the (male) ego and its role in the construction of an individualistic selfhood.

[93] Mitchell, 'Death Becomes Her', e.g. p. 598: 'Widows' fashion could be read as a symbol of bereavement, but it could also signal a woman's new availability or sexual experience.'

Its thrust was closely bound up with the gendered nature of mourning and the structures of power embedded in the rituals of grieving. This proto-feminist critique of what mourning practices can reveal about the nature of nineteenth-century ideas about grief, brings the political dimensions of mourning culture into especially sharp relief.

In an article in *Woman's World* published in 1899, Florence Wallace Legge Pomeroy (also known as Viscountess Harberton) observed that the associations that were dedicated to funeral and mourning reform spent far more energy on reforming funerals than they did on reforming mourning. She blamed this on the fact that these reform campaigns were dominated by men – and especially vicars and priests, who were intimately involved with the administration of funerals. It was women, meanwhile, who bore the brunt of the mourning customs. Women were compelled to drape themselves in uncomfortable clothes as a way of service to their dead husbands. Bereaved husbands, on the other hand, had no corresponding obligation. 'It is indisputable that the custom of mourning presses far more heavily on women than on men,' she wrote. 'In fact, so trifling are the alterations made in a man's dress on this account that practically the whole burden of mourning trappings would seem to have devolved upon women, as well as all sorts of normal retirement.'[94] Pomeroy was famous as an advocate of fashion reform and the founding president of the Rational Dress Society, which aimed to normalise a style of women's clothing that was more suitable to physical activities such as cycling. While her aspirations for social levelling were quite limited – the society emphasised that practical clothing must also be appropriate to the class status of the wearer – the aims of the society were explicitly feminist in a number of ways. Pomeroy herself argued strongly that women were capable of doing much of the work

[94] F. Wallace Legge Pomeroy (Viscountess Haberton), 'Mourning Clothes and Customs' in *Woman's World* Vol. 2, No. 8 (August 1889) p. 421.

that was generally monopolised by men, and that heavy, impractical clothing was both a symbol and a physical cause of their enforced incapacity.[95]

In the case of mourning, Pomeroy's objections went far beyond the restrictions of women's fashion. Women bore the burden of mourning not only on their sleeves and their skirts, but in their social duty to formally honour the dead. Meanwhile their male relatives had no such obligation. It was not an uncommon occurrence, she claimed, for men to show up at parties shortly after the death of a parent, bearing earnest apologies for the absence of a sister whose loss self-evidently made it impossible for her to attend such social events. This is not due to a lack of love on men's parts, she argued. 'It instead shows that while they are held free, and fit to act as their individual feelings prompt, women have not yet entirely surmounted the false position to which they were relegated so long—that they do not belong to themselves but are more or less the property of their kinsfolk.' The duty of mourning was 'one of the many disabilities and heavy burdens that have devolved on women in their progress from barbarism to civilisation.'[96]

Mourning, then, could be construed as an act of service (or perhaps servitude) as much as a demonstration of personal sentiment. As such it was a manifestation of existing social arrangements and an intrinsically political custom. There was even a hint of something barbaric or oriental to the tradition, claimed Pomeroy: 'There would still seem to be a lurking feeling that if a man dies, it is desirable that some punishment should fall on the wife, or that at least she should be sacrificed in some way, as far as is possible without being too much out of keeping with the general liberty of the age.'[97] This is clearly a reference to the Indian practice of sati, and the same comparison is made by Bertie in *Barchester* Towers. As Sophie Gilmartin has shown, the idea of sati

[95] S. Levitt (2004, September 23), 'Pomeroy [née Legge], Florence Wallace, Viscountess Harberton (1843/4–1911), dress reform campaigner', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* online edition. (Retrieved 25/06/2020).
[96] Pomeroy, 'Mourning Clothes and Customs', p. 421.
[97] Ibid. p. 420.

held a fascination for many Victorians, and the comparison between Indian sati and widowhood was a trope that recurred repeatedly, including in *Jane Eyre* as well as the novels of Trollope.[98] Again, the idea of grieving customs as an inhibition to social progress and equality is clear – although, as so often in Victorian writing, this 'progress' was constructed in racialised terms as an increasingly drawn distinction from a primitive other. Public displays of grief are not only inadequate as a demonstration of authentic feelings; they are part of a structure that makes the expression of true individual feelings impossible for those it oppresses. The range of questions expands, then, from 'what is mourning?' and 'how should people mourn?' to '*who* is mourning?' and, crucially, who is *mourned*.

Pomeroy was even willing to argue that gender was only one power dynamic among several in which inequalities were revealed by the traditions of mourning. For instance, she also decried the practice of wealthy employers forcing their servants into mourning as an act of 'self-glorification' with 'no reciprocity about it'. This demand from a person in power to those without power to mourn another's dead was demeaning and 'lowered' servants in the estimation of others, she wrote. Viewing the performance of mourning as a duty imposed on subservient groups rather than an expression of individual feeling brings to mind Arlie Hochschild's coinage of the term 'emotional labour' to describe the demand in certain form of paid work that employees manifest particular emotional and affective attitudes, sometimes so deeply that they are alienated from their own private feelings.[99] The term 'emotional labour' has suffered from a concept creep in recent years, but what was describing here is completely consonant with Arlie Hochschild's initial definition: paid work in which employers are expected to enact and embody an emotion that they do

[98] S. Gilmartin, 'The Sati, the Bride, and the Widow: Sacrificial Woman in the Nineteenth Century', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (1 (1997), pp. 141-158.
[99] A. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2012).

not necessarily feel on their own account.[100] Mourning that is mandated by an employer fundamentally alienates a person from their own emotions; but the same, in a less direct sense, can be said for the women mourning their dead. Pomeroy cited the example of women who feel duty-bound to mourn their husband's relations by withdrawing from society while the husbands themselves feel no such burden themselves. This is 'grief work' not in the Freudian sense of internal psychological labour, but in the sense that displays of grief were a social duty that fell on people in lesser social roles.

Perhaps this helps to shed some light on the fact that, before the 1870s, the anti-mourning cause was often associated with political radicalism. The most striking example of this is the 'Anti-Mourning' tract with which this chapter began. To elucidate this it is worth delving a little deeper into the biography of Mary Hume-Rothery.

In many respects Hume-Rothery was typical of a Victorian middle-class reformer. Her father was the Benthamite MP Joseph Hume, a prominent Radical who energetically pursued an eclectic range of causes, from budgetary retrenchment to the abolition of flogging for soldiers and sailors. His daughter inherited this progressive zeal, although as a woman her sphere of action was limited to civil society rather than parliamentary politics.[101] Alongside her husband William, she became a Swedenborgian, a religious group associated with liberal, progressive politics. Swedenborg was an Enlightenment scientist-turned-mystic whose philosophy emphasised religious pluralism and a Biblical exegesis in which the fulfilment of God's plan was made manifest in the historical process of gradual emancipation. According to Hume-Rothery's worldview, anything that furthered the general cause of liberty and enlightenment was part of a broader project of human emancipation. This

[100] A. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2012).
[101] M. Clement, Rothery, 'Mary Catherine Hume- (1824–1885), campaigner for medical reform and author', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (online edition, published 2004).

emancipatory agenda was in its turn part of the unfolding of a divine plan which would ultimately result in the advent of paradise on Earth. Swedenborgians and their fellow reformers saw themselves as inheritors of the tradition that began with the abolitionists, but rather than a single objective they advocated for a whole constellation of causes that they construed as part of one grander mission.[102]

In campaigning for causes that were associated with the rights of women and the working classes, Hume-Rothery's activism coalesced around a resistance to what she perceived as intrusions into the bodily autonomy of ordinary citizens. She was a staunch opponent of state-enforced medical interventions of all kinds, such as compulsory medical check-ups and obligatory reporting of contagious illnesses. However, there were particular two causes that Hume-Rothery was most associated with, both slightly surprising as signature causes for a rationalist, progressive campaigner. Firstly, she was one of Victorian Britain's staunchest opponents of compulsory vaccination. In 1868 Hume-Rothery set up the National Anti-Compulsory Vaccination League and released the first issue of a periodical agitating against vaccination (later named the *National Anti-Compulsory Vaccination Reporter*). To nineteenth-century reformers like her, this was not the crank issue that it is often cast as today. They saw opposing vaccination as an urgent humanitarian crusade. Alongside her husband, Hume-Rothery spent decades railing against what she viewed as a sinister alliance of political and religious authority bent on horrifyingly intimate intrusions into the lives and the bodies of the poor – and of poor women in particular. She was one of the foremost middle-class voices in a predominantly working-class movement that witnessed powerful popular protests across the country.[103]

---

[102] For an exploration of the culture of Victorian reform movements back to Evangelical abolitionism, see P. Hollis, 'Anti-Slavery and British Working-Class Radicalism' pp. 297-311 in *Anti-Slavery, Religion and Reform*, ed. C. Bolt and S. Dreycher (Folkestone: Archon, 2011).

[103] Although relations between middle-class reformers and the working-class people they claimed to represent were not without tensions – the Hume-Rotherys' interventions were often domineering and sometimes openly condescending; N.

In the pamphlet *Women and Doctors*, Hume-Rothery argued that the flat fine for mothers who avoided vaccination ensured that the risks inherent in the enforcement of the vaccinations were largely borne by working-class mothers. Poor women were forced to sacrifice dignity, safety and bodily integrity for the sake of an abstracted ideal of public health.[104] In defending working-class families from the incursions of the meddling needle, reformers like this saw themselves as the advocates and champions of the dignity of some of the most oppressed groups in Victorian Britain: women and the urban working class. This probably explains the prominence in the anti-vaccination movement of several well-known campaigners for women's rights, Josephine Butler and Millicent Fawcett among them. Butler framed the struggle over vaccination as a conflict between oppressed working-class women and 'terrible aristocratic doctors' – a struggle that was paralleled by other nineteenth-century medical interventions into women's lives, including compulsory medical inspections of prostitutes under the contagious diseases acts.[105]

If it seems odd to twenty-first century sensibilities that anti-vaccination was part of a constellation of would-be emancipatory causes for Victorian campaigners, it is perhaps even odder to find that anti-mourning also found its niche within this same culture of radical middle-class dissent. But for Mary Hume-Rothery, at least, the urgency of opposing mourning customs was not merely a question of cost and taste and decorum. For her and her followers, to wear mourning constituted an assault on the fundamental principles on which progressive Christian politics were built. The persistence of demonstrative mourning practices in Christian cultures was, she believed, the greatest existing proof of 'the failure of Christianity' to conquer the souls of those living in societies that had been nominally Christian for centuries. Those who followed the practice were not only committing an error but 'warring against the highest and the

---

Durbach, *Bodily Matters: the Anti-Vaccination Movement in England, 1853-1907* (London: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 77.

[104] M. Hume-Rothery, *Women and Doctors* (London: Heywood, 1871).

[105] Quoted in F. Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830* (London: Routledge, 1987), p. 71.

holiest, the very central truth of Christianity.'[106] To succumb to grief, she argued, was to respect a fleeting and narcissistic feeling against the core logic of the faith. A world without these familiar mourning rituals would be a world 'in which every man shall be encouraged to listen to the voice of his own free heaven-illumined conscience, and to obey it, instead of being bound, under all manner of social penalties, to renounce his own sacred rights of free-will and action, and live by rule in all manner of orthodox conventionalisms – in which, in a word, every man may be a true man, and not the slave of self and sin, or the puppet of circumstance.'[107]

For Hume-Rothery, mourning weeds were the chains that held back society from cultural and spiritual emancipation, in the same way that bodily freedom was constrained by compulsory medical intervention. The two causes are also alike in the sense that their association with emancipatory politics is not immediately obvious to twenty-first century readers. It is hard to understand such near-millenarian visions of the anti-mourning cause unless mourning rituals are understood as an expression of entrenched power relations. Hume-Rothery's anti-mourning society never attained the social standing of the Funeral and Mourning Reform Association: it seems to have remained primarily an individual passion. But esoteric as it may seem, her particular framing of mourning as one of the ingredients in a revolution against the social bonds that restrained the human souls is revealing and suggestive nevertheless.

[106] M. Hume-Rothery, *Anti-Mourning: A Lecture against the Unchristian Custom of Wearing Mourning for the Dead* (London: James Spiers, 1876), p. 2.
[107] Ibid. p. 14.

Grievability, mourning and power

The formalised language of mourning rituals and their status as a contested theatre of emotion meant that ritual expressions of mourning could take on political meanings. In some cases the politicisation of mourning was very literal and on the surface. In Lydia Murdoch's study of working-class protests against compulsory vaccination in the 1880s, she uncovers multiple cases in which protesters used the iconography of mourning to dramatise the horror of child deaths that protesters believed to be a result of vaccination. The press reacted to this tactic with disgust, labelling it 'burlesque'.[108] In Murdoch's analysis of this dispute she hints at the dichotomy between public/theatrical and private/authentic that this chapter has explored: the middle-class reaction to the protests, she writes, revealed a belief that 'mourning for children should remain private and that such public, explicitly political referencing of grief must necessarily be inauthentic.'[109] The same controversies over vaccination and mourning came together in the figure of Hume-Rothery. The use of mourning as a political device, however, was perhaps not quite as innovative as Murdoch claims: Manon Nouvian's study of Chartist funerals shows that working-class radicals were already leveraging mourning as a form of 'collective action'.[110]

Examples like these constitute political mourning at its most direct and literal: the material culture of mourning brought to bear on questions of policy, law and political power. But even ostensibly private mourning was closely related to questions of status and identity that were political in a broader way. The burden of mourning fell disproportionately on women; and while this gave women a language that could be utilised in political protest, it also suggested a hierarchy of value in the lives of the mourning and the mourned. Judith Butler has

[108] Ibid. p. 15; Murdoch argues that the term 'burlesque' itself was laden with classist connotations of squalor and sexual iniquity.
[109] L. Murdoch, 'Anti-vaccination and the Politics of Grief for Children in Late Victorian England' in *Youth, Childhood, Emotions and Modern History*, ed. S. Olson (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), p. 250.
[110] M. Nouvian, 'Defiant Mourning: Public Funerals as Funeral Demonstrations in the Chartist Movement', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, vol. 24,2 (April 2019), pp. 208–226.

discussed this idea under the label of 'grievability'. Who a culture chooses to mourn, Butler argued, is a consequence of whose lives are recognised to be worth that mourning. To grieve for somebody is to acknowledge their human value and also to assert a sense of shared reality: to 'apprehend' their existence 'as a life', and not only a biological and demographic fact. 'Grievability is the presupposition for a life that matters.'[111] It would be possible, Butler suggests, to map the dynamics of power and powerlessness across the world simply by tracing the geography of grief: who is considered worthy of grieving reveals the limits of empathy and of respect.[112] Victims of mass shootings in Europe, the USA and New Zealand are greeted with minutes' silences in parliaments and football stadiums not only in their own nations but all over the world. Victims of bombings in Nigeria or Pakistan, meanwhile, often receive relatively little public recognition even in the neighbouring regions of the world. Networks of grief make up what might reasonably be called an 'emotional community', spanning the globe and propagating global hierarchies of racism, colonialism and economic disparity.[113]

Perhaps the most obvious examples of this relationship of status to 'grievability' and a sense of a life that matters are public figures such as heads of state. The nineteenth century was certainly notable for public ceremonies on behalf of public figures, which were some of the greatest demonstrations of national feeling. John Wolffe's examination of 'great deaths' in Victorian and Edwardian Britain traces the state funerals of national figures and the accompanying

---

[111] J. Butler, *Precarious Life: the Powers of Mourning and Violence* (Verso, London 2005), p. 14.
[112] J. Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable* (Verso, London 2016), pp. 9-10. Grievability is only one element in a theoretical structure that Butler has proposed as a way of reforging political communities based on the shared 'precarity' of all life.
[113] The term 'emotional community' is not Judith Butler's, but one I have borrowed from Barbara Rosenwein, who uses the phrase to describe the 'systems of feeling' that govern social communities: B. Rosenwein, 'Worrying About Emotions in History', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, Issue 3 (June 2002), pp. 821-845 (quotation on p. 842). In Rosenwein's original work on emotional communities (always in the plural), one of the key communities she identifies is that forged by the customs surrounding confrontation with mortality: B. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 57-78.

popular expressions of communal grief. These events, Wolffe argues, were crucial in establishing a shared sense of national feeling. What is more, contrary to the established view that public mourning had become more muted by the early twentieth century, his analysis suggests that the opposite was true.[114] While the first Duke of Wellington's funeral in 1852 was indeed more grand and ostentatious than Queen Victoria's funeral half a century later, the decline in pomp and pageantry was accompanied by a heightened emotional outpouring evident in newspaper reports, diaries and letters. Public deaths, Wolffe shows, were increasingly greeted with private expressions of feeling observable in diaries, rather than by pageantry and dignified triumphal processions.[115]

The idea that mourning is political is less immediately obvious when the mourned is not a figure of state. This chapter has demonstrated, however, how Victorian mourning retained a political dimension at other levels of the social scale. Public grief could be read as an assertion of wealth on the part of the deceased or their family; a claim on the estate of the deceased; or a duty of servitude by someone of lower rank. Mourning rituals reflected on the status of both the mourner and the mourned. Since mourning was an expression of status and identity as well as of feeling, mourning rituals often became embroiled in controversies over political and economic questions: inheritance, gender politics and even racialised discussions of mourning in non-European cultures. Partly because of the way that mourning could be understood in these political terms, some commentators grew to see them as suspicious in their own right.

---

[114] J. Wolffe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Another work addressing what Wolffe terms 'great deaths' in Victorian Britain is E. Schor, *Bearing the Dead: the British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)*. Schor was writing before Butler's coinage of the term 'grievability', but the themes she discusses and her conclusions have much in common with Butler's arguments. This is particularly true in her discussion of the response to Princess Charlotte's death, when Percy Bysshe Shelley called for the martyrs of a popular rising in Pentrich, Derbyshire to be mourned with 'an unassuageable grief' of the kind that greeted Charlotte's death (see pp. 197-211).

[115] Ibid. I am summarising a key argument that runs throughout the book but see for instance pp. 271-280.

'Independent feelings or wishes,' as Pomeroy wrote, 'are held to be of no importance.'[116] One effect of this discourse was to contribute towards the tendency noted in the previous chapter for interiority to be equated with authenticity in emotional responses to death. Novels offered a way of dramatising the private struggles of bereavement while simultaneously disparaging the value of their public expression. Grief as an internal process could be understood in opposition to mourning as a social ritual. This chapter has examined a disparate group of writers with various objections to mourning; what they all share in common is an insistence on distinguishing between a private, internal and supposedly authentic emotional response to death on the one hand and a public, communal and perhaps fraudulent culture of mourning on the other. In this model of loss, mourning acted as a foil to the conceptualisation of grief as highly personal, perhaps even ineffable process of struggle, to be navigated within the body and mind of the individual alone.

Tony Walter characterises the twentieth century as the period when the culture of mortality in Britain transitioned 'from ritual to discourse': from formalised public expressions to the more private and individualised narratives that emerge through introspection, therapy, personalised funeral services and self-writing. In this chapter I have shown how – like the idea of grief as an 'internal struggle' in the Freudian style – many of these elements were already present in the nineteenth century. The following two chapters continue this theme as I turn to discussions of the emotional response to death in science and psychology, discovering a pre-Freudian science of grief in which the emotional response to death was boundaried within medical as well as spiritual and social limits.

[116] Pomeroy, 'Mourning Clothes and Customs', p. 419.

Chapter 3

Hierarchies of Suffering in Victorian Psychology and Evolutionary Science, c. 1860-1900

When the Scottish empirical philosopher and educationalist Alexander Bain wrote the book that expounded his theory of emotions in 1859, his classification of mental phenomena did not contain a single mention of 'grief'. *The Emotions and the Will* did, however, address the topic of 'sorrow' – a term which, as I discussed in Chapter One, was commonly used in Christian theology and in consolation literature to describe emotional responses to death. The emotion that he had isolated as 'sorrow' was associated with all degrees of loss, both great and small. 'The pains inflicted upon human beings through their tender sentiments are intense and characteristic,' he wrote. 'They are of various grades, from the gentle longings of brief absence, to the overwhelming sorrow of the new-made grave.'[1] From the beginning of his project to systematically establish a physical basis for psychological phenomena, he was at pains to single out the essential humanity of the feeling of sorrow, and its integral relationship to the peculiar intimacy of human ties. 'When we have cultivated an object of tenderness as a principal ingredient of our life's comfort,' he wrote, 'the cutting off of that object has a reaction of misery and distress, and charges a cup of bitterness to be drained to the dregs.' The 'cup of bitterness' mentioned here is a biblical quotation, and all of the words quoted above could almost have come from one of a Christian consolation manual.[2]

But Bain, steeped though he was in the language of religion, was himself deeply materialistic and even antagonistic to religion (his friend George Lewes was

[1] A. Bain, *The Emotions and the Will* (London: Longmans, 1859), pp. 115-117.
[2] The terms 'cup of suffering' or 'cup of bitterness' never actually appear in the King James Bible but are a common shorthand for a recurring metaphor, found for instance in Matthew 20:22, Psalm 80:5.

slightly scandalised at his periodic 'anti-Christian onslaughts').[3] And indeed, the passage that follows this one hints at a more materialist approach, defining the emotion not by how it is felt psychologically by the sufferer, but instead by its physical symptoms: 'a sudden arrest and throwing back of the habitual currents and energies of the mental system. The nature of the feeling, a state of suffering both massive and acute, is well marked.'[4] Bain did not find this emotion easy to categorise within his typology of feelings (such as ones which are, for example, 'benevolent' or 'irascible') but he took comfort in the fact that over time it 'healed' (like a wound) into one of the 'tender' emotions: the wound having healed, the love whose loss had caused the injury remained.[5]

It is not only Bain's choice of terminology that situates him alongside the religious literature that I discussed in Chapter One, but also the fact that this 'sorrowful' emotion was explained by him in terms of its moral purpose. Classed as one of the 'tender' emotions, it serves to encourage warmth and fellow feeling, 'drawing human beings into benevolent embrace.' It is a 'singular paradox' that painful emotions are considered alongside those that bring pleasure, he wrote – but in fact they are two sides of the same coin, each working to bring us into closer harmony with our companions.[6] In Bain's treatment of 'sorrow', then, it is possible to discern both his Calvinist roots and his stridently secular professional and intellectual identity.[7] It is also at once noticeable that the arc of feeling Bain describes is similar to one of those described in my typology of Christian narratives of sorrow: comfortless pain is transmuted into a 'tender affection' that is 'a great moral lever for the elevation of mankind'.[8]

---

[3] T. Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 152. See also R. Rylance, *Victorian Psychology and British Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 164.
[4] Bain, *The Emotions and the Will*, p. 117.
[5] Ibid. p. 118.
[6] Ibid. pp. 67-68.
[7] For an account of Bain's life and his intellectual influences, see Rylance, *Victorian Psychology*, Chapter 5.
[8] Ibid. p. 125.

Bain's book asserts the division between 'emotions and the will' in its title, and the interplay between the two is the central theme of the entire text. The first half was dedicated to 'the emotions' and the second to 'the will', and the two labels roughly conform to two of Bain's three 'elements of mind': feeling and volition (the third being intellect).[9] The text is preoccupied throughout with the question of how emotions and will relate and which has primacy in determining the actions of the body and mind. In grief and sorrow, Bain perceived the action of the wilful mind in ensuring the 'mental currents are adapted to the new state of things': time heals, but it is also a mental struggle. In multiple respects, then, this notoriously anti-theological writer adopted a model of loss and a conceptual framework for the emotional response to death with striking similarities to established Christian narratives.

Bain was not alone. Over the course of the nineteenth century, men of science observed, catalogued and categorised the workings of emotions both in human subjects and in the natural world, attempting to give an account of the emotions – including varieties of grief and sorrow – as natural processes governed by biological laws, operating on the body and the mind in measurable and predictable ways. In this chapter, I trace accounts of these emotions in nineteenth-century science and show how, even as they attempted to create a new basis for understanding emotional suffering, they also adopted many tropes and assumptions from Christianity. Thus the male-coded model of strong emotions mastered by a powerful will, dominant in Victorian theology and also present in critiques of mourning, was perpetuated in Victorian science. Looking for signs of grief in supposedly lower forms of animals (and humans), these invariably male and middle-class writers effectively created a hierarchy of suffering in which silence, interiority and stoicism were presented as more civilised and intellectually sophisticated.

[9] Bain, *The Emotions and the Will,* throughout from p. 3 on; the equivalence between 'emotion' and 'feeling' is not absolute, since Bain also takes 'feeling' to include 'muscular feelings and sensations of the senses'. But in the volume in question almost all 'feelings' referred to by Bain are 'emotions', and in any case a key part of his argument is that emotion is inseparable from 'muscular feelings' (pp. 3-7). 'Volition' and 'will' are used essentially interchangeably (see for instance pp. 297-314).

Emotion, will and suffering in the historiography of Victorian psychology

This chapter contributes to a growing literature on Victorian mental science, which has attracted increasing scholarly interest over the past three decades. Beginning with Roger Smith's *Inhibition*, published in 1992, much of this literature has stressed the importance in Victorian theories of mind of the idea of mental struggle and control. 'The struggle to attain perfect moral control was lifelong' in Victorian society, Smith claims, whether this was through 'mental regulation of the body' or 'spiritual control of the flesh'.[10] In a more recent work works, Smith has identified the issue of free will as the crux of many debates in the nineteenth-century human sciences, especially for those 'naturalists' who sought to eradicate any appeal to subjective knowledge not gleaned from observable cause and effect. 'Victorian culture placed the will, understood as an individual capacity, at the centre of human distinctiveness,' Smith argues, making it in many ways the materialist counterpoint to the 'soul'.[11]

The ambiguous relationship between religious concepts of the 'soul' and the more secular idea of 'mind' is also a preoccupation of other histories of early psychology, such as Rick Rylance's *Victorian Psychology* and Edward Reed's *From Soul to Mind*.[12] Reed in particular emphasises that, while the new language of psychology created the possibility of describing mental phenomena in materialistic terms rather than identifying their origin in the soul, the secular idea of 'mind' could equally replace 'soul' or coexist with it.[13] The relationship of body and mind and the intermediary status of will was at the heart of early psychology as its practitioners strove to carve out a space in which the

[10] R. Smith, *Inhibition: History and Meaning in the Sciences of Mind and Brain* (University of California Press: 1992), pp. 28-29.
[11] R. Smith, *Free Will and the Human Sciences in Britain, 1870–1910* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 8.
[12] Rylance, *Victorian Psychology*, for instance pp. 271-289. Rylance argues that one of the main functions of the idea of 'mind' was 'to invigilate against materialistic trespass' (p. 3). E. Reed, *From Soul to Mind: The Emergence of Psychology, from Erasmus Darwin to William James* (London: Yale University Press, 1998).
[13] E. Reed, *From Soul to Mind*, pp. 81-88.

questions they dealt with could be kept separated from theological concerns. Scientific writing about grief and emotional responses to death took place within these discourses, and part of what this chapter explores is how psychological accounts of emotional responses to death bore the marks of these urgent questions of Victorian mental science: the relationship between body and mind, the role of the will, and the overlap between Christian theology and approaches to psychology – physicalist, materialist and pragmatic – that were ostensibly opposed to theological explanations for mental phenomena.

Focusing more specifically on Victorian theories of emotion, Gesa Stedman has similarly emphasised the centrality of control and restraint in Victorian thought. Stedman argues that treatment of emotions in scientific and literary discourses shows how 'a specifically middle class habitus was created and maintained by using the emotions as a means of social distinction.'[14] Stedman's writing about emotions followed Thomas Dixon in insisting on the rediscovery of the more diverse language of feeling that preceded the dominance of the 'emotions' paradigm, including terms like 'sentiment', 'passion', 'affection' and 'sensibility'. As Dixon has argued, the adoption of the physicalist idea of 'emotions' meant abandoning models in which affective states were subject to greater moral and cognitive control.[15] To the qualified extent that this thesis is a story of the transition from religious 'sorrow' to secular 'grief', this journey mirrors the transition from 'passions' to 'emotions' (although the adoption of grief as a dominant category occurred somewhat later than the time when the idea of 'emotions' became widespread). However, I emphasise the continuities just as much as the ways in which the adoption of the more bodily, materialist 'grief' represented a departure.

While the Victorian science of mind – including the place of emotions within this science – has been widely researched, the subject of grief and emotional

[14] G. Stedman, *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in the Victorian Discourses on Emotion, 1830-1872* (London: Routledge, 2020) p. 16.
[15] T. Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, pp. 135-179.

suffering in nineteenth-century psychology has received less focused attention. Dixon and Rachel Ablow have focused on topics adjacent to grief – respectively, tears and pain (including emotional pain).[16] But only two historians have focused substantially on the specific question of the emotional response to death in the life and thought of Victorian men of science. The first is Pat Jalland, who concluded that those who rejected the consolations of faith found themselves stranded in a comfortless grief without the language of consolation.[17] Paul White adds nuance and context to this account, framing the comparatively dispassionate language used by men of science as an affective stance and strategy of condolence in itself, rather than as a simple absence of faith. White places expressions of condolence between 'men of science' in the context of a professional masculine identity in which 'manly reserve' and sentimentality mingled. He characterises the grief of men of science as a response enacted in networks of friendship rather than family and domesticity, and structured less by 'a stable structure of grief and mourning, than upon an active questioning of that structure.'[18]

My sources overlap to a large extent with White's and in many respects my conclusions in this chapter build on the themes established in his research. I also draw on a second strand of historiography that White has contributed to significantly: the history of non-human animals and their suffering. Much of this debate has centred on prominent debates over vivisection in Victorian Britain. White makes the case that objectivity itself can be understood as a set of affective practices that could play a role in the construction of identities and communities, but which also required the suppression of other emotions, such

[16] T. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 185-198; R. Ablow, *Victorian Pain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), pp. 93-113.
[17] P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 339-357.
[18] P. White, 'Darwin Wept: Science and the Sentimental Subject', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 16 (2011), pp. 195-213, quotation on p. 199; see also P. White, *Thomas Huxley: Making the 'Man of Science'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); P. White, White, 'Darwin Wept'; P. White, 'Darwin's Emotions: the Scientific Self and the Sentiment of Objectivity', *Isis* Vol. 100, No. 4 (December 2009), pp. 811-826.

as sympathy for a dying animal or – in the case of his studies of crying children – fatherly love. Practicing science in service of what they perceived to be a higher social and moral good, Victorian researchers self-consciously adopted a 'regimen of restraint' to 'stem the tide of feeling and perform like well-tuned instruments for the pursuit of truth and medical mercy.'[19] Rob Boddice, in his research on Romanes' acts of vivisection, agrees that the scientific value of objectivity was compatible with sentimental and sympathetic attitudes including attitudes towards experimental subjects (in the sense that it was also an affective stance rather than an absence of feeling).[20] But he argues instead that sympathy and objectivity could exist not simply in a state of tension but as elements of a coherent emotional worldview: 'Romanes was a lover of nature; and one expression of that love was his dissection of it, sometimes when it was still alive.'[21]

These debates about death, emotion and the sensibility of science tend to focus around the emotions of humans rather than their animal subjects. Teresa Mangum and Philip Howell both observe, however, that these two forms of mourning are connected: human faith in an animal's capacity for mourning brings them into a circle of mutual sensibility that permits them in turn to be mourned. Mangum's work on how Victorians mourned their pets and Howell's research into Victorian pet cemeteries are both concerned in particular with domesticated animals, and both (from different angles) argue that in mourning their pets Victorians were in fact refining and practicing a kind of domestic sensibility that had broader applications.[22] These are some of the more directly

[19] I am quoting here from two separate texts. The first is White, ''The Experimental Animal in Victorian Britain', p. 74; the second is White, 'Darwin's Emotions', pp. 811-826 (quotation on p. 817).
[20] P. White, 'The Experimental Animal in Victorian Britain' in *Thinking With Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism*, ed. L. Daston and G. Mitford (Columbia University Press: New York: 2005), pp. 59-82.
[21] R. Boddice, 'Vivisecting Major: a Victorian Gentleman Scientist Defends Animal Experimentation 1876-1885', *Isis* Vol. 102, Issue 2 (2011) pp. 215-237 (quotation on p. 236). See also R. Boddice, *Humane Professions: The Defence of Experimental Medicine, 1876-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
[22] T. Mangum, 'Animal Angst: Victorians Memorialize Their Pets' in *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture*, ed. D.

relevant books in the wide strand of recent cultural history known as the 'animal turn'.[23] Although I touch on the subject of human emotions towards animals, my main concern in this chapter when it comes to animal mourning is the feelings of mourning imputed to animals themselves. The only work that has dealt extensively with Victorian perspectives on non-domesticated animals' ability to themselves *feel* grief is Ed Ramsden and Duncan Wilson's work on animal suicide. But although this investigation naturally overlaps with the question of animal responses to bereavement, the focus is on the ethics and the philosophy of suicide, and how tales from the animal kingdom informed these discussions.[24]

Within the surge of interest in the history of animals and their relationships to human society, the Victorian period has become a focal point for discussions about the changing conceptions of animal minds and subjectivities. Earlier overviews, such as the work of Erica Fudge, supported the popular notion (familiar from celebrated myths of the Huxley-Wilberforce debate in 1860, when Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford, and the biologist Thomas Huxley confronted each other over Darwin's theories of evolution) that evolutionary ideas served to erode the barrier between humans and animals by locating humans within a kinship network that included all other life on earth.[25]

Denenholz Morse and M. A. Danahay (Ashgate Press: Ashgate: 2007), pp. 15-34; P. Howell, 'A Place for the Animal Dead: Pets, Pet Cemeteries and Animal Ethics in Late Victorian Britain', *Ethics, Place and Environment* vol. 5, issue 1 (July 2010), pp. 5-22.

[23] Harriet Ritvo, who is often credited with sparking the 'animal turn', has given a critical account of its affects on cultural history in H. Ritvo, 'On the Animal Turn', *Daedalus* Vol. 136 Issue 4 (2007) pp. 118–122. In Ritvo's seminal account, the Victorians' 'sentimental attachment to both individual pets and the lower creation in general' was at least in part a consequence of the neutering of nature by the industrial revolution: H. Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: the English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge: 1987), quotations taken from pp. 3-4.

[24] E. Ramsden, D. Wilson, 'Suicidal Animals: Science and the Nature of Self-Destruction', *Past & Present* Vol. 224, Issue 1 (August 2014), pp. 201–242.

[25] E. Fudge, *Animal* (London: 2002); Fudge is primarily a historian of the Medieval and Early Modern periods, where she has made many important contributions to animal history since 2002, as well as writing extensively about the theory of addressing animals in a historical context – see for example E. Fudge, *Society and Animals* Vol. 27, issue 5-6 (November 2019), pp. 647-652.

Rod Preece complicated this narrative in an article in 2007 by bringing into focus some of the ways in which this oversimplifies the impact of Darwin's interventions: theories of evolution were far from the first or only philosophical structures to deny human exceptionalism, or to grant animals souls, awareness, intelligence and emotional subjectivity.[26] Rob Boddice built on Preece's interventions, arguing that beyond their lack of originality in this respect, Darwin's theories actually *increased* the sense of separation between animals and man by creating a 'hierarchy of suffering' in which more sophisticated forms of life were distinguished by a greater capacity for experiencing pain. Here I borrow the term 'hierarchy of suffering' from Boddice and apply it to the subject of grief and emotional responses to death.[27]

Situating the scientific conceptualisation of grief in the context of other models of loss, my analysis of the 'hierarchy of suffering' in emotional responses to death makes three related interventions into the history of nineteenth-century psychology and evolutionary thought. Firstly, the 'hierarchy of suffering' I identify here is not only a question of degree, but of the character of the emotion in question. Whereas the grief of 'lower' animals was understood as an ephemeral, reflexive response, a more sophisticated grief involved a confrontation between this reflex and interventions from the intellect, the conscience and the will. Ascending up what Joanna Bourke has called the 'chain of feeling', this sense of grief as an internal struggle between two aspects of mind increased.[28] Varieties of grief could thereby function as a marker of cultural or intellectual standing, not only between species, but also within the

---

[26] R. Preece, 'Thoughts out of Season on the History of Animal Ethics', *Society and Animals* Vol. 15 (2007) pp. 365-378; 'Darwinism, Christianity, and the Great Vivisection Debate', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Jul., 2003), pp. 399-419. See also N. Pemberton, J. Warboys & J-M. Strange, *The Invention of the Modern Dog: Breed and Blood in Victorian Britain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 2018); J. Mayer, 'Ways of Reading Animals in Victorian Literature, Culture and Science' *Literature Compass* Vol. 7, Issue 9 (May 2010), pp. 347-357.
[27] R. Boddice, *A History of Attitudes and Behaviours Toward Animals in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain: Anthropocentrism and the Emergence of Animals* (The Edwin Mellen Press: Lampeter, 2008), pp. 355-359.
[28] J. Bourke, *The History of Pain: From Prayer to Painkillers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), e.g. p. 96, p. 196 and elsewhere.

human species in terms of gender, ethnicity or social class. Secondly, moral value was ascribed to the ability to sustain this struggle, both on an individual level and in the context of evolutionary models in which suffering could be construed as an engine of progress. Even within a broadly physicalist paradigm, grief was therefore not only a biological phenomenon but also one with more cosmic meaning. The idea that the evolution of mind was a consequence of struggle was linked to an enduring belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics. The belief that qualities acquired over the course of an individual's lifespan could be passed on to future generations did not pass into obsolescence after Jean Baptiste Lamarck fell out of fashion, but was taken up in qualified forms by supporters of the theory of natural selection, including Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace. Finally, the resulting model of grief as an internal struggle with moral purpose bore striking similarities to the religious models discussed in previous chapters – even as its proponents sought to repudiate theories of emotions with a spiritual and theological root.

An 'eminently human' emotion: Darwin's 'grief muscles'

One of the first thorough accounts of a distinct emotion called 'grief' was by Charles Darwin himself. In 1872, just over a decade after Alexander Bain published *The Emotions and the Will*, Darwin published his ground-breaking work on emotions, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. *Expression* was the final instalment of a trilogy, beginning with the *Origin of* Species in 1859. Its very existence is evidence that Darwin took seriously the challenge posed to evolutionary theory by religious accounts of the emotions: *Expression*'s explicit aim is to offer a materialist account of the emotions in order to counter the creationist one. *Expression* was originally conceived as a section of *The Descent of Man,* the second in the trilogy that was published in 1871, in which emotions were one of several qualities whose distinctiveness to humans Darwin strives to disprove. He surveyed the animal world and found in non-human species the germs of every trait and ability that were apparently unique to mankind, from morality and religion to language and the use of tools.

In each case he was countering the claims of human exceptionalism made by the opponents of evolutionary theory.[29] In so grappling with the origins of emotion, Darwin was responding to several scientists working within the framework of natural theology, most especially Charles Bell (but also Charles le Brun and others). 'This illustrious anatomist maintains that man is endowed with certain muscles solely for the sake of expressing his emotions,' Darwin writes. 'As this view is obviously opposed to the belief that man is descended from some other and lower form, it was necessary for me to consider it.'[30] The whole of the *Expression*, then, is a response to the idea that emotional expression was facilitated by special and characteristically human emotions directly endowed by a creator God for expressing the movements of the soul. Yet although the *Descent* returns several times to the emotions, Darwin found the topic too complex to accommodate within this more general work. He was troubled by the argument that God had endowed humans with the distinctive ability to express certain morally charged sentiments but didn't have the empirical data to challenge this systematically. Throughout the *Expression* he sought to identify physiological justifications for emotional expression, identifying specific expressions not as tools of communication but physiological mechanisms stemming from bodily processes. These habits could be evolutionary vestiges, or responses to reactions acquired over the course of an individual's lifetime, and perhaps even acquired habits that had been inherited. As an exposition will show, grief in particular was a complicated synthesis of the two.

Darwin's work on emotions was once considered to be a fairly marginal element of his great legacy – not much more than an extended footnote to the two more widely known general works on evolutionary theory. Over recent decades, however, it has been increasingly recognised as a foundational work

[29] Janet Browne contextualises *Expression* as a response to the theories of writers like Charles Bell and as the strongest and most explicit statement of his claim that humans were only qualitatively rather than quantitatively distinct from other animals: J. Browne, 'Darwin and the Expression of the Emotions', ed. D. Kohn *The Darwinian Heritage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), especially pp. 312-313.
[30] C. Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871), p. 5.

in the scientific study of emotions – as well as a lightning rod for controversies both in history and in other academic disciplines. This can partly be ascribed to the rise of affect theory and the related theory of 'basic emotions'. Silvan Tomkins, the psychologist and personality theorist, first proposed his nine bodily 'affects' – pre-conscious impulses in the nervous system, which he believed to be the source of all shades of human emotional experience – in 1962.[31] Although Tomkins's own references to Darwin were in fact sparse, some of his disciples, most notably Paul Ekman, were particularly eager to lay claim to Darwin's intellectual legacy. Ekman credited Darwin with several insights which he believed to have been proven correct by subsequent research in psychology. Firstly, according to Ekman, Darwin identified several discrete emotions that operated identically across all human cultures. Secondly, he interpreted facial expressions not primarily as tools of communication, but as by-products of bodily responses that were now inexplicable in terms of the evolutionary benefits they once provided: they were 'serviceable habits', rather than social signals.[32]

In the past twenty years Ekman's ideas about the way in which emotional expressions reveal otherwise obscure emotional truths have become particularly controversial and widely-discussed.[33] This is largely because of his attempts to

[31] S. Tonkins, *Exploring Affect: The Selected Writings of Silvan S Tomkins* (ed. C. Demos), pp. 64-100 (this is a useful selection). Somewhat confusingly, affect theory has more recently become identified with a current within cultural criticism and work within the arts and humanities, where its view of emotions is almost diametrically opposed to the ideas propounded by the supporters and colleagues of Paul Ekman. In the writing of philosophers like Sara Ahmed and Sianne Ngai, the distinct 'affects' of basic emotions theorists are supplanted by the idea of 'affect' as a sort of fluid force that gives shape to the objects that feelings flow within and between. See for instance S. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[32] P. Ekman, 'Darwin's Contributions to Our Understanding of Emotional Expressions', *Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society B Biological Sciences*, Vol. 364, Issue 1535 (December 2009), pp. 3449-3451.

[33] A. Richardson, 'George Eliot, G. H. Lewes and Darwin: Animals, Emotions and Morals' in *After Darwin: Animals, Emotions and the Mind,* ed. A. Richardson (New York: Rodopi, 2013), pp. 136-171; T. Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Invention of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); T. Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford:

put these ideas into practice in areas of policing and intelligence services, applying the scientific study of non-verbal clues to counter-terrorism in particular. Ekman as well as other 'basic emotions' theorists have identified Darwin as an ally in their struggle against cultural relativistic accounts of emotion whose more recent influential proponents include the cognitivists and psychological constructionists like James Russell and Lisa Feldman-Barrett.[34]

Darwin's ideas about emotions were more ambiguous than this account implies. Firstly, Darwin's thoughts on the essential nature and character of emotions are often necessarily obscure because the field was theoretically undeveloped: his focus was almost always on empirically describing and explaining the expression rather than theorising on the nature of the corresponding emotion. Secondly, some of the language and emotions that Darwin used appeared to complicate the notion that he was expounding a purely physicalist perspective in which cultural, social and cognitive factors were secondary. If anything, as Rachel Ablow pointed out in her research into Victorian attitudes towards pain, Darwin appeared to collapse body and mind into two aspects of one inseparable reality. Thirdly, although Darwin's work on the emotions was part of a broader project to demonstrate that there was nothing to qualitatively distinguish humans from other animals, there *were* certain emotions to which Darwin nevertheless assigned as distinctively human character.[35] In all three of these respects, Darwin's theory of grief is an interesting case study that has not been extensively studied in its own right. Ablow is an exception, analysing grief as a variety of 'pain,' while Browne touches on grief as an instance of several

---

Oxford University Press, 2008); *Weeping Britannia: A Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 185-198; J. Browne, 'Darwin and the Expression of the Emotions' in *The Darwinian Heritage*, ed. D. Kohn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 307-326.

[34] For Ekman's claim to bear the standard of Charles Darwin, see Ekman, 'Darwin's Contributions' and the introduction to P. Ekman (ed.), *Darwin and Facial Expression: A Century of Research in Review* (San Francisco: Malor, 2006), pp. 1-10; for an account of the psychological constructionist theory, see L. Feldman-Barrett & J. A. Russell, *The Psychological Construction of Emotion* (London: Guildford Press, 2015), pp. 1-20 (the introduction is a useful outline of the position of Feldman-Barrett and other psychological constructionists).

[35] Ablow, *Victorian Pain*, pp. 101-102.

expressions arising from roughly the same emotional impulse: the outward appearance of grief was therefore explicable as 'an amalgam of physiology, habit, and inherited responses, whereas weeping, the most obvious manifestation of sorrow, was more or less a learned reaction.'[36]

Darwin believed that there were very few 'eminently human' emotional expressions, but the symptoms of grief (alongside shame or embarrassment) were among them. Monkeys, he observed, appear to laugh when in high spirits, suggesting that laughter is a recent but not unique evolutionary development. He wrote that suffering has 'caused screams or groans to be uttered' from the very earliest periods of evolutionary history. Crying, Darwin believed, was a very recent evolutionary development that even great apes did not share; yet it did seem to have developed in certain species of monkey, perhaps via a different evolutionary route.[37] Expressions of rage were far were more widespread, in Darwin's estimation, and there were several distinct ways of expressing anger that transcended species boundaries.[38] Of all the emotional expressions Darwin identified, the only ones that he judged to be unique to humans were the embarrassed blush (the 'most strictly human') and the expression of grief.[39]

Among the emotions and the emotional expressions that feature prominently in Darwin's work, grief is perhaps the one that jars most obviously with the schema suggested by the modern basic emotions theorists such as Ekman. 'Grief' rarely features among the handful of emotions identified as fundamental and universal by them – unlike, for instance, anger or disgust. What is more, it seems likely that most British people in the twentieth-century would struggle to

[36] Browne, 'Darwin and the Emotional Expression', p. 314. Dixon and White both give some attention to Darwin's chapter on grief in discussions of Darwin's ideas about tears, but since grief is defined as a separate expression explicitly and thereby incompatible with crying it is not clear that the two expressions share a common cause (or indeed whether Darwin was interested in underlying causes at all).
[37] Darwin, *Expression*, p. 330.
[38] Ibid. p. 331.
[39] Ibid. p. 331.

identify an archetypal facial expression that signified grief, as distinct from crying and displeasure. Indeed, even the psychological studies most firmly rooted in the notion that specific arrangements of the face correspond to fixed varieties of emotion tend to stray when it comes to grief: in studies attempting to empirically measure the emotional response to bereavement, researchers often identify the expressions as being ones of 'anger' rather than of grief.[40] This leaves several questions about Darwin's ideas of grief. Firstly, what exactly did he mean when he used the term 'grief'? Secondly, what did he think of as the 'expression of grief' and what was the origin and significance of this expression? And, finally, how did Darwin's ideas about the emotional response to death fit into the conception suggested by his theories of natural selection about the nature of human and animal life?

For Darwin, the expression of 'grief' was not necessarily the emotional response to death or serious loss (although it could be). Darwin's 'grief', similarly to Bain's 'sorrow,' covered the whole gamut of human misfortunes, from simply being interrupted in an argument to the death of a child, sibling or spouse. Unlike Bain, however, Darwin began with the body rather than the fundamental essence of the emotion: in his effort to understand human emotions as existing in a continuum with the instinctual responses of non-human species, he was less interested in the fundamental nature of emotions themselves than the means by which those emotions were outwardly expressed. The common factor that united the phenomena he included under the broad category of 'grief' was not a subjective emotional experience, nor the cause of that experience, but the particular arrangement of the facial muscles: the manifestation of a feeling rather than the feeling itself. What distinguished the expression of grief, he believed, was the tension of a network of 'grief muscles', copiously illustrated in the pages of the *Expression*. A moustachioed young man stares straight at the camera in two images, the second of which has his face creased in emotion, the

[40] For instance G. Bonanno & D. Keltner, 'Facial Expressions of Emotion and the Course of Conjugal Bereavement', *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* Vol. 106, No. 1 (February 1997), pp. 126–137.

forehead corrugated with wrinkles; the forehead only of a woman, again emphatically scored by wrinkles with her eyebrows, just visible in the image, following the same perplexed line; a boy seen from the front and from the side, his eyebrows raised and his mouth slightly open; a younger child with its mouth in an exaggerated downward grimace of what looks like petulance or distress. It is not immediately apparent that these faces are displaying the same emotion. But Darwin noted that in each of them, the eyebrows become 'oblique', the corners of the mouth are depressed, the face grows long and tense.[41] He confessed that he found this expression 'utterly perplexing' for years.[42] After observing the development of his own children's expressions, however, and asking his scientific acquaintances to do the same, he became convinced that he had hit on a solution.[43]

Darwin saw an unconscious association, beginning in infanthood, between emotional suffering and physical pain. This is obvious from his earliest notes on the subject, a full forty years or so before the publication of *Expression*, where he wrote: 'Think, whether there is any analogy between grief & pain — certain ideas hurting brain, like a wound hurts body — tears flow from both, as when one burns end of nose with a hot razor.'[44]

Darwin saw the screaming and crying of small children is an evolutionary inheritance, an attempt to relieve pain or to draw attention to it. But he also believed that as humans (at least in 'civilised cultures) mature, they could learn to strive for greater self-control. In our attempts to hold back tears, faces are contorted into a clenched and furrowed state. The subtle, often fleeting evidence of grief – oblique eyebrows and downturned mouth – is seen only on

[41] Darwin, *Expression*, pp. 165-173.
[42] Ibid. p. 173.
[43] For an interesting account of Darwin's methods, see R. Jann, 'Evolutionary Physiogmony and Darwin's Expression of the Emotions', *Victorian Review* Vol. 18, No. 2 (Winter 1992), pp. 1-27.
[44] Note 45 in 'Notebook N' (1838-1842) in 'The Darwin Correspondence Project,' retrieved online at http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?viewtype=side&itemID=CUL-DAR126.-&pageseq=1 (24/8/2016).

'the facial muscles least under control of the will'; when infants learn to control tears, they 'generally command all of the other facial muscles more effectually than they do the depressor of the corners of the mouth.'[45] This then is the distinctive and 'perplexing' expression of grief. What is manifest on the face of grief is not the evidence of an emotional impulse, but the struggle to suppress a more distinctive and recognisable form of emotional expression: crying.[46] In an echo of the more austere theology I analysed in Chapter One, Darwin equates grief with a struggle for mastery over a self made unruly by the encounter with loss.

This association of grief with mental effort recurred in the work of other writers, as well. George Henry Lewes, writing in 1859, described sighing as a symptom of exhaustion: the inhalation comes from the brain's desperation for oxygen in the midst of a period of heavy exertion. 'Whenever the mind is preoccupied by a powerful impression of some duration, the breathing becomes so feeble that from time to time we are forced to compensate this diminished activity by a deep inspiration. This is the rationale of *sighing*, an action commonly attributed only to grief.'[47] The sigh of a person in deep grief is comparable to the sigh of a philosopher labouring over a difficult problem: like a complex puzzle, grief requires all of our attention to resolve, and its bodily symptoms can be ascribed to this fact.

Darwin's expression of 'grief' suggested a similar mental focus. As he wrote in another note, a frown 'shows the mind is intent on one object.'[48] Alongside this 'active' grief he identified a second type, which was distinct from the 'acute paroxysm' of immediate suffering and characterised by passivity or 'low spirits'.

---

[45] Darwin, *Expression,* p. 179.
[46] Ibid. pp. 173-9.
[47] G. H. Lewes, *The Physiology of Common Life*, vol. 1 (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1859), p. 339.
[48] Note 58 in 'Notebook N' (1838-1842) in 'The Darwin Correspondence Project,' retrieved online at http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?viewtype=side&itemID=CUL-DAR126.-&pageseq=1 (24/8/2016).

Darwin exemplified this difference by describing the typical behaviour of a mother whose child has died. Initially the archetypal bereaved parent he describes is desperate and restless, pacing and tearing at her clothes and hair. Then finally the nervous energy is expended and a more passive grief descends. 'The sufferer sits motionless,' he wrote; 'the circulation becomes languid; respiration is almost forgotten, and deep sighs are drawn.'[49]

Although these states seem opposed in their physiological manifestations, they are united by a common expression. Given that Darwin was in general interested in the *expression* of emotions rather than the underlying feeling or internal bodily process, it is curious that he identifies grief with a 'state of mind' characterised by a succession of different bodily movements: 'persons from excessive grief often seek relief by violent and almost frantic movements… but when their suffering is somewhat mitigated, yet prolonged, they no longer wish for action, but remain motionless and passive.' It is at this point that the 'lips and cheeks sink' and the characteristic expression of grief sets in. But there is at the very least an insinuation of an underlying 'mental state' of grief.[50]

Darwin hinted in this passage at the idea that extreme emotions can do physical as well as mental harm – an idea already implicit in his comparisons of grief to a physical wound. The frantic grief of immediate loss is a futile rescue impulse, he believed, but the 'silent, motionless grief' that follows is a state of nervous exhaustion, which friends of the sufferer must struggle to cure.[51] In *Descent*, Darwin even argued that grief can kill a bereaved mother – although in this case the mothers he had in mind were not humans but monkeys.[52] In a later chapter of *Descent*, he returned to the theme to cite apparent evidence that the death of a loved one might have a similar effect on humans: this is his explanation for why married couples have a healthier life expectancy than widows and

[49] Darwin, *Expression*, p. 137.
[50] Ibid. p. 164-5.
[51] Ibid. p. 81: Darwin is discussing a paper by William Farr's entitled 'On the Influence of Marriage on the Mortality of the French People'.
[52] Darwin, *Descent*, pp. 40-41.

widowers.[53] This belief is apparent in Darwin's response to grief on a personal level: in his letters to bereaved friends he occasionally treated their suffering as a medical issue, as when he diagnosed his cousin's mourning as 'a helpless case'. 'I had hoped,' he writes, 'that the mind w[d] have refused to dwell so long & so intently on any object.'[54]

According to his view, intense grief could be medically excessive (a topic on which much more will be said in Chapter Four). Indeed, this excessive grief might also be seen as a sign of insanity. Drawing on the insights of the Scottish psychiatrist, neurologist and medical psychologist James Crichton-Browne, Darwin concluded that an extreme sensitivity to emotional hurt was a defining feature of a mad person. Nothing is more characteristic of a lunatic, he wrote, 'even in the male sex, than a tendency to weep on the slightest occasions, or from no cause. They also weep disproportionately on the occurrence of any real cause of grief.'[55] This passage serves to illuminate another of Darwin's most important assumptions about the emotion of grief: that there is an implicit hierarchy of pain in which the capacity both to feel and to resist feeling are signifiers of higher humanity and civilisation. Accompanying his scientific project were subjective and cultural assumptions, which he took for granted. Even while he insisted that rudiments of emotional expression could be found in animals, he persistently implied that emotional suffering had an intellectual, and even a moral, dimension to it.

One way in which this hierarchy is manifest is in the idea that those with a 'higher' place on the evolutionary scale were more able to withstand their grief. In theory the idea of hierarchy or teleology in the natural world is at odds with natural selection. As Darwin emphasised, 'fitness' was relative to the environment. A complex species that flourished in one climate would be ill-adapted to another; a simple bacterium is in many cases better equipped for

[53] Ibid. p. 181.
[54] 'To W. D. Fox [25 March 1843]' in 'The Darwin Correspondence Project,' retrieved online at https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-665.xml (24/8/2016).
[55] Darwin, *Expression*, p. 145.

survival than a bird or a mammal. As his disciple Thomas Huxley put it, 'if our hemisphere were to cool again, the survival of the fittest might bring about, in the vegetable kingdom, a population of more and more stunted and humbler and humbler organisms, until the "fittest" that survived might be nothing but lichens.'[56] Yet at the same time, Darwin persistently used the language of progress, however much it conflicted with the basic argument of his theory. It is present in one of his most celebrated pieces of rhetoric, the conclusion of *The Origin of Species*: 'all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection,' he wrote, going on to marvel at evolution's capacity to achieve 'the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals.'[57]

To use an analogy is not to endorse each of its possible ramifications.[58] Abstract thought is shot through with metaphor, and Darwin's more than most. As Gillian Beer has shown, his theories were permeated with metaphor, poetry and folklore.[59] Darwin, Beer writes, 'was telling a new story, against the grain of the language available to tell it in.'[60] The entire theory of natural selection rests on the parallel he draws between the natural world and a well-tended farm, and Darwin's work accommodates many smaller analogies within this overarching one. But his metaphors are conceptual and linguistic techniques, not scientific claims: nature does not literally select, and the language of progressive evolution does not necessarily imply linear progress.[61]

---

[56] T. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics* (Princeton 2010 [1893]), p. 80.
[57] C. Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (Oxford, 1998), p. 396.
[58] Thomas Huxley made this point explicitly in his essay *Evolution and Ethics*: 'names are but "noise and smoke"' – Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 82.
[59] Robert Young has forcefully rebutted those who criticise the logical integrity of Darwin's thought by pointing out inconsistencies in the implications of the metaphors he uses. See R. Young, *Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge: 1985), for instance p. 48.
[60] G. Beer: *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 3.
[61] There is a long and ongoing debate over the extent to which Darwin endorsed a metaphor of 'progress'. For instance Beer, *Darwin's Plots*, pp. 12-14, 107-109 and elsewhere.

Yet parts of Darwin's writing suggest that he *did* tend to think of humans as the apex of evolutionary development.[62] What is more, there was a hierarchy within the human race itself: at the top stood sane, 'civilised' men. Women, children, 'savages' and the insane, while all still human, were distinctly less differentiated from the animals from which they had evolved. This is if anything made more striking by the fact that a large part of Darwin was a committed anti-slavery activist and that one of his primary projects in *Descent* and *Expression* was to demonstrate that humanity was a single species, not divided into sharply distinct races.[63] But if he ascribed these differences to the influence of 'culture' on the instinctual responses that all humans shared, this 'culture' appeared to play a particularly interventionist role in the shaping of grief.

In his attempts to prove the universality of emotional expressions, Darwin drew on his expansive network of correspondence to obtain anecdotes about societies from Papua New Guinea to the Americas. In one incident, he wrote of a Maori man weeping 'like a child' after having flour spilled on his clothes. 'Englishmen,' by contrast, 'rarely ever cry except under the pressure of the acutest grief' – although the same cannot be said for apparently weaker-willed continental Europeans.[64] Here as elsewhere, it is not clear how far Darwin believed the differences between Europeans and 'savages' are caused by inheritance and how far they are instilled by education and culture. The exact reasons for the different operations of grief on people of different ethnicities were left indeterminate.

In Darwin's hierarchy of evolutionary development, English males stood at the apex of a pyramid, with softer-hearted continental men just beneath them,

---

[62] See for instance R. J. Richards, 'Darwin on Mind, Morals and Emotions' in *The Cambridge Companion to Darwin*, ed. J. Hodge and G. Radick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 96-119.

[63] A. Desmond and J. Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins* (London: Penguin, 2010) especially pp. 111-141.

[64] Darwin, *Expression*, pp. 144-5; for discussions of Darwin's discussions of crying, see White, 'Darwin Wept: Science and the Sentimental Subject'; Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, pp. 185-198; T. Dixon, 'The Tears of Mr Justice Willes', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 17, Issue 1 (2012), pp. 1-23.

followed by women, then by 'primitives' and the 'insane'. It was not only that vulnerability to intense pain decreased as the subject became more advanced or civilised. Take a case observed by Darwin himself: 'I saw in Tierra del Fuego a native who had lately lost a brother, and who alternately cried with hysterical violence, and laughed heartily at anything which amused him.'[65] Here it is the volatile forgetfulness of grief that for Darwin distinguishes the 'native', as well as his susceptibility to it. By noting this ability to laugh even while mourning, Darwin implied that a European man would feel a similar emotional wound more consistently and profoundly in spite of expressing his pain less.

Elsewhere Darwin recounted stories of people whose grief muscles twitch fleetingly with those passing thoughts that cause them emotional pain. Notably, these people were uniformly women, children or non-Europeans.[66] In one case the apparent cause of distress is nothing more than mild physical discomfort, when Darwin invites his children to stare up into a bright sky. Another, particularly detailed description that I touched on in the Introduction to this thesis features a woman in a railway carriage whose grief muscles would repeatedly contract for brief moments. Then suddenly her eyes 'suffused with tears'.[67] She was thinking about a great loss in her past, Darwin surmised, and was struggling to keep the emotion it inspired under control. These twitching grief muscles have a deep evolutionary association with infantile screaming, he concluded.[68]

To easily give way to grief, therefore, was not only a sign of immaturity. It was also a remnant of more primitive evolutionary tendencies. At the same time, Darwin understood the depth of the emotion as evidence of a sophisticated mind. As we have seen, Darwin's use of the term 'grief' did not necessarily refer to the emotional response to death. Nevertheless, it certainly could – and indeed, when he witnessed the twitch of the 'grief muscles' on the face of the

[65] Darwin, *Expression*, p. 145.
[66] Darwin, *Expression,* for instance pp. 178, 179.
[67] Ibid. p. 164.
[68] Ibid. p. 181.

woman on the train, it was bereavement that first entered Darwin's consciousness as its probable cause. It is of course possible that this anonymous woman was not experiencing grief at all. It may have been pure projection on Darwin's part. It seems, in fact, that these ideas about grief did indeed have some application when it came to Darwin's encounters with bereavement in his personal life. While consoling his cousin, in the letter mentioned above, the only solace he could offer was that the intensity of William Darwin Fox's grief was a testament to his strong personality. 'Strong affections, have always appeared to me, the most noble part of a man's character & the absence of them an irreparable failure,' Darwin wrote; 'you ought to console yourself with thinking that your grief is the necessary price for having been born with (for I am convinced they are not to be acquired) such feelings.'[69]

If the expression of intense grief was a proof of mental weakness or instability, how could it also be a sign of finer feeling and a higher mind? Perhaps what is virtuous and admirable about Darwin's 'grief' is neither the expression of it nor the feeling itself, but the internal struggle it induces. According to this analysis, which is based on specifically masculine Victorian middle-class norms 'savages' succumb to their emotion or dismisses it without seriously confronting and resisting the pain; they have no control over it but are controlled by it. The woman on the train is barely capable of withstanding the strong emotions that are passing through her without breaking down in tears. But Darwin's cousin grappled with a prolonged, profound suffering that he expresses in letters rather than in spasms and sobs. In the human mind as in the evolutionary process, a struggle against nature could be understood as the means by which the species evolves.

Darwin's sense of struggle in grief may also bear some relation to another aspect of his thought that commentators have until recently under-appreciated: his belief in the idea that acquired as well as innate characteristic could be inherited. Darwin believed the 'natural selection' of fixed, heritable

[69] Darwin, 'To W. D. Fox'.

characteristics was the primary engine of evolution; but there were also multiple occasions on which he endorsed the idea that characteristics developed over the course of an individual's lifespan could be passed onto its offspring.[70] He even posited a theory for the mechanism called 'pangenesis' that might account for these acquired characteristics, resting on a substance within cells that he called 'gemmules'.[71] Darwin believed that the most important mechanism by which heritable characteristics could be acquired was through use and habit: the more a capacity was used, the more likely it was to be inherited. 'There is no more improbability,' he wrote in the *Descent*, 'in the continued use of the mental and vocal organs leading to inherited changes in their structure and function, than in the case of handwriting.'[72]

If the emotional suffering of a healthy, upright Englishman was characterised by its silent and steadfast stoicism – embodied in the prolonged but concealed expression of 'grief' – the grief of Darwin's man from Tierra del Fuego represented an almost exactly opposing archetype. Instead of the 'eminently human' resistance to inner pain, this 'native' and others like him simply displayed the unmediated and unresisted effects of a physiology ravaged by trauma – albeit trauma of a shallower and more transient type. The emotional response to death was not itself particular to humans. But grief of the kind

[70] Interest in Lamarck and in the notion that acquired characteristics could be acquired has been sparked recently by recent developments in 'epigenetics' that to some extent support these views, which the theory of natural selection was long considered to be obsolete. Darwin is now also increasingly credited with having anticipated epigenetics: see for instance Y. Liu, 'Darwinian Evolution Includes Lamarckian Inheritance of Acquired Characteristics', *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol. 45, Issue 6, (December 2016), pp. 2206–2207.

[71] Darwin outlined his theory of pangenesis and the inheritance of acquired characteristics in C. Darwin, *The Variation of Animals and Plats Under Domestication* (London: John Murray, 1868); in this work Darwin argued that 'in the cases in which the organisation has been modified by changed conditions, the increased use or disuse of parts, or any other cause, the gemmules cast off from the modified units of the body will be themselves modified, and, when sufficiently multiplied, will be developed into new and changed structures' (pp. 396-397). For an account of the development and reception of the theory, see G. L. Geison, 'Darwin and Heredity: the Evolution of his Theory of Pangenesis', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* Vol. 24, Issue 4 (October 1969) pp. 375–411.

[72] Darwin, *Descent*, p. 418.

identified by observers like Darwin and Lewes in British subjects was a strenuous mental effort, requiring a concentration and an assertion of will that only more intellectually developed minds were capable of – perhaps precisely because their ancestors had habitually exerted the muscle of the will in keeping grief in check. Internal struggle of the kind evident in the expression of grief might be a driver of evolution as well as the model of natural selection that Darwin is better known for.[73]

In the concluding arguments of *Expression*, Darwin ranked grief among a small handful of emotional expressions that are specific to humanity – a list that does not include even such feelings as religious reverence or love. For him the expression of grief was 'eminently human' precisely because it implies an attempt to control a more primal and instinctive emotional expression – that is, irrepressible screaming or weeping. 'Our early progenitors, when suffering from grief or anxiety, would not have made their eyebrows oblique, or have drawn down the corners of their mouth, until they had acquired the habit of endeavouring to restrain their screams.'[74] Both the degree to which a person suffers and their capacity to keep the painful emotion outwardly in check are in this view signs of mental strength. Darwin began with the objective of contesting moral and theological accounts of the emotions and replacing them with explanations that rest purely on physiology. Yet his conclusions consistently implied an association between emotional suffering and moral worth, resonant with the religious reasoning he was attempting to replace.

Whereas Darwin's scientific explanations of grief have been given relatively little attention, more has been written about his own emotional response to death. Darwin's biographers have often surmised that his devastation after the

[73] While the theory of pangenesis (and Darwin's belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics more generally) has sometimes been taken to be at odds with the theory of natural selection, recent research by Kate Holterhoff shows that Darwin and his contemporaries believed that it instead buttressed and strengthened it: K. Holterhoff, 'The History and Reception of Charles Darwin's Hypothesis of Pangenesis', *Journal of the History of Psychology*, Vol. 47 (2014), pp. 661–695.
[74] Darwin, *Expression*, p. 331.

death of his daughter Annie played an important role in hardening his scepticism towards the Christian faith.[75] Somewhat more tenuously, John Bowlby, whose work was instrumental in developing an attachment theory based partly on Freudian ideas about mourning, used Darwin as an extended case study to demonstrate his own ideas about the potentially pathological nature of grief.[76] Bowlby believed that Darwin was afflicted with a chronic psychosomatic condition resulting from the death of his mother when he was just eight years old. In his own attempts at autobiography, Darwin professed to remember little of his mother aside from a few reproachful words and some faint images of her dying hours. 'I believe that my forgetfulness is partly due to my sisters, owing to their great grief, never being able to speak about her or mention her name,' he wrote. Bowlby agrees with this, but for him the inference took on an ominous significance. Darwin, he suggests, was never given the opportunity to mourn his early and traumatic loss. 'Instead, an iron curtain descended' and Darwin was thereafter haunted by thoughts and feelings of which he remained unconscious, but which shaped both his personality and his physical constitution.

From Bowlby's perspective, Darwin's long, meditative walks were evidence of a 'fugue' state 'known to occur sometimes in persons who have failed to recover from a bereavement'. Grief, suggested Bowlby, lies at the heart of Darwin's recurring issues with anxiety and occasional depression, but also of apparently innocent traits, such as his 'horror of cruelty' and his eagerness to please. Having suppressed his anger at his mother's death, Bowlby claims, for the rest of his life Darwin had a mortal fear of becoming angry at anything at all. Finally Bowlby turns to the gastric problems that blighted Darwin's life. His diagnosis is 'hyperventilation', an anxiety-related condition apparently common among

[75] For instance J. Browne, *Charles Darwin: Voyaging* (Princeton 1996), pp. 503, 513, 525.
[76] J. Bowlby, *Charles Darwin: A New Life* (London: W. W. Norton, 1992), pp. vii-ix.

those whose grieving process has been blocked, and which can in turn disrupt the working of the digestive system.[77]

Bowlby's retrospective diagnoses of these two Darwinian mysteries – his health problems and the influence of his forgotten dead mother – are impossible to decisively prove or disprove. But there are reasons to doubt their accuracy. For one thing, Darwin's daughter Annie died of a condition that seems very similar to his own severe gastric problems.[78] For another, there is no reason to presume as Bowlby does that a mother was necessarily and always the most prominent presence in her child's moral and emotional development. As Janet Browne has pointed out, a woman of Susannah Darwin's class in the early nineteenth-century would have been expected to leave most of the day-to-day duties of child-rearing to her servants.[79] Darwin's meagre memories might be explained by the fact that his mother was actually an occasional presence in his life and that this was to be expected. Perhaps the strongest reason to doubt the neatness of this thesis of a life marked by repressed mourning from an early age, however, is that Darwin wrote candidly and extensively about grief, both as a scientist and from his own experience.

Interpreting Darwin's grief in the light of his own scientific theories and in the multiple consolation letters that he wrote to his friends – instead of with reference to post-Freudian theories about grief and mourning that were developed a century later – it is quite possible to see Darwin's grief in a different light. Steeped in a long tradition of religious sorrow in which the emotional response to death was seen as a test of moral fortitude and spiritual resolution – the Christian and customary cultures of grief and mourning discussed in Chapters One and Two – he was living in a context where sorrow was seen as a

[77] Ibid. pp. 53-79; further references to Darwin's grief are repeated throughout the biography.
[78] Darwin himself compared the prostration and vomiting fits that preceded Annie's death to 'an exaggerated one of my Maer illness': 'To Emma Darwin [18 April 1851]', The Darwin Correspondence Project, retrieved online at https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-1400.xml (19/07/2021).
[79] Browne, *Charles Darwin: Voyaging*, pp. 20-22.

noble act in itself. At the same time, the too-easy expression of painful emotions was taken as a sign of mental weakness, and even perhaps of the weakness of the emotion itself: the performance of grief indicated its shallowness and inauthenticity (as outlined in Chapter Three). Darwin's sometimes uneasy blend of the stoical and the sentimental echoed the Victorian religious narratives surrounding death discussed in Chapter Two. Yet he also adapted these ideas about the emotional response to death to his view of evolutionary human life that was quite distinct from and at odds with the traditional Christian perspective. Instead of being enmeshed in the human relationship with God and heaven, the expression of grief became a physical embodiment of the struggles that evolution entailed.

Darwin's portrayal of grief remained ambivalent. Despite his view of grief as an 'eminently human' emotional expression, he did nevertheless believe that animals were capable of mourning death and loss, and that this was evidence of higher emotional capacity. In the *Expression* he quoted an account of a zookeeper in India who witnessed among the monkeys he tended to 'tears rolling down the face of an old female, when distressed at the removal of a young one.'[80] Here again, Darwin was not going against the grain of ideas about mourning, but giving credence to a trope that was widespread. In the next section, I will explore Victorian accounts of animal mourning, first in popular mythology, and then in science, where they took on fresh significance in the light of the new evolutionary theories of the time.

[80] Darwin, *Expression*, p. 114.

Mourning dogs, funereal ants and suicidal stags: grief in the animal world

In April 1867, a brief report appeared in the pages of *The Scotsman* concerning a minor legal dispute between the local tax authorities and an Edinburgh restaurant owner named John Traill. The restaurant was adjacent to Greyfriars Kirkyard, where a small mongrel could frequently be seen loitering among the graves. The tax collectors had determined that Traill had been 'harbouring' the animal for years and demanded that he pay his dues in dog tax accordingly (this tax was an annual fee paid by pet owners in Scotland).

Traill's defence, however, offered a very different story concerning the dog. According to the former curate of the burial grounds, 'Bobby' had first appeared in Greyfriars on the morning after the burial of his former master, a poor and otherwise unmourned man, one John Gray. Bobby had kept sentry on the mound of earth by his master's corpse every night for the eight and a half years since it had been interred, 'and no matter how rough the night may be nothing can induce him to forsake the hallowed spot.' The dog served only its original master and so nobody could claim to own it, Traill said. The burgh court agreed and the summons were dismissed. [81]

This brief report is the first published mention of one of history's most enduringly famous dogs. In the weeks following its appearance in the *Scotsman*, the story of 'Greyfriars Bobby' and his devoted vigil was reprinted and expanded upon in newspapers across Britain, as well as in Canada, France, New Zealand and the USA. By 1871, Greyfriars Bobby's fame was such that the *Pall Mall Gazette* could conclude an article on the dog with the admonition that 'every person who does not know the history of "Greyfriars Bobby" ought to be ashamed of himself.'[82]

[81] 'A Faithful Mourner', *The Scotsman*, 18 April 1867, p. 4.
[82] 'Occasional Notes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 November 1871, p. 4.

The Greyfriars Bobby story is not necessarily true: doubts over its veracity have existed almost as long as the myth itself.[83] It is clear that the story was drawing on tropes that were established long before his vigil began (if indeed such a vigil ever occurred). Stories about dogs loyally guarding their dead companions were numerous among the Ancient Romans and Greeks, perhaps the most famous of which was the tale of a dog belonging to the slave of Titius Sabinus.[84] Several accounts by Greek writers tell of a dog leaping onto pyres to join or save their burning owners. Tales of canine fidelity unconquered by death can be found throughout the Middle Ages, too, such as the almost identical folk-tales of the loyal hounds Gelert in Wales and Saint Guinefort in France.[85]

From the eighteenth century onwards, however, the fascination with funereal dogs seems to have intensified, with regular flurries of commotion in the popular press over a new instance of devoted canine mourning. What is more, the content of the stories shifted its focus away from a fierce and protective loyalty and towards the pathetic emotional state of the bereaved and inconsolable dogs. One prior example of a graveyard dog that was strikingly reminiscent of Bobby's backstory occurred in 1716 in Argyllshire – although this case does not seem to have captured the public imagination in the way that other stories did.[86]

The trope of graveyard dogs was well enough established by the mid-nineteenth century, indeed, that several poems on the subject were published around this

[83] Jan Bondesen has written an entire book arguing that Greyfriars Bobby was in fact two separate dogs: J. Bondeson, *Greyfriars Bobby: the Most Faithful Dog in the World* (Amberley Publishing: Stroud: 2012).
[84] This tale is related in Bondeson (ibid) p. 65; however, there are also nineteenth-century accounts of the history of animal mourning that mention similar stories: Charles John Cornish, in a work published in 1896, cited Wordsworth's 'Dog of Helvellyn' as well as examples from Greek and medieval mythology; C. J. Cornish, *Animals at Work and Play: their Activities and Emotions* (London: Sedley & Co, 1896), pp. 77-84.
[85] These tales are mostly related in G. Jesse, *Researches into the British Dog* (Robert Hardwicke: London: 1866). For the history of the folk tale about 'Saint' Guinefort, see J-C. Schmitt, *The Holy Greyhound: St Guineforte, Healer of Children Since the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
[86] Bondeson, *Greyfriars Bobby*, p. 44.

time. Here, for instance, is a verse from 1856 by Lydia Howard Sigourney in a volume entitled *Poems for Children*:

> 'Twas his master's grave where he chose to rest,
> He guarded it night and day;
> The love that glowed in his grateful breast,
> For the friend who had fed, controlled, caressed,
> Might never fade away.[87]

A similar poem later appeared in the RSPCA organ *Animal World* eulogising Bobby in similar terms. 'A humble funeral! At the grave no mourners wept,' the poem begins, before extolling the dog's 'faithful heart' as he steadfastly endured his 'patient vigil' through hard winters and long nights.[88] All of these canine elegies share similar themes. In each verse, the human hero is an undistinguished everyman who would vanish amid a thicket of headstones were it not for the attentions of a faithful dog. In each the dog is a single-minded paragon of loyalty, gratitude and love. They serve as living monuments to their dead master, embodying by their constancy the relics of the virtue and sentiment evinced in a life that was otherwise obscure. The formula was familiar enough for Thomas Hardy to produce a sort of ironic commentary on it in his poem 'Ah, are you digging on my grave', narrated by the corpse of a woman to the dog whose scuffling she hears above. Convinced that all her human associates have forgotten and neglected her grave, she pours out her gratitude to the animal whose 'feeling' and 'fidelity' is unmatched by any of 'humankind'. She is deceived, however, the answer to the titular question is 'no': the dog is only burying a bone, and has 'quite forgotten' that the spot is its mistress's resting place.[89]

---

[87] L. H. Sigourney, *Select Poems* (Philadelphia: Parry & McMillan, 1856), p. 286
[88] Quoted in Bondesen, *Greyfriars Bobby*, p. 47.
[89] T. Hardy, 'Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave' in *The Works of Thomas Hardy* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1994), pp. 310-11.

The influence of one poem looms over the ideas and imagery expressed in all of these paeans to graveyard dogs: Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, which remained hugely popular and influential a century after its initial publication in 1751. Like the grieving dogs, Gray's thoughts rest with the 'lowly' dead, remembered with no 'fame and elegy' but only a rough inscription 'spelt by the unlettered muse'. The dead survive in the emotions of the living, the grave – that 'mould'ring heap' and 'narrow cell', is a nexus for the vast web of feeling and affection that joins the living and the dead into one emotional community.

> On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
> Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
> Ev'n from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
> Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.[90]

Gray's poem dramatised a democratisation of death in which sentiment – common to all people – does the work that epic verses or mausoleums might do for the great and noble dead.[91] The dogs of the poems and fables were likewise receptacles of sentiment that affirm the enduring social presence of the deceased, however poor and obscure they were. It is tempting to wonder whether it is purely coincidental that the alleged owner of Greyfriars Bobby shared a surname with Thomas Gray and that the mongrel dog haunted a churchyard. Coincidence or otherwise, Bobby can in many ways be seen as an avatar for Thomas Gray, his incarnate grief breathing life and meaning into the forgotten tomb and 'frail memorial'.

---

[90] T. Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, ed. Bloom, H. (New York: 1987).
[91] The influence of Thomas Gray on mourning practices, and especially on the theme of memorialising the forgotten dead, is a major theme in T. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: a History of Mortal Remains* (London: Princeton University Press: 2016), especially pp. 107-117, although the poem is discussed throughout. Gray's poem also features heavily in Esther Schor: E. Schor, *Bearing the Dead*: *The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton University Press: 1994).

While mourning dogs were something of a Victorian literary trope, they had also begun to feature regularly in the press. In contrast to poignant tales like Greyfriars Bobby, the chief symptom of animal grief in sensationalist press reports appeared to be violent suicide.[92] One typical report which appeared in 1849 in the *Standard* described how a dog had stood at the foot of its mistress's bed throughout her illness howling in misery. On her eventual death 'the animal's grief redoubled' and he took up a similar position beside her coffin, refusing to leave it even for food.[93] When the coffin was buried it remained by the headstone and was forcibly removed from the cemetery only with difficulty. The end of the account left its readers with the image of the dog so sunk in despair that is in danger of starving. A similar story from 1872 concerned the death of a dog belonging to the moderately famous and prolific French librettist Michel Carré, which apparently starved itself and died 'from grief' after being forcibly dragged from its master's grave.[94]

These tales of self-starvation touch on another theme that is common in reports of animal grief at the time: the press were apparently fascinated by the idea that bereavement could affect animals so severely that they might be driven to a swifter and more purposeful suicide. These reports were numerous. One, from 1845, told of a Newfoundland dog which threw itself off a cliff in a frenzy after losing its owner.[95] Another from 1866 fervently related how a dog decided to end its life after being abandoned when it was suspected of harbouring a contagious disease. The animal, 'after turning round and giving a sort of farewell howl,' then 'walked into the stream, where he kept his head under water, and in a minute or two rolled over dead.'[96]

---

[92] Animal suicide was addressed in the article by E. Ramsden and D. Wilson, 'Suicidal Animals'; however, while their discussion of suicide as an indicator of human freedom and autonomy tracks closely to some of the themes I am discussing here, they only briefly touch on the Victorian media trope, and their research does not address the emotion of grief.
[93] 'Railway Intelligence', *The Standard*, 19 Jan 1849, p. 1.
[94] 'Death of a Dog from Grief', *Exmouth News*, 22 July 1872, p. 4.
[95] 'Strange Case of a Dog's Suicide', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 April 1845, p. 8.
[96] 'Suicide by a Dog', *The Ipswich Journal*, 12 May 1866, p. 5.

So far, the animal mourners that I have discussed have exclusively been dogs. The topic of canine mourning has been discussed by historians such as Teresa Mangum and Philip Howell.[97] Dogs have also been the subject of much other historiography, including Keridiana Chez's *Victorian Dogs, Victorian Men*, which thinks about the challenge of the pet dog to humanistic ethics through the lens of portrayals in Victorian literature.[98] Emma Townshend's *Darwin's Dogs* brings together two of the core themes of this chapter – evolutionary theories and the emotions of dogs.[99] But in many ways dogs are a special case: since they share human affections and domestic lives, they can be readily encompassed within a human community of grief.

What is unique in Bobby's case is his elevation to the status of a national treasure. By so faithfully memorialising his master he became worthy of remembrance himself; for his labour of mourning he himself was mourned. In a way, this valorising of an animal for mourning is a subversion of the relationship that its mourning expresses. After all, the reason why dogs are so particularly suited to the duty of remembrance in the first place are that they are uncritically, unconditionally devoted to their human superiors. Their loyalty is a sort of willing and wholesome servitude, and its prolonged and unswerving continuation after death is proof of its depth and sincerity. In this sense the grieving dog had something in common with the Victorian idealisation of a widow in her weeds, who was admirable because of her demonstration of enduring fidelity to her superior – without having the potential to mourn too much or too dramatically. With the erection of the monument to Greyfriars Bobby, however, his sentimental relationship with the human world became reciprocal; he is not just a symbol but a citizen of an emotional community. This monument was only one of several examples of memorialising animals in this period; another notable one is the creation of the pet cemetery in Hyde

[97] Mangum, 'Animal Angst'; Howell, 'A Place for the Animal Dead'.
[98] K. Chez, *Victorian Dogs, Victorian Men* (Colombo: The Ohio State University Press, 2017), p. 57-59 for a discussion of dogs and vivisection.
[99] E. Townshend, *Darwin's Dogs: How Darwin's Pets Helped Form a World-Changing Theory of Evolution* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2009).

Park, which was founded in 1881, and whose tiny tombstones memorialise the beloved companions of mostly wealthy Victorian Londoners.[100]

In the case of other animals, however, the relationship with humans is not so straightforward. If dogs could grieve for humans (and be grieved by them in turn), that made them a sort of bridge between the human and animal worlds. But other species occasionally joined these despairing canine hordes, and in their case there was less of an obvious reason to believe that the interest in animal mourning was due to the flattering light it cast on their affection for a human companion.

Sympathy for the beast: animal emotions, animal rights

In 1847 *Scientific American* claimed that a gazelle had reacted to the death of its mate by ramming its head into a wall so hard that it immediately died. Another report (almost certainly apocryphal and possibly based on a satirical story that was popular at the time) concerned a pet monkey who allegedly imitated its master's suicide by shooting itself in the head.[101] Alongside its claims of suicide in dogs, *Animal World* also claimed to have corroborated reports of a cat hanging itself after the death of its kittens and a horse deliberately drowning itself in a canal.[102]

It is perhaps not surprising that *Animal World* – a vehicle explicitly created to promote animal welfare – was especially keen to disseminate stories about animal responses to death. Its editors clearly (and understandably) believed that extraordinary tales of pitiable beasts would spur readers to sympathy both with the animals and with the mission of the RSPCA (which had been founded in 1824). But this idea was not simply a Victorian version of a maudlin marketing

[100] For an account of the history of this graveyard, see Howell, 'A Place for the Animal Dead', pp. 7-9.
[101] 'Suicide by a Gazelle', *Scientific American*, 14 August 1847, p. 1.
[102] I take this account from E. Ramsden and D. Wilson, 'The Nature of Suicide: Science and the Self-Destructive Animal', *Endeavour*, Vol. 33, Issue 1 (2010), pp. 21-24 (the story is on p. 21).

campaign: as well as eliciting sympathy, animal grief was also widely taken as hard evidence for the mental power of animals.

This is particularly evident in the writing of the Irish writer, social reformer and women's suffrage campaigner, Frances Power Cobbe, who was perhaps the period's most famous, vociferous and prolific opponent of vivisection (as well as being truly obsessive about dogs). A rich historiography exists on the vivisection debate and Cobbe's place within it. For the most part, this debate has centred on the relationship between sentiment and science. The disagreement between Paul White and Rob Boddice that I referred to earlier in this chapter centres around the debate over vivisection and the feelings that researchers experienced when conducting experiments on animals.[103] Susan Hamilton, meanwhile, places Cobbe's antivivisectionist commitments in the context of campaigns for women's rights, arguing that female antivivisectionists saw continuities between their suffering, subjugated bodies and those of the animals they sought to defend – although this identification was ultimately self-defeating. 'A gesture of identification which promises an assertion of feminine power – ends in self-vilification, and the perpetuated denigration of feminine bodies – both human and animal.'[104] Again, the emotional and psychological state of the humans involved in this controversy is foregrounded in this research.

Claims about the emotions of the animals were also used to buttress the case for animal rights. In pressing their claims, antivivisectionists – especially Cobbe – repeatedly made reference to instances in which animals allegedly exhibited an emotional response to the death of their companions. On one level, the reason for this is quite intuitive: imputing emotions to an animal implies a subjectivity that in turn implies consciousness – or at least what modern philosophers would

[103] R. Boddice, 'Vivisecting Major'; P. White, 'The Experimental Animal in Victorian Britain'. See also P. White, 'Sympathy Under the Knife: Experimentation and Emotion in Late Victorian Britain' in *Medicine, Emotion and Disease*, ed. F. Bound Alberti (London: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 100-124.
[104] S. Hamilton, 'Still Lives: Gender and the Literature of the Victorian Vivisection Controversy', *Victorian Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Winter 1991), pp. 21-34 (quotation on p. 33).

describe as 'qualia'.[105] And the capacity to suffer in particular has been central to arguments for animal rights since Jeremy Bentham posed his famous rhetorical question in a brief treatment of animal ethics published in 1789: 'The question is not, can they reason? Nor, can they talk? But, can they suffer?'[106] I argue, however, that Cobbe treated evidence of grief and mourning in animals as a particularly powerful argument for their right to recognition. Firstly, an emotional response to death implied some level of comprehension of mortality. Secondly, the ability of animals (particularly dogs) to mourn humans could be seen to bring them into a sort of emotional community that included a sense of mutual obligations. The idea that emotional responses to death put animals and human minds in closer proximity was also a theme in the natural science of the time, as the final part of this chapter explores.

Cobbe was awakened to the cause of animal ethics during a trip she made to France in 1863, when she learned that French veterinary students were trained in their surgical dexterity by sawing off the hooves of healthy and unanaesthetised horses.[107] Appalled by this discovery, she dashed off a polemical essay denouncing such practices as degrading to the happiness of animals and to the virtue of man – these being the highest purpose of either being. From this first essay she put animal's capacity to suffer at the centre of her arguments. Since animals lack the mental development to make moral judgements, she argued, the most important object in their lives is that of

---

[105] For a discussion of the history of ideas about animal consciousness, and its relationship to Victorian debates about animal rights, see R. Preece 'Thoughts out of Season on the History of Animal Ethics', *Society and Animals* 15 (2007) pp. 365-378

[106] J. Bentham, *An Introduction To The Principles Of Morals And Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon: 1807 [1789]), pp. 310-11; this quotation is in fact found in a long footnote which, interestingly, begins by noting the paucity of discussions of animal rights in the Western philosophical tradition compared to the 'Gentoo and Mohametan' traditions. As Rob Boddice has pointed out, Bentham's essay was not paid much attention in his own time, and he himself had no issue with making a value judgment about the superiority of humans to other animals: R. Boddice, *A History of Attitudes and Behaviours Toward Animals in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain: Anthropocentrism and the Emergence of Animals* (The Edwin Mellen Press, Lampeter 2008).

[107] F. Power Cobbe, 'The Rights of Man and the Claims of Brutes', *Frasers* Vol. 68 (1863) pp. 586-682; the story about the horses' hooves is pp. 594-596.

contentment. In this sense their inferiority to humanity only makes cruelty towards them more monstrous: whereas human suffering might be given meaning by a sense of higher moral purpose, animal pain is starker, without any possibility of redemption.[108] Interestingly, Cobbe's argument in this essay actually implied an absence of willpower in animal mourning, thereby de-emphasising a feature that was so important for Darwin in distinguishing human grief.

In this early response to vivisection, Cobbe was generally more concerned with human ethics, emphasising that humans are capable of far greater suffering than 'lower' animals and that our ethical duties towards one another are proportionally more severe. But even this first essay contains a passing insistence on the intensity of animal emotions: 'the affection and devotion of many species of animal for man are matters of too great notoriety to need more than passing reference,' she writes. 'The dog, horse, elephant, cat, seal, and many species of bird, show these feelings in the most unmistakable manner; in some cases marking their love by truly heroic sacrifice, or by dying of grief for the loss of their masters.'[109] As she became steadily more involved in the anti-vivisection cause, some of her essays shifted their focus to the experiences of the animals themselves, and began to blur the distinction between animal and human minds.

One well-known essay by Cobbe that is exemplary of this erosion of neat distinctions between animals and humans was 'The Consciousness of Dogs', published in the midst of the vivisection debates of the 1870s. As she explained in an introduction to a later anthology of her writing on animals, this was an attempt 'to look at the dog's nature, so far as sympathy would help me.' Her first conclusion in this essay was that a dog's intellectual inferiority to humans does not in fact translate necessarily into comparative emotional dullness. 'There are

[108] F. Power Cobbe, *False Beasts and True: Essays on Natural (and Unnatural) History* (London: 1875).
[109] F. Power Cobbe, 'The Scientific Spirit of the Age', *Contemporary Review* Vol. 54 (1888), p. 250.

very few human passions which a dog does not share,' she writes – and chief among these sorrows is grief. This is an emotion that a dog 'feels so deeply that it often breaks his heart.' This is to say that feelings that we impute to humans can also be imputed to animals. To emphasise this point, Cobbe told an anecdote reported by the historian and biographer James Anthony Froude: 'In his awful description of the death of Mary Queen of Scots, Mr. Froude tells us how her little dog was found to have followed her to the scaffold, hidden under her flowering robes, and that when her head had fallen, the poor creature, in the agony of its grief, lay down precisely in the severed place of the neck. Is it imaginable how the sympathy of a dumb mourner could be more forcibly expressed?'[110] According to Froude and then Cobbe, the queen's dog not only mourned its dead mistress, but almost took her place, positioning itself where the thinking, feeling self had once been.

Parts of Cobbe's writing might read like a sentimental love letter from a dog owner to her pets, and Cobbe's diatribes against vivisection did indeed come at a moment when pets had become a more conspicuous part of British life than ever before.[111] But it would be a mistake to dismiss Cobbe's writing as mere doting sentiment – a mistake that many of her contemporaries made, often in explicitly sexist terms.[112] In one response to a critic who had belittled her writing on animal rights by saying that it was interesting only in that it showed the difference between the (rational) male mind and the (emotional) female one, Cobbe took her aggressor to task on his misunderstandings of Immanuel Kant, and engaged in a prolonged discussion about his incorrect usage of *Verkant*. In the same essay she lambasted unnamed 'men of science' for reductively returning to René Descartes' account of animal behaviour, which conceived of

[110] F. Power Cobbe, 'The Consciousness of Dogs', *Quarterly Review* Vol. 133 (1872), pp. 419–451 (quotations on pp. 427, 429).
[111] For instance the 1860s saw the foundation of the Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and of the first ever major dog show in Birmingham, at a time when the rates of pet ownership were rapidly on the rise: see H. Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, pp. 164-170.
[112] For instance Reverend George Tyrrell, which begins with a note of condescending regret that the movement is led by a 'prophetess' and that there is 'not an abler man' whose arguments he can rebut: R. Tyrell, 'Zoolatry', *The Month* Vol. 85 (September 1895), pp. 2-3.

everything other than humanity as soulless automata without any conscious existence or an inner world. 'If this conclusion (on which modern science is to be congratulated!) be accepted,' she wrote, 'it follows of course that we should give no more consideration to the fatigue of a noble hunter than to the wood of a rocking-horse; and that the emotions a child bestows on its doll are more serious than those of a dog who dies of grief on his master's grave.'[113] Once again the funereal dog figured as an archetype of animal's claim to recognition as a being worthy of sympathy and entitled to rights. Dogs' acts of mourning made vivisection against its species an act not only of violence, but also of betrayal.

In relating these tales Cobbe was leaning heavily on the writing of George Jesse, an ally of hers in the antivivisection struggle. Jesse founded of the Society for the Abolition of Vivisection and gave extensive evidence to parliament on the occasion of a debate over a law restricting the use of vivisection. In his *Researches into the History of the British Dog*, Jesse also returned again and again to the trope of the mourning dog. One story he discussed is that of a hunter who came across some dogs whose master had just died in a shooting accident, and who were letting forth 'the most piteous moans I ever heard. The dogs remained at their post all night; no one could remove them,' Jesse wrote. 'On taking the corpse in the boat both dogs commenced howling, and followed the boats to the establishment, and would not again leave their dead master until he was put under ground. Nay, for some days after, these two dogs haunted the grave, and in whatever place they sat, kept their faces turned towards it, as if listening for the familiar call.' He also cited a few newspaper reports of similarly grieving dogs, including one involving a Melton Mowbray surgeon called Mr Hose, whose dog after its master's death 'took precedence at the procession and walked before the coffin to the grave.'[114]

[113] 'Zoophily' [1882], published in S. Hamilton, *Animal Welfare and Anti-Vivisection 1870-1910: Nineteenth-Century Woman's Mission* Vol. 1, pp. 176-186.
[114] Jesse, *Researches Into the History of the British Dog*, pp. 105-6.

Cobbe, Jesse and other anti-vivisectionists continually deployed examples of animal bereavement in their arguments, mobilising a combination of empirical and anecdotal evidence of animal grief to create the basis for a sort of rational sympathy. The questions that have dominated historiography on vivisection concern the emotions of researchers and campaigners and their sympathy for the animals they studied. As Philip Howell puts it in his analysis of pet cemeteries, the act of mourning for animals implies 'an embracing of non-human animals in a shared moral community.'[115] In Howell's argument it is the humans whose emotions create this community – but my analysis of animal mourning in the anti-vivisection debates suggests that this sense of communion could be strengthened by reciprocity: animals could not only be grieved, but could also express grief themselves. Once again, the emotional response to death was politically and ideologically consequential and contested, involving the mourner in a claim about status, identity and social position – even when the mourner happened to be a dog.

Animal grief in evolution and secular psychology

Cobbe was frustrated by what she perceived as the hypocrisy of 'men of science', who stressed the similarities between humanity and the 'lower animals' even as they brushed off any qualms about experimenting on them and butchering them in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. But she was not setting herself against an unfeeling scientific establishment: Cobbe was a prolific populariser of evolutionary ideas and a personal friend of Charles and Emma Darwin. Charles Darwin praised 'The Consciousness of Dogs' as the most impressive account of animal psychology he had ever read.[116] He and Cobbe did not, however, agree on the question of vivisection – although he played a significant role in the vivisection debate, even helping to draft legislation to restrict the use of animal experimentation for the purposes of psychological

[115] Howell, 'A Place for the Animal Dead', p. 20.
[116] 'To G. J. Romanes, 26 December 1875', Darwin Correspondence Project, retrieved online at https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/?docId=letters/DCP-LETT-10325.xml;query=romanes%20dogs;brand=default;hit.rank=1#hit.rank1 (19/07/2021)

research, the measures he endorsed fell far short of Cobbe's outright abolitionism and he refused to sign a petition that she had launched with the RSPCA.[117] Cobbe sent anecdotes to Darwin purporting to demonstrate examples of sophisticated forms of consciousness in non-human animals, including a clipping from *Animal World* in 1872 containing an account of the suicide of a dog from grief.[118] Darwin's response was sceptical. Although he had found value in her discussion of animal consciousness, he questioned the rigour of George Jesse's research, which Cobbe had relied on heavily in her work, and cast doubt on the stories published in the popular press, including the story of the grieving dog.[119] This scepticism was reflected by other scientists of the time, notably Henry Maudsley. In a letter that he wrote to the journal *Mind* in 1879, Maudsley picked apart several reports of animal suicide to have 'gone the round of newspapers,' concluding in each case that the evidence for the animal's intent was doubtful if not non-existent. A cat that hanged itself in a tree was, he judged, probably simply caught in a branch. A dog might indeed die of a broken heart, he sarcastically notes, 'if only it were accompanied by a sufficient dose of arsenic.'[120]

Not all scientists were so dismissive of the idea of animal grief. The Scottish physicist and botanist William Lauder Lindsay, who took animal emotions more

---

[117] Rod Preece has argued strongly that advocates of natural selection were unsympathetic to animal rights despite the apparent implication of the theory that animals and humans are related: 'Darwinism, Christianity and the Great Vivisection Debate', *Journal of the History of Ideas,* Vol. 64, No. 3 (July 2003) pp. 399-419. But the characterisation of Darwin and his followers has been convincingly refuted by subsequent researchers, who have highlighted evidence that Darwin argued for protections to be given to animals under experimentation even while he defended what he saw as necessary research: D. A. Feller, 'Dog fight: Darwin as animal advocate in the antivivisection controversy of 1875', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* Vol. 40, Issue 4 (December 2009), pp. 265–271; P. White, 'Sympathy Under the Knife'.

[118] 'From F. P. Cobbe ', 25 December 1872, Darwin Correspondence Project, retrieved online at https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/?docId=letters/DCP-LETT-8696.xml;query=cobbe;brand=default (19/7/2021).

[119] 'To F. P. Cobbe', 28 Nov 1872, The Darwin Correspondence Project; retrieved online at https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/?docId=letters/DCP-LETT-8652.xml;query=frances%20power%20cobbe;brand=default (19/7/2021).

[120] H. Maudsley, 'Alleged Suicide of a Dog', *Mind*, Vol. 4, Issue 15 (July 1879), pp. 410-413.

seriously than most of his contemporaries, wrote of grief in dogs in ways that closely echoed the descriptions of human grief by psychologists and scientists like Henry Maudsley, Alexander Bain and Charles Darwin: 'The sense of bereavement in the bitch produces a whole series of varied mental phenomena, which include perversion of the sense of duty, and an abrupt stoppage of ordinary labours; implacable fury, succeeded by despair, gradually giving place to settled melancholia.' The picture painted by Lindsay in this passage is reminiscent of the twentieth-century notion of 'stages of grief'. He also believed that this grief could be fatal, in its own right or (apparently) by causing rabies. Lindsay also believed that these symptoms could be observed in mandarin ducks and in swallows.[121]

One scientific study of mourning that made a particular splash, appeared just months before Maudsley's contemptuous dismissal of mourning in dogs. In 1879 a number of British newspapers recounted the death of one half of a minor celebrity couple from Philadelphia, USA. What distinguished the report from regular death notices and obituaries was the species of its subjects: these were not humans, but chimpanzees, and what the editors thought worthy of note was not the demise of one chimp but the reaction of its bereaved mate. The 'genuine grief' of the surviving ape was 'painful to watch', the papers reported, before describing in depth its anthropomorphous behaviour – his howls of despair, his desperate attempts to wake his dead companion, his sobbing all through the subsequent day. [122]

The source of these reports was an article published in *The American Naturalist* by a zoologist called Arthur Brown, who had previously reported on the striking signs of intelligence displayed by this chimpanzee pair. His notes on ape bereavement were framed first and foremost as further evidence of their intellectual capacity. 'Among the lower animals,' he wrote, 'any striking display

[121] W. Lauder Lindsay, *Mind in the Lower Animals, in Health and Disease* (London: 1879), pp. 232-3.
[122] For instance, 'Grief in a Chimpanzee', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 22 April 1879, p. 5; 'Affection Among Monkeys', *Banbury Advertiser*, 24 April 1879, p. 2.

of grief at death or separation… has rarely been observed.' It was probable, he reckoned, that 'friendship – if the term may be so used – partakes too much of an abstract nature to be sufficiently developed in them to retain much of a place in memory when the immediate association be once past.' The expression of 'authentic' grief (even in animals some anxiety about authenticity apparently still persists) implied to Brown a depth of personal attachment that only complex minds capable of deep social attachment could feel.

Brown then proceeded with the detailed account of the chimpanzees' expressions of woe that was subsequently picked up by the international press, repeatedly noting its similarity to the way that humans behave when bereaved. As well as remarking on the depth of the chimpanzees feeling, though he was equally struck by the transience of the his grief, supposedly established by a curious experiment in which the bereaved chimp was expected to mistake his own reflection for a resurrection of his late companion. Noticing none of the expected 'customary signs of recognition', Brown concluded that the ape has forgotten its friend entirely. 'On looking over the field of animal emotion,' Brown concluded, 'it seems evident that any high degree of permanence in grief of this nature belongs only to man.'[123]

The dubious nature of this experiment notwithstanding, Brown's reasoning for lesser animals' shorter grief period is revealing. 'An unrestrained indulgence in an emotion so powerful as this has become in its higher forms, would undoubtedly prevent due attention to the bodily necessities of the animal subjected to it,' he wrote. By virtue of their greater intelligence, humans could endure grief that lesser animals can cope with only by forgetting. Brown's argument rests on the Darwinian supposition that natural selection conditions all organisms into a state that makes them fit to survive and reproduce: for creatures with lower self awareness than humans, 'lasting grief would tend to prevent a new association of like nature and would thus impede the

[123] A. Brown, 'Grief and the Chimpanzee' in *The American Naturalist*, vol. 13 (1879), pp. 173-175, quotation at p. 173.

performance of the first function of an animal in its relation to its kind – that of reproduction.'[124]

In Brown's analysis, grief was held up as evidence for intellectual superiority of several sorts. Firstly, he treated mourning as evidence of a strong personal attachment that seemed to rest on specific and well-developed social bonds – or what he labels as 'friendship'. This required a sophisticated memory and also some recognition of the utility of the 'service' a companion had offered. On top of this, Brown also saw protracted grief as evidence for intelligence as it is more conventionally understood. The greater the feeling, the greater the mental energy required to bring it under control. It is this heroic struggle between refined sensibilities and stern intelligence that distinguishes the human species.

Brown was not alone in pointing out the strong analogies between a primate's love and that of a human. Another close observer of ape and monkey life, the zoologist Alfred Brehm, was so affected by the spectacle of a bereaved monkey mother, that it led him to question his previously held assumptions about the gulf between human and animal minds:

> Who could, without deep emotion, witness the anxiety of a mother-ape nursing her sick child? I must confess that, to my eye, in such cases she is at least the equal of the human mother. If the young ape dies, the spectacle is a piteous one. The mother cannot be separated from the dead body, refuses all food, and frequently perishes from grief. In such crises the ape proves certainly his congeniality with the human race, and in his moral affections could stand as an example to many men.[125]

[124] Ibid. pp. 173-175.
[125] A. Brehm, 'The Ways of Monkeys', *Popular Science Monthly* Volume 27 (June 1885), pp. 235-6.

Brehm saw the intensity of the monkey's mourning as proof of its intelligence and its proximity to human nature. More than this, the monkey's display of emotion also made it possible to conceive of the animal as 'moral'. To Brehm, the sorrow of a bereaved monkey indicated both intelligence and consciousness. In the very next paragraph he used the example of the monkey to muddy the boundaries between humanity and the rest of the animal kingdom. 'The intellectual cultivation of which the monkeys are susceptible neither raises them so high above the average of mammifers,' he wrote, 'nor places them so far beneath the level of mankind, as some people contend.'[126]

Brehm, whose stories often concerned remarkable examples of animal intelligence and cooperation, was one of a number of writers on emotions who Darwin drew on for evidence that animals were capable of selflessness and social sentiments. Dixon has demonstrated that, while neo-Darwinists have tended to view the individual – or even the individual gene – as the basic unit of evolution, Darwin was comfortable applying natural selection to 'traits that benefited the family, the swarm, the community or the tribe'.[127] Darwin believed that 'parental and filial affections' were the origin of 'the social instincts'.[128] To the extent that the emotional response to death was an extension of the love of kin, it too could be seen as a primary social emotion. Not only did an individual and internal model of emotional suffering exist before the interventions of evolutionary thinkers like Darwin, but Darwinism itself left room for the possibility that grief might have a social purpose.

Another populariser of animal science, Charles John Cornish, drew on Arthur Brown in a chapter of his book on animal grief. 'There is a strong balance of popular belief, Cornish wrote, 'in favour of the theory that many animals do feel an emotion more lasting that momentary chagrin or inconvenience in the loss or absence of those for whom they entertain a regard.' This can even be similar to

[126] Ibid. pp. 235-6.
[127] Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism*, p. 146.
[128] Darwin, *Expression*, p. 151.

humans, he argued, and might even preferable to human mourning in that it was 'always respectable, never morbid.' But Cornish went on to say that in most mammals, including horses and cattle, no lasting emotion was possible. He supported this assertion with an anecdote about Indian cows being induced to lactate using models stuffed with the skin of dead calves, suggesting that they do not have a proper understanding of mortality or the permanence of deaths. 'In the social life of most animals,' Cornish concluded, 'there is so little difference between the individuals the loss of one is easily replaced. It leaves no gap in the daily life as the loss of a human being may in that of a domestic animal.'[129] It is only in certain mammals of higher intellectual capacity and social awareness that grief can truly be observed: Arthur Brown's chimpanzees, deer painted by Edward Landseer, and perhaps love birds – although Cornish was sceptical about this particular case.[130]

While Darwin was cautious about the popular accounts of animal mourning offered to him by Cobbe, he was much happier to embrace descriptions by (male) naturalists like Brehm – although they were in many cases just as anecdotal. In *The Descent of Man*, while making the case that maternal love is a deep evolutionary inheritance, Darwin cited Brehm as an authority to insist that monkeys in captivity 'invariably' *die* of sorrow if their offspring are removed from them.[131] Yet in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, he nevertheless concluded that grief was one of only two 'eminently human' emotions – the other being shame. Indeed, as I described at the beginning of this chapter, Darwin believed that the expression of grief was literally the physiological result of a struggle between a primal need to cry or scream and the mental control over that urge. 'Our early progenitors, when suffering from grief or anxiety, would not have made their eyebrows oblique, or have drawn down the corners of their mouth, until they had acquired the habit of endeavouring to restrain their screams.' This is somewhat reminiscent of

[129] C. J. Cornish, *Animals at Work and Play: their Activities and Emotions* (London: Sedley & Co, 1896), p. 81.
[130] Ibid. pp. 77-84.
[131] Darwin, *Descent,* p. 40.

Brown's description of the grieving chimpanzee: in an animal's emotional response to death Brown found the traces of something recognisably human, yet their failure to restrain any expression of grief also marks them as under-developed in comparison.[132]

While Darwin was certainly interested in the subject and clearly persuaded to some extent by descriptions of animal mourning, he never systematically analysed it – the descriptions we can find are scattered across various chapters in *Expression* and *Descent*, and generally point to other sources for a fuller account. Among Darwin's disciples, however, there was one writer who provided a more systematic analysis of animal psychology, and his most famous work *did* deal extensively with mourning and grief. George Romanes' *Animal Intelligence* was an avowedly Darwinian attempt to create a 'textbook' of comparative psychology, and especially to detail the descent of man insofar as it relates to the mental world. It was arranged in an undisguisedly hierarchical structure, starting with the organisms presumed to be the least sophisticated and ending with those closest to humankind. Yet the psychological hierarchy of the organic world, it suggested, was not identical to the physiological one: 'if the animal kingdom were classified with reference to psychology instead of with reference to anatomy,' Romanes wrote, 'we should have a very different kind of zoological tree from that which is now given in our diagrams.'[133]

With this in mind, Romanes assessed the relative development of various types of animals by examining their behaviours for signs of intelligence and emotion – and an animal's response to its dead comrades is among his key indicators of mental development. The first sign of this came fairly early on in the book, when Romanes was describing the behaviour of ants. 'There is nothing which is apt to awaken deeper interest in the life-history of ants,' he wrote, 'than what may properly be called their funereal habits.' What followed was a long section quoting a whole troop of insect authorities who claim to have witnessed the

[132] Darwin, *Expression,* p. 331.
[133] G. Romanes, *Animal Intelligence* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co, 1882) pp. ix.

remarkable phenomenon of ants processing ceremonially to deposit their dead in a 'cemetery' some distance from their nest. One source describes a particularly 'mournful' ant returning to a burial pit in an attempt to dig up its companion's corpse, before being persuaded away by its ant comrades; another deepens the analogy between human and ant cemeteries by claiming that ants segregate their cemeteries according to 'caste': 'the red slave-makers never deposited their dead with those of their black servitors,' he writes. Romanes was so struck by the ants' organised response to death that it led him to dismiss the notion that they act purely through instinct – and ants are the most primitive organism for which he is prepared to make this claim. The relationship of the ant to other insects, he argued, was similar to that of the human to other apes.[134] Romanes here seemed to interpret ant behaviour in terms of the highly specific cultural practices of his own human society – even down to its social and racial divisions. As with Brehm's monkeys, Romanes saw the behaviour of the ants was irreducibly social: Romanes could see no instrumental, selfish motive for their apparent mourning behaviour.[135]

In his discussion of bird emotions, Romanes was even more explicit in taking grieving behaviours as a sign of mental sophistication. 'As regards emotions, it is among birds that we first meet with a conspicuous advance in the tenderer feelings of affection and sympathy,' he wrote. 'The pining of the "love-bird" or its absent mate, and the keen distress of a hen on losing her chickens, furnish abundant evidence of vivid feelings of the kind in question.' One obvious implication was that grief was evidence of love, and therefore of individuated

[134] Ibid. pp. 89-94 and pp. 140-142. More recent research on the apparent mourning rituals of ants has revealed that their drive to remove corpses from the nest and bury them is triggered by an acid released from the corpse after death. Twenty-first century zoologists believe that this behaviour developed as a way of protecting the breeding queen from infection, and since the response is triggered even when a *living* ant is covered in acid, it is not generally taken as evidence of any particular social bond. See for instance Barbara King, *How Animals Grieve* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 2013), pp. 1-2.

[135] Insects were frequently cited by Victorian men of science as evidence of the social nature of natural selection, and of the existence of selflessness in the animal world. See Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism*, pp. 159-168.

social bonds. But that was not all that Romanes had in mind: the fidelity of certain birds, he wrote, and their reaction to the absence of their mate, showed 'not only what may be called a refinement of sexual feeling, but also the presence of an abiding image in the mind's eye of the lover.' As with Arthur Brown's description of the mournful chimp, grief was not simply an emotion but a compound of social bonds, sentimental development and memory; as such it provided proof of a particularly diverse array of mental qualities. Once again his point was furnished by a series of emotive anecdotes, such as a swan whose secluded 'widowhood' continues for weeks and a dove that marches in endless circles around the corpse of its mate.[136]

Romanes's many case studies of animal mourning, drawn from an array of contemporary accounts, provide a useful overview of contemporary attitudes to animal emotions among amateur and professional scientists. Although the tone varies from writer to writer, it is striking that all combine close observation with a hint of sentiment, and they scarcely make any attempt to resist the temptation of comparing the animals' behaviour to that of humans. Grief was frequently taken to be both moral and emotional in a way that few other affective phenomena are; this makes it a marker of mental development and of something close to humanity – although the way in which it is expressed can reveal much about the mental capacity of the sufferer.

In the examples outlined above it is possible to make out the beginnings of a science of grief. Writers and scientists were looking for signs of grief in the natural world and were attempting to systematically determine its characteristics and its boundaries. But even as they did so, they created hierarchies of suffering. That an animal could grieve at all was a sign of higher mental faculties: it implied both a capacity for lasting, intimate relationships, and an understanding of mortality. Scientists and anti-vivisection activists vigorously disputed animals' ability to experience grief in the apparently mutual acceptance that this ability would constitute a strong argument in favour of animal rights. Yet the

[136] Romanes, *Animal Intelligence*, pp. 271-5.

ephemeral grief of an animal – or what anthropologists considered to be a 'lower' human – was missing a crucial ingredient. To experience the kind of grief that Darwin praised as 'eminently human' and noted admiringly in his cousin, it was not sufficient to simply feel the emotion, but also to resist it. This struggle between animal despair and the force of human will separated grief from other emotions, because it was held in strenuous tension rather than released. This was a spur not only to individual development, but also – as the final part of this chapter explores – the development of species and the unfolding of the process of evolution itself.

'The very apes no better': the grief of a man of science

In July 1860, Thomas Huxley looked on as his first-born son Noel, killed by scarlet fever at the age of four, was lowered into the ground. The experience of seeing a child buried was hardly unusual in an era when infant mortality rates remained high.[137] But Huxley himself was unusual in an important respect: he was a self-described agnostic (in fact he was the inventor of the term).[138] As Huxley watched the ceremony unfold, he found himself alienated from the spiritual consolation that the ceremony and its accompanying liturgy were intended to impart.

A few days later, Huxley received a letter from the broad church priest Charles Kingsley, whose reflections on the higher purposes of suffering I analysed in Chapter One as a hinge between Christian and evolutionary ideas. Kingsley offered Huxley condolences and reflected on the solace that he found in his conviction of eternity and the survival of the soul. Huxley's passionate response to this letter related his feelings as he watched the burial of his son:

---

[137] B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1962) pp. 36-7. the infant death rate was 21.6 per 1,000 per year in 1868, roughly the same rate it had been since the 1830s (although it fell sharply over the following 50 years).

[138] See B. Lightman, 'Huxley and Scientific Agnosticism: The Strange History of a Failed Rhetorical Strategy', *The British Journal for the History of Science* Vol. 35, No. 3 (September 2002), pp. 271-289.

> As I stood behind the coffin of my little son the other day, with my mind bent on anything but disputation, the officiating minister read, as a part of his duty, the words, 'if the dead not rise again, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.' I cannot tell you how inexpressibly they shocked me… What! Because I am face to face with irreparable loss, because I have given back to the cause from whence it came the source of a great happiness, still retaining through all my life the blessings which have sprung and will spring from that cause, I am to renounce my manhood, and, howling, grovel in bestiality? Why, the very apes know better, and if you shoot their young, the poor brutes grieve their grief out and do not immediately seek distraction in a gorge.[139]

This passage has been cited as one of the most powerful Darwinian defences of agnostic morality.[140] It was the moment when Huxley explicitly addressed the pervasive criticism that a world without God or hope of an eternal life left no other philosophy available than crude hedonism. But Huxley's passionate response to Kingsley is not only notable for its rebuttal of religion as the necessary foundation of a moral sensibility. It is also striking for the surprising way in which Huxley talks about grief. Even at this moment of unbearable pain and 'irreparable loss', the suggestion that agnosticism might strip his emotions of moral value was enough to spark a tremor of righteous outrage. What was it in this stock phrase of the Anglican liturgy that appalled him so? Why did he so recoil from the idea that the pursuit of happiness must lie at the heart of an irreligious life? And why did he immediately respond to bereavement by comparing his own response to that of an ape?

Huxley's response seems puzzling at first. He cherishes his pain as a living connection to his beloved son and defiantly asserts his determination to suffer

---

[139] L. Huxley, *Life and Letters of Thomas Huxley* (London, 1900), p. 220.
[140] For instance S. Gould, *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life* (New York, 2002), pp. 60-61.

his grief in full. Yet to 'howl and grovel' appeared to him brutish and contemptible. Huxley represented the depth of his emotion as evidence somehow of his manhood and humanity; but his capacity to suffer without succumbing to fits of uncontrollable grief was a crucial part of his moral and intellectual status as well. It is as though, in the absence of faith, Huxley nevertheless saw his experiences as being ennobled by the quality of his emotion – both the feeling itself and his refusal to be overcome by it. It was not in heaven but in the intensity of Huxley's emotions that he understood his son to live on. His grief offered him the possibility of a more profound connection to the world than the pursuit of passing pleasures. Even without a Christian doctrine, mourning – or at least mourning in a 'manly' rather than a 'bestial' fashion – had an intrinsic moral significance for him. In this moment of anguish, which biographers have identified as the hardest of his life, Huxley was fiercely defensive, and even proprietorial, of his grief.[141]

Part of the answer to this lies in the fact that Thomas Huxley did not – despite his reputation as 'Darwin's bulldog' – straightforwardly distance himself from religion. Indeed, many commentators have remarked on the religious flavour of his rhetoric, his concern with metaphysics and final meanings, and the missionary passion with which he devoted himself to putting science at the centre of political and cultural life. James Moore, for instance, described his philosophy as 'scientific Calvinism'. [142] Discussing the exchange between Huxley and Kingsley that began with these letters, Paul White describes how the two men were engaged in a mutual pursuit of 'making science religious, and religion scientific.'[143] 'Rather than simply divide the world into enemy camps,' White writes, 'Huxley assimilated Scripture, its authors and prescriptions, by conflating religion and science.'[144] Huxley fervently believed that a worldview structured around commitment to science could inform not only beliefs about

[141] A. Desmond, *Huxley: From Devils Disciple to Evolution's High Priest* (London: Perseus, 1997), p. 286.
[142] J. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) p. 349.
[143] P. White, *Huxley: Making the Man of Science*, p. 118.
[144] Ibid. p. 106.

the material world, but also the most intimate relationships and sentiments. The emotions he felt at the moment of his son's death were a test of this belief, and it is revealing that he felt compelled to affirm and justify his emotional response to bereavement.

There is little in Huxley's more theoretical writings that has specifically to do with the emotional response to death. But the place of suffering within an evolutionary framework *was* a major theme of his. In *Evolution and Ethics*, Huxley painted a picture of 'cyclical' evolution in which all of material nature is constantly in flux. For Huxley, this cycle of development and destruction encapsulated the cosmic nature of all things: not only organisms, but stars, seas, dynasties, states, and perhaps even of systems that are too vast and complex for humans to conceive. The 'cyclical evolution' included natural selection but it is not limited to it. Its essence, he argued, was constant flux, fuelled by a mysterious 'cosmopoietic energy': 'seeming peace is silent but strenuous battle… a scene of strife, in which all the combatants fall in turn.' This universal struggle is transcendently awesome in the abstract, Huxley believed, but terrible in its particulars, implying an endless circle of 'pain and suffering' that only increased with the complexity of the organism that it creates.[145] Humanity may be the most complex of species, he believed, but by nature of its complexity, it the species that has to most fully confront the hard reality of its own misery and suffering.

Evolution and Ethics was a clear rebuttal of theodicies like those of Joseph Butler and William Paley – both hugely popular and successful well into the nineteenth century – which sought to translate scientific investigations into the workings of nature as celebrations of God's magnificence.[146] Central to this

[145] Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 4.
[146] There is an expansive historiography on the relationship between Darwinism and Christianity. See for instance J. Hedley Brooke, 'Darwin and Victorian Christianity' in *The Cambridge Companion to Darwin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); J. R. Moore, 'Theodicy and Society: the Crisis of the Intelligentsia' in *Victorian Faith in Crisis*, ed. R. J. Helmstadter and B. Lightman (London: Palgrave, 1990); David Oates has argued that Huxley was the first major figure in evolutionary thinking to abandon

ambitious enterprise was the attempt to grapple with the problem of evil: by examining the workings of the observable world as a holistic unit, theodicies set out to prove that even the most ostensibly awful and evil phenomena were in fact part of a beneficent plan. 'It is a happy world, after all,' as Wiliam Paley wrote in 1802. 'The air, the Earth, the water, teem with delighted existence...' Such a joyous world could not come about by chance, only by providence.[147] 'Evolution and Ethics' was a repudiation of such a way of interpreting natural phenomena. But it was also a warning against the tendency for Darwinism itself to develop the theodicy-like tendency to use nature to justify itself. Instead Huxley pressed a view in which all worldly goods were won at the expense of a nature whose logic tends always towards destruction. 'That which lies before the human race,' he wrote, 'is a constant struggle to maintain and improve, in opposition to the State of Nature, the State of Art of an organised polity.'[148]

Yet, in a certain respect, *Evolution and Ethics* itself shared some of the characteristics of theodicy. To overcome suffering, Huxley argued, it is necessary to unflinchingly recognise that suffering is the irrevocable condition of existence: not a means to a better end, or a temporary ill that will one day be redeemed, but the raw fact of nature. By recognising this fact and submitting to the fact of death and suffering can give humanity the tools it needs to build a 'garden' of civilisation that provides at least a temporary refuge. 'The foundation of morality,' Huxley wrote in a different essay, 'is to have done, once and for all, with lying.'[149]

---

the idea of justifying nature with reference to progress and perfection: D. Oates, 'Social Darwinism and Natural Theodicy', *Zygon*, Vol. 23, Issue 4 (December 1988), pp. 439-459. The struggle to grapple with the 'problem of evil' in the context of a Darwinian worldview is ongoing today: in one recent work John Schneider attempts to offer solutions to the 'Darwinian problem' that we live in a world in which the suffering and death of non-human animals is incessant, intense and unavoidable; see J. Schneider, *Animal Suffering and the Darwinian Problem of Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[147] W. Paley, *Natural Theology: or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (London, 1802), p. 456.

[148] Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics*, pp. 44-45.

[149] T. H. Huxley, 'Science and Morals' [1888] in *Collected Essay* Vol. 9 (London: Richmond Clay & Sons, 1894), pp. 117-146 (quotation on pp. 145-146).

This idea that the struggle that resulted from heroically facing suffering and mortality was the engine of progress is one that is only hinted at in the work of Thomas Huxley. But it is right at the centre of another outspoken opponent of Victorian religious orthodoxy. William Winwood Reade's 1872 *The Martyrdom of Man* is a sweeping general history of humanity, observed as though it were an unfolding natural force.[150] Although he has sometimes been credited with a respect for non-European civilisations that was unusual for his time, Reade's story was nevertheless one of progress from cultural and intellectual darkness to light. And the engine of this progress was suffering. This is the 'martyrdom of man' to which the title refers. In the final chapter of the *Martyrdom of Man*, Reade delivers this grand conception of human history – but he drew a line at his present. This engine of suffering that has propelled humanity towards betterment is no longer in service: in his day, Reade believed, the struggle for survival no longer dominated human lives. And this was a fact to be celebrated, since suffering has no divinely-ordained purpose. 'Pain, grief, disease and death,' he wrote, 'are these the inventions of a loving God? That no animal shall rise to excellence except by being fatal to the lives of others, is this the law of a kind creator? It is useless to say that pain has its benevolence, that massacre has its mercy. Why is it so ordained that bad should be the raw material of good? Pain is not the less pain because it is useful.'[151]

However, there is a final twist in the tale. Physical hardship may have at last been overcome, Reade argued, but there remained one last grief that humanity must endure: the loss of the very same beliefs that had hitherto provided solace amid the harsh realities of life on an uncaring planet.

> Famine, pestilence and war are no longer essential for the advancement of the human race. But a season of mental anguish is at hand, and through this we must pass in order that our posterity may

[150] W. W. Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man* (London: Turner & Co, 1872), p. 520.
[151] Ibid. p. 520-521.

> rise. The soul must be sacrificed; the hope in immortality must die. A sweet and charming illusion must be taken from the human race, as youth and beauty vanish never to return.'[152]

Reade's epic history of humanity was an attempt to repurpose this structure of martyrdom and redemptive suffering in the name of an irreligious worldview. Indeed, Reade saw the project of his epic as a distinctively 'Darwinian' evolutionary epic, informed by a lengthy correspondence with Darwin himself in which he declared his allegiance to Darwin's theories and methods and even sought Darwin's approval for the theories he had expressed: 'My book,' Reade wrote to Darwin,' is a child of your masterpiece.'[153] Yet even as an avowed devotion to natural selection and his extensive consultation with its most famous proponent did not prevent him from understanding the emotional life of humanity in terms of a teleological moral arc.[154] The renunciation of a religious worldview and the replacement of divine sorrow with natural, animal grief did not strip the emotional response to death and loss of moral and spiritual meanings. Instead, it spurred on people like Charles Darwin, George Lewes, Thomas Huxley and Winwood Reade to find other ways in which suffering and death could hold meaning and find purpose.

In this chapter, I have analysed a constellation of ideas about the emotional response to death that were grounded not in religion or domesticity but in empiricism, Darwinism and encounters with the natural world. Unlike the ideas analysed in the previous two chapters, these were not frameworks and narratives that structured most people's encounters with death. Nevertheless, they were increasingly important, and form an important part of a pre-history of the twentieth-century concept of grief, since they constitute fragments of an

---

[152] Ibid. pp. 543-4.

[153] Quoted in I. Hesketh, 'A Good Darwinian? Winwood Reade and the Making of a Late Victorian Evolutionary Epic', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, Vol. 51 (June 2015) pp. 44-52 (quotation on p. 47).

[154] Hesketh makes this argument convincingly in the text cited in the previous footnote, especially pp. 49-51.

attempt to give meaning to the emotional response to death outside the framework of Christianity.

I began this chapter with an exposition of Darwin's own writing on grief and the emotional response to death. For Darwin, as for his contemporaries, these two things were not identical, although they did overlap. The 'grief' manifested in Darwin's 'eminently human' expression was one that exhibited an exertion of will – as much the mastery of feeling as the physiological consequence of it. The silent, almost stoical struggle with grief was therefore a sign of a higher mind – as Darwin's strategies of condolence in his personal life attest. The 'grief' and 'mourning' Darwin ascribes to animals lacks this element of self-control, expressing itself instead in paroxysms. Animal grief was not only a preoccupation of Darwin's, but a public fascination. In this conversation, too, it was widely taken to be evidence of the mental capacities of these animals, and used as evidence in debates about animal rights to strengthen a sense of a shared moral community between humans and non-human animals. Animal mourning was identified as a sign of mental sophistication, but human 'grief' was special and unique – a product not only of animal nature, but of the struggle to contain and control that nature in the face of the greatest possible emotional strain. It was through this process that 'mind' evolved, through the exertion of will and the habit of mental control: acquired characteristics that lent a moral and tinge to evolutionary ideas and brought them more closely into alignment with a Christian teleology in which the trials of the Earth were a means of spiritual improvement.

Ultimately, these alternative explanations of grief, despite being grounded in a more materialist and empiricist understanding of emotions, nevertheless construed the emotional response to death as humanising and perhaps even ennobling. In the context of a secular worldview, grief, sorrow, suffering and death were not stripped of meaning, but given new meanings that in some respects mirror the narratives I outlined in Chapter One.

In the next and final chapter of this thesis, I continue this exploration of nineteenth-century attempts to explain the emotional response to death in materialist and empiricist terms. Countering the idea that grief only became medicalised over the course of the past century, I show that there were many instances in which grief was treated as pathological: either a disease in itself, or a potential cause of mental or physical disease. In doing so I will further explore some of the arguments made in this chapter about the way in which secular and scientific discourses on the emotional response to death adopted the religious framings and the moral and spiritual values with which they were laden.

Chapter 4

‘A Slow Murderer at Best’: Grief as a Disease, c. 1860-1900

One summer’s day in 1845, in Penang, Indonesia, a Malaysian construction worker called Sunam took up a knife and stormed out into the main thoroughfare of Georgetown, stabbing indiscriminately at people as he went. By the time he was stopped and arrested by a local constable, ten people lay dead or dying. Among Sunam’s victims were men and women, adults and children, Hindus, Indians and Chinese. None of them, as far as the records show, was an acquaintance of the killer.

Presented with this case, the British colonial authorities quickly identified this bloody spree as an ‘amok’. Amok is an old Malay term for a violent rampage. These rampages were invariably preceded by a period of intense brooding known as *sakit-hati* – a state that was traditionally believed to result from a wicked spirit entering the soul of the amoker.[1] In this particular case, witnesses confirmed, Sunam had sunk into a deep depression since the death of his wife and child, and had become so ‘afflicted’ that he had been unable to work. ‘I

[1] In Malay, the word ‘hati’ stands for the emotional locus of a person’s psyche – something like a more expansive usage of the English usage of the word ‘heart’ in terms like ‘kind-hearted’ or ‘broken-hearted’ or ‘sick at heart’, although in Malay the term actually refers to the liver. ‘Sakit’ has been roughly translated as ‘resentful’, so *sakit-hati* could be roughly translated as ‘resentful at heart’, although a linguist discussing the phenomenon has suggested that the meaning is closer to emotional ‘pain’; see C. Goddard, ‘Hati, A Keyword in the Malay Vocabulary of Emotion’ in *Emotions in Crosslinguistic Perspective*, ed. J. Harkins, A. Wierzbicka (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 167-196. For a modern perspective on ‘sakit hati’ among refugees from another country in Southeast Asia, see S. Rees, ‘Sakit Hati: A state of chronic mental distress related to resentment and anger amongst West Papuan refugees exposed to persecution’ in *Social Science & Medicine* Vol. 73, Issue 1 (July 2011), pp. 103-110.

think he was mad,' one witness said at the ensuing trial. 'He daily complained of the loss.'[2]

This trial was hastily arranged and the verdict came swiftly: five days after running amok on 8th June, Sunam was sentenced to be hanged. In his summing up, the judge, William Norris, highlighted the role of the defendant's 'turbulent passions' in inspiring the horrific act:

> Not a particle of manly courage or heroism could have animated you, or can ever animate a man who lifts his cowardly hand against helpless women and children. You had the deaths of your wife and only child, and God forbid that I should needlessly harrow up your feelings by reverting to the subject. I do so merely because it serves in some degree to explain the dreadful tragedy for which you are now about to answer with your life. Unable or unwilling to submit with patience to the affliction with which it had pleased God to visit you, you abandoned yourself to discontent and despair.[3]

Instead of humbly submitting to God's will, as a good Christian would have done, Sunam had been led by his erroneous faith into a cowardly rage against the world. The judge went on to denounce amok as a horror that was unique to Muslims, born out of 'superstition, fanaticism and overweening pride.' Sunam was condemned not only to be executed but subsequently to be mutilated, his body given over to surgeons for dissection and then his 'mangled limbs… cast into the sea, thrown into a ditch or scattered on the earth at the discretion of the sheriff.'[4]

The sentence proved controversial even at the time, both for the 'medieval' brutality of the punishment and for the speed with which it was passed. But the

---

[2] W. Norris, 'Sentence of Death Upon a Malay convicted of Running Amok', *The East Asian Journal*, vol. 3 (1849), pp. 460-467.
[3] Ibid. p. 461.
[4] Ibid. p. 462.

judge also became the target of another criticism: that in designating amok simply as a product of Islam, he had overlooked its medical status.[5] A year after Sunam ran amok in Penang, a British doctor in Singapore made one of the earliest attempts to classify amok as a medical condition. It was specific to Malays, he concluded, but rather than being a perversion of religion, it sprang from a defect in mental character that was unique to South Asian ethnicities. 'It consists in a proneness to chronic disease of feeling,' he wrote, 'resulting from a want of moral elasticity, which leaves the mind prey to the pain of grief, until it is filled with a malignant gloom and despair, and the whole horizon of existence is overcast with blackness.'[6] Much like Chief Justice Norris, Oxley identified amok as a perverted response to grief (or in Norris's terms, 'affliction') – including but not limited to the emotional response to death. But where the judge saw a failure of faith, the doctor saw instead a failure of physiology.

This phenomenon of amok had captured the imagination of the British ever since it was first reported by Captain Cook in 1780.[7] In *Confessions of an Opium Eater* (first published in the London Magazine in 1821) Thomas de Quincey described a recurring fever dream in which frenzied Malaysian men 'run a-muck' at him – a xenophobic fantasy that was lodged in his subconscious for months after a chance encounter he had with a man he identified as a 'ferocious-looking Malay'.[8] To this day the term lives on in the phrase 'running amok' – albeit with somewhat less bloody connotations. The *meng-âmuk* (the

[5] T. Oxley, 'Malay amok', *The Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* Vol. 3 (1849), pp. 532-533.
[6] Ibid.
[7] For more on early British encounters with amok, see E. H. Kua, 'Amok in Nineteenth-Century British Malaya History', *History of Psychiatry* Vol. 3 (October 1991), pp. 429-436; a recent article collected summarising accounts of amok is also useful: 'Amok: A Mirror of Time and People', *History of Psychiatry* Vol. 30, Issue 1 (September 2019); while both these articles discuss the changing meaning of amok and the influence of theories brought to bear by the observer, neither notes the frequent association between amok and bereavement in nineteenth-century British accounts.
[8] T. de Quincey, *Confessions of an Opium Eater* (London: Taylor& Hessey, 1823), pp. 130-135. De Quincey's account (which stems from an earlier period than the texts I am discussing) appears to ascribe at least some blame for instances of amok to the effects of opium, although he also asserts that they can be triggered by encounters with misfortune.

unabbreviated phrase, which de Quincey used) described a behaviour that was particular to young men, who would all of a sudden take up arms and embark on a violent rampage, slaughtering family, friends and strangers, often indiscriminately. In some accounts the binge of destruction would end with the man turning his weapon on himself, or with his death at the hands of bystanders or of authorities; for this reason it was sometimes thought of as a kind of suicide, in a culture in which suicide was taboo. Traditionally this urge to violence was explained in Malay culture by the presence of a wicked tiger spirit that could enter into a man's soul at a moment of emotional vulnerability.[9] But while British observers willingly accepted amok as a phenomenon, they variously interpreted it in the light of their own theories and prejudices about the people and the culture from which it sprung.

Over the decades following Sunam's case, a consensus emerged among British doctors working in Malaysia and Indonesia about the nature and cause of amok: it was largely agreed that the condition was in fact a perverse and destructive emotional response to adverse occurrences, most often that of loss and death. The colonial administrator Hugh Clifford saw amok as an emotional disorder that was particular to the Malay constitution, noting the gloomy, wounded state of mind known as *sakit-hati* that preceded it. This state, in his analysis, was a complex stew of emotions – grievance, anger, irritation – but its extreme forms were generally provoked by loss and they were characterised by total 'despair'. 'A Malay loses something that he values,' Clifford wrote; 'he has a bad night in the gambling houses; his father dies or his mistress proves unfaithful. Any one of these things causes him "sickness of the liver".' If this sickness builds to an unbearable pitch, he concluded, it could find its release in the bloody outburst that is amok. Clifford also described what he believed to have been an incipient case of amok that he had actually helped to avert by calming and restraining the sufferer after the death of his father before the brooding had spilled over into

[9] M. L. Saint Martin, 'Running Amok: A Modern Perspective on a Culture-Bound Syndrome', *The Primary Care Companion to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, Vol. 1, Issue 3 (June 1999), pp. 66-70.

violence.[10] Clifford's tales of life in Malaysia came from a sentimental fascination he had with a culture that he was particularly fond of in many aesthetic respects, and which he was aware was gradually dying; but his writing was also explicitly driven by the conviction that colonial rule was the cure to the 'chaos' that he believed had dominated pre-colonial existence in South Asia.[11] It is not a stretch to imagine that Clifford viewed the chaos of amok as a somatic corollary to the political sickness of disorder: both required the application of a disciplining force.

Several decades later, in the *Journal of Mental Science*, William Gilmore Ellis returned to the case of Sunam in an attempt to produce a full theory of amok and its causes, in accordance with new ideas in contemporary psychology. He attacked the judge's religion-focused verdict, referring to several verses of the Koran that explicitly forbade violence and aggression. At the same time, he reaffirmed the intimate association between amok and emotional trauma, particularly that which resulted from the death of 'a close relative'. 'As in epilepsy strong emotions sometimes bring on a convulsive seizure, caused by disturbances in the motor centres,' Ellis wrote, 'so I believe that in some Malays strong emotions bring on sudden paroxysms of acute homicidal mania.' This was neither hereditary nor religious, but, he claimed, a result of a childlike, underdeveloped nervous physiology – a bodily symptom of the same lack of order whose only remedy was British rule.[12]

Amok retained its status as a category of mental illness until the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, which was replaced only in 2013, and its nature and causes remain a subject of academic debate. Anthropologists have suggested that it may have been a vestige of an honour culture of masculinity in which men were encouraged to see violent death as

[10] H. Clifford, *In Court and in Kampong* (London: Grant Richards: 1897), pp. 78-95.
[11] 'Clifford, Sir Charles Hugh', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), retrieved online at https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/32448 (19/7/2021).
[12] W. G. Ellis, 'The Amok of the Malays', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 39, issue 166 (July 1893), pp. 325-338 (quotation on pp. 328-9).

preferable to submission or humiliation.[13] Nowadays psychologists and psychiatrists tend to downplay its cultural specificity to Malaysia and other South Asian cultures, since similar phenomena exist in many other societies – including the very present example of American mass-shootings that end in the death of the assailant, which are sometimes described as 'suicide by cop'.[14] In the nineteenth century, however, anthropologists, psychologists and colonial administrators tended to reach for a different explanation. To them it seemed quite clear that amok was a disease arising from a frailty in the nervous infrastructure. It was believed that the particular susceptibility of Malay people to this disorder betrayed a lack of capacity for emotional self-control.

Amok, of course, is not an emotional state so much as a violent behaviour that was often attributed to an underlying emotional state. And even the state, *sakit-haki*, while not easily translatable, can hardly be straightforwardly glossed as 'grief'. In more modern translations it is defined instead as something akin to 'resentment' or even to 'vindictiveness'.[15] What is important for the purposes of this thesis, however, is not the meaning of amok in Malay culture nor its true psychopathology (both of which have been written about extensively before), but the way in which it was interpreted by British observers such as colonial administrators and anthropologists.[16] In attempting to make sense of this unfamiliar behaviour, they resorted to explanations rooted in a perverse reaction to intimate loss – an emotion that they variously labelled 'despair', 'affliction' or 'grief'.

---

[13] H. Imai et al, 'Amok: A Mirror of Time and People. A Historical Review of Literature', *History of Psychiatry*, Vol. 30, Issue 1 (September 2018), pp. 38-57.
[14] For further discussions of parallels between amok and mass-killings in other cultures, see Saint Martin, 'Running Amok', p. 70.
[15] W. J. Karim, *Emotions of Culture: A Malay Perspective* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992), p. 51
[16] Karim, *Emotions of Culture*; C. Goddard, 'The "Social Emotions" of Malay', *Ethos*, vol. 24, Issue 6 (September 1996); for a modern medical (rather than linguistic) perspective, see S. Rees and D. Silove, 'Sakit Hati: A State of Chronic Mental Distress Related to Resentment and Anger Amongst West Papuan Refugees Exposed to Persecution', *Social Science & Medicine*, Vol. 73, Issue 1 (July 2011), pp. 103-110.

In some cases, such as that of Sunam, the 'grief' observed by nineteenth-century observers was a strong, often desolate reaction to mortal loss. But 'grief' in the nineteenth-century sense could also mean something closer to the original Malay definition of *sakit hati*, conveying a general and broad sense of emotional woundedness, from mild irritation (as in 'grievance' or 'to give grief') through to full-blown despair. In Chapter One I dealt broadly with the term 'sorrow,' an emotion-word heavily laden with religious, devotional and often even scriptural connotations. Judge Norris's condemnation of Sunam's rampage in 1845, similarly, does not impute the violence to 'grief', but to 'discontent and despair', as well the presence of an 'affliction'. What is more, the framing that Norris gave it is absolutely Christian: shackled by 'superstition', Sunam was judged incapable of bearing the 'affliction with which it had pleased God to visit' him. Notwithstanding the cruelty of the judge's punishment, the logic of these sentiments corresponds closely to that of consolation literature. Sorrow was visited on the sufferer by God, but the steadfast faith of a good Christian could withstand even the most crushing of misfortunes, and even come to rejoice in the revelation of their true meaning: that the loved ones they had lost had ascended to a more perfect existence. Sunam, blinded by his false religion, had 'sorrowed as one that has no hope' – with particularly bloody consequences.

Later interpretations of this event still maintained the association between bereavement and amok, but they shed the Christian interpretation in favour of something that instead emphasised the physical and physiological constitution of Malays. In people of this specific ethnicity, Gilmore Ellis conjectured, 'strong emotions sometimes bring on a convulsive seizure, caused by disturbances in the motor centres.'[17] Ellis' practical point here was that this was for the most part an involuntary behaviour, and therefore should be treated as a medical problem rather than as a criminal offence: rather than being hanged, Sunam should have been admitted to an asylum. Traditional Christian explanations for emotional responses to death – illustrated by Judge Norris in 1845, had given way in this

[17] Ellis, 'The Amok of the Malays', p.234.

1895 analysis to a physicalist psychology of an emotion which was given the label of 'grief'.

Following on from the previous chapter's examination of naturalistic accounts of the emotional response to death, this chapter argues that Victorian doctors, alienists and writers on mental science medicalised and pathologised grief in two opposing ways: either as an over-exertion or a failure of the will. In cases such as Sunam's, weakness of will meant that emotion might overflow and result in either physical ruptures such as organ failure or a dangerous loss of behavioural control. Grief like Sunam's was a dangerous emotion, ungoverned as it was by the assertion of manly will.[18] But grief could also become pathological when its effects were suppressed, internalised and refused an outlet through bodily expression. Medical and psychiatric writers analysed and discussed these pathologies in the language of experimental physiology and nerve theory. These authors drew on constructions similar to those used by Darwin and others, as discussed in Chapter Three: the dichotomy between savage and civilised grief, and the idea of the emotional response to death as a struggle between force of will and animal emotion. But in making the struggle between emotion and will central to the medical status of grief, they also reproduced elements of the non-medical models of loss analysed in Chapters One and Two.

[18] For a discussion of the role of racialised anthropology in throwing into relief Victorian ideas about civilisation, see H. Kuklick, *The Savage Within: the Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1991), for instance p. 93: 'When Britain's colonial rulers presented themselves as agents of improvement in the lives of their subject peoples, they were wont to do so by arguing that they were negotiating their charges' smooth passage through the stages of evolution anthropologists described.'

The medicalisation of grief: a twentieth-century process?

In the previous chapter I addressed the early stages in what might be termed the secularisation of emotional responses to death, emphasising the extent to which these apparently secular models of loss borrowed from Christian narratives. Secularisation is one of three related but distinct processes that Tony Walter has identified as the defining developments in the past two centuries of the history of death and dying. This chapter concerns a second of these processes: medicalisation.[19]

Over the course of the twentieth century, as Walter and others have shown, the main theatre of dying shifted from the home to the hospital.[20] Under a quarter of deaths in twentieth-century Britain occurred in a domestic setting.[21] By contrast, the vast majority of Victorians died in their own houses, with the exception of those who had been institutionalised for reasons other than their final illness. The 'sick room' was a familiar arena and it had its own established rituals and rules.[22] While medical professionals had their place in this environment (especially in middle-class homes), it was the female relatives who typically presided over the sickbed and the deathbed.[23] In most cases the doctor or nurse

[19] T. Walter, *The Revival of Death* (London: Routledge, 1994), especially pp. 69-85 and pp. 157-160; T. Walter, *On Bereavement: the Culture of Grief* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2001). The third is rationalisation, which Walter equates with the proliferation of records on death such as obligatory post-mortems and the collation of mortality statistics.
[20] Ibid. pp. 12-13.
[21] 'Statistical commentary: End of Life Care Profiles, February 2019 update', Public Health England, published online at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/end-of-life-care-profiles-february-2019-data-update/statistical-commentary-end-of-life-care-profiles-february-2019-update (February 2019) [accessed online 17/01/20]. Although the number of people dying at home fell dramatically over the course of the twentieth century, it has been steadily rising over the course of the first two decades of the twenty-first – one illustration of what Tony Walter is referring to with his label 'the revival of death'.
[22] M. Bailin, *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction: the Art of Being Ill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 5-47.
[23] P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 98-102. For a study of the sick-room as a site of female authority that was actively fought over in the late nineteenth century, see A. Winter, 'Harriet Martineau and the

would step aside as the moment of death approached in order to make way for the priest. In the twentieth century and today, by contrast, the majority of deaths occur in the hospitals and care homes, watched over by medical practitioners and electronic monitoring systems instead of (or at least in addition to) family-members and priests.

The physical fate of the corpse was also more domestic and less clinical in the nineteenth century, although this was starting to change. Traditionally, the dead body of a family member would remain in the house for up to two weeks, a literal presence of death that has no parallel in modern Britain, where dead bodies are quickly ushered on to funeral parlours, morgues and post-mortems.[24] As Julie-Marie Strange shows, the material treatment of the corpse could in itself be a 'communal act of condolence', entwined with the act of remembrance and the processing of a death.[25] The decline of this practice is just one of the more stark examples of the migration of death and mortal remains from a domestic to a clinical setting.

There is no doubt that death as a process and an event became increasingly medicalised in the twentieth century. But can the same be said of emotional responses to death? This has become a topical question in recent years, since the publication of the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V)*. This update to the classification of mental disorders included a restriction that prevented patients from being diagnosed with depression within two months of bereavement (and hence made it possible for particularly intense emotional responses to death to be pathologised even if they

---

reform of the invalid in Victorian England' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 38, Issue 3 (September 1995), pp. 597–616.

[24] For discussions of this change, see for instance D. Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites* (London: Bloomsbury: 1997). As Julie-Marie Strange points out, the custom of laying out was already contentious in the nineteenth century, with critics attacking the practice as a menace to health and hygiene; see J-M Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 80-81.

[25] Ibid. p. 73.

were short-lived).[26] But the controversy over this specific diagnosis – justified by its proponents as a practical measure to allow bereaved people access to greater professional support – has intensified a longer-term concern that the 'natural' response to death has been gradually re-interpreted as a pathology in the years since the publication of Sigmund Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia'. 'Grief as a topic worthy of psychological study is an early twentieth century phenomenon,' wrote Leeat Granek in 2010, which has over the following century 'come to be understood as potentially pathogenic and in need of professional psychological intervention.' [27]

The twentieth-century psychologist most often credited with re-categorising grief as a disease is Colin Murray-Parkes, who defended this proposition extensively in the introduction to his influential 1965 study of bereavement. Murray-Parkes describes grief – not only unusually prolonged and intense grief, but also the 'natural' course of painful emotions that follow after the death of a loved one – as a type of mental illness. That it is common, perhaps even universal, presents no issue for him. Many illnesses are common, he points out – chicken pox, the common cold – but that fact does prevent them from being treated and categorised as illnesses. Bereaved people are expected and permitted them to take adequate time off work for a 'healing' period; sufferers often go to the doctor to seek help, often for symptoms that turn out to have bereavement as a root cause. 'On the whole,' Murray-Parkes writes, 'grief resembles a physical injury more closely than any other type of illness. The loss may be spoken of as

[26] For an outline and explanation of the changes in the DSM-5, see C. Murray-Parkes, 'Diagnostic Criteria for Complications of Bereavement in the DSM-5', *Bereavement Care*, Vol. 33 Issue 3 (2014), pp. 113-117; for a balanced overview of the criticisms and defences of this move, see 'The Medicalization of Bereavement: (Ab)normal Grief in the DSM-5', *Death Studies*, Vol. 39, Issue 6 (2014), pp. 347-352.

[27] For instance L. Granek, 'Grief as a Pathology: the Evolution of Grief Theory in Psychology from Freud to the Present', *Journal of the History of Psychology* vol. 13, Issue 1 (February 2010), pp. 46-73 (quotations on p. 46 and p. 48). See also L. Granek, 'Is Grief a Disease? The Medicalization of Grief by the Psy-Disciplines in the Twenty-First Century' in *Handbook of the Sociology of Death, Grief and Bereavement*, ed. N. Thompson, G. R. Cox (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 264-277; Archer, J. (1999). *The Nature of Grief: the Evolution and Psychology of Reactions to Loss* (London: Taylor & Frances, 1999), especially pp. 12-26.

a "blow". As in the case of a physical injury, the "wound" gradually heals; at least, it usually does.'[28] Defenders of the approach used in the *DSM-V* argue that acknowledging the painful and disruptive nature of the feeling allows bereaved people to be given support when it is most needed. Critics suggest that it is a particularly egregious instance of a process in which ordinary emotions have become pathologised.[29]

It is striking that Charles Darwin used language very similar to Murray-Parkes in the notes that he made for *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, which I discussed in Chapter Three*:* 'Think,' he wrote to himself – 'certain ideas hurting brain, like a wound hurts body – tears flow from both.'[30] Historians have shown that 'mood disorders' are not as modern a phenomenon as is sometimes assumed. In Åsa Jansson's recent study of nineteenth-century discussions of melancholia, she argues that the notion of 'mood disorders' coincided with the emergence of a 'modern, scientific model of emotion' in the nineteenth century.[31] Melancholia and later depression were not discovered, Jansson stresses, but made, and made in ways that reflected the values of the experimental physiologists who first developed them. The idea of 'disordered emotion', she argues, grew out of a belief that mind could be understood as a function of physiology, and that emotions were the mental equivalent of a reflexive action – one not mediated by the conscious mind. Physiologists like

---

[28] C. Murray-Parkes, *Bereavement: Studies of Grief in Adult Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), especially pp. 73-75.
[29] See for instance S. Brinkmann, *Diagnostic Cultures: A Cultural Approach to the Pathologization of Modern Life* (London: Routledge, 2016); see for instance pp. 11-13.
[30] C. Darwin, 'Notebook N' in 'The Darwin Correspondence Project,' retrieved online at http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?viewtype=side&itemID=CUL-DAR126.-&pageseq=1 (24/8/2016); As discussed in the previous chapter, Charles Darwin came over the course of his studies into emotions to consider grief the most 'eminently human' of expressions: not so much an expression of pure feeling as the product of a struggle between instinctive emotional response and act of conscious will. In the context of this highly materialist, empiricist study, 'grief' was a precise and ephemeral thing: emotions were to be thought of as momentary impulses acting involuntarily on an individual's metabolism and the muscles of their face. Being the meticulously rigorous scientific observer that he was, Darwin was generally less concerned in his published work with the 'outward signs' of emotion than their internal dynamics.
[31] Å. Jansson, *From Melancholia to Depression: Disordered Mood in Nineteenth-Century Psychiatry* (London: Macmillan, 2021), p. 12.

Thomas Laycock and, in a more qualified way, William Carpenter sought to redescribe 'volition' in terms of nervous impulses. 'In this way,' she writes, 'the will was conceptualised as a physiological process.'[32] Yet this gave an ambiguous place to the will: both a part of bodily processes yet also capable of overriding them. This question of the place of the will in the relationship between cognition and emotion bears heavily on physiological discussions of grief.

Jansson is building on research from previous historians of psychiatry, most notably Janet Oppenheim. Oppenheim has traced the medical treatment of various emotional disorders as they were categorised by nineteenth-century psychiatry: melancholia, neurasthenia, hypochondriasis. She explores how contemporary Victorian theories about 'nerve force' and 'nervous degeneration' informed medical ideas about the cause, the diagnosis and the cure of emotions that were considered abnormal or pathological.[33] These theories were coloured by contemporary prejudices about gender and race – in this way, suffering was often blamed on effeminacy, physical feebleness or inherited degeneracy. Psychiatrists, she writes, often ended up blaming their patients: 'victims of nervous breakdown always bore a sense of personal accountability – whether to God or humanity – that admonished them even in the depths of despair.'[34] The moral and the somatic were often blended in Oppenheim's focus on the gendered coding of mental illness, and the juxtaposition of medical and moral in Victorian aetiology chimes with some of the themes that I developed in the previous chapter, and which I will further explore here. More recently, David Jones has shown how the Victorian conflicting ideas of 'moral insanity' and 'psychological disorder' lay at the heart of the evolution of modern psychiatry,

[32] Ibid. p. 41.
[33] J. Oppenheim, *'Shattered Nerves': Doctors, Patients and Depression in Victorian England* (Oxford, 1991).
[34] Ibid. p. 318.

arguing that these concepts contain the seeds of the 'contradictory forces that have shaped psychiatry'.[35]

Reviewing the scattered discussions in the medical and psychological literature, a set of common beliefs and discussions are evident in late nineteenth-century Victorian medicine about the relationship between the experience of grief and ill health. There are three ways in which this relationship could be conceived, each of which I will discuss in turn:

1. Grief as a pathology in itself: an illness that could potentially even be fatal
2. Grief as a cause or a contributing factor in physical illness
3. Grief as a cause or a symptom (or both) of madness

All of these relationships were believed to be possible, and indeed common, in Victorian medicine. Examining the cases in which grief was considered to be abnormal or pathological can also throw into relief the assumptions that were made in the Victorian age about the healthy or normal course of grief. One thing that is revealed by this analysis is that the Victorians held an almost ubiquitous belief in the inextricable relationship between grief and character: the strength and quality of a person's character determined their susceptibility to the more pathological varieties of grief, and it also shaped the kinds of grief-related pathologies that they were thought to be susceptible to. Psychological and psychiatritc writers understood mental suffering as a way of stimulating the exertion of will: the exercise of a higher, more consciously controlled aspect of the nervous system over a lower, more reflexive one.

In this chapter, as in the previous one, I will begin by analysing the way in which grief was treated as apathology in reports in the popular press, demonstrating that grief was widely understood as a medical concern even

[35] D. Jones, 'Moral Insanity and Psychological Disorder: the Hybrid Roots of Psychiatry', *History of Psychiatry* Vol. 28, No. 3 (September 2017), pp. 263–279.

before the interventions of experimental psychology. Then I will analyse discussions of emotional responses to death in descriptions from theoretical works on psychopathology, demonstrating the various ways that grief could be construed as destructive to health and how each of these relate to the idea of internal struggle against emotion.

The mortal dangers of a broken heart

One undeniable sign that grief could be thought of as a disease is the fact that it was regularly identified as a primary cause of death. For most of British history, the idea that bereavement was a mortal danger – that death itself could in some sense be contagious – was accepted as a given. In the London bills of mortality produced between 1657 and 1758, grief appeared as a regular scourge, in some years claiming victims almost weekly. In 1665, for instance, the death toll for grief was 46, not much less than the 56 souls claimed by 'cancer, gangrene and fistula'.[36] Nor was this belief particular only to the Early Modern period: medical texts offer countless apparent instances of death pining away or dying 'from a broken heart' (a phenomenon that was frequently associated with the trauma of bereavement). Such accounts can be found in Galen in Ancient Rome, in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra,* first performed around 1607*,* and in the folk tale Matty Groves, which dates to at least the early seventeenth century, to name just a few scattered examples.[37] It is likely that the same could be said for almost any era – including, indeed, the present one: since 1990 doctors have identified certain heart attacks caused by stress and trauma as 'Takotsubo cardiomyopathies'. More colloquially, this is known as the 'broken heart

[36] *A General Bill for this Present Year, Ending 19 December 1665 According to the Report Made to the King's Most Excellent Majesty by the Company of Parish Clerks of London, &c* (London: 1665).

[37] For Galen's ideas about grief – in fact a loose translation for the Greek word 'lype' which might be in different contexts also correspond to other English-language emotions including anxiety and distress – see J. T. Fitzgerald, 'Galen and his Treatise on Grief', *In die Skriflig* Vol. 50 Issue 2 (2016); the reference to death to grief is on page 6. The trope of death from broken hearts in folk music, including Matty Groves, is discussed in I. Inglis, 'A Brief Life: Broken Hearts and Sudden Deaths', *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 27 No. 4 (2004), pp. 477-488.

syndrome', since one of the most common causes appears to be bereavement.[38] In recent decades, too, multiple studies have confirmed that the mortality rates of elderly people rise significantly in the period after one partner dies.[39]

At the start of the nineteenth century, the registry of bills was still collating tables featuring 'grief' as a cause of death. In the 1830s, the recording of vital statistics was standardised by William Farr. Previously, causes of death had been recorded haphazardly, without a pre-defined set of categories. Farr's more systematic categories for mortality statistics did not include 'grief', but this was not because doctors no longer believed that death from grief was possible. 'Apoplexy' and 'sudden' deaths, which made up a significant amount of recorded deaths, were sometimes used to describe mortalities thought to result from violent emotional shock or trauma, including the trauma of bereavement.[40] The specialised medical terminology may have signalled a shift in the theories for *why* grief might prove fatal, but sifting through newspaper reports of the era leaves no doubt that grief *was* regularly identified as an immediate and primary cause of death – as the following examples will demonstrate.

Frequently, the announcement of one death would be followed in a later edition of the same newspaper by a sequel announcing the subsequent death of a loved one. 'Our obituary recently contained the name of George Ernest Hadden, Esq,' reported the *Morning Post* in 1857, under the headline 'Death From Grief'. 'The melancholy event plunged his sister and venerable mother into the most intense grief, and notwithstanding all that medical skill could devise, together with the solace of her relatives and friends, the sister sank under the weight of the bereavement.' George Ernest Hadden's sister was just another victim of a

[38] M. N. Peters et al, 'The Broken Heart Syndrome: Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy**',** *Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine,* (Vol. 25, Issue 4, May 2015), pp. 351-357.
[39] A. Bowling, 'Mortality after bereavement: A review of the literature on survival periods and factors affecting survival', *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 24, Issue 2, pp. 117-124.
[40] J. Eyler, *Victorian Social Medicine: the Ideas and Methods of William Farr, 1979: The Work of William Farr, the Statistical movement, GRO and Mortality Statistics, the Life Table, and Zymotic Theory* (John Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 66-68.

broken heart, and medical experts fully expected the mother to suffer the same fate.[41] 'Broken-hearted' was not just a stock metaphor or a plot device for romantic Victorian novels and plays. It was a physiological description of a condition that was considered to be real and to be deadly.

This was just one of countless such reports of death by grief that were published in the Victorian press, and which seem to have been particularly common throughout the second half of the century. Judging by one curious letter received by the *Daily Post* in 1861, they became so frequent that at times they contributed to a sense of anxiety and moral panic about the very state of the nation. 'The cases of death by grief, and death by fright, are little varying of the awful announcements which daily reach us.' Combined with wars, murders, earthquakes and famines, the correspondent couldn't help but assume that some kind of scourge had befallen the world. 'I wish some of your readers could give us the key to the grouping of so wide a range of evils into the small compass of a few weeks, or point out a time which could bear a parallel with it,' he begged.[42] Of course, this kind of hyperbole says more about the morbid sensationalism of the popular press and the anxiety-inducing effects of mass media than it does about the actual science of grief. Nevertheless, it is striking to see that death from grief reckoned alongside starvation and slaughter as one of the great plagues of the troubled world as portrayed by the press. A closer examination of the details of these reports begins to give a sense of the particular ways in which grief was commonly thought to be a medical danger and the kinds of people and situations that were considered particularly susceptible to it.

The cases of death from grief reported in newspapers can be broadly divided into two categories: those that were sudden and seemingly provoked by 'violent' emotion and those that were caused by a slow and festering heartbreak. The violent deaths, which were reported much more frequently,

[41] 'Death Through Grief', *The Morning Post* (London), 12 February 1857, p. 3.
[42] 'Correspondence', *Birmingham Daily Post* (Birmingham), 21 September 1861, p. 2.

often came at a moment of unexpected drama or trauma. Such was the case in the addendum to an obituary of a London shipping clerk, who lived with his sister until being taken ill and quickly dying from an 'inflammation of the stomach and intestines'. His sister was so shocked by her bereavement that 'in her excitement' she apparently 'burst a blood vessel and expired'.[43] Another instance in which two deaths were announced in one article, the second occurring at the shock of the first, appeared in the *Lancaster Gazette* in 1854. A farmer's wife was ill, and her sister came to tend to her in her sickness. 'When the visitor arrived, she found Mrs Farrelly breathing her last, and was so shocked she fell down in a fainting fit, from which she never recovered.'[44] A similar instance occurred in the earlier case of a Hampshire gatekeeper's wife, who 'breathed her last… at the very moment the remains of her husband were being consigned to the grave.'[45]

In all three of these cases of sudden death by grief, the victim was a woman, and indeed the evidence of newspaper reports does seem to suggest that women's deaths were much more likely to be ascribed to broken hearts. In cases like the Haddens, the death of one man could apparently spell doom for not one but two of his close female relatives.[46] In this case, as in all of the ones mentioned above, the reports stressed the women's devotion to the man she was mourning: it was implied that the death from grief arises from the fracturing of a particularly powerful bond of duty and affection. To die of grief was the ultimate act of fidelity.

In other reports, however, the stereotypically 'feminine' qualities evident in these deaths from grief were more negative: often there was an insinuation, or even an explicit assertion, that something in the weakness of a particular

[43] 'Death Through Grief', *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper,* 13 June 1880, p. 3.
[44] 'Death From Grief and Alarm', *The Lancaster Gazette, and General Advertiser for Lancashire, Westmorland, Yorkshire, &c*, 28 January 1854, p. 6.
[45] 'Death From Grief', *Hampshire Advertiser & Salisbury Guardian Royal Yacht Club Gazette, Southampton Town and County Herald, Isle of Wight Journal, Winchester Chronicle, and General Reporter*, 8 October 1836, p. 5.
[46] 'Death From Grief', *The Morning Post*, 12 February 1857, p. 3.

woman's physical, emotional and moral constitution made her particularly susceptible. A 'delicate constitution' was often ascribed to the victims of grief, such as the eighteen-year-old Mary Ann Martlet, who 'fretted to death' a week after losing her mother.[47] Sometimes the language of the reporting carried an implication that a feminine love was particularly dangerous and unstable, liable to be transformed by acute loss into a potentially fatal condition. In one widely reported case, a white woman's 'unaccountable' love for an 'ugly and repulsive black' ended in tragedy after she discovered that he was being unfaithful to her. The post mortem revealed the heart to be 'a very small one, and one of the vessels was ruptured.'[48] The surgeon thereby 'attributed the death of the female to an affection of the heart, brought on by excessive grief.' This particularly prurient article seemed to imply that the interracial relationship, which was treated with undisguised revulsion, was somehow bound up with the particular smallness of the woman's heart, which in turn led to her death from grief. The woman is portrayed as stunted in emotional, aesthetic, physiological and perhaps also in moral terms. Another tale of 'grief' with a putative moral message – although not one that featured actual bereavement – concerned the death of a theatre actress who was so distressed at the bad notices she received that she abruptly passed away. 'Persons of sensitive natures should not attempt to win laurels on the stage or in any other career which exposes to marks of public criticism,' the *Illustrated Police News* condescendingly concluded. [49]

The other variety of fatality that was regularly ascribed to grief, in contrast to these dramatic shocks, was the slower demise, in which sufferers were thought to have pined away after enduring a great loss. The 'most affecting instance of a widow named Mrs Price,' reported in the *Manchester Times*, typified this kind of slow-motion death by grief. Hers, the paper reported, was 'a deep and abiding, rather than a violent sorrow.'[50] It was not until some time after her husband's death that she was seen to 'falter and fall' while laying flowers on the

[47] 'A Girl's Death From Grief', *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, 6 April 1894, p. 4.
[48] 'Singular Case – Death From Grief', *Morning Post*, 2 December 1840, p. 3.
[49] Ibid.
[50] 'Miscellaneous', *Leeds Times*, 26 August 1854, p. 7.

grave. Shortly afterwards, she died. This kind of slow-working grief does not seem to have been quite as gendered as the deaths from sudden shock. In 1850 the *Preston Pilot* reported the case of a local man whose wife's death had sent him into a spiral. 'From the time of the death he never seemed to notice anything, being quite absorbed in grief, and when his wife's corpse was taken out of the church to the grave he was taken very ill.' His death followed shortly after.[51] In another case, a woman whose son had drowned twelve months previously in Clacton-on-Sea, 'seemed to pine away' until one day she collapsed and died. 'The cause of death was apoplexy,' the coroner concluded, 'which was doubtless set up by worry and fretting over the loss of her son.'[52]

This mention of 'apoplexy' raises another consideration about the way these deaths were reported: although grief was judged to be at the root of all of these deaths, the more immediately proximate causes were much more various. 'Apoplexy' was a term commonly used to describe an array of syndromes that could suddenly incapacitate a person. One definition by a French doctor, which roughly matches its English usage, identified apoplexy as 'an affection in which… an individual falls, and is struck down suddenly, like an ox felled by the butcher.'[53] When it was used with any specificity – as in George Burrows' *On Diseases of the Cerebral Circulation,* first published in 1846 – it referred to burst blood vessels in the brain and was often simply a scientific name for a phenomenon with no recognised physiological cause.[54] At other times, however, coroners identified a more specific physiological cause behind an attributed 'death from grief'. In 1854 a ship's surgeon ascribed the death of his passenger to the loss of her child, but concluded that the biological cause of

[51] 'Death From Grief', *The Preston Pilot*, 24 April 1850, p. 8.
[52] 'Death Through Grief', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 6 September,1891, p. 3.
[53] Quoted in A. Mangham, 'Life After Death: Apoplexy, Medical Ethics and the Victorian Undead,' *Women's Writing* Vol. 15 Issue 3 (2015), pp. 282-299 (quotation on p. 284).
[54] G. Burrows, *On Diseases of the Cerebral Circulation* (London: Longman, 1846), pp. 80-104. For a newspaper report citing 'apoplexy' from grief, see for instance Wynne Baxter in *Reynolds's Newspaper* (London, England), 6 September 1891, Issue 2143: 'the verdict was death from apoplexy, which was doubtless set up by worry and fretting over the loss of her son.'

death was actually 'effusion of the brain'. The sister of the shipping clerk John Henry White 'burst a blood vessel'.[55] A ten-year-old girl whose death shortly followed that of her father was judged to have died of grief, but also of 'extensively inflamed' intestines.[56]

There is only so much that can be gleaned from the limited information available in newspaper reports – even if some of it drew on the judgments of coroners or of surgeons. A survey of the available information can, however, lead to several tentative conclusions. Firstly, death from grief was considered possible, reasonably common and was supported by medical knowledge. Secondly, such deaths fell into two categories: either a sudden collapse after being overwhelmed by powerful emotion, or a slow decline in which little emotion was outwardly expressed. Thirdly, it was thought to particularly affect women, and especially those of a particularly delicate or sensitive nature. Finally, no consensus was evident about the mechanism by which grief could prove thus fatal – although 'apoplexy' and conditions relating to circulation were widely referenced. For a more substantive understanding of the medical science of grief in nineteenth-century Britain, I will now consider the evidence available in more theoretical works of psychology and psychiatry from this time.

[55] 'Death Through Grief', *The Morning Post*, 30 September 1854, p. 3.
[56] 'Alleged Death From Grief', *The Examiner*, 28 December 1844, p. 5.

The 'anti-vital influence' of bereavement

In 1886, the *British Medical Journal* published a brief article noting the phenomenon of death from grief. The occasion for the piece was the news of a Parisian woman who had died in a shock of grief after identifying her husband's corpse in the morgue. 'There can be no doubt that the proximate cause was violent emotion,' the article ran, 'but it would have been interesting to know what visceral diseases existed in the deceased.'[57] As the reports in less specialised media have already indicated, this article confirms both that medical specialists took grief seriously as a health hazard and that they were not settled on an explanation for its attendant risks. But while there was not a consensus on the precise physiology behind a 'broken heart', there were attempts to address the issue in greater depth.

Several decades earlier, in 1838, one account of a narrowly-avoided fatality from bereavement was considered in William Cooke's *Mind and Emotions in Relation to Health and Disease*. Cooke described a woman whose beloved husband drowned while bathing with friends in the River Lea. 'She fell into violent paroxysms of hysteria,' he relates.

> For some days life was doubtful. She shed no tears. The liver secreted no bile. The kidneys ceased to act. The skin was dry. I never witnessed a case in which there was such a suspension of secretion and life be spared. Her lamentations were severe. The names of 'widow' – 'husband', which she often repeated, never failed to rend her wounded heart.[58]

As Thomas Dixon has noted, Cooke was a transitional figure who 'defies classification in terms with which we are now familiar,' typifying a genre

---

[57] 'Sudden Death From Grief and Fear', *The British Medical Journal* Vol. 1, No. 1326 (May 29, 1886), p. 1031.
[58] W. Cooke, *Mind and Emotions Considered in Relation to Health, Disease and Religion* (London: Longman & Co: 1838), p. 45.

'medico-theology' that fluently fluctuated between biblical exhortations and physicalist, empiricist descriptions of emotional phenomena.[59] This was evident in the way he wrote about grief. In the end, Cooke's 'Mrs S' recovered due to the fortifying effects of faith and the consolations of the Gospel: apparently there was no intrinsic incompatibility between studying grief from a medical and a physiological perspective and seeing Christian faith as its remedy. The overall impression of how grief actually acted on the nervous system was that of a general slowing down. It 'paralyses exertion,' he wrote 'and, when intense, often suspends secretion so that even tears do not flow.'[60] The liver, the kidney, the skin and the salivary glands could shut down under this metabolic inertia. But above all it could have a catastrophic effect on the circulation system, 'impairing the contractile power of the heart and arteries, so that passive haemorrhages take place from different organs – the lungs, the bowels, the uterus, even the skin.' In sudden, 'extreme and overwhelming cases of grief… arising from sudden calamity… some of the machinery of the body stands still (all action suspended).'[61] This sudden standing still of the body, perhaps, corresponds to those cases reported in the paper in which a person appears to have died almost instantaneously on receiving bad news.

Cooke drew a distinction between two different kinds of grief: 'Often-times its sadness and force are irresistible; at others it is slow though permanent.' It was this slow and permanent grief that he considered to be the most dangerous – although this variety was also in some sense the most admirable. The outwardly most expansive grief, characterised by hand wringing and wailing, was 'the ostentation of an effeminate grief, which speaks not so much of the greatness of the misery, as the smallness of the mind.'[62] Deep, silent suffering indicated a physical and moral constitution capable of enduring deep feeling – although this deep feeling could also be fatal. The ideas outlined in this text were similar

[59] T. Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Invention of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 189-190.
[60] Cooke, *Mind and Emotions*, p. 44.
[61] Ibid. p. 44.
[62] Ibid. pp. 15-16.

to those that would continue to recur in later Victorian science: grief could degenerate into a dangerous and even lethal medical condition; it could be broadly divided into two categories (sudden and slow-acting); its expression was taken to be inversely proportional to the depth of the feeling, so that the more that grief is felt, the less it is outwardly visible.

As the physician and psychiatrist William Carpenter wrote in his *Principles of Psychology* in 1890: 'Those who really "die of grief" are not those who are loud and vehement in their lamentations, for *their* sorrow is commonly transient, however vehement and sincere while it lasts; but they are those who have either designedly suppressed any such manifestations, or have shown no tendency to their display.' This build-up of unexpressed sorrow, Carpenter believed, could exert an 'anti-vital influence on the Organic functions… producing their complete cessation without any structural lesion.' Carpenter offered a case study to demonstrate this phenomenon: the tale of two inseparable orphaned sisters, one of whom dies of consumption. Instead of collapsing into a state of inconsolable misery, the other bereaved sister exhibits no obvious emotion at all. Then, two weeks later, she is found dead, without a discoverable symptom either in post-mortem or in her waking life. 'No explanation seems admissible,' Carpenter concluded, 'except the depressing influence of her pent-up grief upon her frame generally, through the Nervous system.'[63] Lacking an outlet for her emotion, her body had turned the toxically 'anti-vital' stimulation inwards, ultimately to fatal effect.

Carpenter was a staunch empiricist who argued strongly that the human mind could be understood as a more complex continuation of the instinctual mechanisms observed in lower organisms, including plants.[64] Yet he also argued that the superior sophistication of human nervous systems indicated that a force

[63] W. Carpenter, *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt & Company: 1890), p. 326.
[64] For William Carpenter's place within the Victorian debates over mind, will and morality, I have drawn on L. S. Jacyna, 'The physiology of mind, the unity of nature, and the moral order in Victorian thought', *The British Journal for the History of Science* Vol. 14, No. 2 (July 1981), pp. 109-132, especially pp. 112-114.

of will or soul was at work – an 'intelligential' reflex rather than an 'emotional' one.[65] That this 'volitional' or 'intelligential' force was 'higher', however, did not imply that it belonged to a separate, immaterial realm. In fact Carpenter believed the will to be 'higher' in a quite literal sense: located in upper parts of the brain – the cerebral ganglia – whereas emotions were located in the second highest part, including the medulla.[66] 'Reflexive' actions were 'commonly termed instinctive in the lower animals, and consensual and emotional in ourselves; these all correspond, in being performed without any idea of a purpose, and without any direction of the will – being frequently in opposition to it'.[67] Willpower and emotion were therefore the actions of two separate parts of the nervous system that were very often in conflict: internal struggle was encoded in human physiology. In Carpenter's model, Jansson writes, 'emotion was something the control of which was at once difficult and desirable, but most importantly *possible*.'[68] The case described above, however, suggests that Carpenter also thought the controlling influence of the will could also carry risks: by suppressing the externalisation of emotions, it could force their 'anti-vital influence' to turn inwards.

The sceptical Henry Maudsley was a little more circumspect about the potential effects of grief on the nervous system. 'Grief is heartache attended by a slow and weak pulse,' he wrote in *The Physiology of Mind* in 1867, and the 'saddest grief of all is heartrending and its subject sometimes heart-broken.' Nevertheless, he wrote, 'people do not die of actually broken hearts in real life as they do in novels… and grief is but a slow murderer at best.' Maudsley may have been less convinced that the broken heart was a literal physical condition than some (such as the coroner in the case of the jilted lover) firmly believed. But he nonetheless believed that bereavement could cause diagnosable symptoms – and even potentially 'deadly' ones:

---

[65] W. Carpenter, *A Manual of Physiology, Including Physiological Anatomy for the Use of the Medical Student* (London, 1846) pp. 599-600.
[66] Ibid. p. 229.
[67] Ibid. p. 228.
[68] Jansson, *From Melancholia to Depression*, p. 47.

> Long-standing grief, and especially the grief that does not weep, may lay the foundations of chronic disease and powerfully second its progress, while the depression of a great sorrow, paralysing the vital energies temporarily, might open a breach and give an easy victory to the noxious agents of acute disease. The deadliest message which the brain can send to a diseased organ, is it not a message of despair?[69]

In both Carpenter's explanation and in Maudsley's, the nervous system was the key to understanding the link between emotional suffering and physical collapse. In this they were operating within the paradigm of Victorian 'nerve theory'. As Oppenheim has described, Victorian doctors were much preoccupied by the fragility of the human nerves. 'Nerve force' or 'nerve element' was understood by scientists as the vital energy behind all of the actions of body and mind; a sort of physical embodiment of the force of will.[70] Carpenter and Maudsley, in subtly different ways, both saw the will as a function of the nervous system. The threat from grief, though, appeared to be that the nerve force applied to the disrupted nervous system to suppress its unruly activity might force the 'anti-vital' energies to remain in the body and wreak damage. The stronger the will and the more dominant the volitional aspect of the brain and nerves, the more nerve force the subject could apply to this process.

While the nervous energy appeared in nineteenth-century science as the vital key to the nature of the human mind and soul, it was also a volatile and a potentially debilitating force. In the language of nineteenth-century medicine, nerves might easily fray, misfire, collapse and be overcome; the vocabulary used here is mechanistic: the nervous system is like an over-worked machine that is wearing out and breaking down; nerves are like wires or cables that are loose or taut or fraying.[71] Emotions too were mechanistic: as Maudsley had it,

---

[69] H. Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 164.
[70] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, e.g. pp. 79-109.
[71] Ibid. pp. 81-82.

'quick or dull, bright or gloomy, warm or cool, flutter, flurry, tremor, palpitation, cutting, piercing, sweet, bitter, caustic, thrilling, quivering, electric and so on'.[72] The physical system under attack gives rise to a whole vocabulary of mental disorder – nervous breakdowns, nervous exhaustion, weak nerves.[73] Put under excessive strain, the nervous system could buckle, and in its turn throw the whole of the body's metabolism into disarray. The nervous system was envisaged as a sort of complex and fragile mediating system between external impulses and bodily processes. It was the buffer between the raw sensations communicated by the outside world and the fragile body.

Fatal grief, in the model outlined by Victorian psychologists, was something analogous to liver disease: in attempting to process too much toxic sensation, the nervous system could become overwhelmed. Debilitated, the shocks it had endured would then communicate themselves to other bodily systems. The actual, proximate cause of death varied widely from case to case: haemorrhages, apoplexy, organ failure, heart attacks. In the later half of the nineteenth century, nerve theory provided a materialist framework for understanding the way in which the apparently immaterial influence of abstract sensations could lead to this organic failure. But even if grief did not buckle the fragile nervous system fatally, it could still have other medical effects. If death from grief was a common diagnosis in the nineteenth century, then 'grief madness' was an even more universal scourge.

[72] H. Maudsley, *Life in Mind and Conduct: Studies of Organic in Human Nature* (London: Macmillan, 1902), p. 13.
[73] Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, p. 81-82.

Mad with grief: emotional suffering and mental disorder

The last part of this chapter is given over to a more thorough analysis of the role of grief and emotional suffering in Victorian psychiatry, with a particular focus on the work of Henry Maudsley, who was perhaps more preoccupied with the relationship between emotional suffering and emotional disorder than any other writer in Victorian medical science. Maudsley's place in history is conflicted. On the one hand he is well-known for his institutional legacies, the Maudsley Hospital and the Medico-Psychological Association, which he devoted much of his life to as an administrator and even an 'entrepreneur'.[74]

On the other, he also figures the villain of several disreputable episodes in Victorian psychiatry that have been the object of recent historical interest. Maudsley was a leading advocate of a particularly unpleasant form of degeneration theory permeated with Lamarckian ideas about the inheritance of degenerate behaviours as well as genetic traits. He blamed criminality on individual degradation passed down through generations, identifying criminals as an underclass, and saw the maintenance of disciplined habits and character as a question of primary national concern.[75] For similar reasons, he was also a key figure in what has become known as the 'masturbation panic', believing that autoeroticism characterised the 'last and worst stage' of degeneration and a descent into 'egoistic passions' that must be suppressed on peril of social collapse.[76]

---

[74] T. Turner, 'Henry Maudsley: Psychiatrist, Philosopher and Entrepreneur' in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry,* ed. W. F. Bynum, R. Porter and M. Shepherd, Vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 151-187 – especially pp. 155-163.

[75] D. Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, C.1848-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 203-216; J. Saussman, 'Science, Drugs and Occultism: Aleister Crowley, Henry Maudsley and Late-nineteenth Century Degeneration Theories', *Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. 1 Issue 1 (2007), pp. 40-55.

[76] A. N. Gilbert 'Masturbation and Insanity: Henry Maudsley and the Ideology of Sexual Repression', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 3 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 268-282; the Maudsley quotation can be found in H. Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind*, p. 449. To complete this unflattering picture, Maudsley also

An analysis of Maudsley's ideas about the dangers of grief does nothing to dispel his image as the high priest of Victorian repression. None of Geoffrey Gorer's characterisation of the Victorian era as a time of taboos over sexuality and openness about death was in evidence here: Maudsley was stern and censorious about both.[77] Even more starkly than in most of his contemporaries, Maudsley portrayed emotional suffering as a dangerous weakness that could become morbid without vigilant mental attention. But, as I show in the final part of this chapter, his belief in the dangers of unbridled emotion was modified in the case of emotional suffering by an urge to ascribe 'grief' and 'sorrow' a role in the formation of character – at least when it was counteracted by a strong force of will. In Maudsley's writing, two of the tropes in Victorian theories about emotional response to death were united: grief as a dangerous force to be mastered, and grief as a teacher that could be put to work in moulding character and identity.

Maudsley's most famous and ambitious work, first published in 1867, was *The Physiology and Pathology of Mind*. In the 1870s the book was republished as two separate texts (*The Physiology of Mind* and *The Pathology of Mind*) before being reunited as a single text for further print runs in 1880 and 1895.[78] From the start, Maudsley placed 'melancholia' at the root of the vast majority of mental disorders, and that this condition almost always began with an emotional trauma of some kind – often with a significant loss. 'Melancholia with delusions', 'hypochondriacal melancholia', 'melancholia with stupor': all of these conditions start with a disruptive emotional effect on the nervous system. A shock to the nervous system had the capacity to throw it catastrophically out of sympathy. This was 'dis-order' in the most literal sense. A person whose

---

had a personal reputation as an austere and difficult man, described by his professional acquaintances as 'cynical and rather unfriendly' and 'with a touch of gloom and austerity of Wuthering Heights.' I take these quotations from T. Turner, 'Henry Maudsley', pp. 166-167.

[77] The Gorer construct of an inversion between grief and death between nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain is from G. Gorer, 'The Pornography of Death' in G. Gorer (ed.), *Death, Grief, and Mourning* (London: Cresset Press, 1965).

[78] For a full bibliography see T. Turner, 'Henry Maudsley', p. 181.

physiology was ordered so that familiar stimuli can be processed as coherent thoughts, Maudsley believed, would rarely be overwhelmed by emotion, however acute and painful that emotion is; nervous excitations would be assimilated into a sympathetic nervous response, gradually ceasing to act as raw passions and transforming into ideas that could then be harnessed and so understood. 'Before definite paths of association of ideas, have been organised through culture and experience,' Maudsley wrote, 'every emotion tends to react directly outwards, either upon the organs of the organic life or upon the instruments of the animal life.' In this reading, mental disease was quite literally a lack of cerebral orderliness – a flurry of nervous activity without the coordinating influence of the will.[79]

Maudsley was influenced by William Carpenter and, like Carpenter, he believed that all subjective phenomena had a physical correlate, including volition. But Maudsley gave a less privileged position to the will. Whereas Carpenter's will, located in the ganglia, operated separately from reflexive actions such as emotions that could be directly affected by external stimulations, Maudsley's will and emotions were two manifestations of the same basic system. Will, like emotion, was 'excited into activity by the appropriate stimulus.'[80] Hence disordered emotion could also disorder the will. Feelings like grief could corrupt the entire functioning of the nervous system: 'where there is perversion of the affective life, there will be morbid feeling and morbid action; the patient's whole manner of feeling, the mode of his affection by events, is unnatural, and the springs of his action are disordered; and the intellect is unable to check or control the morbid manifestations.'[81]

Maudsley was a theoretician who aspired to make mental science into an all-encompassing materialist philosophy. He tended to write about such matters in the abstract. But asylum records demonstrate that this link was more than simply

[79] Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind* (London, 1895), p. 164.
[80] Ibid. pp. 149-150.
[81] Ibid. p. 302.

theoretical. In the nineteenth century, the effects of great sorrow on a constitution too weak to bear it were considered a common cause of mental collapse, and bereavement was frequently cited as a trigger in asylum admission records – especially in women. In the Nottinghamshire Asylum annual report for 1863, 'grief at the death of relatives' was listed as the cause of madness for more than ten per cent of female patients.[82] In an 1897 study of a hundred cases of melancholia, sixteen were at least partially deemed to result from 'worry and grief'.[83] Although the official records provide few illuminating details for the stories that lie behind these cases, a number of psychiatrists did record in a more focused way the behaviour and the diagnosis of those whose minds had been affected by affliction and bereavement.

James Crichton-Browne, who was the superintendent of the West Riding Lunatic Asylum between 1866 and 1875 – and who corresponded extensively with Charles Darwin on the *Expression*, including providing some of its famous images – recorded several such cases.[84] In one case, a man named David, 'at the close of an industrious and frugal life…. Lost his wife, who had been the companion of his toil and thrift, and was profoundly affected by his bereavement. This grief, instead of being tempered as time went on, became intensified.'[85] He became consumed by a combination of deep sorrow and financial anxiety, and after being committed to the asylum would 'wander about the ward mourning' until his misery was cut short by pneumonia.[86] Once again, it was the long-term effects of a stubborn grief that allegedly proved terminal, first to the mind and then finally to the body.

---

[82] 'Eighth Annual Report of the Nottingham County Lunatic Asylum', *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, 13 May 1864.
[83] G. Brush, 'An Analysis Of One Hundred Cases Of Acute Melancholia', *The British Medical Journal* Vol. 2, No. 1917 (September 1897), pp. 777-779.
[84] Crichton-Browne's own ideas and motivations, which have generally been relegated to a secondary concern in his relationship with Darwin, are interestingly explored in A. M. Pearn, '"This excellent observer …": the Correspondence Between Charles Darwin and James Crichton-Browne, 1869–75', *History of Psychiatry* Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 160–175.
[85] J. Crichton-Browne, 'Clinical Lectures On Mental And Cerebral Diseases', *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 615 (October 1872), pp. 403-406 (quotation on p. 406).
[86] Ibid.

Another case related by Crichton-Browne involved a woman who had given birth to an illegitimate child, which was shortly followed by the death of the mother's father. Convinced that her father had been felled by grief at her 'fall from virtue', she in turn was racked with guilty sorrow. 'She sank into a state of inconsolable grief, wept incessantly, was sleepless, and twice attempted to put an end to her existence and sorrow by jumping through the window. After this she refused to eat all food,' and was in the end committed to the asylum 'for her own protection.'[87] Her disorder consisted in nothing more or less than the constant, protracted expression of the misery that her trauma had sparked: 'her head bowed down, and her hands crossed upon her lap, in an attitude of listless dejection. Her features were fixed in an expression of mental suffering, the angles of the mouth being drawn down, and the corrugators of the upper eyebrows being firmly contracted.'[88] This description is identical to the expression of struggle against emotions described by Darwin. Emaciated and wasted, the woman could be brought to do little. But aside from the degree of her sadness and guilt, she was not delusional or in any way mentally unsound. Crichton-Browne was convinced that he could cure this deep dejection of grief in a mere three months – although he did not explain how.[89] Here, in a single story, pathological grief is shown to be a mutual contagion: the father was felled by grief at his daughter's impropriety, and that bereavement in its turn drove the daughter to her mental confusion. Once again it was the slow, brooding expressions of distress that Crichton-Browne found to be most prone to develop into madeness.

Crichton-Browne's tales of madness from grief were drawn from a series of columns in the *British Medical Journal*, and were originally written as lectures for medical students, most of whom were destined for general practice rather than psychiatric specialisation. His primary theme in these lectures was a plea that the prospective doctors do not, through a fascination with 'rare and exotic'

[87] Ibid. p. 403.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid. p. 406.

cases, lose sight of the ordinary and mundane afflictions that plague a far greater number of people, and which are often not noticed or addressed.[90] Primary among these ordinary illnesses is that same 'melancholia' that Henry Maudsley placed at the root of the vast majority of mental disorders. Crichton-Browne's worry was that this everyday killer was wreaking havoc without notice, beyond any official estimation, 'because very often it runs its course, even to a disastrous end, without being recognised as morbid.' The problem, then, as Crichton-Brown saw it, was how to distinguish this scourge of melancholia from 'that depression to which healthy men are subject when bereft of an object of affection or overtaken by any calamity?' In a phrase that could almost be taken from an article reflecting on recent controversies over changes to the period of mourning that is considered healthy and normal in the DSM-V, he asks: 'where is the line to be drawn between healthy grief and its morbid continuation?'[91]

Crichton-Browne's answer lay not in the specific symptoms, which were essentially identical in both conditions: anxiety, indifference, gloom, depression and hopelessness. The difference was only in the duration and the intensity of the mental anguish, and a disjuncture between the scale of the loss and the severity of the emotional response. 'Melancholia' was the body's natural response to shock, distorted so that it reshaped the nervous system. 'Minds have their special delusional tendencies, he writes, 'just as chemical substances have their special crystalline forms.'

What kind of mind, then, was susceptible to madness from grief? On this question Crichton-Browne himself was comparatively neutral: although he occasionally hinted at a 'weakness' that made people susceptible to pathological grief, he also affirmed that even strong characters could succumb. Other writers, however, were more ready to merge value judgments with medical assessments. In the final section of this chapter, I argue that accounts of grief in Victorian theoretical psychology – even when concerned with grief as a

[90] Ibid. p. 405.
[91] Ibid.

disorder – also repeatedly presented the emotional response to death as a productive process in the formation of character and identity.

Grief scars, scientific stoicism and the formation of character

J. G. Davey, a Bristol alienist, saw a three-way way relationship between grief, moral character and physiology. A person's reaction to 'overpowering grief', he claimed in a lecture published in 1855, 'marks the degree of susceptibility or impressionability… and which measures the force of our various passions and desires.' By temperament, he clarified, 'is meant the quality of the nervous organism – that portion of our physical structure which receives impressions from without.' A patient's physiological response to 'emotional suffering' could reveal the 'quality' of their temperament. If the temperament was found wanting, the consequence was invariably illness or madness or both. 'The temperament in a man is index to his mental health,' Davey wrote.[92] Grief was both a threat to an orderly mind and a test of the quality of a person's temperament.

For Maudsley, emotional processing was the key to the entire shaping of mind and character. It was the way a person processed emotions that above all that betrayed their underlying character of an individual, and these emotions were encoded in their nervous system. 'It is feeling, or the affective life, that reveals the deep essential nature of the man,' he wrote in *The Physiology and Pathology of the Mind*; 'for it expresses the tone of his nerve element, which again is the result of its actual constitution or composition, inherited and acquired.'[93] A person's character was therefore essentially a product of their 'nerve element', a behavioural manifestation of their biological wiring. Since both inherited and acquired characteristics were evident in Maudsley's conception of an individual

[92] J. G. Davey, 'Lectures on Insanity Delivered at the Bristol Medical School During the Summer Session of 1855', *Association Medical Journal* (July 1855), pp. 668-675 (quotation on p. 668).
[93] H. Maudsley, *The Physiology and Pathology of Mind* (London, 1868), p. 149.

'constitution', the way grief affected that constitution was simultaneously a sign of their inherent character and the extent to which they had been successful in moulding that character: the acquisition of mental characteristics was not a passive process but a strenuous task.

A feeling, Maudsley argued, is the body's response to an external stimulus. But he believed that nervous excitements were only experienced as emotions when they were disruptive and unfamiliar; once they had been organised and rationalised into a cognitive order, we then experience them as 'ideas'. This, in Maudsley's analysis, explained why babies cry and scream so much. An unfamiliar experience is a fresh jolt to the nerves, which have not had the opportunity to arrange themselves into a harmonious order; each new stimulus is felt as a passion.[94] As the human brain learns to categorise and assimilate these experiences into a sympathetic nervous response, they cease to be emotions and become instead thoughts. 'So long as the ideas or mental states are not adequately organised in correspondence with the individual's external relations, more or less feeling will attend their excitation: they will, in fact, be more emotional.'[95] As Roger Smith has explored in *Inhibition*, it was not simply that feelings were an undesirable element of the human experience that had to be suppressed at all costs: they were a symptom of a person's body internalising new experiences, a test of the psychological infrastructure. The more robust a person's constitution, the more capable they were of internalising the shocks that the constitution was subject to.[96] As I now argue, these ideas implied a relationship between emotional suffering and emotional disorder in which grief was either productive and character forming, or pathological.

Maudsley was interested in the 'pathologies' not only (perhaps not even primarily) because of his vocation to cure them. They were also the extreme and exceptional cases that threw into light the functioning of a 'normal' brain. It is

[94] Ibid. 149-155.
[95] Ibid. p. 48.
[96] Smith, *Inhibition*, especially pp. 41-57.

no accident that psychology and pathology were juxtaposed as the two volumes of his masterwork. But it was in his final work that he outlined his philosophy of emotional suffering most fully. The 1902 book *Life in Mind and Conduct* was a self-proclaimed 'non-medical' book, far more contemplative and philosophical than his previous works.[97]

It may be that Maudsley had personal reasons for this shift in register late in life. He was a secretive figure and historians have found biographical details hard to come by. He is thought to have destroyed his private correspondence and diaries and he condemned as 'pitiful' the 'great men' who attempted to preserve a record of their daily thoughts and relationships for posterity (it is fairly clear from the context that he aspired to be included among these 'great men').[98] Nevertheless, the scant evidence that is available suggests that Maudsley was severely affected by the death of his wife, Ann, in 1901. According to friends, the bereavement sent him into a deep and prolonged depression: he withdrew from social life and became increasingly isolated and embittered.[99] Perhaps it is no coincidence that *Life in Mind and Conduct* was shot through with his musings on the purpose of pain (which I discuss in more detail below).

Maudsley, though a die-hard materialist, routinely melded the medical and the moral. Cognition, Maudsley believed, was a function of individual character, and character is etched into our physiology, expressed most directly through emotions. The healthier and more ordered the mind, the less susceptible it was to emotional disturbance; and the truly healthy feel 'a general well-being' which 'is sometimes described as an emotion' but 'is not truly an emotion,' rather a

---

[97] Maudsley, *Life in Mind and Conduct*, p. 8.
[98] Quoted in H. R. Rollin, 'Whatever Happened to Henry Maudsley?' in *150 Years of British Psychiatry, 1841–1991* ed. G. E. Berrios (London 1991), p. 34; Rollin subsequently wrote a brief addendum offering further evidence that he felt believed vindicated his tentative theory that the death of Maudsley's wife and his 'only emotional prop' was the cause of his 'morose' persona in later life, after further evidence he discovered after publishing the book: H. Rollin, 'The Disappearance of Henry Maudsley' *British Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 197, Issue 6 (December 2010), p. 499.
[99] Ibid.

state of flourishing that precludes emotion.[100] Emotions were fluctuations on that topography of character, a turbulence that tested the sturdiness of the self. Grief was the purest example of this trial of the nerves in the conceptual framework outlined by Maudsley. When faced with some great trouble or trauma, such as the death of a loved one, he explained, a bereaved person struggles at first to incorporate the upheaval into our intellectual infrastructure. It is not intelligible or incommunicable. 'He who is wholly absorbed in a passion of sorrow cannot see and speak it; its violence transports and, so to speak, hypnotises; when its ecstasy abates and it is beginning to pass, then it can be looked at and talked about, it is no longer engrossing and unspeakable.'[101]

In Maudsley's iteration of this idea, however, there is also the counterintuitive consequence that a person who was obviously in the throes of mourning was by definition not experiencing truly deep grief:

> The hysterical woman who rends the air with shrieks and appals the spectator with her bodily writhings does not suffer much; indeed, the performance of her grief often yields her a degree of secret gratification… Sobs, shrieks, cries, wails and weeping are nowise proportional signs of suffering; they are rather the explosive vents and ease of it, issues rather than measures of it, and therefore a relief which is almost a luxury when it is indulged excessively.[102]

Grief that is expressed (whether in words or wails) is thus not grief in its truest form, since that degree of suffering mutes and paralyses. In fact it is an avoidance of real sorrow – an 'indulgence' and a 'luxury' even.[103] There is an obvious misogyny in Maudsley's contempt and suspicion for the sort of open emotionality that he explicitly codes as feminine. Where the 'engrossing and unspeakable grief' that truly shakes a person's nervous system takes masculine

[100] Ibid. p. 135.
[101] H. Maudsley, *Life in Mind and Conduct,* p. 319.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid. pp. 319-326.

pronoun, the 'bodily writhings' are given to a 'hysterical woman'. The framing is scientific, but this passage betrays strikingly similar attitudes to those discussed in previous chapters. Again, outward expressions of loss are feminine, superficial and perhaps even insincere, while the silent endurance of a more manly grief – though it carries its own dangers – is the means by which the nervous system is disciplined into a more orderly form.

For Maudsley the struggle to render grief articulate was also the struggle to master it. To illustrate that he used language that appeared to draw parallels with the idea of inoculation and immunity granted by exposure to disease. Although grief is an illness – a 'fever', as Maudsley put it, which fades into a 'scar' – it also helps form defences that guard against future disruptions. But whereas the immune system can be understood in purely physiological terms, the nervous system is the physiological correlate of a person's character; hence grief and suffering were a formative element in this character for reasons that Maudsley felt able to describe in essentially physical terms.

> Though the cause of grief remain the same, yet the individual changes, and in a little while is no longer the self who was afflicted; its pang then is the remembrance of what another self suffered… As the grief-scar witnesses to the grief-fever which has been, so it witnesses also perhaps to lasting effects on character; like the disease which, once recovered from, protects the body against its recurrence, it modifies the mental constitution and protects against a similar and equal grief-fever.[104]

In other places, however, the language he used was less lofty: 'to be weak is to be miserable.'[105]

Maudsley's concern with emotional suffering began from the perspective of a doctor and a man of science. It was a cause of mental disorders, a condition to

[104] Ibid. pp. 394-398.
[105] Ibid. p. 398.

be avoided and to be cured. Even so, he finally interpreted grief in heavily value-laden terms, as a morally productive process necessary for a meaningful life and a developed character. Physiology became the theatre for the struggle to contain emotionality and prevent outward impulses from overwhelming the will, which alone could strengthen the constitution of the sufferer. The open expression of grief displayed by 'the hysterical woman' was a sign that she was succumbing to external impulses and losing her integrity, surrendering mastery of her own will. Those who instead struggled emerged with 'scars' that could defend them against future convulsions.

Diseases of the will

It may be true that grief became a subject of medical attention and study more systematically in the twentieth century than ever before. But the idea that bereavement could be a cause of mental and physical illness (or an illness in itself) has a much longer pedigree. In the nineteenth century, physicalist accounts of emotion drew a direct parallel between bodily and mental pain. Grief was frequently construed as a sort of psychic wound, which is analogous to a physical injury and produced by physiological upheaval. Discussions of the potentially pathological dimensions of grief focused on two forms of illness:

1. A rupture such as 'apoplexy' or organ failure brought on by the sudden emotional shock that overwhelmed the capacity of the nervous system to absorb new sensations
2. A festering of 'toxic' or 'anti-vital' emotions which, suppressed and unexpressed, might remain in the body and damage the nervous systems and other parts of a person's biology

Earlier writers such as William Cooke, as well as reports in the popular press, tended to focus on the first of these: the way that paroxysms of grief could lead to sudden and dramatic deaths. Later writers such as Carpenter and Maudsley,

often using case studies from asylums and hospitals, emphasised the second. In both cases, medical issues caused by grief were in some sense diseases of the will: either a failure of the will to contain a violent feeling, or an excessive exertion of will that turned the dangerous force of feeling inward. Yet this effort to contain violent emotions such as bereavement was also, in the work of writers such as Maudsley, an important struggle, since such internal struggle was grist for the production of character – and perhaps also a struggle against political and even civilisational disorder.

To lose a loved object constituted a challenge to the nervous system that could reveal its underlying calibre and strength. To feel the full weight of the loss and yet resist being conquered by it was the sign of a healthy and properly disciplined mind. Sunam, whom his British observers believed to come from a culture unaccustomed to or incapable of steadily holding such passions, was the horror story of the 'savage' grief that had not been conquered by an exertion of will. That judges and commentators diagnosed this failure of stoicism in both Christian terms and through the materialist lens of mental science is revealing: although the metaphysics behind these two interpretations of pathological grief varied, the model of loss was similar in the way it positioned the wilful struggle against 'natural' emotion as a moral imperative. The unconstrained, violent response to loss that was interpreted as the cause of amok was the dark force that lay behind the 'tender' emotion extolled by Alexander Bain and the 'eminently human' expression identified by Charles Darwin. To feel and yet withstand great grief was a risk, but also a moral imperative, since emotions were a threat to the rational order of both the individual nervous system and the social world beyond. Medical discussions were tinged with injunctions to discipline and assumptions about a gendered and racialised hierarchy of emotional resilience – the Malay amok being the most extreme example of the unhealthy savage grief. The preoccupation with the formation of 'character',

meanwhile, was a theme of Victorian thought, as many historians have pointed out.[106]

The ideal of grief represented in Victorian medicine certainly is one that fits comfortably into a paradigm of male-coded stoicism. Perhaps it is unsurprising, in this context, that in the twentieth century, as psychology and medicine increasingly became the discourse within which the emotional response to death was managed and understood, the importance of silence and suppression were increasingly emphasised. Gesa Stedman has identified the values and assumptions predominant in nineteenth-century science as part of a largely masculine 'middle class habitus'.[107] There is an extent to which this habitus, evident in Victorian scientific ideas about grief, seeped into twentieth-century ideas about grief in secular psychology, which in turn have found their way into the popular emotional lexicon. The case of Sunam – like that of Darwin's Tierra del Fuego 'native' – suggest the possibility that this habitus was at least somewhat tied to an imperial identity: the British man's ability to govern his own nervous system against the disorder of grief legitimised the British state's government of peoples who were constitutionally prone to disorder.

The insistence on self-control, self-mastery and self-discipline presented a puzzle for physiological psychologists committed to the notion that the 'self' was a unitary entity that could be explained in physical terms. If mind was simply an epiphenomenon of movements in the body, what external agent

---

[106] A classic text on this is S. Collini, 'The Idea of "Character" in Victorian Political Thought', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Vol. 35 (1985), pp. 29-50; more recently Peter Cain has brought together the two themes I mention here by highlighting a prominent Victorian discourse that ascribed the might of the British Empire to the construction and maintenance of an specifically British imperial 'character': 'Empire and the Languages of Character and Virtue in Later Victorian Britain', *Modern Intellectual History*, Vol. Issue 2 (August 2007), pp. 249-273.

[107] G. Stedman, *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in Victorian Discourses on the Emotions, 1830-1872* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p. 121; Paul White makes similarly argues that nineteenth-century medical ideas about grief reflected a set of particularly male middle-class values: P. White, 'Darwin Wept: Science and the Sentimental Subject', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 16 (2011), pp. 195-213, pp. 198-199 and elsewhere.

could be imposing on the self that mastery, discipline or control? Writers like Cooke, Carpenter and Maudsley found solution to this problem in the ambiguous concept of the will: an aspect of the nervous system, whether located in the ganglia or dispersed throughout the brain, that was capable of exerting supremacy over the merely reflexive mental processes. In giving this role to the will as a sort of neurological mediator between mind and body, these secular writers replicated in certain key ways narrative of internal struggle that dominated Christian models of loss. In place of a struggle of faith and the soul over 'natural' emotion, the physicalist account of grief tended to create a narrative of inner struggle between one element of the nervous system and another. Moreover, this struggle was not only a medical concern but – as the writing of Maudsley in particular demonstrates – a moral imperative.

The case of grief, then, complicates any straightforward idea that the development of a secular science of mind represented a clean break in the way emotions were conceptualised. It is a window into how a pillar of Christian moralism found its way into modern medicine and physiological psychology.

Conclusion

Coming to Grief

Shortly after the period considered by this thesis, Sigmund Freud published 'Mourning and Melancholia'. Begun in 1915 and published in 1917, this brief essay coincided with the cataclysmic war that transformed the culture of death. The British deaths in the First World War amounted to over 800,000, a scale of tragedy that overwhelmed the customs and rituals that had hitherto shaped death and bereavement.[1] 'The Victorian way of death was itself buried under the weight of mass deaths in war,' Pat Jalland writes.[2] Jay Winter's conclusion is similar: after four years of total war, he writes, 'the individuality of death had been buried under literally millions of corpses.'[3] Despite taking bereavement as his subject, Freud did not directly address the slaughter that was occurring around him – an absence that has puzzled more than one biographer.[4] Yet, in

[1] Sources disagree about the exact number; I have taken the figure given by the National Archives to be authoritative: see https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/deaths-first-and-second-world-wars/#:~:text=More%20than%20one%20million%20British,during%20the%20Second%20World%20War. [retrieved 15/7/2020].

[2] P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2006), p. 15.

[3] J. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Palgrave: London 2003), p. 305.

[4] É. Roudinesco, *Freud in His Time and Ours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 179-80; P. Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Times* (London: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 372-3. Freud did however comment on the war in other essays, of which 'Mourning and Melancholia' could plausibly be taken as a continuation. See in particular S. Freud, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" [1915] in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* (vol. 14) ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 275-300. The main thrust of this essay as it pertained to death was that the war had unveiled a powerful death wish usually shrouded by modern civilisation; this, Freud thought, was part of a broader disillusionment with the moral and aesthetic values of the civilisation that had been plunged into 'horror and suffering'. There is one small section within this essay in which Freud alludes to theories that would be more fully expounded in 'Mourning and Melancholia': as well as humanity's capacity for hatred and its attraction to death, the war had also laid bare an 'ambivalence' towards a lost loved one. Yet this claim itself was adapted from a work written before the war, namely 'Totem and Taboo': 'Totem

its own way, 'Mourning and Melancholia' also marks a point of departure: it was, at least in the account often given within psychiatry and psychology, the progenitor of modern theories of grief. Freud was, Leeat Granek has claimed, 'the first to introduce grief to the psychological lexicon.'[5] Writing in 1965, Geoffrey Gorer marvelled at the extent to which this single essay 'dominates all the psychoanalytical and most of the psychiatric and sociological studies of grief and mourning written since.'[6] It is the earliest work that is cited by later canonical writers on bereavement, such as John Bowlby, Peter Marris and Colin Murray-Parkes.[7]

The legacy of 'Mourning and Melancholia' was undoubtedly a powerful influence on twentieth-century ideas of grief. But in treating Freud as the starting point for attempts to theorise grief, there is a danger of ignoring earlier and in some respects deeper precedents for conceptualising the nature and meaning of emotional responses to death, including those that I have discussed in this thesis.

I have described the previous chapters as a pre-history of grief, 'signs of a future story' before the dominant twentieth-century meanings of that term emerged.[8] I conclude with a brief reflection on the history of grief since its entry into the 'psychological lexicon' with Freud, comprising an account of the evolution of the concept within twentieth-century psychology and psychoanalysis. The haphazard and contingent way in which this concept emerged complicates any notion that the development of ideas about grief can be understood as the gradual demystification of a universal, predictable process revealed by the

---

and Taboo', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* (vol. 13) ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), pp. 113 and 117-123.

[5] L. Granek, 'Grief as a pathology: the evolution of grief theory in psychology from Freud to the present', *Journal of the History of Psychology* vol. 13,1 (February 2010), pp. 46-73 (quotation on p. 46).

[6] G. Gorer, *Death Grief and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (London: Cresset Press, 1965), p. 118.

[7] Granek, 'Grief as a pathology', p. 47.

[8] A. Holland and R. Scholar, *Pre-Histories and Afterlives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 5.

systematic application of scientific method. Indeed, setting twentieth-century ideas about grief alongside the nineteenth-century discourses discussed in this thesis suggests a number of parallels and continuities. These continuities are obscured when twentieth-century psychology is understood in isolation from the other fields in which emotional responses to death had previously been discussed.

Stages of 'Mourning and Melancholia'

In 'Mourning and Melancholia', Freud was interested in mourning more as a window into the pathology of 'melancholia' than as a phenomenon in its own right. 'Dreams having served us as the prototype in normal life of narcissistic personality disorders,' he wrote, 'we will now try to throw some light on the nature of melancholia by comparing it with the normal effect of mourning.' He explicitly and consistently rejected the temptation to medicalise mourning in its own right: 'it never occurs to us to treat it as a pathological condition,' despite the intensity of the 'painful displeasure' and its disruptive effect on our lives.[9]

The feature of mourning that distinguished it from pathology, for Freud, was its status as a time-bound process with a natural purpose and a progression. When a person loses a beloved object, he claimed, the libidinal energy they have invested in that object suddenly becomes unattached and must be withdrawn. But to do this all at once would be too severe a shock to the ego. So instead of this sudden and total detachment, the mourner clings to a psychic duplicate of the lost object, surrendering it only gradually, withdrawing their libido piece by piece over time. This was the crucial and hard 'work of mourning', and total absorption in it explains the familiar symptoms of grief: 'dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity.' Freud never underplayed the lived experience – it is the healing of an

[9] S. Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia' [1917] in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* (vol. 14) ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), p. 243.

open psychic 'wound' whose effects are directly analogous to physical pain. But once this process is complete, 'the ego becomes free and uninhibited again.'[10]

The crucial argument concerned not a unitary 'mourning *and* melancholia' but a distinction *between* 'mourning' and 'melancholia.' Melancholia, in Freud's account, was similar to mourning, but distinguished by an additional affliction: the total loss of self-regard, 'to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment.'[11] There were two causes of this. Firstly, although the melancholic powerfully felt the libidinal withdrawal, they were not conscious of what exactly had been lost to them. Secondly, Freud believed that in the psyche of a melancholic mourner the image of the loved object was reconstructed within the ego. Instead of withdrawing from an external object, libido therefore detached from the ego itself. The melancholic thus suffered not only object loss but also ego loss. 'In mourning it is the world that has become poor and empty. In melancholia it is the ego itself.'[12] Hence there was a contrast in Freud's thought between the basically functional work of mourning – a time-bound process of healing – and the dysfunctional condition of melancholia.[13]

As the essay's reputation grew, it also became a vehicle for a whole tradition of re-interpretation, as grief became a central concern in modern psychology. Interest in psychoanalysis grew slowly in Britain,[14] even while Freud's works were being translated into English and being debated in the British press.[15]

---

[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid. pp. 244-5.
[12] Ibid. p. 245.
[13] Ibid, pp. 245-248.
[14] D. Rapp, 'The Early Discovery of Freud by the British General Educated Public, 1912–1919', *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 3, Issue 2 (August 1990), pp. 217–243; Rapp argued that the scepticism of the British medical establishment had drawn historians' attention away from the more sympathetic engagement of the general public – although he concedes that even this engagement was very limited before about 1913.
[15] N. Kiell (ed.), *Freud Without Hindsight: Reviews of His Work (1813-1939)* (Madison: International Universities Press, 1988); the first spate of debate in British journals recorded in this compilation came in 1913, when several writers responded to the recent translation of *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Ernest Jones, Freud's chief emissary in the United Kingdom, was one of few early British sources to comment on 'Mourning and Melancholia'.[16] Initially he responded with warm approval.[17] But when, after a succession of bereavements, his only daughter died in 1928, aged seven, it seemed to lead him to question his idol's analysis of mourning. 'There cannot be much I do not know about grief on the conscious side,' he wrote to Freud, and although unconscious processes are harder to introspect, he believed that he had gained insights into these as well. Primed to think of the world in terms of personal agency, he suggested, we 'cannot conceive of another person's death except in terms of murder'; so it followed that to 'accept' a death means to 'to consent to the murder of the loved one.'[18]

Whatever the nuances of Freud's position on mourning, it was not generally considered a central concern of psychoanalysis in Freud's own lifetime. The people who changed this were also those that brought Britain from the periphery of the psychoanalytic world to its centre: Anna Freud and Melanie Klein.[19] These two prominent psychoanalysts had wide-ranging, acrimonious disagreements.[20] What is relevant here is one important and influential paper, published just as their hostilities were escalating in 1939: 'Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States' by Melanie Klein. Citing the theories she had developed over the previous five years, Klein referred to a 'depressive position' phase that every infant passes through after it has been weaned. The baby 'mourns' its mother's breast and the 'love, goodness and security [that] it has come to stand for.' The internal conflict wrought by this loss, Klein wrote, is a true psychosis: to preserve the internalised 'good' objects signified by the

[16] Freud's growing hostility to Jones is documented for instance in B. Maddox, *Freud's Wizard: the Enigma of Ernest Jones* (London: John Murray, 2006), pp. 194-195.
[17] R. A. Paskauskas (ed.), *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones 1908-1939* (Harvard University Press: Massachusetts, 1993), p. 223.
[18] Ibid. pp. 651-652.
[19] For the details of Melanie Klein's career, see J. Segal, *Melanie Klein* (London: SAGE, 1992); J. Kristeva, *Melanie Klein* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).
[20] The main works that comprise the war of publications between Freud's followers and Klein's can be found in P. King & R. Steiner (ed.), *The Freud-Klein Controversies 1941-45* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992).

mother, the young child must fight to suppress the internalised 'bad' objects. Its success or its failure in this depends on the healthiness of the maternal bond and it also determines the baby's future mental health – if too much destructive psychic energy must be deployed to restore harmony, the child may develop manic-depressive tendencies. But even in cases where the ego regains its equilibrium, she argued, the memory of this great cleavage and the resulting psychosis period is retained. When in later life a great loss is suffered, this early, pre-verbal memory of deprivation and struggle will be triggered and a part of the psychosis is relived. Hence even in 'normal' mourning, 'the mourner is in fact ill.'[21]

Klein repeatedly cited Freud's essay with apparent approval. But she invariably went on to suggest a revision or change of emphasis that fundamentally altered the theory that she claimed to support. In fact, earlier iterations of Klein's argument in this essay made no reference to 'Mourning and Melancholia' at all: not in the previous 1935 paper, which she extensively quotes, nor in the speech on which the 1939 paper is based. Klein evidently found it necessary to show that her ideas were firmly grounded in Freudian orthodoxy, even while rebutting them.[22] This is not to deny that Klein's thoughts on mourning were influenced by Freud's. But the way she deployed his ideas shifted the perception of 'Mourning and Melancholia' in two fundamental ways. It established the idea that mourning ('normal' or otherwise) was inexorably pathological and psychotic, and brought the topic more into the foreground of psychoanalytic discourse, especially in Britain, where the influence of Klein and the Freud-Klein schism was most substantially felt.

Klein's complex, conflicted reading of Freud influenced not only the psychoanalytic community, but research on mourning and bereavement by a generation of British such as John Bowlby, Peter Marris and Colin Murray-

[21] M. Klein, 'Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States' in *Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. J. Mitchell (Simon & Schuster: New York: 1986), pp. 146-175.
[22] L. G. Fiorini, T. Bokanowski and S. Lewkowicz, *On Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia'* (Wiley: New York: 2007), pp. 7-10.

Parkes. Bowlby's 'attachment theory' adopted the Kleinian notion that early experiences of parental love and neglect shape responses to loss throughout our life. Murray-Parkes introduced the idea of 'stages of grief' (for him, these are shock, yearning, despair and recovery).[23] This came directly from Klein's essay: 'it seems that the processes of projecting and ejecting which are closely connected with giving vent to feelings, are held up in certain stages of grief by an extensive manic control.'[24]

Bowlby's notion of a 'grief process' consisting of distinct stages was in turn taken up by other theorists, including Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, whose 1969 book *Death and Dying* was based on research that focused on terminally ill patients rather than their bereaved relatives. Kübler-Ross's work is the source of the most widely-recognised 'stages of grief' model, with its five stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.[25] The notion of 'five stages' has been widely criticised by subsequent researchers, and empirical studies have found little evidence in its favour.[26] In Kübler-Ross's defence, it was never intended to be definitive: her original book makes more nuanced and granular distinctions than its subsequent stereotypes. In the 2005 sequel to *Death and Dying* (entitled *Grief and Grieving*) she disowned any straightforwardly prescriptive interpretation of her work: the stages model 'never meant to help tuck messy emotions into neat packages,' she wrote.[27] Nevertheless, this later book reaffirms the value of the five stages and is even more assertive in its

[23] J. Bowlby, 'Processes of mourning', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, issue 42 (1961), pp. 317-340; the relationship between psychoanalysis and attachment theory was once overlooked but is now widely noted – see for instance J. Schwartz, 'The Unacknowledged History of John Bowlby's Attachment Theory', *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, vol. 31, Issue 2 (February 2015), pp. 251–266.
[24] Klein, 'Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States' in *Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. J. Mitchell (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), p. 162.
[25] E. Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and Their Own Families* (London: Scribner, 2019).
[26] P. Maciejewski et al, 'An Empirical Examination of the Stage Theory of Grief', *JAMA*. Vol. 297 No. 7 (2007), pp. 716–723.
[27] E. Kübler-Ross & D. Kessler, *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2005).

characterisation of grief as a pursuit of meaning structured by 'stages'.[28] Meanwhile the 'five stages' are still widely cited as a 'road map' by bereaved people themselves, including sometimes by practising health professionals.[29]

The struggle within: contingencies and continuities in conceptualising emotional responses to death

The evolution of 'grief' as a key component of the psychological lexicon has, then, been a contingent process of adaptation and appropriation. Rather than being steadily and systematically elucidated by advances in twentieth-century psychology, grief has been shaped by its deployment in debates whose primary focus was rarely the subject of grief itself. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a number of common features in the idea of grief present in theories from Freud to Kübler-Ross:

1. Grief is not just an ephemeral feeling in response to an immediate stimulus, in the way that anger or disgust might be, but a process that takes both time and effortful attention: it is in some sense 'work'.
2. In at least some cases – particularly when the work of grief is blocked or the effort incorrectly channelled – 'grief' can become pathological and cause or even constitute a mental disorder.
3. In healthy cases, this grief process is also a process of healing and perhaps even redemption: 'grief work' culminates in the restoration of heath and equilibrium.
4. Grief is an important element in the formation of mind and personality: the process of internalising and adapting to trauma and loss is also an act of self-fashioning.

[28] Ibid. e.g. pp. 155-158.
[29] M. Stroebe, H, Schut, K. Boerner, 'Cautioning Health-Care Professionals: Bereaved Persons Are Misguided Through the Stages of Grief' *Omega*, Vol. 74, Issue 4 (2017), pp. 455-473.

5. In consequence of all of these features, grief can be understood as an internal struggle between different aspects of the self.

This thesis suggests that this eminently psychological way of understanding and navigating emotional responses to death may not only be an inheritance of psychoanalysis and experimental psychology, but may also have deeper cultural and intellectual roots. Supplementing and complicating the history of the twentieth-century grief concept, I have taken a longer view of the way in which the concepts governing emotional responses to death have developed. Systematic, secular, scientific accounts of emotions were not a blank slate for describing psychology with dispassionate objectivity, but adopted value-laden models of emotion from earlier discourses, including Christianity. Each of the characteristics of grief enumerated above has parallels in nineteenth-century discourse, as the fields analysed in this thesis show.

What is more, the transition from a theological framework for understanding emotions to a scientific one did not involve shedding the idea that emotions had a moral valence. Even as men of science attempted to identify a physical, biological and – increasingly – evolutionary basis for emotions, they also produced value-laden accounts of feelings like sorrow and grief that perpetuated and naturalised a preference for an emotional style predominantly identified with an upper- and middle-class British masculinity, which they equated with moral and intellectual authority and self-control. Whether self-consciously or otherwise, both religious and secular writers were engaged in creating an emotional code that valorised some ways of experiencing and expressing feelings while denigrating the value and legitimacy of others. One common trope across different fields of literature was that sorrow should be restrained; another was that it could function as a teacher and an aid to self-improvement. 'Sorrow, like all the other passions and affections of our nature, requires to be kept within its proper bounds,' wrote Henry Southgate in 1884.[30]

[30] W. Logan, *Words of Comfort for Bereaved Parents of Little Children* (London: James Nisbet: 1868), p. 167.

Consolation tracts consistently decried expressions of loss unchecked by spiritual reflection, while lauding the potential of Christian sorrow to act as a 'school of sorrow' and an 'alphabet of tears'.[31] From a very different metaphysical and epistemological perspective, William Maudsley poured scorn on the grief of 'the hysterical woman who rends the air with shrieks' and whose 'explosive vents' were 'almost a luxury'; at the same time he believed that 'every pain is pregnant with its proper instruction, every virtue perhaps sown in pain.'[32]

In particular, the elite writers who developed normative theories about emotional responses to death depicted inner struggle as virtuous, authentic and morally or intellectually improving. Religious writers produced narratives of sorrow in which a 'natural' emotion was to be overcome by faith and transmuted into acceptance or even joy. Critics of mourning practices cast doubt on the authenticity of easy expressions of sorrow. And, even before a science of grief was systemically developed in twentieth-century psychology, Victorian men of science and medicine translated this language of inner struggle into a secular, physicalist paradigm. Evolutionary accounts of emotion located the origins of grief in reflexive animal responses to death or loss, yet theorists including Charles Darwin drew a distinction between an unprocessed, freely expressed bestial grief and a distinctly human phenomenon characterised by the struggle between grief and the will. Physiologists interpreted grief as potentially pathological disruption to the order of the nervous system, which could be counteracted by an exertion of a 'will' whose physical basis was disputed but which in many respects transplanted the Christian notion of the soul.

This idea of emotional mastery and control (not confined to men, but reflecting a set of behaviours and values typically coded as masculine) did not

[31] H. Southgate, *Gone Before* (London: Hodder and Stoughton: 1884), p. 60; C. Kingsley, *Out of the Deep: Words for the Sorrowful* (London: 1880), p. 60.
[32] H. Maudsley, *Life in Mind and Conduct: Studies of Organic in Human Nature* (London: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 319, 325.

straightforwardly involve a rejection of emotionality. The idealised emotional response to death and loss was that of powerful emotion counteracted, controlled and ultimately overcome, or else transmuted or transfigured, by a powerful exertion of faith and/or will. What was significant in the conceptions of grief developed by religious and secular writers alike was not only the pre-eminence of the will over the emotions, but also the struggle between the two. It was the process of emotional struggle and the work that it involved, which these Victorian writers understood as an engine of value and meaning. Whether they understood this in terms of spiritual improvement, evolutionary development or nervous robustness, theorists of sorrow and grief consistently valorised a model of loss that involved the effortful management of strong feelings.

Emotion and the will in narratives of secularisation

In itself, there is nothing particularly surprising in the fact that upper- and middle-class Victorian men preached an emotional regime that upheld a code of mastery, inhibition and control. The caricature of the Victorians as repressed, humourless acolytes of the 'stiff upper lip' is an oversimplification (and in some ways an anachronism).[33] Yet it is clear that it was a period when an unusual volume of moralising texts were produced (almost uniformly by men) urging the disciplining of emotions and warning against loss of control. This is evident in the proliferation of religious tracts, not least on how to mourn; in censorious satires casting doubt on the authenticity and the decency of publicly expressed emotion; and in the naturalisation of these same emotional norms in psychology and mental science.

[33] As Thomas Dixon has shown, the phrase 'stiff upper lip' was not popularised until the release of a 1937 George Gershwin song mocking the English for their stereotypical emotional reserve: T. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2015), p. 205; in this book (pp. 153-184) and elsewhere Dixon has explored a more emotionally expressive and in particular tearful side to Victorian culture, while emphasizing that crying and other varieties of emotional expression could have a wide range of meanings; T. Dixon, 'The Tears of Mr Justice Willes', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 17, Issue 1 (November 2011), pp. 1-23.

The injunction against succumbing to emotion was not an injunction against emotion itself: both scientific and religious writers saw intense emotion as a force for the improvement of the character of individuals and perhaps even civilisations. Rather, British writers on grief argued that the benefits of emotional suffering (including in response to death) came from the willful struggle to contain this suffering without allowing it an easy vent or release. This is not only relevant in relation to emotional responses to death, but may have something to say about the value systems contained in nineteenth-century emotions theory more broadly. It suggests seeing interiority, silent struggle and stoicism as an affective stance in itself, rather than a total absence of emotion. This position was similar to what Paul White has termed 'the sentiment of objectivity', and similarly constituted a self-fashioning of middle-class masculinity.[34] In the examples analysed by White, objectivity could involve the evocation of a whole range of emotions – an 'emotional economy of science'.[35] This application of grief in the fashioning of a 'scientific self' was just one example of how encounters with death were an occasion for the demonstration of masculine discipline and self-control. The dramatisation of inner struggle similarly legitimised the exercise of spiritual, temporal and scientific authority.

There is no doubt that between the mid-nineteenth century and today, paradigm shifts have occurred in the ways in which emotions are commonly described, explained and navigated. Psychology, evolutionary science and psychoanalysis have supplanted theology as the dominant domains for debates about emotion theory and the sources of new models for emotion. 'Grief' as we understand it today, and in particular the idea of a 'grief process', has emerged from this shift: although the word is old, its sense as a distinctive emotional arc originating from the experience of bereavement is new. The novelties in vocabulary and theoretical framework can obscure how much scientific accounts of emotion have inherited from earlier regimes – especially when the shift in disciplines did

[34] P. White, 'Darwin's Emotions: the Scientific Self and the Sentiment of Objectivity', *Isis* Vol. 100, No. 4 (December 2009), pp .195–213.
[35] Ibid, p. 212.

not involve an accompanying shift in the social, cultural and demographic identity of the writers propagating theories of emotion. In the case of grief, this inheritance consists of a series of narratives that construe emotional responses to death in terms of internal struggle between different aspects of the inner self. In Christian and in secular thought, the clash of will and emotions contributed to the construction of 'soul', 'character', 'mind' and – finally – 'self' or 'ego'.

Tony Walter has situated changing attitudes to death and bereavement within an orthodox narrative of 'secularisation', beginning with the emergence of Humanism in the Renaissance and culminating in the loss of Church authority since the late nineteenth century.[36] Among Walter's key conclusions in this analysis is the assertion that 'the very concept of bereavement is a secular one'.[37] When the most important relationship in human life is the relationship to God and the divine, he argues, the key question to ask after a person's death is what has happened to their soul. When the most important relationship in life is with other humans, the key question becomes what survivors should do with the feelings that sustained that relationship now that the connection has been severed. 'Human loss,' Walter writes, 'has replaced spiritual destination as the touchstone by which even Christians justify their practices.'[38]

There is no doubt that the very widespread belief in the survival of the soul had an enormous impact on the way that Victorians processed the deaths of their loved ones. Besides offering solace, this belief also made it imperative that sorrow should be counteracted by an exertion of faith, lest despair should betray an excessive worldliness. As Pat Jalland, Mary Riso and Michael Wheeler have demonstrated, and as my analysis of consolation literature also shows, the idea

[36] T. Walter, 'Secularisation' in *Death and Bereavement Across Cultures*, ed. P. Laungani and W. Young (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1997), pp. 166-187.
[37] Ibid. p. 181.
[38] Ibid.

of heavenly reunions was not a sterile article of faith but a fervently imagined feature of nineteenth-century Christians' emotional engagement with death.[39]

It is also the case that the epistemological and metaphysical basis for conceptualising the emotional journey of bereavement was fundamentally different for physiological psychologists than it was for theologians. In secular psychology emotions were conceived of as fluctuations in the body rather than movements of the soul. Once considered a distinctive marker of humanity, they became vestiges of animal reflexes in Darwinian thought. This was not a straightforward transition, as writers like Edward Reed, Rick Rylance and Roger Smith have demonstrated: many nineteenth-century psychologists were committed to a largely Protestant conception of human nature.[40] Nevertheless, the adoption of a materialist language of feeling was a meaningful shift: as Thomas Dixon convincingly argues, nineteenth-century psychology was not merely 'theology in disguise'.[41]

In terms of their fundamental assumptions and their sources of intellectual authority, the Christian and secular writers that I have addressed were therefore different in important respects. To this extent my distinction between religious sorrow and secular grief supports a narrative of 'secularisation'. However, it is important not to view 'secularisation' in purely negative terms, as a shedding of superstition and metaphysical excess – a species of teleology that Charles Taylor has termed 'subtraction stories'.[42] Secular engagements with questions about

[39] Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, pp. 265-283; M. Riso, *The Narrative of the Good Death: The Evangelical Deathbed in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2015), e.g. pp. 174-180; M. Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 119-174.
[40] R. Rylance, *Victorian Psychology and British Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); E. Reed, *From Soul to Mind: The Emergence of Psychology, from Erasmus Darwin to William James* (London: Yale University Press, 1998); R. Smith, *Free Will and the Human Sciences in Britain, 1870–1910* (London: Routledge, 2016).
[41] T. Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Invention of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 235-239.
[42] C. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007); Taylor uses the term 'subtraction narratives' throughout, but see 26-29 for an exposition of the term. The idea that secularisation needs to be seen as a positive process rather than one of

human nature, including investigations into emotional responses to death, were not purely projects to support or undermine Christianity. Indeed, as David Nash has suggested, secularisation itself can be understood as a 'grand narrative' with an implicit system of values and beliefs. Instead of asking whether or not secularisation is 'true', Nash suggests, historians should view it as they view Christianity, 'as a series of narratives that convinced and comforted some, strangely in a manner that secularisation saw religion doing in earlier ages.'[43]

Many of the writers I consider in the second half of this thesis – Thomas Huxley, William Winwood Reade, Henry Maudsley and to some extent Charles Darwin – self-consciously engaged in the early myth-making of this secularisation narrative, including in the attempt to make sense of sorrow and grief. In doing so, they drew on familiar models, including theological ones. Often the values conveyed by these writers in their confrontation with bereavement had as much to do with identities like class, gender and race as with confessional and professional identity. Animated by concerns about the moral meanings of emotions, secular writers often adopted and adapted narratives about emotional responses to death from the Christian models that they set out to challenge.

To assert that the concept of bereavement is uniquely 'secular' both understates the extent to which religious writing was interested in the content of emotions themselves, and overlooks elements in secular writing that sought to impart a moral, social or teleological purpose to grief. Looking at a moment when these two conceptual regimes for interpreting death existed side by side reveals the continuities that a straightforward narrative of 'secularisation' tends to obscure.

'There is no suffering that does not entail a social appraisal and, by extension, a form of expression linked to cultural guidelines and expectations,' Javier

---

negation is also a theme in D. Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) and J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

[43] D. Nash, 'Believing in Secularisation – Stories of Decline, Potential, and Resurgence', *Journal of Religious History* Vol. 41, No. 4, (December 2017), pp. 505-531 (quotation on p. 531).

Moscoso has written. The suffering that Moscoso was referring to was physical: the quotation is from his *Cultural History of Pain*.[44] But mental suffering – even the most acute and apparently primal – can also be construed as a form of social appraisal: a thinking and deliberate response that involves judgments about the meaning of the cause of suffering, rather than an instinctual response to a stimulus.[45] A twentieth- and twenty-first-century concept like 'grief' is not straightforwardly the outcome of objective scientific observation, but instead a narrative that bears the marks of its narrators. Part of the context for the emergence of this concept is the Victorian narratives of sorrow and grief, which themselves contain social appraisals linked to the values, prejudices and expectations of the theological and secular writers who developed them.

[44] J. Moscoso, *Pain: A Cultural History* (London: MacMillan, 2012), p. 56.
[45] In adopting the term 'appraisal', I do not intend to call to mind the 'Appraisal Theory' of emotions in modern psychology, which centres the role in emotion-formation of individual judgments about the likely personal and social consequences of an action within a particular environment and with reference to specific motivations and goals. This strand of emotions theory does however have some features in common with the way I have described emotions in this thesis, in that it treats emotions as 'episodes' or 'processes' and emphasises variability between individuals and cultures; see A. Moore, 'Appraisal Theory' (March 2017) in the continuously updated online edition of *The Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, ed. V. Zeigler-Hill and T. Shackleford, retrieved online at https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-3-319-28099-8_493-1 (18/07/2021).

'Of all things not to be wasted': Grief, narrative and the construction of character

In 1895, towards the end of the period this thesis has addressed, the agnostic critic and author Leslie Stephen presented his daughters Virginia and Vanessa with a small book. This text, which became known as the *Mausoleum Book*, was purportedly conceived as an account of the life and character of their dead mother, Julia (as well as of his previous wife, Minny). It remained a private family document until 1977. When the book was finally published, it transpired that it was something closer to a memoir. [46] After initially declaring his intention to 'simply write about your mother', and not to indulge in any revelations about his own 'internal struggles', Stephen instead embarked on an account of his life and career – including confessions about intimate anxieties and fears.[47] Only after this long digression did he return to an account of Julia, and a shorter one of Minny. Finally, the narrative disintegrated into a series of addenda recording the deaths, one by one, of his literary friends.

If there was a theme that held this curious, ramshackle and compellingly ambivalent text together, that theme was the virtues of sorrow and grief. When he met Julia, Stephen recalled, they both came to their marriage scarred with the deaths of their previous spouses:

> My darling had to pass through the valley of the shadow of death… Life – alas! I know the feeling too well – becomes under such trials a dream, a futile procession of images which seem to have in them no real life or meaning: the only real world is the world of intense gnawing pain which may gradually be dulled,

[46] For a summary of the book's history and the circumstances of its publication, see V. R. Hyman, 'Concealment and Disclosure in Sir Leslie Stephen's *Mausoleum Book*', *Biography*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring 1980), pp. 121-131.
[47] L. Stephen, *Mausoleum Book* (Oxford, Clarendon Press: 1977), pp. 3, 4.

> but which refuses to admit any of the brighter realities from outside.[48]

Julia is not only marked by grief, but utterly defined by it. 'Sometimes I have felt… that the world was clothed in drab but that it was all shrouded in a crape-veil,' she says, in a letter that Stephens quoted at length.[49] To him, though, this pervasive struggle with death and mental suffering was the wellspring of all her virtue. Having rescued herself from the 'shipwreck' of bereavement and misery, Stephen wrote, her life was devoted to the salvation of others. Stephen contrasted his own 'masculine' sorrow to his wife's 'numbed and petrified' response.

> Womanlike she has accepted sorrow, a life of sorrow, or let me say a life crowded by sorrow, as her permanent portion. I, though plunged into a deep melancholy, always resent or resist the thought of a complete abandonment of the hope, at least, of happiness. I still somewhere, deep down in my nature, was able to carry on a struggle against the dominion of grief.[50]

As the tale goes on, further miseries accrue to his unfortunate wife. Yet this was not a call for his children to pity their mother. It was a lesson for them to follow. 'Deep as was my darling's grief,' he wrote, 'it became "transmuted" into affection for the survivors.' Paraphrasing from an essay on Wordsworth that he had written years before, Stephen imparted what appeared to be the moral of his diffident memoir: 'Grief… is of all things not to be wasted.'[51] Shortly after this he abandoned any attempt to write in prose and gave over the rest of the

---

[48] Ibid, p. 40.
[49] Ibid, pp. 40-41.
[50] Ibid, p. 47.
[51] Ibid, p. 71; the essay on Wordsworth is a longer exposition of the same theme. For instance: 'Wordsworth's favourite lesson is the possibility of turning grief and disappointment into account. He teaches in many forms the necessity of 'transmuting' sorrow into strength.' L. Stephen, 'Wordsworth's Ethics', *Hours in a Library* (London: Elder & Co, 1892), pp. 270-307.

book to a litany of notices on noteworthy events – predominantly deaths. Emma Darwin, Margaret Oliphant, Lady Tennyson: one by one, eminent Victorians were consigned to history by his pen. 'I don't quite like this tendency of this to become a series of obituary notices,' Stephen fretted.[52]

In many ways, the *Mausoleum Book* was a quintessentially Victorian work from a literary figure who, as Noel Annan has written, was an almost archetypal member of the Victorian 'intellectual aristocracy'.[53] Its mixture of sternness and sentiment, its fetishisation of domesticity and feminine virtues, its paternalistic moralising and even its diffidence and anxiety all seem characteristic of the figure of the Victorian patriarch.[54] Stephen distinguished between masculine and feminine modes in the emotional response to death: the woman gives way to suffering, or 'transmutes' it into sympathy, while the man struggles for mastery over despair. His account of his life as a 'struggle against the dominion of grief' was thereby an act of self-fashioning and self-justification as an upper-middle-class man at the apex of the social order of his time.

Stephen's self-writing was an enactment of a model of emotional mastery through inner struggle, the most prominent of the various emotional narratives that I have analysed throughout this thesis. The way he put his suffering to work in narrating his character could be seen as a statement of secular individualism.

---

[52] Stephen, *Mausoleum Book*, p. 102.

[53] 'They were intellectual because they measured others by their mental and moral attributes, not by wealth or birth. They can also be called aristocratic because they felt ultimately secure; secure that their standard of values was correct; secure in that they were above grinding economy, seediness or niggling.' N. Annan, *Leslie Stephen: the Godless Victorian* (New York: Random House, 1984), p. 6.

[54] For an insightful discussion of the gender politics of the *Mausoleum Book* and of the role of ego-writing in the self-fashioning of Victorian men of letters, see T. L. Broughton, *Men of Letters, Writing Lives: Masculinity and Auto/Biography in the Late Victorian Period* (London: Routledge, 1999), e.g. p. 27: 'In its all-too-self-conscious professions of "anti-self-consciousness"; in its validation of masculine autonomy in the guise of a celebration of interdependence; in its laboured disavowal of the self apparently in favour of, but actually at the expense of, a virtually voiceless feminine "other" (Julia); and in its translation of social connections into metaphysical bonds of love, Stephen's text enacts the dynamics of Danahay's bourgeois subject almost to the point of parody.'

Stephen was an avowed agnostic who had lost his faith after reading *The Origin of Species* and was close personal friends with Darwin's own family and many of his most famous adherents.[55] While 'secularisation' may not have been the term that he himself would have used, much of his intellectual labour can be understood as part of a project to repudiate Christian doctrines as a source of knowledge and authority. This project did not prevent him from finding a higher meaning and purpose in his and his wife's emotional responses to death. On the contrary, these emotions became part of a secular narrative of selfhood. In striking ways – the pessimism about the possibility of worldly joy, the 'transmuting' of sorrow into affection, the 'struggle against the dominion of grief' – Stephen's narrative echoed those of Evangelical consolation tracts. In asserting an agnostic identity through grief, secular writers like Stephen reproduced a pillar of the Christian moralism that they had ostensibly rejected. Grief was as central to the formation of the secular self as sorrow was to the Christian soul and twentieth-century psychology has inherited values and assumptions from both.

Throughout this thesis I have treated ideas about sorrow and grief as narratives characterised by generic structures and tropes and imbued with what Peter Goldie describes as 'coherence, meaningfulness and evaluative and emotional import'.[56] Taking Stephen's *Mausoleum Book* as an example, alongside the many other case studies I have presented over the course of this thesis, demonstrates the value in this approach. Stephen's book was a narrativisation of his own and his wife's lives, in which he sought to give meaning to their experiences by appealing to the theme of struggle against emotional hardship in general, and bereavement in particular. Grief both gave the overall narrative its

[55] Leslie Stephen expressed his religious views in many places but his clearest statement is L. Stephen, 'An Agnostic's Apology' in *An Agnostic's Apology and Other Essays* (London: Smith & Elder, 1893), pp. 1-41; Stephen argues that 'man knows nothing of the Infinite and Absolute; and that, knowing nothing, he had better not be dogmatic about his ignorance' (p. 41). He also disavowed 'atheism' and 'epicurean indifference' on the grounds that belief in *some* underlying logic to the universe was rational and vital, even if the exact nature of that logic was impossible to grasp (p. 20).
[56] P. Goldie, *The Mess Inside: Narrative, Emotion and the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2012), p. 2.

meaning and carried an implicit narrative of its own. This trope of internal struggle between grief and the will helped Stephen to process his suffering in a way that reinforced his self-identification as a freethinking, deep-feeling 'intellectual aristocrat'. The resulting emotional construction emulated justifications for Christian sorrow in ways that are only obvious once the tropes and structures of its attendant narrative are taken into account. Stephen's beliefs about the destination of his first wife's soul had nothing in common with the ardent Christianity of a writer like Hume-Rothery, for whom resisting 'natural – but unspiritual, unchristian grief' was an urgent and heroic act on both an individual and a social level.[57] Yet this religious, metaphysical and epistemological gulf did not invalidate the emotional and moral structure that Christianity gave to bereavement. In ways that are arguably as important to the experience of emotion as its philosophical or doctrinal basis, secular writers like Stephen were navigating emotional responses to death in not-so-novel ways.

The idea of emotions as narratives has some similarities with Monique Scheer's idea of emotions as 'cultural scripts'. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, Scheer treats expressions of emotion as engagements with culturally and socially learned models, which are enacted in individual ways. Like narratives, scripts involve evaluations about authenticity and meaning: 'Which of these is more "real" or legitimate than the other and for what reasons is a judgment, not inherent in the emotional practice itself.'[58] Whereas scripts are enacted moment-to moment, however, my use of narratives emphasises the retrospective, introspective and self-conscious nature of engagement with a series of emotional experiences: the way in which a sequence of affective experiences relating to one event can be folded into a single concept to give it sense and meaning. Emotional responses to death are particularly amenable to this approach. This is partly because encounters with mortality inescapably raise critical moral, metaphysical and

[57] M. Hume-Rothery, *Anti-Mourning: A Lecture against the Unchristian Custom of Wearing Mourning for the Dead* (London: James Spiers, 1876), p. 6
[58] M. Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History?) A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory* Vol. 51 (May 2012), pp. 193-220 (quotation on p. 207).

social questions and partly because the emotions involved in bereavement unfold and fluctuate over a sustained period of time. But attending to the way that emotions carry narrative structures and tropes may nevertheless prove to be a fruitful approach for considering other accounts of emotions. One benefit this might have is to allow historians and other scholars to notice and give weight to the narrative and structural similarities between emotional experiences, even when they are rooted in different philosophical systems – as I have attempted to do with Christian sorrow and secular grief.

Bibliography

Books and Journals

Ablow, Rachel: *Victorian Pain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017)

Ahmed, Sara: *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Routledge, 2015)

Alexander, Kaelin: 'Turning Mourning: Trollope's Ambivalent Widows', *Victorian Literature and Culture* Vol. 43 (2015), pp. 607–620

Almond, Philip: *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Annan, Noel: *Leslie Stephen: the Godless Victorian* (New York: Random House, 1984)

Anon, 'Sudden Death From Grief and Fear', *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1326 (May 29, 1886), p. 1031

Ariès, Philippe: *The Hour of Our Death* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1981)

Ariès, Philippe: *Western Attitudes Towards Death*, trans. Weaver, Helen (London: Penguin, 1983)

Augustine, *Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*, trans. R. Trench (London, 1851)

Austen, Jane: *Emma* (London: Penguin, 2003)

Bain, Alexander: *The Emotions and the Will* (London, 1859)

Bandini, Julia: 'The Medicalization of Bereavement: (Ab)normal Grief in the DSM-5', *Death Studies* vol. 39,6 (April 2015), pp. 347-352

Banner, Michael: 'The Today Programme', *BBC Radio 4* (9 February 2017)*

Barclay, Katie: *Men on Trial: Performing Emotion, Embodiment and Identity in Ireland, 1800-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018)

Barnes, Julian: *Nothing to be Frightened Of* (London: Random House, 2008)

Barton, Stephen: 'Eschatology and the Emotions in Early Christianity', *Journal of Biblical Literature,* Vol. 130, No. 3 (September 201)

Bebbington, David: *Evangelicalism in Britain: A History From the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989)

Beer, Gillian: *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Bentham, Jeremy: *An Introduction To The Principles Of Morals And Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1807)

Berens, Edward: *Beren's Sermons on Sickness, Sorrow and Death* (London: Rivington, 1839)

Bloomfield, Anne: '"Muscular Christian or Mystic? Charles Kingsley Reappraised." *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 11 Issue 2 (1994), pp. 172-90

Boddice, Rob: *A History of Attitudes and Behaciours Toward Animals in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain: Anthropocentrism and the Emergence of Animals* (The Edwin Mellen Press: Lampeter, 2008)

Boddice, Rob: 'Vivisecting Major: a Victorian gentleman scientist defends animal experimentation 1876-1885', *Isis* Vol. 102 Issue 2 (2011)

Boddice, Rob, ed. *Pain and Emotion in Modern* History (London: MacMillan, 2014)

Bonano, George and Keltner, Dacher: 'Facial expressions of emotion and the course of conjugal bereavement' *Journal of Abnormal Psychology,* Vol. 106, No. 1, pp. 126–137

Bondeson, Jan: *Greyfriars Bobby: the Most Faithful Dog in the World* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2012)

Bound Alberti, Fay: *A Biography of Loneliness: the History of an Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

Broughton, Trev *Men of Letters, Writing Lives: Masculinity and Auto/Biography in the Late Victorian Period* (London: Routledge, 1999)

Bourke, Joanna: *The Story of Pain From Prayer to Painkillers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Bowlby, John: 'Processes of mourning', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, issue 42 (1961), pp. 317-340

Bowlby, John: 'Processes of mourning', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Issue 42 (1961)
Bowlby, John: *Charles Darwin: A New Life* (London: W. W. Norton, 1992)

Breger, Louis: *Freud: Darkness in the Midst of Visions* (New York: John Wiley, 2000)

Brehm, Alfred: 'The Ways of Monkeys', *Popular Science Monthly* Volume 27 (June 1885), pp. 235-6

Brinkmann, Svend: *Diagnostic Cultures: A Cultural Approach to the Pathologization of Modern Life* (London: Routledge, 2016)

Browne, Janet: *Charles Darwin: Voyaging* (Princeton: Princeton, 1996)

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett: 'Grief', in *Poems*, vol. 1 (London: Edward Moxon, 1844)

Brown, Arthur: 'Grief and the Chimpanzee' in *The American Naturalist*, vol. 13 (1879), p. 173

Brush, George: 'An Analysis Of One Hundred Cases Of Acute Melancholia', *The British Medical Journal,* Vol. 2, No. 1917 (Sep. 25, 1897), pp. 777-779

Butler, Judith: *Precarious Life: the Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2006)

Butler, Judith: *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable* (Verso, London 2016)

Cadwaller, Alan: 'Pedalling the death of a life: A Late Victorian variation on dealing with grief', *The Catholic, Journal of Religious History*, Issue 38 (October 2014) Vol. 38, Issue 1, pp. 35-52

Cain, Peter: 'Empire and the Languages of Character and Virtue in Later Victorian Britain', *Modern Intellectual History*, Vol. Issue 2 (August 2007), pp. 249-273

Carpenter, William: *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1890)

Castillo, Larisa: 'Natural Authority in Charles Dickens's Martin Chuzzlewit and the Copyright Act of 1842', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (March 2008)

Chamber, Arthur: *The Open Door* (London: Drane's, 1913)

Chez, Keridiana: *Victorian Dogs, Victorian Men* (Colombo: The Ohio State University Press, 2017)

Chrichton-Browne, James: 'Clinical Lectures On Mental And Cerebral Diseases', The British Medical Journal, Vol. 2, No. 615 (October 1872), pp. 403-406

Christ, Carol: 'Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House', *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, ed. Martha Vicinus (London: Methuen, 1980)

Clarke, Rachel: *Dear Life: A Doctor's Story of Love & Death* (London: Hachette, 2020)

Clifford, Hugh: *In Court and in Kampong* (London: Grant Richards, 1897)

Cocks, Harry: 'Modernism and Modernity' in *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (London: Routledge, 2014)

Conrad, Peter: 'Medicalization and Social Control', *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 18 (1992), pp. 209-232

Cornish, Charles John: *Animals at Work and Play: their Activities and Emotions* (London: Sedley & Co, 1896)

Collini, Stefan: 'The Idea of "Character" in Victorian Political Thought', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Vol. 35 (1985), pp. 29-50

Cooke, William: *Mind and Emotions Considered in Relation to Health, Disease and Religion* (London: Longman & Co, 1939)

Coutts, Marion: *The Iceberg: A Memoir* (London: Atlantic, 2014)

Curl, James Stevens: *The Victorian Celebration of Death,* (London: David Charles, 1972)

Darwin, Charles: *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, ed. Ekman, Paul, (London: Harper Collins, 1998)

Darwin, Charles: *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals: Definitive Edition,* ed. Ekman, Paul: (London: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Darwin, Charles: *The Descent of Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Darwin, Charles: *The Origin of Species* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1998)

Darwin, *The Variation of Animals and Plats Under Domestication* (London: John Murray, 1868)

Davey, J. G.: 'Lectures on Insanity', *Association Medical Journal* (1855) p. 668

Davies, Douglas: *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997)

Derrida, Jacques: *The Work of Mourning* ed. Brault, Pascale-Anne & Naas, Michael (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001)

Desmond, Adrian: *Huxley: From Devils Disciple to Evolution's High Priest* (London: Perseus, 1997)

Desmond, Adrian and Moore, James: *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins* (London: Penguin, 2010)

Dickens, Charles: *Martin Chuzzlewit* (London: Penguin, 1999)

Dickens, Charles: *Oliver Twist, or, the Parish Boy's Progress* (Penguin: London, 2002)

Dickens, Charles: *Great Expectations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

Dickens, Charles: *The Old Curiosity Shop* (London: Penguin, 1972)

Dickens, Charles: *Bleak House* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977)

Dictionary of National Biography online edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), https://www.oxforddnb.com/

- 'Pomeroy [née Legge], Florence Wallace, Viscountess Harberton (1843/4–1911), dress reform campaigner'
- Clifford, Sir Charles Hugh (1866–1941), colonial governor and author
- 'Flavel, John (bap. 1630, d. 1691), Presbyterian minister and religious writer'
- 'Southgate, Henry (1818–1888), anthologist and auctioneer'
- 'Mary Catherine Hume- (1824–1885), campaigner for medical reform and author'

Dixon, Thomas: *From Passions to Emotions: the Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Dixon, Thomas: *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Dixon, Thomas: *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017)

Dixon, Thomas: 'The Tears of Mr Justice Welles', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 17, Issue 1 (2012)

Drew, John: 'Reviewing Dickens in the Victorian Periodical Press', *Charles Dickens in Context,* eds. Ledger, Sally and Furneaux, Holly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Dollimore, Jonathan: *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2001)

Douglas, Ann: 'Heaven our home: Consolation literature in the northern United States, 1830-1880', *American Quarterly* 26 (1974), pp. 496-515

Durbach, Nadja: *Bodily Matters: the Anti-Vaccination Movement in England, 1853*-1907 (London 2005)

Earle, Sarah, Komaromy, Carol & Bartholemew, Caroline: *Death and Dying: A Reader* (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 2009)

Ekman, Paul: 'How to Spot a Terrorist on the Fly', *The Washington Post*, 29 October 2006 [retrieved online at https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2006/10/29/how-to-spot-a-terrorist-on-the-fly/e8f5865f-1dac-4c55-990f-459c1e8b3563/, 25/05/2020]

Ekman, Paul: 'Lie Catching and Micro-Expressions' in *The Philosophy of Deception,* ed. Martin, Clancy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Ekman, Paul: 'Darwin's contributions to our understanding of emotional expressions', *Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society B Biological Sciences*, Vol. 364, Issue 1535 (December 2009), pp. 3449-3451

Eliot, George: *The Mill on the Floss* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1995)

Eliot, George: *Middlemarch* (London: Penguin, 1994)

Elliott, Charlotte: *Hours of Sorrow Cheered and Comforted* (London: Booth, 1856)

Ellis, William Gilmore: 'The Amok of the Malays', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 39, issue 166 (July 1893), pp. 325-338

Eyler, John: *Victorian Social Medicine: the ideas and methods of William Farr, 1979: The work of William Farr, the statistical movement, GRO and mortality statistics, the Life Table, and zymotic theory* (JBaltimore: ohn Hopkins University Press, 1999)

Febvre, Lucien: 'Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past' in *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre*, ed. P. Burke and trans. K. Folca (London, 1973), pp. 12-26

Feldman-Barrett, Lisa, & Russell, James: *The Psychological Construction of Emotion* (London: Guildford Press, 2015)

Feller, David: 'Dog fight: Darwin as animal advocate in the antivivisection controversy of 1875', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, vol. 40:4 (December 2009), pp. 265–271

Fiorini, Glocer, Leticia, Bokanowski, Thierry & Lewkowicz, Sergio: *On Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia'* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018)

Fischer, Agneta: *Emotion scripts: A study of the social and cognitive facets of emotions* (Leiden University Press: 1992)

Fitzgerald, John: 'Galen and his Treatise on Grief', *In die Skriflig* Vol. 50 Issue 2 (2016)

Flavel, John: *A Token for Mourners* (1674[1776])

Foucault, Michel: *Madness and Civilisation* (New York: Vintage, 1988)

Freud, Sigmund: 'Mourning and Melancholia', *Collected Papers* vol. 4, trans. Riviere, Joan, (London: Hogarth Press, 1925)

Freud, Sigmund: 'Mourning and Melancholia' [1917] in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* (vol. 14) ed. Strachey, James (London: Hogarth Press, 1957)

Freud, Sigmund: *The Sigmund Freud-Ludwig Binswanger correspondence, 1908-1938,* ed. Fichtner, Gerhard, trans. Roberts, Tom (Open Gate Press: London, 2003)

Freud, Sigmund: "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" [1915] in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* (vol. 14) ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957)

Freud, Sigmund: 'Totem and Taboo', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud* (vol. 13) ed. Strachey, James (London: Hogarth Press, 1957)

Fudge, Erica: *Animal* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002)

Fudge, Erica: S*ociety and Animals*, vol. 27, issue 5-6 (November 2019)

Eyler, John: *Victorian Social Medicine: the ideas and methods of William Farr, 1979: The work of William Farr, the statistical movement, GRO and mortality statistics, the Life Table, and zymotic theory* (John Hopkins University Press, 1999)

Gaskell, Elizabeth: *North and South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)

Gay, Peter: *Freud: A Life for Our Times* (London: Harvard University Press, 1988)

Geison, Gerald: 'Darwin and Heredity: the Evolution of his Theory of Pangenesis', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* Vol. 24, Issue 4 (October 1969) pp. 375–411

Gilbert, Arthur: 'Masturbation and Insanity: Henry Maudsley and the Ideology of Sexual Repression', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 3 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 268-282

Gilmartin, Sophie: 'The Sati, the Bride, and the Widow: Sacrificial Woman in the Nineteenth Century', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (1 (1997), pp. 141-158

Gittings, Clare: *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1998)

Goddard, Cliff: 'Hati, A Keyword in the Malay Vocabulary of Emotion' in *Emotions in Crosslinguistic Perspective*, ed. J. Harkins, A. Wierzbicka (Mouton de Gruyter: New York: 2001), pp. 167-196

Goddard, Cliff: 'The "Social Emotions" of Malay', *Ethos*, vol. 24, issue 6 (September 1996)

Goldie, Peter: *The Mess Inside: Narrative, Emotion and the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Gorer, Geoffrey: *Death, Grief, and Mourning: a Study of Contemporary Society* (London: Cresset Press, 1965)

Granek, Leeat: 'Grief as a pathology: the evolution of grief theory in psychology from Freud to the present', *Journal of the History of Psychology* vol. 13,1 (February 2010), pp. 46-73

Gray, John: *The Immortalisation Commission: Science and the Strange Quest to Beat Death* (London: Allen Lane, 2011)

Gray, Thomas: 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', *Selected Poems of Thomas Gray, Charles and William Cowper*, ed. Turner, K, (London: Penguin, 1998)

Greenleaf Eliot, William: *The Discipline of Sorrow* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1867);

Guest, William: *The Ministry of Suffering* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1882)

Gould, Stephen Jay: *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), 60-61

Hale, Piers: 'Darwin's Other Bulldog: Charles Kingsley and the Popularisation of Evolution in Victorian England', *Science and Education* Vol. 21 (2012)

Hall, Bolton: *The Mastery of Grief* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1913)

Halttunen, Karen: *Confidence Men and Painted Women: a Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (London: Yale University Press, 1982)

Hamilton, Janet: *Poems and Ballads* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1873)

Hamilton, Susan: *Animal Welfare and Anti-Vivisection 1870-1910: Nineteenth-Century Woman's Mission*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2004)

Hamilton, Susan: 'Still Lives: Gender and the Literature of the Victorian Vivisection Controversy', *Victorian Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Winter 1991), pp. 21-34

Hardy, Thomas: *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, ed. M. Irwin (Ware: Wordsworth, 1994)

Hawkins, Mike: *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Hedley Brooke, John: 'Darwin and Victorian Christianity' in *The Cambridge Companion to Darwin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Henry, Matthew: *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Vol. V (Ontario: Devoted Publishing, 2018)

Hesketh, 'A good Darwinian? Winwood Reade and the making of a late Victorian evolutionary epic', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, Vol. 51 (June 2015) pp. 44-52

Himmelfarb, Gertrude: *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1959)

Himmelfarb, Gertrude: *Victorian Minds* (London: Ivan R. Dee, 1995)

Himmelfarb, Gertrude: 'Social Darwinism, Sociology, and the Two Cultures' in *Marriage and Morals Among the Victorians* (New York: Knopf, 1936)

Hindmarsh, Bruce: *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Hochman, Baruch and Wachs, Ilja: *Dickens: The Orphan Condition* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999)

Hochschild, Arlie: *The Managed Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2012)

Hofstadter, Richard: *Social Darwinism in American Thought 1860-1915* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944)

Holland, Anna and Scholar, Richard: *Pre-Histories and Afterlives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009)

Hollander, Anne: *Seeing Through Clothes* (Berkley: University of California, 1978)

Hollis, Patricia: 'Anti-Slavery and British Working-Class Radicalism', *Anti-Slavery, Religion and Reform*, ed. C. Bolt and S. Dreycher (Folkestone: William Dawson and Sons, 2011)

Holterhoff, Kate: 'The History and Reception of Charles Darwin's Hypothesis of Pangenesis', *Journal of the History of Psychology*, Vol. 47 (2014), pp. 661–695

Hotz, Mary Elizabeth: '"Taught By Death What Life Should Be": Elizabeth Gaskell's Representation Of Death In North And South', *Studies In The Novel*, Vol. 32, Issue 2 (summer 2000), pp. 165-184

Houlbrooke, Ralph: 'Death, history and
Sociology: Stannard's Puritan way of death', *Mortality*, Vol. 5 Issue 3 (2001)

Houlbrooke, Ralph: *Death Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

Howell, Philip: 'A Place for the Animal Dead: Pets, Pet Cemeteries and Animal Ethics in Late Victorian Britain', *Ethics, Place and Environment* vol. 5, issue 1 (July 2010)

Hume-Rothery, Mary: *Women and Doctors* (Heywood, 1871)

Hume-Rothery, Mary: *Anti-Mourning: A Lecture against the Unchristian Custom of Wearing Mourning for the Dead* (London: James Spiers: 1876)

Huxley, Thomas: *Evolution and Ethics* (Princeton, 2009)

Huxley, Tomas: *Life and Letters of Thomas Huxley, ed. L. Huxley* (London, 1900)

Huxley, Thomas: *Collected essays vol 9* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Hyman, Virginia: 'Concealment and Disclosure in Sir Leslie Stephen's *Mausoleum Book*', *Biography*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring 1980) pp. 121-131

Israel, Jonathan: *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Inglis, Ian: 'A Brief Life: Broken Hearts and Sudden Deaths', *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 27 No. 4 (2004), pp. 477-488

Jacyna, L. S: 'The physiology of mind, the unity of nature, and the moral order in Victorian thought', *The British Journal for the History of Science* Vol. 14, No. 2 (July 1981), pp. 109-132

Jalland, Pat: *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

Jalland, Pat: *Death in War and Peace: A History of Loss and Grief in England, 1914-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

James, Rosemary: 'Evolutionary Philosophy and Darwin's Expression of Emotions', *Victorian Review* 18:2 (1992), pp. 1-27

James, William: *Principles of Psychology* (London: Harvard University Press, 1981)

Jann, Rosemary: 'Evolutionary Physiognomy and Darwin's Expression of the Emotions', *Victorian Review* Vol. 18, No. 2 (Winter 1992)

Jansson, Åsa: *From Melancholia to Depression: Disordered Mood in Nineteenth-Century Psychiatry* (London: Macmillan, 2021)

Jansson, Åsa: 'Mood Disorders and the Brain: Depression, Melancholia, and the Historiography of Psychiatry', *Medical History* Vol. 55 (2011), pp. 393-399

Jansson, Åsa: 'From Statistics to Diagnostics: Medical Certificates, Melancholia, and "Suicidal Propensities" in Victorian Psychiatry', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 46 Issue 3, (Spring 2013), pp. 716-731

Jesse, George Richard: *Researches into the History of the British Dog* (Robert Hardwicke: London, 1866)

Jimenez Heffernan, Julian 'Lying Epitaphs: *Vanity Fair*, Waterloo and the Cult of the Dead', *Victorian Literature and Culture* Vol. 40, No. 1 (2012), pp. 25-45

Jones, David: 'Moral Insanity and Psychological Disorder: the Hybrid Roots of Psychiatry', *History of Psychiatry*, Vol. 28 No. 3 (September 2017), pp. 263–279

Karim, Wazir-Jahan *Emotions of Culture: A Malay Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Kellehear, Allen: *The Social History of Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Kenny, Neil: *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Kiell, Norman (ed.): *Freud Without Hindsight: Reviews of His Work (1813-1939)* (Madison: International Universities Press, 1988)

King, Pearl & Steiner, Riccardo (ed.), *The Freud-Klein Controversies 1941-45* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992)

King, Barbara: *How Animals Grieve* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013)

Kingsley, Charles: *Out of the Deep: Words for the Sorrowful* (London, 1880)

Kingsley, Charles: *Scientific Lectures and Essays* (London 1880)

Kingsley, Charles: 'Poems of Matthew Arnold', *Fraser's* Issue 49 (1854)

Klein, Melanie: 'Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States', *Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Mitchell, Juliet (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986)

Koselleck, Reinhart: *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. K. Tribe (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985)

Koselleck, Reinhart: The Practice of Conceptual History: *Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Pressner, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002)

Kristeva, Julia: *Melanie Klein* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001)

Kuchar, Gary *The Poetry of Religious Sorrow in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Kübler-Ross, Elizabeth: *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and Their Own Families* (London: Scribner, 2019)

Kübler-Ross, Elizabeth: *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2005)

Kua, Ee Heok: 'Amok in Nineteenth-Century British Malaya History', *History of Psychiatry* vol. 3 (October 1991), pp. 429-436

Kuklick, Henrika: *The Savage Within: the Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Laqueur, Thomas: *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2015)

Laqueur, Thomas: 'Cemeteries, Religion and the Culture of Capitalism' in *Revival and Religion Since 1700*, ed. J. Garnett and C. Matthew (London: Hambledone, 1993), pp. 183-200

Lauder Lindsay, William: *Mind in the Lower Animals, in Health and Disease* (London, 1879)

Leverson, Ann: *Letters to the Sphinx from Oscar Wilde, with Reminiscences of the Author* (London: Duckworth, 1930)

Lewes, George Henry: *The Physiology of Common Life* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1859)

Lightman, Bernard: 'Huxley and Scientific Agnosticism: The Strange History of a Failed Rhetorical Strategy', *The British Journal for the History of Science* Vol. 35, No. 3 (September 2002), pp. 271-289

Lindermann, Erich: 'Symptomatology and the Management of Acute Grief', *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 1, Issue 2 (1944), pp. 141-148

Litten, Julian: *The English Way of Death* (London: Robert Hale Ltd, 1991)

Liu, Yongsheng: 'Darwinian Evolution Includes Lamarckian Inheritance of Acquired Characteristics', *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Vol. 45, Issue 6, (December 2016), pp. 2206–2207

Logan, William: *Words of Comfort for Parents of Bereaved Children* (London: James Nisbet, 1868)

Luciano, Dana: *Arranging Grief: Time and the Sacred Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007)

Lutz, Deborah: *Relics of Death in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

MacDonald, Helen: *H is for Hawk* (London: Penguin, 2014)

MacFarlane, John: *Why Weepest Thou? A Book for Mourners* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1888)

Maciejewski, Paul et al: 'An Empirical Examination of the Stage Theory of Grief', *JAMA*. Vol. 297 No. 7 (2007), pp. 716–723

Maddox, Brenda: *Freud's Wizard: the Enigma of Ernest Jones* (John Murray: London, 2006)

Mangham, Andrew: 'Life After Death: Apoplexy, Medical Ethics and the Victorian Undead,' *Women's Writing* Vol. 15 Issue 3 (2015), pp. 282-299

Mangum, Teresa: 'Animal Angst: Victorians Memorialise Their Pets' in *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture*, ed. D. Denenholz Morse and M. A. Danahay (Ashgate: Ashgate Press, 2007)

Mannix, Kathryn: *With the End in Mind* (London: Collins, 2019)

Martin, David: *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005)

Matt, Susan & Stearns, Peter N.: *Doing Emotions History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004)

Maudsley, Henry: *Life in Mind and Conduct* (London: Macmillan, 1902)

Maudsley, Henry: 'Alleged Suicide of a Dog', *Mind*, vol. 4:15 (July 1879), pp. 410-413

Maudsley, *The Pathology of Mind* (London, 1895)

Maudsley, *Life in Mind and Conduct: Studies of Organic in Human Nature* (London 1902)

Maudsley, Henry: *The Physiology and Pathology of Mind* (London, 1868)

Maudsley, Henry: *Body and Mind: An Inquiry Into Their Connection and Mutual Influence* (London, 1870)

Mayer, Jed: 'Ways of Reading Animals in Victorian Literature, Culture and Science' *Literature Compass* , vol. 7, issue 9 (May 2010)

Mayr, Ernst: *The Growth of Biological Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959)

McLeod, Hugh: *Religion and Society in England*, 1850-1914 (London: Macmillan Education, 1996)

McManners, John: *Death and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

MacLeohse, James: *Memoirs and Portraits of One Hundred Glasgow Men*, vol. 2 (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1886)

Milbank, John: *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006)

Milne, Kirsty: *At Vanity Fair: From Bunyan to Milne* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Mitchel, B.R, and Deane, Phyllis: *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962)

Mitchell, Rebecca: 'Death Becomes Her: on the Progressive Potential of Victorian Mourning', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, (January 2013, Vol. 41, Issue 4)

Mole, George: *Consolation for Bereaved Mothers* (Newcastle, 1901)

Molyneux, John William Henry: *Godly Sorrow and the Sorrow of the World* (London, 1866)

Moore, James: *The Post-Darwinian Controversies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)

Moore, James: 'Theodicy and Society: the Crisis of the Intelligentsia' in *Victorian Faith in Crisis* (London: Palgrave, 1990)

Morgan, Jim: 'The Burial Question in Leeds in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' in Houlbrooke, Ralph: *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, pp. 95-104.

Morley, John: *Death, Heaven and the Victorians* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970)

Mort, Frank: *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830* (London: Routledge, 1987)

Mortimor, Alfred: *Sorrow, Hope and Prayer: a Book for Mourners* (London: Skeffington & Son, 1907)

Moscoso, Javier: 'Exquisite and Lingering Pains: Facing Cancer in Early Modern Europe' in *Pain and Emotion in Modern History*, ed. R. Boddice (London: MacMillan, 2014)

Moscoso, Javier: *Pain: A Cultural History* (Baisingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

Murdoch, Lydia: 'Anti-vaccination and the politics of grief for children in late Victorian England' in *Youth, Childhood, Emotions and Modern History*, ed. Olson, Stephanie (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015)

Murray, James (ed.): *A New Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 9, Part 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919)

Murray-Parkes, Colin: *Bereavement: Studies of Grief in Adult Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975)

Murray-Parkes, Colin: 'Diagnostic criteria for complications of bereavement in the DSM-5', *Bereavement Care*, Vol. 33 Issue 3 (2014) pp. 113-117

Nash, David: 'Believing in Secularisation – Stories of Decline, Potential, and Resurgence', *Journal of Religious History* Vol. 41, No. 4, (December 2017), pp. 505-531

Newsome, David: *Godliness and Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (London: Cassell, 1961)

Ngai, Sianne: *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007)

Niemeyer, Robert: *Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss* (American Psychological Association, 2001)

Noble, Christopher: 'Otherwise Occupied: Masculine Widows in Trollope's Novels' in *The Politics of Gender in Anthony Trollope's Novels: New Readings for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. D. D. Morse (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009)

Norris, William: 'Sentence of Death Upon a Malay convicted of Running Amok', *The East Asian Journal*, vol. 3 (1849), pp. 460-467

Nouvian, Manon: 'Defiant Mourning: Public Funerals as Funeral Demonstrations in the Chartist Movement', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, vol. 24,2 (April 2019), pp. 208–226

Nyatanga, Brian: 'A Century of Pathologising Greif and Bereavement', *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*, Vol. 20, Issue 7 (July 2014), pp. 315-322

Oates, David: 'Social Darwinism and Natural Theodicy', *Zygon*, Vol. 23, Issue 4 (December 1988), pp. 439-459

Oppenheim, Janet: *'Shattered Nerves': Doctors, Patients and Depression in Victorian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

Owen, Wilfred: *Collected Poems* (London: Penguin, 1963)

Oxley, T: 'Malay amok', *The Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*, vol. iii (1849), pp,. 532-533

Paley, William: *Natural Theology: or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (London 1809)

Paskauskas, R. Andrew (ed.), *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones 1908-1939* (Harvard University Press: Massachusetts, 1993)

Peacock, Louisa: 'The real reasons why death is still so hard to talk about with your loved ones', *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 May 2014 [retrieved online at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/10825710/The-real-reasons-why-death-is-still-so-taboo-hard-to-talk-about-with-your-loved-ones.html, 11/05/2020]

Pearn, Alison: '"This excellent observer …": the Correspondence Between Charles Darwin and James Crichton-Browne, 1869–75', *History of Psychiatry* Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 160–175

Pemberton, Neil, Warboys, Michael, & Strang, Julie-Mariee, *The Invention of the Modern Dog: Breed and Blood in Victorian Britain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018)

Perkin, J. Russell: 'The Implied Theology of Vanity Fair', *The Philological Review*, Vol. 77, Issue 1 (1998), pp. 79-106

Peters, Matthew et al: *Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine,* (Vol. 25, Issue 4, May 2015) pp. 351-357

Pike, Martha and Armstrong, Janice (eds.): *A time to mourn: Expressions of grief in nineteenth-century America* (Stony Brook, NY: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1980)

Pick, Daniel: *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Piketty, Thomas: *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Harvard University Press, 2013)

Plamper, Jan: *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Plamper, Jan: 'An Interview With William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein and Peter Stearns', *History and Theory*, Vol. 49, Issue 2

Porter, Max: *Grief is the Thing with Feathers* (London: Faber & Faber, 2016)

Power Cobbe, Frances: *False Beasts and True: Essays on Natural (and Unnatural) History* (London 1875)

Power Cobbe, Frances: 'The Scientific Spirit of the Age', *Contemporary Review* Vol. 54 (1888), pp. 1 Preece, Rod: 'Thoughts out of Season on the History of Animal Ethics', *Society and Animals* 15 (2007)

Power Cobbe, Frances: 'The Rights of Man and the Claims of Brutes', *Frasers* Vol. 68 (1863) pp. 586-682 – the story about the horses hooves is pp. 594-596

Power Cobbe, Frances: 'The Scientific Spirit of the Age', *Contemporary Review* Vol. 54 (1888), p. 250

Power Cobbe, Frances: 'The Consciousness of Dogs', *Quarterly Review* Vol. 133 (1872), pp. 419–451

Preece, Rod: 'Darwinism, Christianity, and the Great Vivisection Debate', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Jul., 2003)

Prentiss, Elizabeth: *How Sorrow Was Changed Into Sympathy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton: 1884) *Punch* Vol. 101 (1981)

de Quincey, Thomas: *Confessions of an Opium Eater* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Qureshi, Yakub: 'Doctor Death in Town', *The Manchester Evening News*, 18 April 2013 [retrieved online at https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/doctor-death-in-town-954682, 15/04/2020]

Ramsden, Ed, and Wilson, Duncan: 'Suicidal Animal: Science and the Nature of Self-Destruction', *Past & Present*, vol. 224, issue 1 (August 2014)

Reade, Winwood: *The Martyrdom of Man* (London: Turner & Co, 1872)

Reddy, William: *The Navigation of Feeling: a Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2001)

Reed, Edward: *From Soul to Mind: The Emergence of Psychology, from Erasmus Darwin to William James* (London: Yale University Press, 1998)

Rees, Susan: 'Sakit Hati: A state of chronic mental distress related to resentment and anger amongst West Papuan refugees exposed to persecution' in *Social Science & Medicine* Vol. 73, Issue 1 (July 2011) pp. 103-110

Richards, Robert: 'Darwin on Mind, Morals and Emotions' in *The Cambridge Companion to Darwin*, ed. J. Hodge and G. Radick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Richardson, John: *The Connection Between Sorrow and Sympathy* ((London: Jackson & Halliday, 1876)

Richardson, Ruth: 'Why Was Death So Big in Victorian Britain?' in *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, ed. R. Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 77-94.

Riso, Mary: *The Narrative of the Good Death: The Evangelical Deathbed in Victorian England* (Ashgate: Routledge, 2015)

Ritvo, Harriet: *The Animal Estate: the English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987)

Rollins, Henry: 'Whatever Happened to Henry Maudsley?' in *150 Years of British Psychiatry, 1841–1991* ed. G. E. Berrios (London: Gaskell, 1991)

Romanes, Charles: *Animal Intelligence* (London 1882)

Rosenwein, Barbara: *Emotional Communities in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006)

Rosenwein, Barbara: 'Worrying About Emotions in History', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, Issue 3 (June 2002), p. 821–845.

Roudinesco, Élisabeth: *Freud in Our His Time and Ours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016)

Rowell, Geoffrey: *Hell and the Victorians: A Study of the Nineteenth-Century Theological Controversies concerning Eternal Punishment and the Future Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974)

Rubin, Simon Shimshon: 'Loss and Mourning in the Jewish Tradition', *OMEGA*, Vol. 70, Issue 1 (February 2015), pp. 79-98

Rugg, Julie: 'A Few Remarks on Modern Spulture: Current Trends and New Direction in Cemetery Research', *Mortality*, Vol. 3. Issue 2 (1998), pp. 111-128

Rylance, *Rick: Victorian Psychology and British Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Saint Martin, Manuel: 'Running Amok: A Modern Perspective on a Culture-Bound Syndrome', *The Primary Care Companion to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, vol. 1, issue 3 (June 1999), pp. 66-70

Sandy, Mandy: *Romanticism, Memory, and Mourning* (Farnham: Routledge, 2015)

Sanger, Charles Percy: 'The Structure of Wuthering Heights', *Wuthering Heights* (London: Norton, 1990)

Saussman, Justin: 'Science, Drugs and Occultism: Aleister Crowley, Henry Maudsley and Late-nineteenth Century Degeneration Theories', *Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. 1 Issue 1 (2007), pp. 40-55

Scarry, Elaine: *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Scheer, Monique: 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and is that what makes them have a history)? A Bourdieuian approach to understanding emotions' in *History and Theory* vol. 51,2 (May 2012), pp. 193-220

Schmitt, Jean-Paul: *The Holy Greyhound: St Guineforte, Healer of Children Since the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)

Schneider, John: *Animal Suffering and the Darwinian Problem of Evil*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020)

Schor, Esther: *Bearing the Dead: the British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)

Schwartz, Joseph: 'The Unacknowledged History of John Bowlby's Attachment Theory', *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, vol. 31,2 (February 2015) pp. 251–266

Seale, Clive: *Constructing Death: The Sociology of Death and Bereavement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001

Segal, Julia: *Melanie Klein* (London: SAGE, 1992)

Shakespeare, William: *Hamlet* Act 1, Scene 2, lines 77-86, in *William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. J. Bate and E. Rasmussen (Baisingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 1929

Shand, Alexander: *The Foundations of Character: Being a Study of the Tendencies of the Emotions and Sentiments* (London: MacMillan, 2014)

Shear, Katherine et al, 'Complicated grief and related bereavement issues for DSM-5', *Depression and Anxiety*, Vol. 28, Issue 2 (February 2011), pp. 103-117

Shillace, Brandy: *Death's Summer Coat* (London: Elliott and Thompson, 2015)

Sigourney, Lydia Howard: *Select Poems* (Philadelphia: Parry & McMillan, 1856)

Simon, Leslie S.: 'The De-Orphaned Orphan: *Oliver Twist* and Deep Time', *Dickens Quarterly* (Vol. 34, Issue 4, 2017)

Simon, Taryn: *The Occupation of Loss* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2017)

Skinner, Quentin: 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas' *History and Theory,* vol. 8,1 (**), pp. 3-53 (1969)

Skinner, Quentin: *Visions of Politics, vol. 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Small, Neil: *Grief, Mourning and Death Ritual* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001)

Smith, Roger: *Inhibition: History and Meaning in the Sciences of Mind and Brain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)

Smith, Roger: *Free Will and the Human Sciences in Britain, 1870–1910* (London: Routledge, 2016)

Southgate, Henry: *Gone Before: Being a Manual of Consolation for the Bereaved and a Well of Sympathy for the Sorrowing Filled from Many Sources* (London: Lockwood & Co, 1878)

Southgate, Henry: *Voices from the Willow and the Palm: Rhythms of Grief and Hope Selected for the Suffering and the Thoughtful* (London: Strahan & Co, 1874)

Spellman, William: *A Brief History of Death*, (London: Reaktion Book: 2014)

Spinoza, Baruch: 'Ethics' in *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, ed. E. Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985

Stannard, David: *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study of Religion, Culture and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979)

Stark, James: *Comradeship in Sorrow: Thoughts for the Bereaved* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1907)

'Statistical commentary: End of Life Care Profiles, February 2019 update', Public Health England, published online at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/end-of-life-care-profiles-february-2019-data-update/statistical-commentary-end-of-life-care-profiles-february-2019-update (February 2019) [accessed online 17/01/20]

Stearns, Carol Zisowitz & Stearns, Peter N.: *Anger: the Search for Emotional Control* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986)

Stearns, Carol Zisowitz & Stearns, Peter N.: 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 90,4 (October, 1985), p.813-836

Stedman, Gesa: *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and control in Victorian discourses on the Emotions, 1830-1872* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002)

Stephen, Leslie: *Hours in a Library* (London: Elder & Co, 1892)

Stephen, Leslie: *The Mausoleum Book* (Oxford, Clarendon Press: 1977)

Sterne, Laurence: *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)

Stock, S.G.: *Joy in Sorrow* (London: Shaw & Co, 1884)

Stocking, George: *Race Culture and Evolution* (London: Collier MacMillan, 1968)

Strange, Julie-Marie: *Death, Grief and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Stroebe, Margaret et al: 'Cautioning Health-Care Professionals: Bereaved Persons Are Misguided Through the Stages of Grief' *Omega*, Vol. 74, Issue 4 (2017), pp. 455-473

Sullivan, Erin: *Beyond Melancholy: Sadness and Selfhood in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Taylor, Charles: *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007)

Thackeray, William Makepeace: *Vanity Fair: A Novel Without a Hero* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Thomas, Keith: *Man and the Natural World* (Penguin: London, 1991)

Tomkins, Silvan: *Exploring Affect: The Selected Writings of Silvan S Tomkins,* ed. C. Demos (London: Routledge, 2019)

Toolis, Kevin: *My Father's Wake: How the Irish Teach Us to Love and Die* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2017)

Townshend, Emma: *Darwin's Dogs: How Darwin's Pets Helped Form a World-Changing Theory of Evolution* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2009)

Trollope, Anthony: *Barchester Towers* (London: Random House, 2015)

Tyrrell, Revd. George: 'Zoolatry', *The Month* Vol. 85 (September 1895), pp. 1-12

'V' (anon): 'Christian Grief and its Stages', *The British Magazine* vol. 35 (Apr 1849)

Vickery, Amanda: 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history', *The Historical Journal,* Vol. 36 Issue 2 (June 1993)

Vincent, David: 'Love and Death and the Nineteenth-Century Working Class', *Social History* Vol. 5, No. 2 (May, 1980), pp. 223-247

Wales, K: 'The Claims of Kinship: The Opening Chapter of Martin Chuzzlewit', *Dickensian,* Vol. 83 (1987), p.175

Wallace Legge Pomeroy, Florence (Viscountess Haberton): 'Mourning Clothes and Customs', *Woman's World,* (Cassell & Company, Limited, London), Vol. 2, No. 8, August 1889

Walter, Tony: 'Modern Grief, Postmodern Grief', *International Review of Psychology*, Vol. 17, Issue 1 (2007), pp. 123-134

Walter, Tony: *Death in the Modern World* (London: Sage, 2020)

Walter, Tony: *The Revival of Death* (London: Routledge, 1994)

Walter, Tony: *On Bereavement: the Culture of Grief* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2001)

Walter, Tony: 'Secularisation' in *Death and Bereavement Across Cultures*, ed. P. Laungani and W. Young (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1997), pp. 166-187

Walter, Tony: 'Classics Revisited: A Sociology of Grief', *Mortality* Vol. 3, Issue 1 (August 2010), pp. 83-87

Waters, C: 'Materializing Mourning: Dickens, Funerals and Epitaphs', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 14 (2011)

Watson, Nick, Weir, Stuart and Friend, Stephen: 'The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond', *Journal of Religion and Society,* Vol. 7 (2005), pp. 1-21

Werner, Yvonne: *Christian Masculinity: Men and Religion in Northern Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Leuven, 2011)

Whaley, Joachim: *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (London: Europa, 1981)

Wheeler, Michael: *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Wheeler, Michael: *Death and Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

White, Paul: *Huxley: Making the 'Man of Science' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)*

White, Paul: 'The Experimental Animal in Victorian Britain' in *Thinking With Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism*, ed. L. Daston and G. Mitford (New Tork: Columbia University Press, 2005)

White, Paul: 'Darwin Wept: Science and the Sentimental Subject', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 16 (2011)

White, Paul: 'Darwin's Emotions: the Scientific Self and the Sentiment of Objectivity', pp .195–213; *Isis* Vol. 100, No. 4 (December 2009)

White, Paul: 'Sympathy Under the Knife: Experimentation and Emotion in Late Victorian Britain' in *Medicine, Emotion and Disease*, ed. F. Bound Alberti (London: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 100-124

Whitebook, Joel: *Freud: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Wierzbicka, Anna: *Imprisoned in English: the Hazards of English as a Default Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Wierzbicka, Anna: *Emotions across Languages and Cultures* (Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Williams, Helen: 'Alas Poor YORICK: Sterne's Iconography of Mourning', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 28,2 (December 2016), pp. 313-344

Williams, Raymond: *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976)

Wilson, Andrew: *The Victorians* (London: Norton, 2002)

Winter, Ann: 'Harriet Martineau and the reform of the invalid in Victorian England' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 38, Issue 3 (September 1995), pp. 597–616

Winter, Jay: *Remembering War: the Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

Winter, Jay: *The Great War and the British People* (Palgrave: London, 2003)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig: *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958)

Wolffe, John: *Great Deaths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Wood, Claire: *Dickens and the Business of Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Wood, Tomas (ed): *Arcade Echoes: Selected Poems from the Virginia University Magazine, 1856-1890* (New York 1894)

Young, Robert: *Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge: 1985)

Archival material

Darwin, Charles: 'The Darwin Correspondence Project,' retrieved online at http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?viewtype=side&itemID=CUL-DAR126.-&pageseq=1

Note 45 in 'Notebook N' (1838-1842)
Note 58 in 'Notebook N' (1838-1842)
'To W. D. Fox, 25 March 1843'
'To Emma Darwin, 18 April 1851'
'To G. J. Romanes, 26 December 1875'
'From F. P. Cobbe, 25 December 1872'

Birmingham Daily Post
21 September 1861, p. 6: 'Correspondence'

British Quarterly Review
July 1867, p. 7: 'Words of Comfort'

The Christian Witness
6 November 1867, p. 8: 'Books Received'

Derry Journal
29 October 1877, p. 4: 'Second Annual Report of the Funeral and Mourning Reform Association'

Domestic Messenger
19 March 1868, p. 7: 'Books Received'

The Examiner
28 December 1844, p. 4: 'Alleged Death From Grief',

Exmouth News
22 July 1872, p. 4: 'Death of a Dog from Grief'

The Guardian
4 August 1883, p. 2: 'Local Intelligence'

The Ipswich Journal
12 May 1866, p. 4: 'Suicide by a Dog'

Kent & Sussex Courier
12 September 1879, p. 8: 'Tunbridge Wells',

The Morning Post
2 December 1840, p. 3: 'Singular Case – Death From Grief'

30 September 1854, p. 3: ‘Death Through Grief’
12 February 1857, p. 3: ‘Death Through Grief’

The North-Eastern Daily Gazette
Friday, April 6, 1894, p. 4: ‘A Girl’s Death From Grief’,

Pall Mall Gazette
4 November 1871, p. 4: ‘Occasional Notes’,
23 April 1845, p. 8: ‘Strange Case of a Dog’s Suicide’

The Preston Pilot
24 April 1850, p. 8: ‘Death From Grief’

Reynolds's Newspaper
6 September 1891, p. 8: ‘Yesterday’s Inquests’

Scientific American
14 August 1847, p. 1: ‘Suicide by a Gazelle’

The Scotsman
18 April 1867, p. 4: ‘A Faithful Mourner’,

Shields Daily News
26 July 1892, p. 4: ‘Funeral and Mourning Reform’

The Sixpenny Magazine
Vol. 3 Issue 13 (July 1862), pp. 295-300: ‘The Funeral Mute’

The Standard
19 Jan 1849, p. 1: ‘Railway Intelligence’

West Somerset Press
4 December 1880, p. 8: ‘Letters’

York Herald, Wednesday
19 December 1877, p.6: ‘From Our London Correspondent’

Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer
Saturday 15 December 1877, p. 7: ‘Funeral and Mourning Reform Meeting at York’