

Memory and mourning: posthumous portraiture in Britain
from the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries



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Memory and Mourning: Posthumous Portraiture in Britain from the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries

Short abstract

This thesis focuses on posthumous portraiture produced in the years between 1760 and 1834 in Britain. It examines the strategies used by artists and their patrons to portray the dead during a period known as the 'Age of Sensibility' in which the expression of emotion gained heightened prominence.

Beginning at the time of George III's ascension to the throne, soon before the foundation of the Royal Academy, and ending in the year when Henry Fox Talbot created the first reasonably lightfast photographs, this period saw major developments in the art world including the rise of portraiture as the most popular genre of art. This period also witnessed the emergence of a culture of sensibility that promoted the outward expression of virtuous feeling. It is within this context that artists and their patrons sought new ways of commemorating the dead through portraiture that would allow the bereaved to express their grief, maintain the presence of a lost loved one, and seek comfort in an image of the departed.

This thesis considers a range of different portrait types in order to highlight the various ways in which posthumous portraits were commissioned, designed, displayed and used, and how they responded to the specific needs of the living. Rather than looking at these portraits in isolation, I show how it is essential to consider them within the broader artistic, religious and socio-cultural context, in order to adequately assess their place within mourning practices.

The range of portrait types under discussion in this thesis requires differing modes of analysis and, where appropriate, different but interconnected methodologies. Whilst this thesis is historically grounded, I draw upon anthropological and theoretical approaches in my interpretation of works of arts, in order to thoroughly examine the use, function and value of posthumous portraiture during this period.

Long abstract

This thesis focuses on posthumous portraiture produced in the years between 1760 and 1834 in Britain. It examines the strategies used by artists and their patrons to portray the dead during a period known as the 'Age of Sensibility' in which the expression of emotion gained heightened prominence.

Beginning at the time of George III's ascension to the throne, soon before the foundation of the Royal Academy, and ending in the year when Henry Fox Talbot created the first reasonably lightfast photographs, this period saw major developments in the art world including the rise of portraiture as the most popular genre of art. This period also witnessed the emergence of a culture of sensibility that promoted the outward expression of virtuous feeling. It is within this context that artists and their patrons sought new ways of commemorating the dead through portraiture that would allow the bereaved to express their grief, maintain the presence of a lost loved one, and seek comfort in an image of the departed.

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The structure of this thesis follows a loosely chronological arc with each chapter focusing on a particular portrait type and a different set of questions. While connections can

and should be made between portraits in terms of composition, use and display, the particularities of one family's loss and its manifestation in art needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis. I have sought, therefore, to give equal weight to broader artistic and cultural trends and the specifics of particular portrait commissions.

The first chapter focuses on oil paintings of children after death, examining the various ways in which artists approached this sensitive subject matter. I look at the ways in which posthumous portraits helped parents come to terms with the death of child and the various strategies used by artists to convey the grief of their patron. Considering posthumous portraits of children at an early stage in the thesis allows me to draw attention to various aspects of the artistic and social context in which they were produced. Central to this is the way in which portraits of a mother and child started to change during this period, which was partly the result of the artistic mode of looking back to Renaissance precedents, and also a response to contemporary discussions about the family. By finding ways of capturing the rupture of the mother and child bond, artists could convey the immensity of grief suffered by bereaved parents. My discussion of posthumous portraits of children continues by examining approaches to depictions of children on their ascent to heaven, which became increasingly popular towards the end of the eighteenth century. This provided parents with a comforting image of their deceased child, offering visual reassurance of their divine presence. Whilst many of these portraits were displayed publicly, whether in exhibitions or in the more public areas of the home, they became sites of contemplation that aided parents in their mourning process in private moments of reflection on their loss of their child.

I elaborate and further explore forms of engagement with the image of the deceased in the second chapter, which focuses on posthumous portrait miniatures. Central to my examination of these small, portable portrait-objects, to use Marcia Pointon's term, is the unique form of bodily relationship between the viewer and deceased sitter, and their use in

maintaining social bonds after separation caused by death. Various modes of display and framing are set in contrast to the paintings discussed in the previous chapter, offering the potential to encase locks of hair, inscriptions, and other decorative elements within the frame to indicate the death of the sitter. In many instances, the owners of these miniatures recycled images and literary fragments, creating a commemorative object that corresponded to a broader cultural phenomenon for quotation. This gave the bereaved tools to express their sadness through the act of commemoration. Portrait miniatures carrying a lock of the deceased sitter's hair provided a specificity that united a depiction of the deceased with an actual remnant of their body. Furthermore, the inclusion of an actual remnant of the deceased's body provided a tactile and intimate encounter with the image of the deceased that could be carried by the bereaved owner and contemplated in moments of reflection.

By way of contrast, the third chapter looks at the role of posthumous portraiture in widely circulated commemorative prints, using those produced after the death of Princess Charlotte (1796–1817) as a case study. Before delving into this rich body of material, I begin by considering portraits of the princess that were being painted at the time of her death and completed afterwards, as well as those painted posthumously. These portraits were intended for family members and although they were reproduced in print, the original paintings clearly had a profound effect on the princess's grieving family members. Numerous accounts of the response that Charlotte's father, the Prince Regent, and her husband, Prince Leopold, had to these paintings, indicate the significance and emotive power of such works to the grieving viewer. Having considered the response of her family to her posthumous image, I turn my attention to the extensive body of commemorative prints that were produced after Charlotte's death. I examine the ways in which printmakers and publishers used, adapted and created posthumous depictions of the princess in response to the nationwide outpouring of grief following the death of the most popular royal. This raises the issue of public versus

private forms of commemorative portraiture, which I discuss by considering this unique moment of shared grief, in which the public expressed its concern over the death of the princess in a strikingly personal and emotive language. This is revealed in newspaper articles and letters, but it also found its way into the poetic inscriptions at the bottom of prints. Much like the owners of posthumous portrait miniatures who re-used the words of others to express their grief and record the passing of a loved one, publishers drew on a rich body of literary sources, often composed in the previous century, to give voice to public feeling. These words complimented and enriched depictions of the princess that were either newly conceived or created by adapting existing 'Charlotte' iconography. Such alterations also gave printmakers and publishers the opportunity to express the public's concern at the loss of certainty over future sovereignty.

In the final chapter, I pick up on many of the issues raised in the previous chapter in my discussion of death masks. This particular type of posthumous portraiture has escaped sustained art historical attention, existing somewhere between art, science and anthropology. It is unlike the other types of portraiture discussed in this thesis by virtue of the cast-making process and was conceptualised differently by contemporary viewers as a result. I discuss the variety of uses of the death mask, from acting as a model for an artistically rendered posthumous portrait, whether painted or sculpted, to operating as a portrait in its own right. Looking first at the sculptor Joseph Nollekens's use of the death mask in his working practice, I discuss issues concerning likeness. The death mask was directly 'affected' by the body but showed the deceased as they looked on their deathbed rather than exhibiting the characteristics of their appearance in life. Judicious use of the death mask alongside existing portraits of the deceased sitter allowed Nollekens, amongst others, to create posthumous portraits that appeared like the sitter in life. A key aspect of this study is the almost complete lack of death masks of women during this period within Britain, unlike

their European counterparts. Delving into this disparity sheds further light on how the making process was conceptualised with regards to contemporary notions of propriety.

In the second half of the chapter, I examine the death masks of two deceased sitters, Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830) and Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832). These existed as objects in their own right and were cast, adapted and displayed in ways that shifted the notion of what a death mask could be from an accurate model for an artistically rendered portrait to a relic-like object imbued with a trace of the departed sitter. A number of issues raised elsewhere in this thesis emerge in my discussion of these two portraits. For example, the inclusion of various objects that related to the deceased of the sitter or a lock of hair, the use of a particular medium to convey a sense of remembrance, and the staged experience of viewing the death mask of a deceased intimate. I show that modes of presentation and display profoundly affected the way in which the living interacted with images of the deceased.

This chapter also acts as a segue into the conclusion, in which I explain how the invention of photography had a profound effect on posthumous portraiture and soon became the predominant mode of commemorative portraiture. Relating the process of taking a cast to photographing a deceased sitter, I show how the impulse to retain a portrait of the deceased continued into the later nineteenth century and many of the strategies used by artists of previous decades continued to shape the presentation, use and display of post-mortem photographs for many more years.

This thesis does not seek to isolate a discrete period in history in which the posthumous portrait held particular significance but to highlight its function within a specific artistic, socio-cultural and religious context. While clothes and other objects associated with the dead held great importance for the grieving, the ability to contemplate a representation of the deceased was profoundly affecting. Such works were limited, of course, to the sector of society that had the means to commission them, but the manner in which the deceased were

represented and the specifics of their display, use and exchange, offers evidence of a culture that not only accepted but encouraged the outward display of emotion.

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Introduction

From the early writings on art by Alberti and Durer onwards, the portrait has been intimately bound to absence, whether through physical separation or death.¹ Jonathan Richardson expounded upon this idea in his treatise on painting, first published in 1715, which would become one of the most influential texts on British art. In it, he outlines the fundamental nature of portraiture:

And thus we see the persons and faces of famous men, the originals of which are out of our reach, as being gone down with the stream of time, or in distant places: and thus too we see our relatives and friends whether living or dead, as they have been in all the stages of life. In picture we never die, never decay, or grow older.²

As Richardson's theory of portraiture shows, during the eighteenth century in Britain, portraits were understood to connect the past with the present by documenting a particular moment in a person's life, recording their image for posterity. Whilst Richardson does not make explicit reference to posthumous portraits, his reference to 'all stages of life' necessarily includes death, for death was considered as much a part of life as any other moment in one's existence, and for the predominantly Christian community, death meant a mere temporary state before one's resurrection in heaven. Richardson's oft-quoted words also reveal a key aspect of posthumous portraiture, which is considered throughout this thesis: the capacity for portraits to fix the image of a person at a particular moment in time. A portrait that was produced after someone's death, whether it showed the person as in life or on their deathbed, removed the fear of bodily decay. In addition, showing the deceased in a spiritualised form could offer a comforting image of a person's post mortem existence in

¹ For further discussion about the association of portraiture with death, see Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford, 2004) p.65, and J. Woodall, *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (Manchester, 1997), p. 8.

² J. Richardson, *The Works of Jonathan Richardson. Containing I. The theory of painting. II. Essay on the art of criticism, (so far as it relates to painting). III. The science of a connoisseur* (London, 1792), p.7.

heaven. In this way, a posthumous portrait was capable of performing a consolatory role as much as commemorative one.

Richardson's conceptualisation of portraiture continues:

the picture of an absent relation, or friend, helps to keep up those sentiments which frequently languish by absence, and may be instrumental to maintain, and sometimes to augment friendship, and paternal, filial, and conjugal love, and duty.³

Whilst Richardson refers to the relationship between the sitter and their family and friends, this idea of maintaining connections through absence is essential to the study of posthumous portraiture. Even after the death of a family member, friend or acquaintance, relationships could persist through the image of the deceased, offering a distinct form of remembrance that could, simultaneously, celebrate the life of the deceased, comfort the viewer, offer a model of virtue to future generations, and, on some occasions, publicly highlight the place of the deceased in their family or society at large.

Such a process was by no means unique to this period but dates to antiquity and has remained a constant feature of posthumous portraiture and other forms of commemoration, demonstrating the pervasive impulse to record the image of a person through art. An epitaph to a freedwoman, Allia Postestas, in a Roman cemetery dating to around the 2nd century AD, for example, highlights the persistent value of both literature and art to the grieving:

You shall live as long as possible through my verses.
In your place I hold an image of you as a comfort.⁴

These words express the long-held belief in the capacity of art to continue the presence of the deceased and highlight the value of a representative image of a person in their absence. This raises the central questions of this thesis: if all portraits had the capacity to comfort the

³ Richardson, 'The Theory of Painting', p.10.

⁴ *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* VI 37965 = *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* 1988, lines 35-49, cited in V. M. Hope, 'Remembering to Mourn: Personal Mementos of the Dead in Ancient Rome', in V. M. Hope and J. Huskinson (eds.), *Memory and Mourning: Studies on Roman Death* (Oxford, 2011), p.176. The translation of this text by N. Horsfall was adapted by Hope for this publication.

grieving, what else did posthumous portraits offer the bereaved and how was this achieved by artists and their patrons?

This inevitably raises additional questions: what was the function and value of posthumous portraiture? How did these forms of portraits contribute to modes of mourning and cultural patterns of grief? What can an analysis of posthumous portraits tell us about portraiture in this period? Over the following chapters I attempt to answer these questions by focusing on four different portrait types, each of which serve to highlight the various ways in which posthumous portraits were commissioned, designed, displayed and used within commemorative practices, and how they responded, in specific ways, to the needs of the living. This structure will allow me to investigate and compare the specifics of these different portrait types and to assess them within the broader artistic and socio-cultural context. I analyse these aligned but varying modes of commemoration during a period in which the expression of emotion gained heightened prominence. Posthumous portraits allowed the mourning survivor to remember the dead, express their grief and seek comfort in the image of the deceased. Whilst one cannot recover the actual emotional response and personal value ascribed to posthumous portraiture during this period, one can look to the material evidence, both visual and textual, in order to investigate the manner in which artists and their patrons chose to represent the dead and their reasons for doing so. Various issues traverse each portrait type, raising additional questions that I will seek to resolve in this thesis. What role did gender and age play in posthumous portraiture? How did display affect the way in which people understood and interacted with representations of the deceased? To what extent did medium and scale affect the conceptualisation of posthumous portraiture? How did the public or private nature of a portrait type affect the way in which an artist and their patron chose to represent the deceased?

Beginning in 1760, the year of the first exhibition of the Society of Artists of Great Britain, and ending in 1834, the year in which Henry Fox Talbot first started creating relatively light-fast photographs on paper, this roughly seventy-year period saw portraiture rise to pre-eminence within the British art world. At this time, exhibitions broadened the audience for contemporary art and art schools facilitated the teaching of skills and knowledge to younger generations of artists. This period also witnessed significant socio-cultural changes that had a profound impact on the arts. Central to this thesis is the new openness that occurred during this period to the expression of emotion in art and literature. During the ‘Age of Sensibility’ this was seen, as I will go on to discuss, as a marker of both morality and refinement.⁵ Historians have generally confined this era to the second half of the eighteenth century, but many aspects continued to reverberate into the early nineteenth century and slowly began to take new shape at the dawn of the Victorian age. This thesis is not, however, strictly confined to a rigid timeframe, as there are several relevant and notable examples of posthumous portraiture, which fall outside this period but share the same concerns and issues as those that fall within it.

Whilst the boundaries of the timeframe are permeable to a degree, the profound impact of photography on existing modes of posthumous representation demarcates a clear end to the period under discussion. This new technology and its ability to rapidly capture an image of the body after death, initiated the decline in the various kinds of posthumous portraiture discussed in this thesis. In addition, the portability of photography and the fact it could be presented in different ways, whether encased within mourning jewellery or cut and

⁵ There is extensive scholarship on the ‘Age of Sensibility’ including the following influential texts: G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, 1992); P. Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge, 2005); J. Lamb, *The Evolution of Sympathy in the Long Eighteenth Century* (London, 2009); J. Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1988); J. Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London, 1986).

pasted into an album, comfortably slotted into, or even perpetuated, a relic culture that gripped Victorian society and its increasing fascination with death.⁶ Whilst these modes of representation did not cease to exist entirely, photography became the predominant and most prevalent way of capturing the final image of a person, becoming a key feature of the material culture of death. From the mid-nineteenth century, photographs were inserted into mourning jewellery, included within mourning cards, framed and displayed in the home, and reproduced in various publications. The relative democratisation of portraiture that came with this new medium highlights one of the limits of a study into eighteenth-century portraiture. Up until this point, the practice of commissioning portraiture was only available to certain sectors of society. Whilst I include a range of portraits from the upper echelons of society to the more middling sorts, including portrait prints that were far more accessible than other forms of portraiture, this thesis, by its nature, has focused on the mourning practices of the elite and as such, conclusions about eighteenth-century society at large can only be speculative.

Posthumous portraiture: a history

The practice of portraying the dead was by no means unique to this period and it is worth considering earlier attempts to commemorate the dead through portraiture in order to ascertain the particularities of artistic approaches to death from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. One of the most common needs for posthumous portraiture in the home during both the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was to fill gaps in family portrait galleries.⁷ As Kate Retford, Shearer West and Marcia Pointon amongst others have shown, portrait

⁶ See D. Lutz, 'The Dead Still Among Us: Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture', *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2011), vol. 39, p. 127-142.

⁷ Retford cites Andrea Casali's series of ancestral portraits at Holkham, painted in the 1750s for Thomas Coke, first Earl of Leicester. K. Retford, 'A Death in the Family: Posthumous Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England', *Art History*, 33:1, February 2010, p.75.

galleries for the upper classes became the means by which familial links were cemented, political allegiances manifested, and social position asserted, creating what Pointon has called, ‘a living theatre of family history’.⁸ Commissioning portraits of sometimes long-deceased relatives could visually repair any gaps or breakages in this complex network of social links. The dispersal and later reconstitution of portraits from the Arundel family collection is a case in point.⁹ The precarious position faced by generations of earls of Arundel and dukes of Norfolk as a consequence of their Roman Catholicism necessitated the sale of numerous family portraits. During the eighteenth century, the ninth earl was gradually able to piece back together the collection and fill gaps by buying back family portraits and commissioning copies of portraits of long deceased relatives and friends.¹⁰

This process of establishing or reinforcing social prestige and legitimisation placed particular emphasis on primogeniture and this was further promoted in group portraits in which a representation of the deceased was included alongside other members of the family.

⁸ M. Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, 1993), p. 23. For further discussion about the social and political function of portrait galleries, see S. West, ‘Patronage and Power: The Role of the Portrait in Eighteenth-Century England’ in J. Black and J. Gregory (eds.), *Culture, Politics and Society in Britain, 1660-1800* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 131-53; K. Retford, ‘Sensibility and Genealogy in the Eighteenth-Century Family Portrait: The Collection at Kedleston Hall’, *Historical Journal*, 46/3 (2003), pp. 533-60; K. Retford, G. Perry and J. Vibert, ‘Introduction: Placing Faces in the Country House’, *Placing Faces: The Portrait and the English Country House in the Long Eighteenth Century*, in K. Retford, G. Perry and J. Vibert with H. Lyons (eds.) (Manchester, 2013), pp. 1-36; O. Millar, ‘Portraiture and the Country House’, *Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting* (New Haven and London, 1985), pp. 28-39; J.M. Robinson, ‘Ancestral Piety’, ed. Donald Garstang, *The British Face: A View of Portraiture 1625-1850* (London, 1986), pp. 11-13. Malcolm Baker writes that ‘Extended sequences of busts are far less common than displays of painted portraits’, but describes the placing of busts in relation to one another to demonstrate family histories and networks. See M. Baker, *The Marble Index: Roubiliac and Sculptural Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven and London, 2015), pp.158-164. For a further case of the collecting, commissioning and display of portrait busts, see A. Yarrington, ‘Marble, Memory and Theatre: Portraiture and the Sculpture Gallery at Chatsworth’, in Retford, Perry and Vibert with Lyons (eds.), *Placing Faces*, pp. 96-114.

⁹ See Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.23.

¹⁰ Pointon cites John Martin Robins’s work on this historicist scheme by citing similar projects at Alnwick Castle and Windsor Castle. See Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p.23.

The Saltonstall Family (c. 1636–7) portrait, traditionally attributed to David Des Granges (fig. 1), is thought to represent the family of Sir Richard Saltonstall. It shows him holding the hand of his eldest son, who, in turn, holds that of his younger sibling. The father pulls back the bed curtain to reveal his first wife on her deathbed. Whilst she is shown with her eyes open and gesturing towards her children, it is likely that she was, in fact, deceased when this portrait was painted because sitting in a chair at her bedside, Saltonstall's second wife is represented, holding her own baby in her arms. In this work, the living and the dead are shown side-by-side, overcoming temporal narrative by showing two phases in the family's history. By doing so, the artist and patron were able to demonstrate the continued propagation of the family despite the death of Saltonstall's first wife. Compositions of this sort were more typical of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century funerary monuments, which showed a husband alongside his first and second wives with all of their children, living and dead, in attendance.¹¹ The monument to Thomas Cecil, 1st Earl of Exeter (1542–1623) (fig. 2) in Westminster Abbey, for example, was designed to accommodate representations of Cecil alongside his two wives, Dorothy Neville (1548–1609) and Frances Brydges (c. 1580–1633). Brydges, who died a decade after her husband, was eventually buried in Winchester Cathedral, which accounts for the empty space on the left-hand side of Cecil's effigy.¹²

Similarly, in John Souch's portrait of *Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of His Wife* (1635) (fig. 3), death once again takes centre stage to both memorialise the dead and remind viewers of their own mortality. In Aston's right hand, he supports a cross that is also held by his son below, suggesting the direct relationship between the two and giving assurance of the

¹¹ K. Hearn, online catalogue entry for David Des Granges, *The Saltonstall Family* (April 2008) <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/des-granges-the-saltonstall-family-t02020> [accessed 21 January 2019], A. Laurence, *Women in England 1500-1760: A Social History* (London, 2002) pp. 46-47.

¹² The Latin inscription on the tomb also refers to Brydges, clearly anticipating her intended commemoration by the tomb monument. See N. Llewellyn, 'Honour in Life, Death and in the Memory: Funeral Monuments in Early Modern England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 6 (1996), p.185.

continuation of the family line. The young boy points to the inscription that runs along the crossbar and reads, 'The seas can be defined, the earth can be measured, grief is immeasurable'. These words demonstrate the suffering of the woman's surviving family that is hard to read from the sitters's expressions. Furthermore, the skull at the centre of the composition, placed immediately to the left of the deathbed, focuses on the fragility of life and reinforces the importance of contemporary notions concerning a 'good death', or *Ars Moriendi*, part of which included the presence of family at the deathbed.¹³ This portrait, therefore, acts as much as a memorial to Aston's wife, as it does a warning to those left behind.

The coming together of the living and the dead in group portraiture continued into the eighteenth century albeit without such emphasis on explicit symbols of death. Joseph Highmore's portrait of the Lee family (1736) (fig. 4), for example, the head of the family, Eldred, is represented by a bust-length oval portrait that is partially concealed by a swathe of green drapery. His widowed wife, Isabella, is seated directly below, surrounded by their offspring and on the opposite side of the canvas, Lancelot, the family's heir, stands in a prominent position looking out to the viewer and staking his claim as the new head of the household. The father was not the only deceased family member to be included in the composition, however, and in the top right-hand corner of the canvas, his daughter, baby Catherine who had died just a few years before, is shown in the sky looking down on her family and accompanied by an angel. This was a recurring trope that had existed in the previous century and continued to be used by artists for many decades. Furthermore, it corresponds to the deceased's status within the family, as well as their age and gender, which

¹³ R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford, 2000), in particular chapter 7, 'Good Deaths and Bad', pp.183-219; C. Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London, 1984); J. W. Hurtig, 'Death in Childbirth: Seventeenth-Century English Tombs and Their Place in Contemporary Thought', *The Art Bulletin*, 65/4 (December 1983), pp. 603-615.

will be discussed in greater detail in chapter one. Retford continues by suggesting that portraits such as this, which were not uncommon at the time,

helped to fill the worrying gap created by the premature loss of the head of the household, enabling the depiction of a complete family unit, whilst paradoxically allowing the widow publicly to express her proper grief at the loss of her husband.¹⁴

Whilst the grief of the widow can be inferred by the inclusion of these two deceased family members, there is clearly still an overriding emphasis on primogeniture. Indeed, in a similarly conceived portrait by George Knapton of the recently deceased Prince Frederick and his family (fig. 5), the prince is represented by a portrait on the wall of the room, presiding over his wife and children below. In a poem by William Dobson that was published shortly afterwards, he recognises the sadness of the widow but implores her not to dwell on her grief and to resume her motherly responsibilities.¹⁵ Sitting in a nearly central position surrounded by her nine children, she wears a black veil to mourn her husband but casts a warm expression towards her son George in acknowledgement of his future role as king. Desmond Shawe-Taylor has suggested that the portrait also operates as an allegory of constitutional monarchy with the deceased prince on one side of the composition and the personification of Britannia on the other.¹⁶ The widowed Augusta is simultaneously portrayed as the Dowager Princess and, as Albinson and Hallett have argued, ‘someone who embodies that more abstract ideal of maternal plenty with which the Hanoverians were increasingly being associated’.¹⁷

Over the next few decades, the character of posthumous portraiture began to change, shifting the central focus from dynastic continuity to the outward expression of emotion.

¹⁴ Retford, ‘A Death in the Family’, pp. 80-81.

¹⁵ A. C. Albinson and M. Hallett, ‘Cornucopia: Royal Female Portraiture and the Imperatives of Reproduction’, in J. Marschner (ed.), *Enlightened Princesses: Caroline, Augusta, Charlotte, and the Shaping of the Modern World* (New Haven and London, 2017), pp. 90-93.

¹⁶ D. Shawe-Taylor, ‘Ruling a Free Nation’, in D. Shawe-Taylor (ed.), *First Georgians* especially pp. 22-25.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 92.

Whilst there was still concern with the status of their family and the role that each family member played, artists and their patrons found new ways of representing the deceased that responded to the changing socio-cultural context in the so-called 'Age of Sensibility'. In this thesis, I will examine these changes and developments in posthumous portraiture during this period and explain the underlying causes that affected the way in which people understood and valued portraiture within mourning practices. I intend to add to existing scholarship on portraiture and death in this period, which is scarce, by drawing together various types of posthumous portraits that functioned in different ways and responded to the needs of the grieving at a particular historical moment. This encompassing approach to the subject marks this thesis out from existing studies, which focus on specific portrait types by making use of comparative analysis in order to reach a deeper level of understanding about the value and function of posthumous portraiture during the period in question.

Looking at emotion in the past

Whilst it is impossible to reconstruct or truly apprehend an individual's emotional experience after the death of a loved one, one can analyse the cultural patterns developing around death, and look closely at the manner in which people chose to express their grief and seek comfort in representations of the deceased because, as Ralph Houlbrooke has succinctly argued, there is

no reason to suppose that the basic character of grief changed during that time, but the means of its expression and their availability certainly did.¹⁸

Whilst I acknowledge and postulate on the psychological impact of death in this thesis, the primary focus is on this expression of grief through culturally contingent mourning practices, specifically the commissioning and display of posthumous portraiture. My distinction between the words 'emotion' and 'mourning' should be understood in these terms; the former

¹⁸ Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family*, p. 221.

relating to the psychological life of someone in grief, the latter, as a cultural response to it. Central to this distinction, as Esther Schor writes, is that this cultural account ‘interprets mourning as a discourse among the living’.¹⁹ Aspects of mourning practices were not intended to serve the dead in the mode of ancestral worship but, as Schor explains, to act as a ‘process that generates, perpetuates, and moralizes social relations among individuals’ and, I argue, to help the mourner come to terms with their loss through culturally and historically coded strategies.²⁰

It should also be noted that the term ‘emotion’ only became established as a mental category in the first half of the nineteenth century.²¹ Prior to this, as Thomas Dixon explains, philosophers and other writers concerned with the expression of human experience, used the terms ‘passions’, ‘affections’ and ‘sentiments’ as their primary psychological categories.²² Dixon calls for a more nuanced use of ‘emotion’ rather than the prevalent wholesale usage of the term that smoothes over the differences between these categorisations as they were understood in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For the sake of this thesis, this differentiation is important to note but not essential to its central occupation. Instead, I am concerned with the expression of feeling broadly conceived and the distinction between emotion, as individually felt sensations, and affect as cultural patterns of sensation that are further evoked by the sensation of others. In this way, I follow Julie Ellison’s premise that

¹⁹ E. Schor, *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria*, p.3.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.4.

²¹ For a comprehensive survey of the historiography of emotions in Western history, see B. H. Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about Emotions in History’, *The American Historical Review*, 107:3, pp.821-845.

²² Dixon refers to the work of the work of Roger Smith who similarly states that ‘Passion cannot simply be equated with the modern category of emotion’ but situates the first uses of the term ‘emotion’ to the late eighteenth century (R. Smith, *The Fontana History of the Human Sciences* (London, 1997), p.60). Dixon, by contrast, argues that whilst the term was used by a limited number of philosophers at this time, it was widely used until almost fifty years after that. T. Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge, 2003), p.14.

Emotion takes on the defining attributes of social life: it is gendered, it is old or young; it is associated with experienced individual and group identities; it partakes of national character; it assimilates landscapes, architectures, and other geographies. Never univocal or transparent, feeling inheres in the shapes and conventions of social and cultural life.²³

Assessing these various means of emotional expression in the past, however, presents a challenge to the art historian who makes use of the specific socio-cultural and religious conditions of the period because what separates grief and mourning was not always clean-cut.²⁴ Artistic conventions that emerged during this period allowed the bereaved, in conjunction with the artist, to express or satiate their grief through a variety of standardised visual tropes. As I show in chapter three, the patronage or consumption of commemorative works could indicate a polite performance of mourning revealing underlying concerns that were not always to do with grief over the death of another but could suggest other political or social interests. Nevertheless, this blurring of the experience of grief and the performance of its expression can shed light on how portraiture was adapted to serve the needs of the living, whether those needs were psychological or social.

The Age of Sensibility

The existing studies on the history of emotion are particularly pertinent to an exploration of the way in which feeling was manifested in portraiture during a period in which there was

a discernable and lasting shift in the perception, valorisation and expression of sentiment, sensibility and emotion as markers of a certain refinement of, and the capacity for, feeling.²⁵

Furthermore, these aspects of human experience were viewed as forms of knowledge distinct from reason, and the expression of them was not only acceptable but desirable. Processing

²³ J. Ellison, *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* (Chicago, 1999), p.6.

²⁴ Mark Sandy takes this view in his study of grief and mourning in Romantic poetry. See M. Sandy, *Romanticism, Memory and Mourning* (Farnham, 2013), p.2.

²⁵ J. Baker, "'The Philosophy of Tears': Sense(s) and Sensibility in Some Graveyard Poems', *Études Épistémè*, 30 (2016), [doi: 10.4000/episteme.1323].

one's grief through the commissioning, consumption and contemplation of posthumous portraiture, in whatever form it took, was seen as a display of virtuous feeling, an act of respectful remembrance, and a presentation of one's knowledge of human experience.

These new ideas about the outward expression of emotion were similarly and prevalently found in literature. Contemporary novels, poems and conduct literature offer fertile ground for mining broader artistic conceptualisations of death, outpourings of grief, and acts of commemoration. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's enormously popular exploration of intense feeling, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) brims with emotive expression that the central protagonist can only overcome through death. The tragic image of the young man's would-be lover, mourning at his tomb gave rise to a breadth of artistic production, including prints, such as John Raphael Smith's engraving (fig. 6), which inspired pieces of mourning jewellery, including a locket by an anonymous maker (fig. 7). Of course, it is important to distinguish between artistic and literary responses to death and the capacity of each to express emotion in a way that was distinct to the medium. There are countless descriptions of men and women's emotional and often tearful responses to the death or dying of a loved one.²⁶ Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748) is an oft-cited example of one of literature's most protracted deathbed scenes and Laurence Sterne's emotive description of parson Yorick's death in *Tristram Shandy* (1759) was similarly celebrated in its day. Whilst there are numerous examples of deathbed scenes in portraiture, there are few examples that show tears running down the cheeks of a sitter. I set out, therefore, to situate posthumous portraiture within its wider cultural context and to unpick the various ways in which sentiment was expressed through various artistic strategies.

²⁶ Much has been written about Henry Mackenzie's *A Man of Feeling* (1771) and the protagonist's tearful response to a host of upsetting scenes. For an overview, see T. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 96-107.

Alongside the literary and artistic responses to death, there was a considerable body of conduct literature that sought not only to prepare the living for their eventual death, but to offer advice on how to cope with the passing of someone else. Works such as John Dunton, *A Mourning Ring* (1692), William Sherlock, *A Practical Discourse concerning Death* (1689), and Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, (1651) were republished numerous times throughout the eighteenth century and all counselled the living to approach death in a Christian way so as to achieve a ‘good death’, and to mourn the death of another without allowing the passions to take over in an excessive manner. Whilst Christian belief is central to these texts, the eighteenth century has widely been regarded as a period in which religion gave way to secular authority, whether that be the result of Enlightenment reflection on the past or capitalist forces during an age of commercial expansion.²⁷ This has frequently led to the exclusion of religious belief in art historical studies of portraiture during this period. Whilst it is evident from the portraits I discuss in this thesis that many representations of the deceased focus on the physical and emotional loss to the family, certain visual tropes and associated documentary sources reveal the prominence of religious belief in the lives of many. By considering posthumous portraits within the socio-cultural context of the period, it is clear that such works were based on received ideas from both Classical and Christian sources.

The place of portraiture during the long eighteenth century

The function of the posthumous portrait as an object of consolation to the bereaved is central to this thesis. That is not to suggest that the sole focus of what follows constitutes an attempt to uncover the individual experience of a mourner or their private engagement with the image of the deceased. Portraiture is, after all, a public form of art. Even when paintings were

²⁷ For a historiography of the perceived secularisation of society during the eighteenth century, see Schor, *Bearing the Dead*, pp. 4-5.

intended for display within the home, they were often, as I will show below, exhibited publicly or available to view in an artist's studio. Similarly, the miniature, whilst inviting an intimate form of engagement between the viewer and the deceased sitter by virtue of its diminutive size, could act as a cipher of mourning when worn by its owner. The circulation of commemorative prints and indeed death masks further emphasise the fact that even posthumous portraits were often intrinsically public.²⁸

The extent to which a portrait was made publicly available necessarily relates to the process of creation and commission. The conversation that took place between the sitter, the artist, and, perhaps, the patron (if not the sitter him or herself) in the creation of *ad vivum* portraits was disrupted in portraits of a deceased sitter. The dead, after all, were stripped of their ability to control their posthumous image. Unlike the extant documentary evidence that indicates the extent to which the dying specified their desire for a particular funerary sermon or tomb monument, whether through their will or letters to relatives, there are few instances of a person requesting a posthumous portrait to be displayed within the home or specifying the manner in which they hoped to be shown and, as a consequence, remembered.

In 1796, Richard Mansergh St George wrote a highly emotional and rambling letter, probably addressed to the artist Henri Fuseli, in which he requests a portrait of himself and his deceased wife who had died two years before. Primarily intended to assuage his grief – he explains how he hopes that ‘having as it were transferred the image [of my wife] to you, it will cease to haunt me’ – he assumes that he is soon to die and, therefore, requests a posthumous representation of himself as well:

...the dreadful picture (which I shall never see) you are to paint for my children and posterity, shall not be seen (nor known) to any person till they arrive at mature years.²⁹

²⁸ Much has been written about the public nature of portraiture, such as: Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life*, pp.9-10; D.H. Solkin, *Art in Britain: 1660-1815* (New Haven and London, 2015), pp. 186-209; Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, *passim*.

²⁹ An edited transcript of the letter is included in F. Cullen, ‘Hugh Douglas Hamilton:

He writes that he will build a room to house the portrait in order to protect it from any damage and when their children see ‘this dreadful and strange apparition’ it may inspire them to read his autobiography (contained within a trunk in the room). Mansergh St George’s conviction of his impending demise leads him to offer a ‘like’ miniature from which the artist can work and access to both a chalk drawing and a portrait by Gainsborough. Should he live, he says, ‘you will have a proper model for the dreary subject’. He also suggests that the artist make use of George Romney’s portrait of his wife that was painted shortly before her death. His strange, gothic desire to create a depiction his wife being torn from his arms by some ‘supernatural creature’, which likely includes his own posthumous representation, is useful to the art historian in various ways. It demonstrates one man’s fervent desire to commemorate his wife, not to seek comfort in her image but to rid himself of his grief. In addition, it shows, albeit through an extreme example, how the grieving carefully considered the staging of such works and the powerful effect that portraiture could have on the survivors.

The state of scholarship

Despite the acknowledged relationship between portraiture and death, the amount of art historical literature that directly engages with this topic is severely lacking. As a result, these portraits have largely escaped sustained critical attention and have, for the most part, only been considered in relation to an artist’s career or the biographical study of a sitter. Outside art history as a discipline, numerous scholars have explored death in the past, particularly from anthropological and sociological perspectives. Art has, however, generally been used illustratively without due regard to the artistic forces and socio-cultural context that gave rise to its creation. In this thesis, I follow Retford’s assertion as to the value of portraiture to

“Painter of the Heart”, *Burlington Magazine*, no. 125, 1983, pp. 418–21, cited in Retford ‘A Death in the Family’, p.91.

wider social histories by suggesting that posthumous portraits should constitute a vital aspect of historical studies of mourning practices and the expression of emotion during this period.³⁰

This thesis will add to the well-trodden scholarly terrain of British portraiture during this period, as well as historical studies of death and emotion.

One of the few influential texts that deals with the relationship between visual culture and death is Nigel Llewellyn's *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c. 1500–1800* (1992). Llewellyn devotes two chapters to objects that were created, commissioned, gifted and worn by those in mourning during the timespan of this thesis, which provide a useful platform for further study into this topic. He focuses, however, on objects associated with post-Reformation death rituals and whilst these include posthumous portraits, he does not seek to uncover the emotional impact of such works on the living, nor does he consider such works within the artistic context in which they were produced. Nevertheless, his work on portraiture provides a useful backdrop to some of the portraits discussed in this thesis, mostly dating, as they do, to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as he acknowledges in the introduction.³¹ As I do not seek to incorporate the expanse of eighteenth-century visual culture of death, Llewellyn's book offers further context about attitudes towards death during this time, including, for example, eighteenth-century depictions of the Dance of Death.³²

In recent years, however, several art historians have started to engage with posthumous portraiture in a more sustained fashion, albeit with a focus on a particular portrait type rather than a broader consideration of commemorative portraiture. Kate Retford's article, 'A Death in the Family: Posthumous Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England' (2010) is a foundational piece of scholarship into the subject that has been highly influential

³⁰ Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, pp. 6-7.

³¹ N. Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual* (London, 1992), p. 8.

³² *Ibid*, pp. 19-27.

to the present study, indeed, it is, in many ways, a starting point for this thesis. Retford focuses on paintings in which the living and the dead are shown side-by-side, specifically deceased wives and mothers. Whilst she too considers the artistic, religious and socio-cultural context that gave rise to such portraits, over the course of the article she draws attention to the central problematics of this type of posthumous portraiture. Unlike tomb monuments in which it was commonplace for the living and the dead to occupy the same narrative space, painters were required to adhere to the parameters set by Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Academy concerning historical portraiture, which did not allow for the intermingling of the terrestrial and spiritual worlds.³³ I follow Retford's historical approach that takes into account the socio-cultural and religious forces of the time, and add to her interpretation of a number of the portraits jointly discussed by embedding them within the broader context of posthumous portraiture. Doing so highlights the particularities of different posthumous portrait types and the various ways in which people engaged with images of the dead.

Marcia Pointon's work on both death masks and portrait miniatures has similarly been influential to this thesis. Her article, 'Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things: Artifacts at the Edge' (2014) is the most significant recent study of death masks within art historical scholarship and provides an overview of the history of death mask production before delving into questions concerning the materiality of bodily casts.³⁴ Whilst she considers contemporary responses to death masks, in a period that overlaps but extends that of the present study (1813–1928), her primary focus is on the conceptualisation of bodily casts within portraiture rather than thinking about the value of death masks in mourning practices. Pointon's work on miniatures has proved similarly valuable, particularly with regards to the

³³ Retford, 'A Death in the Family', pp. 93-95.

³⁴ 'Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things: Artifacts at the Edge', *The Art Bulletin*, 96/2 (June, 2014), pp.170-195. As I will go on to discuss, Louis Kaplan has taken a theoretical approach to his study of death masks, using these objects to think about representation in the vein of Heidegger, rather than to situate them within their historical context.

bodily relationship of these portable objects and their owners. This has been key to my understanding of the differing modes of interaction between the viewer and the image of the deceased, whether viewed at a distance, held in the hand, circulated in print, or encountered in a staged setting. Hanneke Grootenboer's significant study of eye miniatures, has similarly informed this thesis. Her book, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures* (2012), includes a chapter on 'crying' eye miniatures, the tears signified by crystals, diamonds and seed pearls.³⁵ Grootenboer argues that these curious and relatively rare objects act quite unlike other forms of portraiture. Rather than simply receiving the gaze of the beholder, they are performative, portraying the act of crying. In the case of posthumous objects of this type, the eye of the subject appears to weep over their own death. Grootenboer questions whether these objects were not so much about remembrance but acted as an invitation to cry. These weeping eyes and their depicted gazes operated as a particularly intimate mode of representation, identifiable only to those closest to the sitter and anonymous to all others. Grootenboer explores this intimate vision within the context of the cult of sentimentality, drawing comparisons to epitaphs on gravestones, mourning jewellery, and death masks. Her historically grounded field of study, covering the few years around the turn of the nineteenth century when these objects were at the height of their popularity, and her discussion of both emotion and intimacy, provide an important insight into the ways in which people interacted with and understood these objects. Her work is essential to this study. Whilst the overarching aim of *Treasuring the Gaze* is to use the eye miniature as a means of exploring the philosophy of the depicted gaze, Grootenboer's methodological approach sheds light on the contemporary socio-cultural context in which these objects were produced that has informed my own understanding of this period.

³⁵ H. Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures* (Chicago, 2012), pp.89-123.

These studies by Retford, Pointon and Grootenboer focus on specific portrait types, only making reference to other kinds of portraiture as an interpretative tool. Recent studies on posthumous portraiture within American art, however, take a more encompassing approach. Exhibitions and the associated catalogues including *Securing the Shadow: Posthumous Portraiture in America* at the American Folk Art Museum (2016) and *Love and Loss: American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures* at the Yale University Art Gallery (2010) cover the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and include numerous types of posthumous portraiture ranging from the work of leading artists to folk responses to the death of a loved one.³⁶ Whilst the latter study is limited in scope by presenting miniatures from specific collections that were produced exclusively in north-eastern American cities with the exception of Charleston, South Carolina, it adds much to our understanding of the value and function of posthumous portraiture in a country that, by virtue of its status as a British colony for much of the period under scrutiny, shared a great deal with Britain culturally.³⁷ As Kariann Yokota states,

...the importation of material culture, ideas, and experts from the mother country was an integral part of a provincial people's attempt to construct a "civilised" nation on the periphery of the transatlantic world.³⁸

This extended to literary works by British authors. In *Love and Loss*, for example, Robin Jaffee Frank refers to works including Thomas Gray and his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751), that were published and widely circulated in America, in order to

³⁶ S.C. Hollander with G. Laderman, and A.I. Radice, *Securing the Shadow: Posthumous Portraiture in America* (New York, 2016); and R.J. Frank, *Love and Loss: American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures* (New Haven, 2010).

³⁷ J.C. Kelly, 'Reviewed Work: *Love and Loss: American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures* by Robin Jaffee Frank', *Journal of the Early Republic*, 21/2 (Summer, 2001), p. 380. In his introduction to his exhibition catalogue, Frank states that '...English taste was highly prized in the colonies, especially amongst the established and aspiring elites...the popularity of miniatures in America coincides with a revival of interest in them across the Atlantic for similar social reasons', *Love and Loss*, p. 5.

³⁸ K.A. Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford, 2011), p. 9.

contextualise miniatures and mourning jewellery that were equally ubiquitous on both sides of the Atlantic, within a broader culture of mourning.³⁹

Securing the Shadow adds to Frank's scholarship on miniatures produced by some of the leading American artists of the day, by discussing self-taught portraiture. This provides a vital insight into the act of creating a posthumous portrait as a way of processing one's grief that, as I discuss in chapter one, is hard to find in documentary sources pertaining to British art. Consequently, both of these exhibition catalogues have provided a useful point of comparison to the present study. In each publication, examples of miniatures and other portrait types demonstrate a comparable desire to commemorate the dead through portraiture and reveal the influence of British artistic and cultural practices on both the professional and folk artists of America.

In addition to the art historical scholarship outlined above there is an extensive body of material that pertains to death, mourning and commemoration in this period, which is crucial to this thesis, particularly in the fields of English literature, religious studies, social history and anthropology. Some of these texts have been particularly influential to death studies and are frequently cited in recent scholarship. Philippe Ariès's *Western Attitudes Toward Death* (1974) and the revised version *The Hour of our Death* (1977) for example, focus on changing attitudes towards death across a millennium.⁴⁰ With regards to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in particular, he cites the removal of burial grounds to outside city walls and the increased medicalisation of death that took the process of dying out of the home and into hospitals, as fundamental to the changing attitude towards death that occurred at this time. Ariès is credited with opening up death studies as a new field of scholarship and whilst his intervention is insightful, providing a new framework for

³⁹ Frank, *Love and Loss*, p. 121.

⁴⁰ P. Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death for the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore, 1974).

considering death in the past, his conclusions and use of particular source material often leads to overgeneralisation. The vast scope of his study has limited use to a geographically and historically focused study as it inevitably glosses over the specifics of particular death practices, both cultural and religious, without paying enough attention to different kinds of death, as well as social, economic and political factors. Nevertheless, his discussion about changing attitudes towards death practices provides a helpful starting point for my consideration of the function and value of posthumous portraiture, as the treatment of the body undoubtedly affected the manner in which the dead were represented in art.

Ralph Houlbrooke's important study, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (2000), provides a broad overview of death practices that includes a particularly illuminating chapter on grief and mourning.⁴¹ This overview is richly supported by biblical quotation and extracts from letters as well as a survey of funerary monuments but the purview of Houlbrooke's investigation does not extend to portraiture. Furthermore, his study ceases ten years before the timeframe of this thesis. The chapter, and book as a whole, does, however, provide a helpful and insightful backdrop to the period on which this thesis focuses. Similarly, Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings's *Death in England: An Illustrated History* (1999) provides an overview of death practices from 'remote times' to the year before the book's publication. This broad sweep of history provides a useful overview of the topic but can only go so far in providing new insights into period specific details. Different methodologies are used to discuss specific periods and practices, including sociology and anthropology, which is useful to my thesis, but the authors' engagement with the visual is limited. Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey's *Death, Memory and Material Culture* (2001) is an influential anthropological study that highlights the importance of material objects in the process of mourning and remembering. Whilst the objects under discussion are far more various than

⁴¹ Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, pp. 220-254.

my study of posthumous portraits, I have drawn on this anthropological approach, which asserts the capacity for objects to preserve the memory of the deceased and serve the living within mourning practices.

Studies into literary expressions of emotions through novels, poetry and other textual sources such as diaries and letters, sermons, biographies and newspaper articles, are far more plentiful and offer both historical insight and comparable methodologies. Esther Schor's book *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (1994), for example, provides a far-reaching history of the culture of mourning literature that covers roughly the same period of the present thesis. Drawing on a range of textual sources, both literary as well as political, economic and social, she adopts a methodology that presents 'mourning as a cultural rather than psychological phenomenon'.⁴² Whilst I adopt a similar premise, I consider it necessary to draw the psychological implications of artistic responses to death and dying into my study of posthumous portraiture, particularly given the documentary evidence that describes the manner in which people engaged with portraiture and recorded the effect that such representations had on their grieving process.

The existing scholarship outlined above constitutes the most significant studies on death, mourning and commemoration in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the extent to which different approaches and subject matters have informed the present study or left room for deeper investigation. Those that focus on portraiture, whilst influential, relate to single portrait types rather than considering the interaction between these modes of representation and how different portrait types could serve the living in different ways. In each chapter, I include, therefore, an additional survey of scholarship that relates to paintings of child portraiture, miniature painting, commemorative prints and death masks respectively.

⁴² Schor, *Bearing the Dead*, p. 3.

This allows me to draw on discussions that relate to the particularities of each portrait type and the extent to which artists and their patrons played on and adapted specific conventions.

Methodology

The act of creating posthumous portraits at this time cannot and should not be seen in isolation but embedded within the artistic, literary, social and religious fabric of the day. Consequently, I have consulted a range of source material that is literary, documentary and religious. Much can be drawn from contemporary poetry, which frequently accompanied many of the portrait types under discussion, including miniature paintings and prints. Similarly, it is vital to consider the manner in which death and commemoration was portrayed in novels. Diaries, letters and contemporary biographies provide a rich source of evidence and textual counterpoint to many of the portraits, particularly those that detail the conditions of a portrait commission or response to the eventual work. The need to consider the religious context, focusing on Christianity along various denominational lines, is a crucial aspect of this study and can be aided by a close examination of published funerary sermons. As Penny Pritchard notes, it is impossible to know how accurately these published works reflected the sermon that was actually preached, but even edited works reveal the primary concerns of both the church and its congregation.⁴³

Considering a range of portrait types, including paintings, miniatures, prints, and death masks necessitates differing modes of analysis, and, where appropriate, different but interconnected methodologies. In this regard, I follow Schor's ambition in *Bearing the Dead*, 'to demonstrate the efficacy of bringing a variety of analytical approaches to bear on the task

⁴³ P. Pritchard, 'The Protestant Funeral Sermon in England, 1688-1800', in K. Francis, W. Gibson, B. Tennant, and R.H. Ellison (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689-1901* (Oxford, 2012), p. 321.

of interpretation'.⁴⁴ So, whilst this thesis is historically grounded, I make use of theoretical approaches where necessary. For example, whilst my discussion of paintings focuses primarily on narrative and composition, I give greater consideration to the materiality and processes of making in my discussion about death masks. Similarly, my study of commemorative portrait prints is concerned primarily with their circulation and consumption on a large scale, whereas in my chapter on miniatures, I focus on the bodily relationship between these small images of the deceased and their owners. There are, however, overlapping concerns throughout, such as modes of display and engagement, including the place of paintings within the home and the presentation of death masks. I also draw connections between different portrait types and the ways in which such juxtapositions shed further light on individual portraits, such as the use of a death mask to create a painted posthumous portrait, or the reuse and augmentation of painted portraits that were reproduced in print. Similarly, I have demonstrated how other aspects of the material culture of mourning can be used productively to understand each portrait type, including monumental sculpture and mourning jewellery.

This varied approach that crosses disciplinary boundaries and reaches beyond the artistic limits imposed by the structure of the thesis is necessary in order to develop a nuanced understanding of the portraits in question. In *Figured in Marble: The Making and Viewing of Eighteenth-Century Sculpture* (2000), Malcolm Baker argues for an approach to eighteenth-century British art that does not privilege painting above other forms of artistic practice, specifically, sculpture.⁴⁵ This viewpoint has been central to the construction of this thesis, in which I similarly stress the need for a more encompassing view of portraiture. If one is to come to any understanding about the use of posthumous portraiture within mourning

⁴⁴ Schor, *Bearing the Dead*, p. 6.

⁴⁵ Malcolm Baker, *Figured in Marble: The Making and Viewing of Eighteenth-Century Sculpture* (London, 2000), p. 9. Baker similarly takes this approach by considering the portrait bust in relation to painted portraits in *The Marble Index*, *passim*.

practices, the field of study cannot be limited to a single type. Studying a breadth of different portrait types raises issues concerning materiality, display and commissioning, all of which are key aspects of my investigation into the way in which people experienced and engaged with posthumous portraits.

Chapter summaries

Each chapter of this thesis focuses on a particular portrait type and responds to a different set of issues. The use of case studies is key to the structure of the thesis. Whilst connections can and should be made between portraits in terms of composition, use and display, for example, the particularities of one family's loss and its manifestation in art needs to be considered, I argue, on a case-by-case basis. Before detailing the central concerns of each chapter, however, I would like to outline the limits of this thesis imposed by time and space. I do not include portraits of sitters long since deceased such as, for example, portraits of ancient philosophers, which raise questions concerning, as Pointon writes, 'convention and idealization'.⁴⁶ Pointon explains how the differing posthumous depictions of ancient figures stemmed from eighteenth-century ideas about the capacity for portraiture to reveal 'the interiority of the individual'. Thus, 'Deprived of the originals...Art created a means of representing the *idea* of [the sitter]'.⁴⁷ Largely following Retford in this regard, this thesis looks instead at the role of posthumous portraiture within families as well as the wider social networks of the deceased. Consequently, I have decided to exclude portraits that were made many years after the death of the sitter with the intention of filling a gap in a family portrait gallery, as discussed above.⁴⁸ Furthermore, by the end of the eighteenth century, the practice

⁴⁶ Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, pp. 62-63.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the practice of commissioning portraits of ancestors to establish their pedigree see West 'The Public Nature of Private Life: the Conversation Piece and the Fragmented Family', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 18/2 (1995), p. 158.

of compiling a sequence of posthumous portraits had become highly unfashionable.⁴⁹ Instead, I focus only on portraits that were produced in the immediate aftermath of the sitter's death and were initially intended to console the viewer so as to enact an element of the mourning process. Throughout the thesis I refer to portrait busts, whose role, as the eighteenth-century French sculptor Étienne-Maurice Falconet wrote, was 'to perpetuate the memory of illustrious men and to give us models of virtue', as well as offering a means of demonstrating familial continuity and status.⁵⁰ The period conception of the portrait bust as a public act of commemoration, however, precludes it from my analysis of the emotional function of portraiture. Often displayed in particular settings, whether civic, religious or in the public areas of the house, the essential function of the portrait bust was not to comfort the bereaved but to celebrate the achievements of the sitter and honour their memory.

Similarly, whilst I make repeated reference to tomb monuments, I do so to shed further light on the portraits being considered rather than engaging in any extended study of their function due to their religious setting.⁵¹ Furthermore, and as Retford argues, monumental sculpture and portraiture 'operated according to very different rules'.⁵² A comparison between the two is undoubtedly valuable but only in as much as it highlights particular types of imagery that were found within the home versus religious settings. Relatedly, I have not included depictions of heroic deaths that serve to commemorate and celebrate an individual's success in life, which invariably demonstrate superior human

⁴⁹ Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p. 27.

⁵⁰ E. M. Falconet, *Encyclopédie* (Paris, 1808), vol. 3, p. 3, cited in Baker, *The Marble Index*, p. 31.

⁵¹ There have been several important studies of funerary monuments in this period including N. Penny, *Church Monuments in Romantic England* (New Haven, 1977); D. Bindman and M. Baker, *Roubiliac and the Eighteenth-Century Monument: Sculpture as Theatre* (New Haven and London, 1995); B. Kemp, *English Church Monuments* (London, 1980); K. Esdaile, *English Church Monuments, 1510-1840* (London, 1946). For an important discussion of earlier tomb monuments in England, see N. Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge, 2000).

⁵² Retford, 'A Death in the Family', p. 92.

qualities of bravery or patriotism. Not only have some of the most famous heroic deaths of the period undergone extensive study already, including, for example, the death of Nelson who was posthumously portrayed by a number of different artists including Benjamin West, but they served a very different function to the portraits discussed in this thesis and were, for the most part, intended to be displayed in different settings.⁵³ In contrast, I focus on more intimate modes of mourning by looking at portraits that allowed the bereaved to remember and seek comfort in the image of the deceased. Whilst most of the portraits discussed were made in England, some examples have come from elsewhere in the British Isles, particularly Scotland, where there was a comparable concern and desire for posthumous portraits, and by artists who were operating on a national level. On rare occasions I also refer to foreign artistic and socio-cultural practices, including those of Europe and America but due to time and space, I have restricted my study to British art. Embedding the topic of this thesis within a broader international context would no doubt yield interesting lines of enquiry and would form a logical extension to the present study.

The thesis has been structured in a loosely chronological order with each chapter considering a particular portrait type in order to investigate a specific set of questions. The first chapter focuses on oil paintings of children after death and the various ways in which artists and their patrons handled this sensitive subject matter: how did posthumous portraits help the bereaved to come to terms with the death of a child, perhaps the most profound yet common occasion of death in the family? What was particular to the various strategies used by artists and their patrons to convey a sense of grief at the loss of a child specifically? What do posthumous portraits of children reveal about the artistic and socio-cultural context in which they were produced? I start with portraits of children for several reasons. Firstly, because discussions about the nature of childhood that took place in Britain from the mid-

⁵³ Baker, *Figured in Marble*, pp. 11-12.

eighteenth century onwards were intimately bound to contemporary notions of sentimentality. My analysis of these discussions allows me to introduce the fundamentals of this particular cultural moment at an early stage of the thesis. Secondly, these portraits raise an issue that permeates the remaining chapters, that is, the extent to which death at different stages of life affected the way in which a person might be commemorated through portraiture. Central to this is the way in which portraits of a mother and child started to change during this period, which was partly the result of the artistic mode of looking back to Renaissance precedents, and also a response to contemporary discussions about the family. The subject necessarily engages with the breadth of existing literature on portraits of children and examines the extent to which posthumous portrayals of children were transformed by these contemporary discussions about the nature of childhood. Whilst there has been significant academic engagement with the depiction of children during this period, there have been few attempts to consider how portraits painted after death were understood and used by grieving parents. Furthermore, these works have not been looked at in comparison to other forms of posthumous portraiture in order to assess any particularities associated with images of deceased children.

This necessitates an assessment of the ways in which artists engaged with, and made use of, existing portrait conventions, whether historic or contemporary, to express the grief felt by those left behind. For example, mother and child portraits achieved great popularity in this period, partly a result of the interest in new ideas about both motherhood and childhood. Artists sought artistic precedents for such portrayals, looking back to both ancient and Renaissance works of art for inspiration in order to capture the bond between mother and child. By finding ways of depicting the rupture of this bond, artists could convey the immensity of grief suffered by bereaved parents. On some occasions, this was amplified by recognisable compositions and motifs that similarly found precedents in ancient works of art

and were commonly used in all kinds of commemorative works, such as mourning jewellery. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, artists also made use of the apotheosis format to describe the transition of a child's soul from this world to the next. The motivations for this were partly religious, demonstrating contemporary views about predestination, whilst speaking to new ideas about the innocence of children, and providing comfort for the beholder that the child has gained immediate passage into heaven and exists in the perfection of their being.

These portraits were largely displayed in the more public areas of the house, viewed by the owner's guests and visitors, and some of them were exhibited publicly in exhibitions at the Royal Academy and British Institution. Nevertheless, for many parents, these portraits were central to the mourning process and could be contemplated in private moments of sadness. I develop this point of intimate engagement with depictions of the deceased in my second chapter, which focuses on portrait miniatures. Drawing on Pointon's discussion about the bodily relationship with the miniature, and Grootenboer's exploration of the 'dead' gaze, I also make use of anthropological discussions concerning 'mutuality of being', particularly the work of Marshall Sahlins in order to assess the role of portraiture in maintaining social bonds: what place did these small portraits that could be worn, held in the hand, turned over, opened up, hold within mourning practices? How did these objects relate to other portrait types with regard to visual and literary sources? To what extent did these objects conform to notions of privacy when they were worn or displayed within a public setting, and what can this tell us about the public expression of grief? The diminutive size, portability and methods of framing the portrait miniature allowed the mourning survivor to add additional, non-pictorial elements that heightened the emotive power of the work. The inclusion of hair, inscriptions, and framing devices rich in symbolism allowed for a multifaceted representation of the deceased, one that was both tactile and visual.

The common use of hair, whether intricately plaited and decorated with seed pearls and set behind glass, or loosely bound and encased within a locket, is a key aspect of this discussion and connects these small portraits to my later discussion about the presentation of death masks. Hair possessed an affective power that drew the viewer closer to the deceased by virtue of its tactility, even if it was entombed behind glass. It could also provide a sense of specificity that married the image of the deceased with an actual remnant of that person's body. This ability, in a sense, to authenticate a portrait was a useful tool for the creation of those portrait miniatures in which existing images taken from well-known prints were used in a generalised manner to remember a specific individual. Inscriptions that were either contained within a piece of mourning jewellery that housed a miniature, or etched into a frame not only reveal the input of the mourning patron on the work of the artist but gives evidence of a broader cultural concern with quotation. The combination of word and image is, therefore, a significant aspect of my examination of posthumous portrait miniatures and their value as an intimate form of commemoration.

By way of contrast, the third chapter looks at the role of posthumous portraiture in widely circulated commemorative prints, using those produced after the death of Princess Charlotte (1796–1817) as a case study. The sheer volume of primary source material, both visual and literary, invite this singular focus, which can be used to ask questions about widespread commemoration during this period in general and to evaluate portraiture as both a public and private genre of art: what can an analysis of commemorative prints tell us about the nature of public grief and the expression of it versus more intimate forms of remembrance? How was the existing iconography of Princess Charlotte used and adapted to enact widespread and shared grief? What role did these prints play in the social and political life of early nineteenth-century Britain?

Several historians and literary scholars have studied the nation's overwhelming outpouring of grief that followed Princess Charlotte's death, however, her posthumous portraits both in oil and in print, have not yet been examined comprehensively nor have they been considered within the broader context of commemorative portrait practices in the early nineteenth century. Whilst I examine the outpouring of grief in terms of image making, it would be misguided to separate the visual and literary, and so my analysis will demonstrate the intersection of the two. Setting up the contrast between public and private forms of posthumous portraits, I begin by looking at painted portraits in oil of the princess that were produced in the weeks preceding her death and not viewed by her family until afterwards, as well as those produced posthumously. This allows me to examine the documentary sources that expressed the impact of seeing these portraits of the princess in the wake of her passing to her closest intimates. Their interaction with these works – keeping a portrait covered, sitting with it in silent contemplation, and erupting into tears on first look – demonstrate the emotive power of the portrait as a form of remembrance.

These private moments of engagement, although published in various sources, are set in contrast to the plethora of prints produced after Charlotte's death that helped to sate the public's appetite for such commemorative works. Whilst the consumers of these prints did not know the princess personally, their grief at her loss was couched in very personal and emotional language, indicating the impact of her death in every household. In terms of the composition of these works, the apotheosis became the most common manner of depiction, which highlighted her almost saintly character and offered a pleasing image that alluded to her spiritual ascension to heaven. Furthermore, it demonstrates the continued use of a composition that, by the end of the previous century, had started to be viewed as old-fashioned. This, combined with the emotional outpouring of grief in both visual and literary

sources, suggests a return to earlier ways of dealing with death in art, in order to attend to the needs of a grieving nation.

In the final chapter, I turn my attention to a portrait type that has received the least art historical attention no doubt due to its liminal position between art and science. The death mask is unlike the other types of portrait discussed thus far due to the process of making. For the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century viewer, these casts possessed a seeming exactitude and authenticity by virtue of having come into direct contact with the body of the deceased. As such, they were conceptualised very differently to paintings, drawings, prints, miniatures or sculptures, and functioned within mourning practices in divergent ways. The process of making is, therefore, crucial to gaining a deeper understanding about the motivation for commissioning a death mask, both artistic and commemorative, and raises a series of questions with regards to the function of the most explicit form of posthumous portraiture: how important was proximity to the body of the deceased in post mortem representation? How did different modes of display and presentation affect the meaning of the death mask for the viewer? To what extent did different casting materials prescribe particular associative values and how does this relate to other forms of portraiture?

Aside from two recent explorations of death masks during this period by Pointon and Grootenboer, and Georges Didi-Huberman and Thomas Repensek's work on the imprint, the relative lack of art historical scholarship on death masks is matched by the limited amount of primary source material that would help the art historian to comprehend the working practices of sculptors and cast-makers that carried out this commemorative work.⁵⁴ As a result, I begin by focusing my discussion on the use of death masks made by the prominent sculptor Joseph Nollekens (1737–1823) in his working practice. Diary entries and

⁵⁴ M. Pointon, 'Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things: Artefacts at the Edge', *The Art Bulletin*, 96:2 (2014), pp. 170-195; Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze*, pp. 117-23; G. Didi-Huberman and T. Repensek, 'The index of the absent wound (monograph on a stain)', *October*, 29 (Summer, 1984), pp. 63-81.

contemporary published sources frequently document the rapidity with which Nollekens and, it can be assumed, his assistants, took a death mask following the passing of a notable figure. The sculptor used these casts to create posthumous works lending a sense of authenticity to the resultant work. A key aspect of this study is the almost complete lack of death masks of women during this period within Britain, unlike their European counterparts. Delving into this disparity sheds further light on how the making process was conceptualised with regards to contemporary notions of propriety.

Death masks did function, however, as objects in their own right and were cast, adapted and displayed in ways that shifted the notion of what a death mask could be from an accurate model for an artistically rendered portrait to a relic-like object imbued with a trace of the departed sitter. By examining two examples in which the death mask was displayed in ways to heighten its commemorative function – the death masks of Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830) and Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) – I will demonstrate the significant value of these unusual portraits to those left behind.

The distinction between death masks and other types of posthumous portraiture provides an appropriate segue into my conclusion where I look forward to the invention of photography and its impact on commemorative practices. In a comparable fashion that has been discussed by several scholars, the ‘automatic’ process in which the body provides a trace of its image on the resultant print is akin to the imprint of the face in the plaster that forms the mould for the death mask. The death mask thereby acts as a linkage that connects the types of posthumous portraiture discussed in the first three chapters of this thesis with the photographic portrait, which soon became the predominant mode of recording the features not only of the living but the dead as well. In addition, I show how modes of presenting the death mask similarly draw attention to the increasing interest during the nineteenth century in secular relics. Whilst undoubtedly a feature of eighteenth-century mourning practices,

particularly during the last fifty years, secular relics in the form of hair, a tooth or other objects and fragments that pertained to the death of an individual, became, as Deborah Lutz suggests, ‘such a craze from the 1850s to the 80s that a busy industry flourished’.⁵⁵ The death mask, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, existed somewhere between the photograph as a form of representation that had been directly affected by the body, and the relic as an object that related to the sitter by virtue of the making process. My discussion of the moment at which the creation of existing forms of posthumous portraiture started to decline as photography took hold indicates the continued desire to preserve the image of the deceased.

This thesis does not seek to isolate a discrete period in history in which the posthumous portrait held more significance than at any other time but to highlight its function within a specific socio-cultural and religious context. Whilst clothes and other objects associated with the dead held great significance for the grieving, the ability to contemplate a representation of the deceased was profoundly affecting. Such works were limited, of course, to the sector of society that had the means to commission them, but the manner in which the deceased were represented and the specifics of their display, use and exchange offers evidence of a culture that not only accepted but encouraged the outward display of emotion. During this period, the dead were very much part of the lives of the living.

⁵⁵ Lutz, ‘The Dead Still Among Us’, p. 129.

Chapter 1

'The Last Sad Testimony of Affection': Picturing Deceased Children

Wealthy members of the Cumberland gentry, the Wilsons of Dallam Tower, recorded the births, marriages and deaths of family members in a small notebook now held with the rest of the family papers by the Cumbria County Archive.¹ Some of the pages are decorated with simple curlicue motifs, particularly on those that document marriages, but mostly they consist of a series of brief sentences that provide a thin summation of the lives of close relatives.

Midway through this notebook, Daniel Wilson writes,

my Son Georges only Child named Sybbil Elizabeth Dyed at Acomb Near york on ye 17 of febry 1773 was brought to Lancaster ye 24 of Febry & buryed there at noon this Day very privately [sic].²

The lack of emotion in this record, capturing only the most practical of details, does little to reflect the impact of Sibyl's death on her family at only six years old.³ She was not merely a brief notation in the family's history but a cherished only child deeply mourned by her parents who found ways of remembering and commemorating her life in both public and private settings. Not long after the girl's death, George Romney painted *Ann Wilson and her Daughter Sibyl* (c. 1776) (fig. 8). This portrait, with its subdued palette, simple composition and sombre antique references, is a sensitive portrayal of the bond between mother and daughter severed by premature death. The mother's head is cast downward but not quite touching that of her now deceased daughter, her arms softly enveloping the child's delicate form. The intimacy of their bond is revealed by this embrace, and further emphasised by the shallow depth of the picture plane and unobtrusive shadowy background. The young girl looks out to the viewer with a calm expression, as she gently rests her crossed arms on her

¹ Notebook of Wilson family of Dallam Tower, 1645-1850, Cumbria Archive Centre, WDX/1229 A2578.

² Ibid, p. 76.

³ There are no extant records that indicate how Sibyl died.

mother's lap. Romney's sensitive portrayal of a mother mourning the death of her much-loved daughter draws together some of the key aspects of posthumous portraiture. Indeed, it speaks to the kind of commemorative imagery that became increasingly prevalent towards the end of the eighteenth century, which will be the focus of this chapter. As I will show, for previous generations, the death of a child was announced in portraiture through the kind of conspicuous gesturing common to group portraits of living sitters and through symbolic schema, which clearly illustrated a rupture in the family line. By the 1770s when Romney painted this portrait, both artists and families who commissioned these commemorative works were actively reconsidering the role of posthumous portraiture within the home and found a variety of new ways to pictorially express their sadness at the loss of a child within a changing socio-cultural context. It has been argued that 'funerary portraits of children...virtually disappeared during the eighteenth century before a new tradition arose in the nineteenth', but I will show that posthumous portraits of children were both common and often considered to be an essential part of the mourning process.⁴ Whilst parents in previous generations also sought ways of commemorating their children, sometimes in a manner that signalled the emotional impact of their loss, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, a new visual vocabulary emerged that both responded and contributed to socio-cultural changes and artistic developments of this particular historical moment.

Analysing the various strategies used by artists to represent deceased children will shed light on the character and value of commemorative portraiture at this time, as well as the way in which art functioned and came into being within its broader socio-cultural context. Essential to this will be my examination of the interplay of the artistic tendency to look back to art of the Renaissance and ancient world, with contemporary discussions about parenthood, family relationships, the nature of childhood, and indeed, death itself. Similarly,

⁴ J. Aronson and M. E. Wieseman (eds.) *Perfect Likeness: European and American Portrait Miniatures from the Cincinnati Art Museum* (New Haven, 2006), cat.62, p. 162.

close reading of these paintings and the iconography that found precedents in Christian imagery will highlight the crucial role that religious belief played in the creation of commemorative portraiture and how posthumous portraits had the capacity to offer assurance of divine providence to grieving parents. The period in question has been characterised as the ‘Age of Sensibility’, which allowed for and, indeed, encouraged a more overt expression of feeling. During these years, the promotion of virtuous feeling came to replace the ‘politeness’ of earlier decades that similarly dominated art and literature from the 1740s onwards.⁵ Within this context, children were often shown at play outdoors in a new form of more relaxed clothing. Artists exploited this new image of ‘natural’ childhood and played on emerging portrait conventions in order to represent deceased children. Portraits of living children were characterised by their playfulness and sprightliness but once deceased, they were shown detached, calm and inaccessible, even when depicted within a familial embrace.

During a period in which child portraiture flourished, the quantity of posthumous portraits inevitably rose. Since the 1990s, there has been steady scholarly interest in child portraiture, which often touch on posthumous portraits.⁶ James Steward’s in-depth exhibition catalogue on the place of the child in the eighteenth century gives some attention to posthumous portraits of children. His discussion of childhood mortality, however, primarily focuses on textual evidence that attests to parental concern for their child both in life and death rather than scrutinising the various ways in which children were depicted posthumously and what effect such works had on grieving parents. Nevertheless, the rich contextual information that he provides, his engagement with existing scholarship of the history of

⁵ For a discussion of sensibility in art, see Solkin, *Art in Britain*, pp. 231-47.

⁶ The rise of child portraiture in eighteenth-century British art has been addressed in several exhibitions including *The New Child: British Art and the Origins of Modern Childhood*, University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, California (August – November 1995), *Pictures of Innocence: Children in Eighteenth-Century Portraiture in Britain*, Holburne Museum of Art, Bath (22 March to 19 June 2005) and Abbot Hall Gallery, Kendal (July – October 2005), and continues to garner interest thanks to a recent exhibition *Painting Childhood*, Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park, Warwickshire (16 March – 16 June 2019).

childhood, and his assertion that child portraiture demonstrated both change and continuity in the perception of childhood has been vital to my own thinking on the subject. Similarly, Martin Postle and Amina Wright's exhibition catalogue on child portraiture offers a detailed historical account of the notion of innocence during the eighteenth century and offers further analysis of existing scholarship on the subject, including Steward's work.⁷

The intimacy of the mother/daughter composition that Romney captured in this painting likely originated from studies he made in Italy between 1773 and 1775. As Alex Kidson has observed, the artist's so-called *Italian Sketchbook* displays a number of related studies (fig. 9) one of which closely resembles the composition of the Wilson portrait in reverse. Kidson suggests that these were likely inspired by works such as Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia* (c. 1513–14) (fig. 10), which was then displayed in the Ducal collection at the Palazzo Pitti, often visited by Grand Tourists.⁸ The painting was temporarily relocated to the Uffizi for Johann Zoffany's painting, *The Tribuna at the Uffizi* (c. 1772–8) (fig. 11) but its presence within this work demonstrates its renown and the high regard in which it was held.⁹ Whilst none of Romney's sketches are direct copies of Raphael's work, they all share the same visual vocabulary.¹⁰ This suggests that Romney completed the portrait upon his return having received the commission either prior to his departure for the continent when the girl was still living (which may account for the compositional changes) or perhaps during his

⁷ M. Postle and A. Wright, *Pictures of Innocence: Portraits of Children from Hogarth to Lawrence* (Bath, 2005).

⁸ The trend for relating mother and child compositions to Virgin and Child compositions by Italian Masters is discussed by J. Steward, *The New Child: British Art and the Origins of Modern Childhood, 1730–1830* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 117–118. For an introduction to the draw of the Uffizi for Grand Tourists, see H. Belsey, 'Florence', in A. Wilton and I. Bignamini (eds.), *Grand Tour: the Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1996), p. 133 and cat. no. 91, pp. 135–136.

⁹ *George III and Queen Charlotte: Patronage, Collecting and Court Taste* ed. J. Roberts (London, 2004), p. 187.

¹⁰ A. Kidson, *George Romney, 1734–1802* (London, 2002), pp. 108–109.

time abroad.¹¹ Furthermore and perhaps most significantly, there is an appointment with a ‘Mrs Wilson’ in Romney’s sitter book on 8 September 1777, which further supports the suggestion that he painted the work following his return from Italy two years earlier.¹²

Portraits that feature a mother and child were of particular interest to Romney during the 1770s. He experimented with the composition in portraits including *Mrs Johnstone and her Son (?)* (c. 1775–80) (fig. 12), *Mrs Carwardine and Child* (c. 1775) (fig. 13), and *Mrs Stratford Canning, neé Mehetebal Patrick, with Her Daughter Elizabeth* (1778) (fig. 14), all of which were painted after his sojourn on the continent and, we may assume, with the assistance of his sketch book.¹³ In these works, the pair are closely entwined, with the child nestled into their mother’s chest, timidly looking out to the viewer in clear reference to Raphael’s celebrated work. Each mother is dressed in contemporary clothing giving the impression that the viewer has interrupted a private moment of intimacy between mother and child, a snapshot of domestic life. This is in sharp contrast to the portrait with Ann Wilson, which depicts her wearing classical garb, adding an overt reference to mourning imagery of the ancient past, an issue that will be discussed later. In these works Romney’s allusions to Raphael demonstrate his artistic ambition following his return from Italy, shared by the likes of Benjamin West, who painted similar compositions including that of his wife and son, perhaps significantly called *Raphael* (1770) (fig. 15) and William Hoare in his pastel, *Anna Vernon, Lady Berwick, and her Son, Thomas* (c. 1770) (fig. 16), but also indicate a sociocultural shift in perceptions of childhood that occupied both artists and patrons alike.

¹¹ Kidson, *George Romney*, pp. 638-9.

¹² T.H. Ward and W. Roberts, *Romney: a Biographical and Critical Essay, with a Catalogue Raisonné of his Works* (London, 1904), p. 84. In Kidson, *George Romney*, p. 638, the author writes that ‘despite the number of clients Romney had names Mrs Wilson, none of the others is a good candidate for this visitor’.

¹³ This is an established view that has been discussed by many art historians, including Kidson.

Crucial to this shift were the intellectual and philosophical foundations provided by John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile* published in French in 1762 and then in English in 1763. In *Some Thoughts*, Locke argues that children are not inherently sinful and that the development of a child's intellect and morality should be carefully nurtured.¹⁴ Describing the young child's mind as 'white Paper, or Wax, to be moulded and fashioned as one pleases', which has an inherent capacity for reason, he contends that the early years of a child's education should prepare their mind for the intellectual development he outlined in his earlier *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689).¹⁵ Crucially, Locke purports, childhood is a state of development as distinct from adulthood, and children should thus 'not be hindered from being children, or from playing, or doing as children, but from doing ill'.¹⁶ Whilst Locke's treatise provided a practical guide for the everyday upbringing of children, its philosophical implications also served a political purpose. Throughout the text, Locke emphasises the importance of imparting a sense of virtue from parent to child, a quality that 'is harder to be got, than a knowledge of the world; and if lost...seldom recovered'.¹⁷ He argued that this instilled the child with a particular attitude and consciousness of public behaviour, which would ultimately produce 'virtuous, useful, and able men' who would contribute to 'the welfare and prosperity of the nation'.¹⁸

¹⁴ M. J. M. Ezell. 'John Locke's Images of Childhood: Early Eighteenth Century Response to *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 17/2 (1983), pp. 146-7.

¹⁵ J. Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London, 1779), p. 319. This is a point discussed by Ezell, 'John Locke's Images of Childhood', p. 141. See also M. Hilton and P. Hirsch, *Practical Visionaries: Women, Education and Social Progress, 1790-1930* (Harlow, 2000), p. 3.

¹⁶ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, p. 76.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 79.

¹⁸ J. Locke, 'The Epistle Dedicatory to Edward Clarke of Chipley, Esq.', *Some Thoughts* [no page numbers]. Ezell discusses the relationship between the family and the government in the work of Locke and Defoe. Ezell, 'John Locke's Images of Childhood', p. 142.

Locke's text was hugely popular, reprinted over twenty times by the end of the eighteenth century and commented upon in contemporary journals and novels, even achieving the recognition of Queen Charlotte. Painted by the artist Allan Ramsay around 1764–69 with her two children Prince Frederick and Prince George (later George IV) (fig. 17), the queen rests her elbow on the top of the piano, directing the viewer's attention to a copy of Locke's text. This overt inclusion clearly indicates her beliefs concerning the nature of childhood and the role of education in the upbringing of 'virtuous, useful, and able men'. Close familial bonds are emphasised by the physical proximity of the family group; the Queen gently embraces Prince George on her lap with Prince Frederick at her side resting his arm on her knee. The bow held by the elder prince and the toy drum behind suggests his future masculine ascendancy and his mother, therefore, as guardian of the state's future leadership. The placement of these toys simultaneously alludes to the Queen's broader advocacy of Locke's directive to allow children to explore the world through play, as he argues in *On Education*,

For all their innocent folly, playing, and childish actions, are to be left perfectly free and unrestrained, as far as they can consist with the respect due to those that are present; and that with the greatest allowance.¹⁹

This idea relates to Rousseau's highly influential book *Émile*, also owned by Queen Charlotte, which argues that children are fully innocent creatures eventually corrupted by society and that it is the role of parents to protect their children from these dangers for as long as possible.²⁰ Much like Locke, Rousseau assigns primary responsibility for a child's education to the father, writing that 'the real nurse is the mother and the real teacher is the

¹⁹ Locke, *Some Thoughts*, p. 62.

²⁰ See C. Campbell Orr, 'Queen Charlotte, "Scientific Queen"', *Queenship in Britain 1660-1837: Royal Patronage, Court Culture and Dynastic Politics*, ed. C. Campbell Orr (Manchester, 2002), p. 266.

father'.²¹ The role of the mother, therefore, is to nurture the child in their very early years and to hand over responsibility for the intellectual development to the father.²² Rousseau goes on to stress the importance of a mother's duty to breastfeed, which 'then will be a reform in morals...there will be no lack of citizens for the state...'.²³ 'When women become good mothers,' he writes, 'men will be good husbands and fathers'.²⁴ In his view, the mother, therefore, shouldered the responsibility for societal reform and thus emerged as an exemplary model of virtue.²⁵ This became the dominant mode of representing Queen Charlotte in portraiture, establishing her as a model of female virtue by 'loving her country in the same kinds of ways as she [loved] her children and husband'.²⁶

Ramsay's portrait of Queen Charlotte and two of her children closely corresponds to this new image of motherhood, much like the portraits of the British gentry already discussed. The uptake, or at least, engagement with Locke and Rousseau's texts by the royal family demonstrates the extent to which the lines separating the aristocracy, or indeed royalty

²¹ J. J. Rousseau, *Émile, or Education*, ed. P. D. Jimack and trans. B. Foxley (London, 1993), p. 18.

²² For a discussion of Rousseau's assertions about motherhood and the impact his work had to other eighteenth-century writers including Mary Wollstonecraft, see J. Golightly, *The Family, Marriage, and Radicalism in British Women's Novels of the 1790s: Public Affection and Private Affliction* (Lewisburg, 2012), pp. 35-37; L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 2nd edn (London, 2003), pp. 244-245.

²³ Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 15.

²⁴ Ibid. Mothers were frequently the focus of sentimental novels in the mid-eighteenth century, such as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), which was later painted in a twelve-part series by Joseph Highmore now divided between Tate (N03573-N03576), the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (M.Add.6-M.Add.9), and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (1114-3, 1115-3, 1116-3, 1117). Stewart discusses the perceived virtuousness of motherhood in relation to Richardson's texts and Highmore associated illustrations in *The New Child*, pp. 112-3.

²⁵ For a discussion of the role of royal women as 'mothers of state', see Colley, *Britons*, pp. 273-281 and H. Smith, *Georgian Monarchy: Politics and Culture, 1714-1760* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 32-33.

²⁶ For a further discussion of the way in which portraits of Queen Charlotte nurtured this image, see Albinson and Hallett, 'Cornucopia: Royal Female Portraiture', p. 99-100.

in this case, and the middle class were starting to blur during this mid-century period.²⁷ The doting mother became a paragon of virtue regardless of social standing and parents commissioned portraits of their children that promoted these forward-thinking attitudes. Artists such as Romney, West and Hoare were thus able to fuse together contemporary social changes with historic sources of artistic inspiration, including Raphael's famed Madonna and Child.

Dynastic commemoration

This fresh approach to the depiction of children constituted a notable change from earlier family portraits in which children were portrayed according to their rank and status within the family. Grand aristocratic portraits clearly show this emphasis on primogeniture limiting the depiction of any affection between the members of the family or narrative associated with the child.²⁸ In Anthony van Dyck's impressive group portrait of the 4th Earl of Pembroke and his family (c. 1635) (fig. 18), for example, the role of each family member is played out through an intricate interplay of hand gestures. The heir to the family, Charles, Lord Herbert, is identified by his bold, scarlet outfit and position at the near centre of the composition above the rest of the group. The central theme of this portrait – his impending marriage to teenage Mary Villiers standing below – is also given prominence by the Earl of Pembroke, who gestures towards the girl with his hand. On the right-hand side of the painting, Anna Sophia, the earl's eldest daughter, stands with her husband Robert Dormer, Earl of Carnarvon, and places her hand close to her womb with a pearl between her fingers indicating that she has performed her dynastic role of producing a male heir for her own family.

²⁷ Steward, *The New Child*, p. 191; Albinson and Hallett, 'Cornucopia: Royal Female Portraiture', p. 102.

²⁸ Steward, *The New Child*, p. 19.

Standing to the left of Herbert in rich amber-coloured clothes, the younger and less important brother Philip takes his place as the family's 'spare', present but not engaged in the propagation of the family line as his elder brother has to be through his marriage to Mary. The remaining siblings on the left-hand side of the canvas are shown wearing darker and simpler clothing signalling their lesser importance to the dynastic continuity of the family. The three Herbert children who died in infancy are included in the family portrait as well, represented as angels looking down on their relatives below. Their death is not the central narrative of the painting and whilst they are included in the composition, their subtle presence reveals the relative status of each family member. This carefully constructed work shows how the placement and specific depiction of each of the children in the family indicates their role and function within it; it is a display of dynasty and hierarchy, not of bonds of familial emotion. Though the three deceased children are included in the portrait, they serve a kind of iconographic role by preparing to throw roses on the wedding party, a trope that was found in marriage portraits, as seen in William Hogarth's later painting *Wedding of Stephen Beckingham and Mary Cox* (1729) (fig. 19), which shows angels raising a cornucopia, the symbol of plenty, above the heads of the wedding party.²⁹

The marriage between Charles and Mary was short-lived and she later went on to marry the 1st Duke of Richmond. A portrait painted by John Michael Wright around 26 years later during this second marriage, *Portrait of Mary Villiers, Duchess of Richmond, with her late son Esme and her daughter Mary* (c. 1661) (fig. 20), of which there are several variations, displays a more direct engagement with the deceased child, who in this case was

²⁹ Steward discusses depictions of children before the eighteenth century more broadly and how they 'usually carried symbolic meaning and consequently were of a different narrative quality and purpose, and were to be read differently, from works of portraiture or genre in Georgian Britain'. See Steward, *The New Child*, p. 17.

the heir.³⁰ Whilst the Pembroke family portrait focused on the promise of a new marital union, this work draws attention to a break in the family line and provides the viewer with greater insight into the emotional narrative of the composition. Mary's son Esme, shown at the centre of the canvas, died not yet eleven years old in 1660. His death was a severe loss to the Richmond family and, as the Venetian ambassador commented on 3 September 1660, to wider society too. Esme was, he wrote 'of great promise, and the king and Court are much grieved'.³¹ The young boy is identified in Wright's portrait by the same method used in other dynastic works of the period, including that of his relations, the Pembroke family, in which the heir is pointed to or signalled by his prominent position within the group. The mother's upturned hand loosely points towards her deceased son who stands at the centre of the group. Unlike van Dyck's painting, however, the portrait is imbued with various symbols that reinforce Esme's premature passing and suggest the impact of his death on the family. All three sitters direct their gaze outwards confronting the viewer with the impact of his death and its significance to their family and its future. Behind the children, the mother rests an ouroboros on the table, mimicking the circular grouping of the figures whilst making reference to infinity and immortality; her son may be dead but this portrait will seal his memory in paint for all eternity. This is mirrored by the young boy who puts his arm protectively around his sister as they take each other's hand, once again creating a circular form at the centre of the canvas. To further emphasise the boy's passing, Wright has placed an extinguished torch and an empty glass bottle on the table, both symbols of expiration and loss, and the young girl holds up a flower in front of her brother; a common symbol of a

³⁰ Versions include (1) a signed version dated 1661 that has appeared at auction twice (Sotheby's, 14 May 1986, lot 160, and again at Christie's, 10 November 1995, lot 70), (2) a version formerly in the collection of the Legges, Earls of Dartmouth, sold at auction (Phillips, London, 10 July 2001, lot 121) (3) a portrait of the children alone at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (4) a drawing of the children alone at the National Galleries of Scotland.

³¹ *Calendar of State Papers Venetian, 1659-61*, pp. 190-91, cited in H.A. Doubleday and Lord H. de Walden, *The Complete Peerage: Or, A History of the House of Lords and all its Members from the Earliest Times*, (12vols., London, 1945), vol. 10, p. 834.

person plucked in the flowering of life.³² Whilst the portrait exhibits the same use of gesture as the Pembroke family portrait, the more intimate grouping pays greater attention to the emotional narrative of the scene and hints at the kind of compositional techniques that would continue to develop into the following century.

In some instances, the use of gesture and symbol to indicate the loss of a child was even more emphatic. In William Dobson's portrait of what is thought to be the Streatfeild family (fig. 21), the father's sorrowful gaze leads the viewer's eyes to a pile of skulls, the universal symbol of death, placed on top of an architectural fragment under which his son stands, dressed in a classically inspired swathe of fabric thereby distinguishing him from the rest of the family group. The mother points directly to her son identifying him and his premature death as the primary focus of the painting. To the left of the group, two other, as yet unidentified children (they had seven) look up to their father, the eldest, identified by the father's hand on his head protectively, holds on to his younger sibling who presents a bunch of cherries to the father. Cherries, the fruit of paradise, were symbolic of heaven, which further adds to the viewer's interpretation of the portrait. The clear act of identification and explicit symbolism leaves the viewer in little doubt as to the fate of the young boy, and through these symbols the patrons are reminded that though they have lost their son, he is now enjoying the fruits of paradise. This symbol is also used in William Hogarth's portrait of *The Graham Children* (1742) (fig. 22) in which we see the eldest child dangling a pair of cherries just out of her younger, deceased, brother's reach. It is also possible that this emblem refers to her virginity in this work but it is also possible that it serves a double function by referring broadly to the fragility and vulnerability of childhood.

³² K. Hearne, Catalogue Entry for T06455, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/wright-portrait-of-mary-villiers-duchess-of-richmond-with-her-late-son-esme-and-her-t06455> [accessed 4 February 2019].

Whilst Wright and Dobson's portraits display concern over the continuation of the family line, both artists have hinted at the impact of the child's death on their family in ways that go beyond primogeniture. By placing the deceased child within the family group and indicating their death through gesture and symbol, both artists succeed in providing a commemorative image that may well have offered comfort to the bereaved. Whereas Van Dyck's portraits focused on the propagation of the family line rather than the loss of young family members, smaller and more intimate portraits like the two discussed above, indicate a gradual shift into the more emotive kind of portrait found in the following century. Nevertheless, perhaps because of the lack of visible emotion on the faces of the grieving parents, which became a feature of many later portraits, these kinds of paintings have been used as evidence to support the claim that parents did not invest emotionally in their children before the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Several scholars during the 1970s held this view on the basis of high infant mortality including Philippe Ariès, Edward Shorter and Lawrence Stone.³³ Stone argued that 'it was very rash for parents to get too emotionally concerned about creatures whose expectation of life was so very low'.³⁴ This 'parental indifference' that Shorter also describes was supposedly the result of the need to respond to their immediate material circumstances and that it was only during the last quarter of the eighteenth century that mothers chose to reorder their priorities and place the wellbeing of their children above all else.³⁵ Both were building on the work of Ariès, who, relying on evidence primarily from France and applying it broadly, argued that there was a lack of evidence to support the claim that parents were deeply affected by the loss of a child and that parents were not wise to invest emotionally in their children due to high infant mortality

³³ L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London, 1977), p. 70; P. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, trans. R. Baldick (London, 1996), pp. 36-39; and E. Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (London, 1976), pp. 168-204. The views of Stone and Ariès are discussed in Steward, *The New Child*, pp. 81-82.

³⁴ Stone, *The Family*, p. 70.

³⁵ Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, pp. 169-170.

rates.³⁶ ‘The indifference’, he writes, ‘was a direct and inevitable consequence of the demography of the period’.³⁷ With regards to portraiture, Ariès states that,

It is in fact quite remarkable that at that period of demographic wastage anyone should have felt a desire to record and keep the likeness of a child that would go on living or of a child that was dead.³⁸

Considering the textual evidence that survives from this period, a significant portion of which was collated by Linda Pollock in her discussion of childhood in *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* and in her anthology of related sources, *A Lasting Relationship: Parents and Children over Three Centuries*, it is easy to refute this claim.³⁹ In the latter, Pollock analyses numerous and wide-ranging letters, diary entries, memoirs and account books from 1600 to 1900, alongside more accurate statistics about infant mortality rates, a sourcebook of textual references to the illness and death of children during this timeframe.⁴⁰ Pollock argues that these sources reveal the deep anxiety that parents experienced when their child became ill, often noting the slightest of changes in their

³⁶ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, pp. 36-37.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 37.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 38.

³⁹ Pollock provides a ‘Reading List’ of scholars who share her views about children and those that subscribe to the ‘Evolutionary Thesis’ at the back of *A Lasting Relationship: Parents and Children over Three Centuries* (London, 1987). Steward argues that Pollock overstates this sense of continuity and glosses over periods of social change, particularly the eighteenth century, giving her source material a flawed context. See: *The New Child*, pp. 81–82. However, the rich body of material that she has collated, even if it has limits in scope, does offer numerous examples of parents expressing concern for the welfare and health of their children, which undermine the earlier thesis of parental indifference.

⁴⁰ L. A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 124-128. Pollock’s dismissal of these texts is supported by numerous scholars including A. Macfarlane, ‘“The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800” by Lawrence Stone’, in *History and Theory*, 18 (1979), pp. 103-26; A. Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), p. 122; Steward, *The New Child*, pp. 128-129; and A. Fletcher, ‘Children who died’, in *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914* (New Haven and London, 2008), pp. 81-93. Houlbrooke also discusses how the deaths of children are repeatedly found in the letters and diaries of parents during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, providing numerous pre-eighteenth-century examples. He also describes how the high infant mortality rates ‘did not make bereavement any less painful to an individual parent’, Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family*, pp. 234-240.

physical wellbeing. The high infant mortality rate, she suggests, only increased their concern.⁴¹ Part of this anxiety lay in the uncertainty regarding medical treatment. In 1606, Anne, Countess of Arundel wrote to her husband, Gilbert Talbot, about their grandson Frederick Henry, expressing her concern about the treatment suggested by the doctor: 'I durst not to do any thing [sic] that he named but with carduus water and cordials'.⁴² In other instances, parents' concern for their children's welfare populated their diaries daily. When Increase Mather's sons, Nathaniel and Samuel, became ill in 1675, he described how, 'Little doe children think, wt affection is in ye Heart of a Father' and later, he 'Could doe little at my study bec. of childrens'.⁴³ Samuel's health improved after Increase 'had wept and prayed for his life'.⁴⁴ These are not the words of a father who is uninterested in the wellbeing of his children but one whose anxiety plagues his every thought.⁴⁵ The social historian Michael Macdonald supports the notion of parental concern rather than disinterest in his writings on stress and anxiety in seventeenth-century England. He suggests that 'bereavement was a common explanation for madness and despair'.⁴⁶ Macdonald further notes that the physician

⁴¹ Pollock, *Forgotten Children*, p. 127.

⁴² Lambeth Palace Library, MS Talbot, MS3205, fo.149 cited in Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship*, p. 107.

⁴³ I. Mather cited in Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship*, pp. 109-110. For a more detailed account of Mather's response to the illness of his sons, see M. G. Hall, *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather, 1639-1723* (Middletown, 2011), pp. 93-94.

⁴⁴ 'The Diary of Increase Mather', p. 342.

⁴⁵ Increase Mather was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts Bay Colony five years after his parents and older siblings had participated in the Great Migration from England to America due to nonconformist religious beliefs. From 1657 to 1661 he studied and preached in Ireland and England before returning to Massachusetts where he became a renowned Puritan. See Hall, *The Last American Puritan*, M. I. Lowance, *Increase Mather* (New York, 1974), K. B. Murdock, *Increase Mather, the Foremost American Puritan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1925).

⁴⁶ M. MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 77.

Richard Napier recorded 134 cases of disturbing grief amongst his patients, 58 of which related to parents grieving the loss of a child (51 of those were mothers).⁴⁷

This rich body of evidence collated by Pollock and the data presented by Macdonald makes clear that parents showed great interest in the health of their offspring and felt the loss of a child with painful intensity. It is not clear as to why Stone, Shorter or Ariès denied this evidence by only including examples of so-called ‘parental indifference’ rather than providing a range of textual evidence. For Ariès, his entire thesis relied on the notion that the concept of childhood had been invented. The suggestion that there was in fact a pre-existing notion of childhood prior to the seventeenth century, which was bound by familial bonds of affection and emotion, and worthy of representation, entirely contradicts this theory and must, therefore, be disregarded. Furthermore, in his introduction, he describes the ‘silent history’ of childhood with the question,

But how was I to discover, in the documents of the past, references to things which were too ordinary, too commonplace, too far removed from the memorable incident for contemporary writers to mention them?⁴⁸

Perhaps it was Ariès’s perception of a ‘silent history’, a lack of ordinary, everyday experiences within a family in textual and pictorial sources that led him to his conclusion; a view seconded by Shorter who similarly describes the silence of the archive.⁴⁹ Pollock’s unearthing of numerous sources that reveal parental love, affection and anxiety about the fate of their children makes this conclusion untenable. Shorter notes the difficulty inherent in a sociological study of ‘ordinary’ people who did not write down what they did or felt, remarking in the preface to his book that ‘Very little is certain, and the evidence, far from anchoring indisputably my propositions about sentiment and affection, trembles in the

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 82. See also Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, p. 233. Anne Laurence similarly supports the view that textual evidence suggests that the emotional relationships between family members did not change a great deal. See Stone, *Women in England*, p. 90-92.

⁴⁸ Ariès, ‘Introduction’, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 10.

⁴⁹ Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, p. 8.

wind'.⁵⁰ Whilst he acknowledges that the affection between mother and child had always existed for biological reasons, he argues that,

In traditional society, mothers viewed the development and happiness of infants younger than two with indifference. In modern society, they place the welfare of their small children above all else.⁵¹

Whilst he cites the academic opposition to his argument, he maintains his contention that this indifference did not stop in the seventeenth century as Ariès had argued but persisted into the last quarter of the eighteenth century in the lives of ordinary people.⁵² The evidence of parental feeling in the textual sources gathered by Pollock, however, clearly demonstrates that whilst parents undoubtedly experienced the same depth of feeling as those of future generations at the loss of a child, the expression of this was generally confined to private letters and diaries and not fully divulged publicly. Without the prevalent legitimisation of emotional expression that emerged during the mid-eighteenth century, grieving parents took to textual forms that allowed for a more discrete and personal display of feeling.

Similarly, seventeenth-century portrait conventions that indicated the death of a child through various symbols and compositional strategies did not allow for the same degree of emotional expression that became prevalent from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. Whilst children often retained their place within the family portrait after their death, as we saw in the Pembroke, Richmond and Streatfeild examples, parental grief was not visually represented, or at least, given centre stage. In the grandest aristocratic portraits, these depictions served a commemorative purpose that signalled the loss to family life and its dynastic trajectory. As I have shown, however, there were also instances in which the familial bond was indicated through careful composition and strategic gesturing, which may allude to such feelings, but we do not see outwards signs of grief, like Romney's later portrait of the Wilsons. This was

⁵⁰ Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, p. xiv.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 168.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 169.

not due to an ‘apparent absence of bereavement’, but because families were bound to certain social and indeed artistic conventions that limited the expression of emotion.

Separation and consolation

From the mid to late eighteenth century, portraits of families, and of mothers and children in particular, started to change. These portraits began to exhibit a tenderness and intimacy lacking in comparative works of previous generations. This primal relationship was sentimentalised and held up as the epitome of civilised society and women were praised for their ability to act in a ‘motherly’ way.⁵³ A reviewer of the 1794 Royal Academy exhibition enthusiastically commented that John Hoppner’s portrait of Lady Caroline Capel and her first-born daughter (fig. 23) had ‘an air of maternal tenderness without affectation’, making it ‘one of the best Pictures in the room’.⁵⁴ Retford has noted that one of the ways in which artists such as Romney and indeed Hoppner, accentuated this notion of motherliness was to remove the mother and child from the family group altogether, as in the Wilson, Johnstone and Carwardine portraits.⁵⁵ These works depict moments of affectionate absorption between the two, providing the viewer with privileged access to a moment of unselfconscious maternal delight.

Returning to Romney’s portrait of the Wilsons, it is tragic because it appears to conform to this sense of physical and emotional closeness, yet there is a lack of direct engagement between the mother and child. Despite their physical proximity, Ann and Sibyl do not fully interact with one another. Though they are entwined in each other’s arms, they no longer exist within the same realm, and in this way, Sibyl appears spectre-like; she is a presence seen by the viewer but felt by her mother. Nancy L. Pressly has suggested that in the

⁵³ K. Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life* (New Haven and London, 2006), p. 1.

⁵⁴ ‘Arts and Entertainment’, *The Sun* (30 April 1794).

⁵⁵ Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life*, p. 85.

years immediately following his return from Rome, Romney developed a keen interest in portraying psychological distance between figures in a composition. Writing with regards to the artist's drawing *Ceyx and Alcyone* (c. 1774–1776) (fig. 24), which similarly depicts a mourning scene, Pressly observes that, 'the theme of...figures reaching toward one another but unable to connect physically or psychologically recurs frequently in Romney's work from this period'.⁵⁶ The bodily relationship between Ann and Sibyl Wilson certainly corresponds to this suggestion, for whilst they are physically proximate, the psychological gap in this instance is clear. Ann frames the child, drawing the viewer's attention to the commemorative focus of the portrait, and her pose embodies her sense of grief and loss; the mother's stance permits the viewer to understand the death of the child. The artistic strategies used by Romney to signal the death of Sibyl Wilson are unlike the symbols used by artists during the seventeenth century. Rather than overtly stating death with a skull or an ouroboros, his painting compels the viewer to unpick embedded artistic references.

The portrait simultaneously acts as a locus for the projection of parental grief whilst also providing solace. Sibyl looks out to the viewer with a calmness that offers confirmation of her existence in heaven and her physical closeness to the mother she has left behind displays her filial attachment. Many parents were fearful of the spiritual fate of their deceased children.⁵⁷ By commissioning memorialising portraits such as this, they could be given visual reassurance of their post-mortem existence in heaven and could maintain the ties of love and affection from this world to the next. Retford has drawn an apt comparison between these types of portraits and contemporary consolation literature, which must be considered in relation to Romney's portrait. Elizabeth Rowe's *Friendship in Death, in Twenty Letters from the Dead to the Living* (1728) comprises twenty short fictional letters written by the dead to

⁵⁶ N. L. Pressly, *The Fuseli Circle in Rome: Early Romantic Art of the 1770s* (New Haven and London), p. 121, no. 123.

⁵⁷ Steward, *The New Child*, p. 153.

their living relatives and friends.⁵⁸ Each letter offers comfort to the reader and on some occasions, warns them against immoral behaviour. One of these letters, which is particularly pertinent to Romney's portrait, is from a two-year-old child to his mother, offering consolation that he is enjoying the splendours of paradise. The child writes:

If you could conceive my happiness, instead of the mournful solemnity with which you interred me, you would have celebrated my funeral rites with songs and festivals. Instead of the thoughtless thing you lately smiled on and caressed, I am now in the perfection of my being, in the elevation of reason; instead of a little extent of land, and the propriety of so much space to breathe in, I tread the starry pavement, make the circuit of the skies, and breathe the air of paradise. I am secure of eternal duration, and independent but on the Almighty, whom I love and adore, as the fountain of my being and blessedness.⁵⁹

The child concludes, 'Pardon me, madam, 'tis you now seem the infant, and I repay you that superior regard and tenderness which you lately bestowed on me'.⁶⁰ Rowe's poems offer a comforting rendering of the afterlife, connecting the living with the dead in a poetic form that relates to the ancient Greek and Roman rhetorical tradition of *consolatio*.⁶¹ These ancient texts are highly likely to have influenced Rowe and her contemporaries, including George,

⁵⁸ First published in 1728 and later to go through over thirty editions during the eighteenth century, retaining a great deal of popularity in the nineteenth century. See P. Walmsley, 'Whigs in Heaven: Elizabeth Rowe's *Friendship in Death*' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 44/3 (2011), p. 316.

⁵⁹ E. Rowe, *Friendship in Death: in twenty Letters from the Dead to the Living. To which are added, Letters moral and Entertaining. In Prose and Verse. In three Parts...* (London, 1760), p. 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ 'Consolatio' emerged as a new literary genre with the work *On Grief* by the Greek philosopher Crantor (c. 325–c. 275 BC). It was later made famous by Cicero (106–43 BC) who based the third book of *Tusculan Disputations* on Crantor's work as well as the consolatory piece he wrote after the death of his daughter Tullia in 45 BC. See P. G. Walsh, 'Introduction', *Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. P. G. Walsh (Oxford, 2008), p. xxx; and for a discussion of Cicero's emotional yet socially conscious concerns, see B. Rawson, 'The iconography of Roman Childhood', in B. Rawson and P. Weaver (eds.), *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space* (Oxford, 1997), p. 208. The translation and publication of ancient *consolatio* texts including John Carr's 1798 five-volume edition of *Dialogues of the Dead* by the 2nd century AD Greek writer Lucian of Samosata (c. 125–180 AD) also became popular.

Lord Lyttleton, who wrote a popular book with Elizabeth Montagu entitled *Dialogues of the Dead* (1760), which went through five editions over the next decade.⁶²

Rowe's work takes on the dialogic form, closing the gap between the earthly and celestial realms with letters from the dead to the living. 'She makes the dead', Peter Walmsley writes, 'our intimates' with her new view of heaven open to her as a Dissenter.⁶³ In much the same way, Sibyl's ethereal presence in Romney's portrait comforts her mother and shows how she is 'in the perfection of [her] being'. She appears to inhabit a celestial realm that is an extension of her earthly life; a world that her mother can comprehend and thus take comfort from.⁶⁴

The female figure of mourning

Rowe's literary works held particular weight within a culture that gave women chief responsibility for mourning the dead.⁶⁵ As a result, the image of the female figure of mourning gained currency in both the literary and visual culture of the day. She was, as Elizabeth Helsinger has suggested, 'a brooding spirit of place keeping watch over loved

⁶² G. Lyttleton and E. Montagu, *Dialogues of the Dead* (London, 1760).

⁶³ Walmsley discusses Rowe's 'unorthodox and distinctly modern vision of heaven' that Restoration theology had largely avoided. See Walmsley, 'Whigs in Heaven', p. 319.

⁶⁴ Walmsley strikes a comparison between Rowe's *Letters* and the work of Milton in her description of heaven as a realm much like our own. See Walmsley 'Whigs in Heaven', p. 323.

⁶⁵ Walmsley, 'Whigs in Heaven', p. 324. Walmsley also posits that women were assigned responsibility for tending to the sick before death. Michelle Iwen argues, however, that women's funerary responsibilities changed during the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries as women's bodies became problematized along with the rise of undertaking as a profession. This shifted the woman role from caregiver to chief mourner. See M.E. Iwen, 'Reading Material Culture: British Women's Position and the Death Trade in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Women and the Material Culture of Death* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 241-242. Elizabeth Helsinger discusses the affect that woman's role as mourner had on tombstone imagery in E. Helsinger, 'Grieving Images: Elegy and the Visual Arts', *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy*, ed. Karen Weisman (Oxford, 2010), p. 660.

remains...'.⁶⁶ Her image transcended media, from mourning jewellery to tomb monuments, and in many ways epitomised the neoclassical mode of looking to ancient Greek and Roman precedents to makes sense of the present.⁶⁷ Clear examples of this figure of mourning can be found on Greek vases dating from 470 BC until the end of the 5th century BC, decorating the most popular graveside gift – the white-ground lekythoi, which was produced exclusively in Athens.⁶⁸ A lekythos attributed to the Painter of London D79 (c. 430–420 BC) (fig. 25) shows two women either side of a stele, the woman on the left seated and looking down to the gravestone mournfully with her left hand resting on her breast. A similar marble lekythos depicts Pithyllis mourning, once again, her head bowed with her right hand raised to her veil.⁶⁹ This iconography found its way into ancient Roman funerary imagery too, in a culture where women similarly held prime responsibility for mourning, as seen on a sarcophagus dated c. 200–220 AD (fig. 26) purchased by Charles Towneley in 1768, which similarly shows a women on the left raising her hand up to her veiled head in a mourning pose.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Helsing, 'Grieving Images', p. 660. Arianne Fennetaux, in her discussion of mourning jewellery observes that 'the iconography used to express the conflation of grief and sentiment that characterized the end of the eighteenth century was almost exclusively female.' See A. Fennetaux, 'Fashioning Death/Gendering Sentiment: Mourning Jewelry in Britain in the Eighteenth Century', *Women and the Material Culture of Death*, ed. M. D. Goggin and B. F. Tobin (Farnham, 2013), pp. 35-36, and for a more sustained discussion of the female figure of mourning, see pp. 36-47.

⁶⁷ For a recent discussion of this neoclassical mode, see V. Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique: Neoclassicism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Chicago and London, 2006), pp. 1-37. See also J. W. Johnson, *The Formation of English Neo-Classical Thought* (Princeton, 1967) and P. Ayres, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁶⁸ K. Beats, 'Enduring Grief. Images of Mourning from Fifth-century Athens to Eighteenth-Century Britain', (unpublished paper, delivered 19-20 May 2016, The Materiality of Mourning' A Wellcome Trust Funded Workshop, University of Warwick).

⁶⁹ The vase was later drawn and then engraved by Edward Dodwell in the early nineteenth century when the female figure of mourning continued to proliferate in British culture. See Edward Dodwell, *Drawing from an album of drawings of antiquities, part of a marble lekythos*, c. 1805–1819, 23.5 x 20 cm (British Museum, London).

⁷⁰ In ancient Rome, women expressed their grief through 'lamentation, the singing of dirges (*neniae*), and by crying out with sorrow (*eiulatio, lessus*)', D. S. Erkes, 'Gender and Roman Funeral Ritual', in V. M. Hope and J. Huskinson (eds.), *Memory and Mourning*, p. 44. The role of women in Roman funerary rites is also described by Susan Walker in her discussion

The female figure of mourning thus found its way into commemorative portraiture of the eighteenth century, whilst also coming to embody an ideal of contemplative femininity. In another of Romney's works, *Mary (Palmer), Lady Beauchamp-Proctor* (c. 1782–83) (fig. 27) the sitter adopts a melancholy pose as she leans against a plinth bearing a relief of a figure bowing over a smoking altar. The subject matter refers to Melpomene, the Greek muse of tragedy, and alludes to the young woman's introspective character rather than any feeling of loss.⁷¹ Mary Beauchamp-Proctor characterised herself in exactly these terms, explaining how reading was 'productive not of knowledge, but *quiet*, composure, resignation, & a chearful [sic] melancholy'.⁷² It became increasingly fashionable to have your portrait painted in the guise of an ancient figure or character, and Romney's portrait relates to this practice albeit conceived and realised with a different aim in mind. Despite the similarities between two portraits, the effect is very different. Mary Beauchamp-Proctor stands on her own in contemplation. The sense of grief manifested in the Wilson portrait comes from the relationship between the mother and child; the site of emotion is the space between them, the boundary that separates the living from the dead.

Romney has clearly referred to these types of ancient precedents in his portrait of the Wilsons by depicting Ann with her head bowed, loosely wrapping her arms around her child. In this way, Romney was working like many of his contemporaries including Angelica Kauffman, the celebrated artist who was praised for her engagement with the antique. Kauffman's *Penelope Weeping over the Bow of Ulysses* (c. 1798) (fig. 28) shows the woman in a similar position, clasping her lover's bow in one hand and holding her lowered head in

of this sarcophagus. She also states that sarcophagi of this type were often stock pieces. See S. Walker, *Memorials to the Roman Dead* (London, 1985), pp. 48-50.

⁷¹ R. Asleson and S. M. Bennett, *British Paintings at the Huntington* (New Haven and London, 2001), pp. 404-405, no. 86. The melancholy pose adopted by the sitter is also discussed in A. Kidson, *George Romney: A Complete Catalogue of his Paintings* (3 vols, New Haven and London, 2015), i, p. 55, no. 70.

⁷² Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Jerningham Correspondence, JE 73, cited in Asleson and Bennett *British Paintings*, p. 404.

the other.⁷³ Similarly, in her etching of a woman mourning beside an urn (1767, reproduced 1781) (fig. 29), once again, the woman's head is lowered as she loosely embraces the vessel.⁷⁴ In both of these works, the object – bow, urn – stands in for the person lost. In Romney's work, however, the deceased is returning to the world of the living and inserted into the narrative of the painting.⁷⁵ Unlike these ancient and neoclassical instances discussed previously, in which an object acts as a cipher of mourning, Sibyl is represented as she was in life. Death is denied by her presence but acknowledged by her mother's pose.

The female figure of mourning appears again in the monument to Sibyl Wilson at Lancaster Priory by the Fisher brothers of York (fig. 30).⁷⁶ This elaborate work includes an urn mounted on a pedestal with a dove carved in relief holding a spray of flowers in its mouth. The pedestal is topped with two ram heads and held up from the base by a lion head at the centre and two griffins on either side. Below this, the large central panel, topped with two flaming lamps that symbolise filial piety, shows two parents in Roman dress mourning

⁷³ Kauffman painted this composition a number of times. In addition to this painting in Louise Crombie Beach Collection, William Benton Museum of Art, University of Connecticut, Storrs, there are versions at Burghley House Collection, Stamford (1777) and the Wolverhampton Art Gallery (c. 1799). Angela Rosenthal discusses Kauffman's fascination with Penelope in A. Rosenthal *Angelica Kauffman: Art and Sensibility* (New Haven and London, 2006), pp. 15-41.

⁷⁴ Lady Hamilton included the mourning pose in her 'attitudes', a series of poses inspired by the art and literature of the ancient world. These were captured by Pietro Antonio Velli and were later engraved by Francesco Novelli's, *Attitudes of Lady Hamilton* (1791) from her famed performances in Italy. These include two melancholy and mourning poses.

⁷⁵ Other examples of the female figure of mourning in eighteenth-century British art include Alexander Runciman, *Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus*, c. 1773, etching on paper, 14.4 x 10.6 cm, (Tate, London), and *Penelope Mourning Odysseus*, 1803, oil on canvas, 92 x 71.2 cm, (Heinrich, Zurich).

⁷⁶ It is possible that the Fisher brothers worked with John Carr on Abbot Hall, former home of the Wilsons, which may account for this commission. In addition, George Wilson, the girl's father was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the 3rd Battalion of the First Regiment of Foot Guards and may have served in York. See P. C. Myerscough, 'The Fishers of York: A Provincial Carver's Workshop in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' (PhD thesis, University of York, 1996), p. 20 and 29.

over the loss of their daughter on her deathbed.⁷⁷ Whether this is a replica of a pre-existing Roman funerary monument or a depiction of the Wilson family in the guise of a Roman family, the group and subject of the scene in either case reflect the intense sorrow of the bereaved parents through the classical motif of the mother lowering her head over the child's deceased body.⁷⁸ Unlike Romney's painting, however, the father, George, is also shown standing at the foot of the bed, looking down at the child he has just lost. As the monument states, George Wilson died in 1776, the possible date for Romney's portrait, which may indicate why he was not depicted in that work but was included on this monument, erected shortly after Sibyl's death.⁷⁹ Both parents are depicted with expressions of overwhelming sadness, with furrowed brows and downturned mouths. Whereas in Romney's painting, the mother is comforted by the presence of her daughter, here, the parents are confronted with the brutal reality of their child's passing. Perhaps the only source of comfort is the putto who descends from heaven with a celestial crown to escort the child to her eternal resting place. In this way, the Fisher brothers were referring quite explicitly to ancient precedents. It is possible, in fact, that the Fishers were familiar with the sarcophagus purchased by Townley, if not the original, which had been in his collection since 1768, then with its reproduction in

⁷⁷ Nikolaus Pevsner describes the disparity between the sophisticated rendering of the decorative elements and the 'provincial' carving of the family group in N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North Lancashire* (London, 1969), p. 155.

⁷⁸ In her thesis on the Fisher Brothers of York, Myerscough states, 'The classical source for the relief, for surely there must be one, is still being sought'. Myerscough, 'The Fishers of York', p. 112. I have, similarly, been unable to find a directly comparable Roman precedent. William Camden in his historical and topographical survey of Great Britain and Ireland, *Britannia* (1587) was the first to note York's Roman past and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many distinguished York residents became interested its ancient history. See P. Ottoway, *Roman York* (Stroud, 2004), p. 15. However, the monuments commemorating the deaths of children in ancient Eboracum (York), of which there are six, were not discovered until the nineteenth century. The Fishers are likely to have consulted works such as *Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes*, 2nd century AD after a Greek original c. 430–420 BC (Louvre Museum, Paris), which was at the Villa Borghese, Rome until 1807 when it came to the Louvre Museum.

⁷⁹ It may also be possible that Romney's central focus was the representation of the mother/daughter bond as previously discussed but the death of George may have prompted this artistic decision.

Pietro Santi Bartoli's engraving in *Admiranda Romanarum Antiquitatum Vestigia*, published in 1693, or Jacob Spon's *Recherches Curieuses d'Antiquité* in 1683.⁸⁰

The Fisher brothers sculpted another monument, which similarly makes use of the mourning pose, at the advice of Reverend William Mason, showing close parallels to the depiction of Ann Wilson.⁸¹ Erected in York Minster in memory of Dr John Dealtry (fig. 31), Hygeia, the Greek and Roman goddess of health, identified by the serpent wrapped around the staff in her right hand, bows her head in mourning and rests her left arm on an urn whilst limply holding a wreath in her hand.⁸² When Mason, Preceptor and Canon of York Minster, consulted Horace Walpole on the appropriateness of depicting a Greek goddess, suspecting that it would be thought 'rather heathenish', Walpole replied that the design was classic, 'as I like those things should be, and the epitaph as Greek'.⁸³ Walpole's words indicate the increasing move towards the use of non-Christian, ancient iconography within religious settings, in this case, York Minster, and the extent to which these references allowed for a more open expression of grief, not only in design but also in word.

On the pedestal beneath the figure, an inscription illuminates the sorrow of the doctor's wife:

⁸⁰ Townley's receipt for the purchase of the sarcophagus along with several other works from Jenkins is dated 12 August 1768, see Oxford, Bodleian MS Add, D 71, fo. 55. When Bartoli engraved the sarcophagus, it was in the Palazzo Capranica having previously been in the de Valli collection. B. E. Cook, *The Townley Marbles* (London, 1985), pp. 11-12.

⁸¹ I. R. Pattison and H. Murray, *Monuments in York Minster: An Illustrated Inventory* (York, 2001), p. 90.

⁸² *Monuments in York Minster*, pp. 90-91. In a letter from Mason to Walpole dated Friday 16 July 1773, Mason describes the design, including the personification of Health, and transcribes his proposed lines for the pedestal of the monument. Cited in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W. S. Lewis, G. Cronin, Jr, and C. H. Bennett, (48 vols, London and New Haven, 1955), vol. 28/1, pp. 97-98. For a brief discussion on the Greek roots in Roman funerary iconography, see J. Mander, *Portraits of Children on Roman Funerary Monuments* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 2.

⁸³ *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, p. 97; and letter from Horace Walpole to William Mason, Thursday 29 July 1773, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, p. 99. In the same letter, Walpole suggests that Mason omits the word 'ambrosial', which '...seems to clash with the sorrow in the end of the line', cited in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, p. 100.

Here o'er the tomb where Dealtry's ashes sleep
See health in emblematic anguish, weep!
She droops her faded wreath; "No more," she cries,
"Let languid mortals, with beseeching eyes,
"Implore my feeble aid: it fail'd to save
"My own and nature's guardian from the grave."⁸⁴

The grief of Dealtry's wife, Elizabeth, who commissioned this monument is expressed through these lines, written in the voice of Hygeia, goddess of health.⁸⁵ The desperate language of loss and failure to protect the life of a man who had spent his career protecting the lives of others amplifies the tragic effect of the monument. Between the time of Mason's first letter to Walpole and the installation of the monument, some of the words of the inscription had been changed. In the first draft, Mason wrote '...Health in sculptured anguish weeps' but in the final version, the inscription reads, '...Health in *emblematic* anguish weep!'⁸⁶ Not only is there a shift from the descriptive to the imperative, which heightens the emotive power of the work, but the change also makes clear the reference to ancient motifs by referring to the 'emblematic anguish'. This is not just a depiction of a figure in mourning but a readable emblem that would have been readily understood by the congregation of York Minster.

An inscription similarly accompanies Sibyl Wilson's monument, albeit of a very different kind. Rather than a stanza of poetic verse, it begins with a list of biographical details. The trauma of the Wilsons's loss is expressed through a single line, written in parenthesis: 'this monument / the last sad testimony of affection for a lovely and only child, was erected by her disconsolate parents'. Whilst it may not have exhibited the same literary

⁸⁴ Letter from Horace Walpole to William Mason, Thursday 29 July 1773, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, p. 99. Mason not only sought the opinion of Walpole for the inscription but also consulted Christopher Alderson (15 July 1773) and Edward Bedingfield (3 October 1775), both of whom suggested further changes. See *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 28:1, p. 98.

⁸⁵ Letter from Mason to Walpole, Friday 16 July 1773, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 28:1, p. 97.

⁸⁶ Italics my own.

sophistication of Dr Dealtry's monument, provided through consultation with Mason, it offers a textual counterpart to the image of the grieving family sculpted on the panel above it.⁸⁷ In this way, the brief but touching addition announced their sadness to the congregation of Lancaster Priory and sought its sympathy. Unlike the Romney portrait, which was intended primarily for private consumption, this was a public statement of their grief.⁸⁸ The young girl may have been buried at Lancaster Priory 'very privately' but her parents wanted a permanent and public reminder of her life.⁸⁹ The difference between this monument and that of Dr Dealtry's lies in the very motif that unites them, that of the mourning figure. Whereas Health is an expression of Elizabeth Dealtry's grief at the loss of her husband, the figure of Ann Wilson doubles up as both grieving parent and the iconic embodiment of grief itself, just as she does in Romney's painting. Ann plays an active role as much as she does a symbolic one.

'Tis a subject I cannot bear to dwell upon': picturing the pain of grief⁹⁰

The coming-together of the living and the dead in the Wilson portrait was carefully constructed around a neoclassical motif that soon became an omnipresent cipher of mourning towards the end of the late eighteenth century. A few years before Romney tackled this subject matter, Pompeo Batoni, the leading artist in Rome, famed for his portraits of British

⁸⁷ Unlike the Dealtry monument, this work was designed and carved by the Fishers. Beneath the inscription panel the following words have been inscribed: 'Fishers: York / Inv^t et Sculp^t'.

⁸⁸ It has not been possible to trace where Romney's painting originally hung and, therefore, whether it was placed in the more public or private areas of the Wilsons's house. At the time of Sybil's death, the family was living in Acomb, near York but the exact address has not yet been established. See WDX/1229 A2578, p. 76, and the *York Courant* (23 February 1773), p. 4.

⁸⁹ WDX/1229 A2578, p. 76.

⁹⁰ Letter from Thomas Lennard-Barrett to Sanderson Miller, April 1750 cited in L. Dickins and M. Stanton (eds.), *An eighteenth-century correspondence, being the letters of Deane Swift, Pitt, The Lytteltons and the Grenvilles, Lord Dacre, Robert Nugent, Charles Jenkinson, the Earls of Guilford, Coventry, & Hardwick, Sir Edward Turner, Mr. Talbot of Lacock, and others to Sanderson Miller, esq., of Radway*, (London, 1910), p. 166.

sitters, had been similarly tasked with the challenge of pictorially overcoming separation through death by showing the living and the dead side-by-side in a portrait of the Barrett-Lennard family (fig. 32). Thomas Barrett-Lennard (later 17th Lord Dacre) and his wife, Anna Maria (née Pratt) were married in 1739 in St George's Chapel, Hyde Park and moved to Belhus in Essex, which Thomas had inherited in 1725.⁹¹ The following year, they had a daughter named Barbara, so called after her great grandmother, the Duchess of Cleveland. On 14th March 1749, Barbara, not yet ten years old, succumbed to a sudden and violent fever and died. Her parents immediately fled to Europe to escape their grief. Their friend, the banker and Irish Member of Parliament, Richard Dawson, who had suffered a similar tragedy, wrote to Thomas offering his sympathy and telling him,

I have had my share of trouble in the same way and there is no living in this world without them...I am convinced it will conduce greatly to the benefit of your health; new objects and moving from place to place will in a great measure remove your melancholy thoughts.⁹²

Barbara's parents wanted to distract themselves from their grief with the diversion of continental travel. This was not, however, immediately successful and after their arrival in Europe, Thomas wrote to his wife's brother-in-law, Nicholas Hardinge saying: 'As to my mind ye loss I have had has made an impression on it not to be got out'. He then goes on to quote lines from Edmund Waller's poem, 'The Self-Banished' written around 1645 to describe his psychological state: 'In vain he would his pain assuage / And to thick shadows does retire'.⁹³

⁹¹ Barrett-Lennard later begun to restore and update the house in the Gothic style, which his friend Horace Walpole was soon to adopt in the building of his own house, Strawberry Hill. Walpole was one of the leading authorities on the Gothic style and wrote about the changes at Belhus but it was Sanderson Miller, another leading figure of the Georgian Gothic Revival, who offered advice to Barrett-Lennard on these alterations. See T. Barrett-Lennard, *An Account of the Families of Barrett and Lennard* (London, 1908), pp. 587-90.

⁹² Cited in Barrett-Lennard, *An Account of the Families of Barrett and Lennard*, p. 599.

⁹³ Barrett-Lennard, *An Account of the Families of Barrett and Lennard*, p. 599.

This expression of feeling is exemplary of the kind of correspondence that Pollock notes in her study of parent-child relations and underscores Thomas's historically specific response to the death of his child. Not only does he include lines from a well-known poem from a book that had gone through eleven editions by this time – a practice to which I devote considerable attention in the following chapter – but he describes his fervent desire to hold on to her image. Tenderly recounting her physical characteristics in exacting detail, he writes:

It was not possible to find a fault in her shape; her shoulders fell from her neck with a peculiar grace, her hair was of the darkest brown, her complexion the finest white and red, and her skin so delicate that every vein was perfectly discovered through it, the form of her face was round tho' inclining to an oval; her mouth of a middle size, and her nose rather small than large; her eyebrows were narrow and most exactly arched; her eyes were of the finest blue and had a mixture of softness and Liveliness in them – inexpressible, and (which gave them a peculiar beauty) her Eyelashes were most remarkably long; and as dark as her hair.⁹⁴

This detailed attention on the physical appearance of his child operates as a pen portrait that reveals the eagerness with which he held on to his mental image of Barbara now at risk of slipping away. Unlike many grieving parents, the Barrett-Lennards had a portrait miniature of their daughter after a larger painting attributed to Thomas Hudson (fig. 33).⁹⁵ Thomas did not regard this work as an acceptable likeness, writing that 'The picture that remains of her when eight years old by no means does her justice'. It was no doubt due to the portrait's perceived inadequacy as a physical reminder of Barbara that the parents commissioned Batoni to paint her posthumously within the family group, likely in hope that it would relieve the grieving couple from their emotional stagnancy and withdrawal from everyday life.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ A miniature in a private collection, which featured in the exhibition *Pictures of Innocence*, p. 36, no.10, is thought to have been copied from an oil painting in the family's collection attributed to Thomas Hudson. In *An eighteenth-century correspondence*, p. 600, however, the author writes: 'there is a tradition that Battoni copied Barbara's figure from her portrait by Hudson which had been sent out on purpose'.

⁹⁶ From a family history by Thomas Barrett cited in *An eighteenth-century correspondence*, p. 140. See also T. Barrett-Lennard 'The Family Pictures at Belhus', in Oswald Barron (ed.), *The Ancestor: A Quarterly Review of County and Family History, Heraldry and Antiquities*,

Batoni's portrait depicts the continued familial bond despite the death of Barbara, simultaneously memorialising the child, providing comfort for the parents, and recording their deep sadness. It also offers further insight into the changing face of parenthood and the representation of families during the mid-eighteenth century. Unlike Romney's work, which focuses on the mother/child bond, fusing together the image of a grieving mother with the funerary iconography of the ancient world, Batoni's painting brings the father into the picture and includes him in the emotional narrative of a scene that straddles the earthly and spiritual worlds. By the time this painting was commissioned, it was becoming increasingly common to depict the father in group portraits as an engaged and involved parent rather than emphasising his position as *paterfamilias*.⁹⁷ As Retford has convincingly shown, contemporary literature, whether advisory or fictional, encouraged fathers to play a greater role in the emotional and material welfare of their offspring.⁹⁸ In this portrait, Thomas turns and extends his dejected gaze towards his daughter, holding the place in his book with his index finger, as if frozen in surprise. Her mother Anna grasps her shoulder unwilling to let her go. Through the strength of their feeling the two parents conjure up an image of their child, narrowing the separation between life and death and allowing the viewer to enter into the emotional narrative of the scene. Unlike the portrait of the Wilsons in which the child appears as an otherworldly presence, here, the girl returns to the family unit and exists within the same realm. She interacts with her mother and offers comfort by placing her hand on her lap, whilst simultaneously drawing the viewer into the scene with her outward gaze. In her right hand she clutches a bunch of flowers, which is mirrored by her mother who holds a single rose, perhaps signalling the fact that her daughter has been taken away from the family group, represented by the bunch of flowers. Further flowers in the vase on the window ledge

(London, April 1903), v, p. 7, in which the author describes how the portrait of Barbara was taken to Rome for the very purpose of having it incorporated into a new family portrait.

⁹⁷ Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life*, p. 115.

⁹⁸ Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life*, pp. 115-48; especially, p. 116.

behind Thomas create a diagonal line across the painting that structurally connects the figures and reinforces the notion that their family bond continues to exist even after death.

When the Barrett-Lennard's friend, Horace Walpole, visited Belhus, in 1754 as part of his visits to country seats, he noted,

A very fine picture of the present Lord & his Wife Anne Pratt, with their only child, drawn after the death of the Latter by Pompeo Battoni [sic], at Rome: Lady Dacre is looking at the girl with a kind of prophetic sorrow.⁹⁹

Walpole's reading of her expression in the portrait suggests an image of time collapsing. As Barbara takes her rightful place back in the family unit, her mother looks forward to the time of her death with mournful knowingness, holding on to her daughter's shoulder in her refusal to accept the inevitable. Batoni's work provides the only description of the mother Anna Maria's grief, aside from references to her suffering in Thomas's correspondence and an anecdote in her great-great-grandson's family history in which he describes how she preserved a piece of the last dress that Barbara had worn.¹⁰⁰ Interestingly, Walpole does not describe the similarly sorrowful expression on the father's face, which perhaps suggests the primacy that women still held as chief mourners within eighteenth-century British culture, but his grief was severe as his letters to friends attest. This portrait was not only a reminder of their daughter whose image was starting to slip from their mind's eye but was a document of their grief; a trace of deep feeling. In this way, Batoni's portrait provides the viewer with a similar sense of grief suffered by the Wilsons albeit through different means. Rather than hinging the portrait on a neoclassical scaffold, their sadness is expressed through its closeness to the family that once was.

Allan Ramsay, the prominent and fashionable Scottish artist, was plagued by a series of similarly devastating losses. Just as the Barrett-Lennards fled to Italy to escape their pain,

⁹⁹ Horace Walpole in P. Toynbee (ed.), 'Horace Walpole's Journals of visits to Country Seats etc.' *The Walpole Society*, 16, (1927-28), p. 34.

¹⁰⁰ Barrett-Lennard, *Account of the Families of Lennard and Barrett*, pp. 599-600.

so too did Ramsay who sought ‘to dissipate the melancholy occasioned by the loss of one valuable part of his family, and the dispersion of others’.¹⁰¹ He was referring to the death of his second wife, Margaret Lindsay, who had died on 4 March 1782 and his daughter, Amelia, whose marriage had taken her to Bermuda.¹⁰² These were the most recent of a string of personal tragedies, which began with the loss of his first-born son, Allan, who had died aged just 14 months in 1741. Whereas the Barrett-Lennards tried to deal with their grief by commissioning an artist to paint a posthumous portrait of their daughter, Ramsay could create that final image himself. Years later, the artist recounted to Lady Bute how, sitting in tears next to his son, he felt the sudden urge to paint his portrait. Her daughter, Lady Louisa Stuart, recorded the conversation:

while thoroughly occupied thus, [Ramsay] felt no more concern than if the subject had been an indifferent one. All his grief was gone. When he laid down his pencil it returned.¹⁰³

By gently daubing paint onto the canvas for those few minutes Ramsay was able to forget about the death of his child and focus on the act of drawing. As soon as he stopped, the fiction dissolved and the grief came flooding back. The portrait (fig. 34), realised on unstretched canvas, was never shown publicly and remained unknown until it was discovered amongst Ramsay’s effects following his death.¹⁰⁴ This was not a work for public consumption, nor a sketch for a later portrait like Hogarth’s deathbed portrait of Thomas Graham (fig. 35). It is hard to classify it as a portrait in the normative sense of the word, but rather a private record and summation of his grief. It is emotional ephemera, the material residue of his grief, something that did not need a viewer because the true significance of the

¹⁰¹ Advertisement to ‘Horace’s Sabine Villa’, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 730. Transcribed and edited in B. D. Frischer and I. G. Brown (eds.) *Allan Ramsay and the Search for Horace’s Villa*, (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 109-156.

¹⁰² *Allan Ramsay and the Search for Horace’s Villa*, p. 152.

¹⁰³ Letter from Lady Louisa Stuart to Miss Louisa Clinton, 13 October 1831, in Lady L. Stuart, *Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart to Miss Louisa Clinton*, ed. Hon. J.A. Home, 2nd edn, (Edinburgh, 1903), p. 115.

¹⁰⁴ *Pictures of Innocence*, p. 34.

work could only be fully understood by the artist himself. Few deathbed portraits of children survive from this period and often those that do are now unidentified or thought to be a sleeping portrait, which suggests that these works only held real significance for the immediate family and were often neglected thereafter.¹⁰⁵ Commissioning a portrait of a deceased child can therefore be viewed as a process of mourning, not just a static reminder of all that has been lost, and the act of creating that image could, in addition, suspend that sensation.

When Ramsay's portrait originally came to light following his death in 1784, it was thought to be a portrait of a sleeping child.¹⁰⁶ This was not an uncommon subject matter at the time and there are a number of instances during this period of artists painting and drawing sleeping children, such as Sir Joshua Reynolds's *A Child Asleep* (c. 1781) (fig. 36), another work by Reynolds of the same name (c. 1782) (fig. 37), and Francesco Bartolozzi's *Little Girl Sleeping* (1786) (fig. 38).¹⁰⁷ Drawing or painting a child asleep gave the artist the opportunity to capture their likeness without risk of them wriggling away. Images like Ramsay's sketch of his deceased child correspond to these kinds of depictions but served a very different purpose and were imbued with associations that emphasised, rather than concealed, the fact

¹⁰⁵ When a drawing of a child came into the British Museum collection in 1895, it was thought to represent a sleeping child (see *Pictures of Innocence*, p. 73). Judy Egerton has since identified the child as Thomas Graham, the youngest child depicted in Hogarth's *The Graham Children* (1741) following on from Mary Webster's suggestion that Thomas was deceased at the time of its creation. See M. Webster 'An eighteenth-century family: Hogarth's portrait of the Graham children', *Apollo*, 130/31 (1989), pp. 171-7). L. Binyon, *Catalogue of drawings by British artists, and artists of foreign origin working in Great Britain*, (4 vols, London, 1898), ii. p. 321, and A. P. Oppé, *The Drawings of William Hogarth* (London, 1948), p. 92.

¹⁰⁶ *Pictures of Innocence*, p. 34.

¹⁰⁷ Reynolds's *Sleeping Child* (c. 1781) is in the collection of the Earl of Aylesford at Packington Hall and was reproduced in print by William Doughty and John Summerfield (for both see D. Mannings, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings* (New Haven and London, 2000) no. 2035). It is one of several paintings by Reynolds that depicts a sleeping child. Others include *Children in the Woods* (now untraced). As a Florentine, Bartolozzi would have been aware of the Italian tradition of the wax or plaster sleeping Christ Child in chapels that reached its height of popularity in the late eighteenth century. See *Pictures of Innocence*, p. 84.

of the subject's death. Depictions of dead children that appear as if asleep suggest an intentional desire to associate such images with earlier Italian depictions of the sleeping Christ Child, such as Orazio Gentileschi's *Madonna with Sleeping Christ Child* (c. 1610) (fig. 39) and *The Virgin and Child in a Landscape* (c. 1620) (fig. 40), and Guido Reni's *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child* (1642) (fig. 41). Reni's painting was frequently reproduced in print as were a vast array of similar depictions of the sleeping Christ Child from the seventeenth century onwards.¹⁰⁸ These images were understood to prefigure the death of Christ and often bore similarities to representations of the Pietà. This connection was sometimes made explicit, as with a contemporary Italian etching (fig. 42) after Reni's painting in which the Christ Child sleeps on a cross, his head propped up by a skull with a crown of thorns, three nails and an hourglass strewn on either side. Depicting a deceased child on their deathbed could reveal an intended association to this religious imagery, in the same vein as the mother and child paintings discussed earlier, and Renaissance images of the Madonna and Child. This repeated reference to religious imagery serves to highlight another aspect of posthumous depictions of children and raises questions concerning the display of Christian belief in art for a society that privileged secular subject matter. As I have discussed, letters and diary entries by grieving parents reveal the pervasive inclination to deal with one's grief by putting trust in divine providence. In certain instances, a child's assured place in heaven was visualised even more explicitly. In the following section, I will unpick this artistic formula that would not only celebrate the innocence of their offspring but offer to the parents a comforting image of their child's post-mortem existence.

The 'happy act' of reunion in heaven

¹⁰⁸ In England, Reni's painting was reproduced by both Simon Francois Ravenet I (published by John Boydell, 1765) and Sir Robert Strange (c. 1765–1769).

By painting this deathbed portrait, Ramsay was clinging on to the final moments of his son's existence. For some parents, the creation and contemplation of such an image may have been too painful and they would have sought other means of memorialising their child. Whilst many believed that it was impossible to have any true understanding of the superior realm in which the dead now resided, artists were tasked with the challenge of representing, if not this ultimate destination, then the passage to it. As a result, the apotheosis became a common visual trope to represent the deceased, particularly children. This was the manner in which the artist Benjamin West portrayed two sons of George III and Queen Charlotte, Prince Alfred and Octavius, following the latter's death in 1783 (fig. 43). Octavius died one year after his younger brother Alfred, leaving George III and Queen Charlotte devastated. They 'cried vastly' at the loss of their children but it was the death of Octavius that seemed most profoundly to affect the King.¹⁰⁹ In a letter to his eldest son Prince William on 14 June 1783, he expressed his depth of feeling and concern for the fate of his Octavius's spiritual destiny, writing that 'There will be no Heaven for me if Octavius is not there'.¹¹⁰ Several months after the young boy's death, George III wrote to the politician, George Legge, 3rd Earl of Dartmouth that every day 'increases the chasm I feel for want of that beloved object'.¹¹¹ The royal parents decided to commemorate their son's death with a painting of his ascent to heaven, showing the young boy escorted by an angel and greeted with open arms by his younger brother Alfred who already resides in paradise. The two boys are looked down on by two putti in the top right-hand corner of the canvas, one with arms lifted in welcoming celebration. The vibrancy of West's colour palette saturates the work with an optimism that belies the tragedy of the event and provides a joyful rendering of their posthumous existence in heaven.

¹⁰⁹ Letter from Lady Charlotte Finch to Sophia Fielding, 31 August 1782. RA GEO/Add 15/8183 cited in F. Fraser, *Princesses: the Six Daughters of George III* (London, 2012).

¹¹⁰ Cited in J. Brooke, *George III* (London, 1972), p. 266.

¹¹¹ C. Hibbert, *George III: A Personal History* (London, 1999), p. 99.

Whilst George III never made a formal statement about his religious belief, it is possible to garner a sense of his devout Anglicanism and broadly how it relates to his thoughts on death, through his comments in letters, the observations and records of others, the religious figures who influenced him in his youth, and his actions as head of the Church of England.¹¹² Central to his belief was his trust in divine providence as he described to the Prime Minister, William Cavendish, 3rd Duke of Portland, just two days after the death of Octavius,

I believe [you have been] in the Situation it has pleased the Almighty to place me now [the child's death], therefore can judge of the State of my mind; but the real trust I have in Divine Providence, and the balm I feel in Religion so far support Me...¹¹³

Two days later, the King received a letter from the Bishop of Worcester, Dr Richard Hurd, who employed the same vocabulary, stating that he would endeavour ‘...to pour balm into My Sovereign’s wounded, heart, and that of his so justly beloved Consort!’ in his ministries.¹¹⁴ The Queen expressed her same trust in divine providence to her Lady of the Bedchamber, Lady Pembroke, several weeks later, writing that ‘...*the Almighty* is the best &

¹¹² The most detailed analysis of George III’s religious belief is provided in G. W. Ditchfield, ‘The Religion of George III’, in G. W. Ditchfield, *George III: An Essay in Monarchy* (Hampshire, 2002), pp. 77-108. For further information about contemporary church politics, see G. M. Ditchfield, ‘Ecclesiastical policy under Lord North’, in J. Walsh, C. Haydon, and S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c. 1689–c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 228-246.

¹¹³ Letter from George III to the Duke of Portland, 5 May 1783. Draft, written on a page of the Duke of Portland’s letter of same date, cited in *The Correspondence of King George the Third from 1760 to December 1783*, ed. The Hon. Sir John Fortescue (6 vols, London, 1928), 4, p. 375. Despite these kind words, the King’s relationship with the Duke of Portland at this time was strained. The Duke had recently succeeded Lord Rockingham as the leader of the Whig party and developed a short-lived coalition with the Tories, which was only temporarily tolerated by George III who was secretly making a deal with William Pitt to form a new government. See D. Wilkinson, *The Duke of Portland: Politics and Party in the Age of George III* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 55-56.

¹¹⁴ Letter from the Bishop of Worcester to George III, 7 May 1783, cited in *The Correspondence of King George the Third*, p. 375. Ditchfield refers to the King’s influence in the appointment of various religious dignitaries in Ditchfield ‘The Religion of George III’, p. 94, in this case a figure who had tutored his older sons, see Roberts, *George III & Queen Charlotte*, p. 18.

only refuge'.¹¹⁵ Although the death of Octavius was a devastating blow to the royal couple, they could trust in God's divine plan and take solace in their religion.¹¹⁶ Of course, one would expect such a pronouncement from the head of the Church of England but the vocabulary used by the King to discuss such a personal matter likely indicates strongly held religious belief and certainly indicates the teachings of the Anglican Church at this time.

Pleasing images of spiritual ascensions such as this must have helped to make sense of a child's death whilst distancing the viewer from the brutal reality of their passing.¹¹⁷ It also offered the parents a consoling vision of their child's immediate entrance into heaven due to their innocence and unblemished nature.¹¹⁸ Showing a child ascending to heaven played into the notion that the child had been borrowed for a brief moment by its earthly parents before being returned to its divine maker. As contemporary textual sources make clear, this notion was longstanding and extended far beyond the royal family. For example, in 1627 following the death of her son, Grace, the wife of the Puritan Nehemiah Wallington, wrote that 'God gave us this child to nurse for him for a while and now he required it of us again, therefore, let us give it to him willingly'.¹¹⁹ This belief persisted into the nineteenth century and was documented by grieving parents in their letters and diary entries. When social reformer Elizabeth Fry's baby became ill, for example, she attempted to console herself by considering her maternal role as being that of a temporary guardian, writing in her diary on 8 March 1809, 'I believe we should seek to look upon [children], as charges committed to our

¹¹⁵ Letter from Queen Charlotte to Lady Pembroke, dated 9 July 1784, cited in O. Hedley, *Queen Charlotte* (London, 1975), p. 127.

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of the Christian belief in a divine plan, see Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and Family*, p. 44.

¹¹⁷ The apotheosis was also used to depict royal and heroic deaths, which is discussed in chapter three. The use of the apotheosis in child portraiture is discussed in Steward, *The New Child*, p. 128.

¹¹⁸ The notion of a child's immediate entry into heaven is discussed by Retford in 'A Death in the Family', p. 85.

¹¹⁹ N. Wallington, *A Record of the Mercies of God*, Guildhall Library, MS204, fo. 422., cited in Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship*, p. 123.

stewardship, and not as our property'.¹²⁰

In the case of West's painting of Alfred and Octavius, depicting the moment of heavenly reunion between the two deceased princes afforded the grieving parents comfort that their children were not alone and could enjoy their post-mortem existence together. This sense of heavenly fulfilment was noted when the painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1784 (no. 81). *The London Magazine* described how 'the Angel is sweetly expressive of the *happy act* over which it presides' and the 'mutual pleasure' expressed by the princes.¹²¹ It was clear to the viewer, both public and private, that West's painting was not intended primarily to lament the fate of these children and their premature loss of life but to celebrate their ascension to paradise – this 'happy act'.¹²² Ralph Houlbrooke, in his examination of grief and mourning from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, discusses the extent to which a 'comfortable passage out of the world was especially important in alleviating grief', which West skilfully achieved in this work.¹²³

Two months after the death of George III himself, the image of heavenly reunion was revisited by Maxim Gauci who produced a lithograph published by Colnaghi. *Celestial Meeting of the Royal Family* (1820) (fig. 44) shows various deceased members of the Hanoverian royal family coming together in a celestial setting.¹²⁴ On the right-hand side of the composition, George III carries Octavius and Alfred in his arms with his elder son Prince Edward, Duke of Kent by his side. The male figures approach the female members of the family positioned on the left, comprising Queen Charlotte, her daughter Princess Amelia and

¹²⁰ Cited in S. Corder, *Life of Elizabeth Fry* (London, 1853), p. 142.

¹²¹ *The London Magazine, or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer* (May 1784), p. 385

¹²² Robert Strange produced an etching after West's painting in c. 1786. See Royal Collection RCIN 605046, RCIN 605047, and RCIN 605048.

¹²³ Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, p. 240.

¹²⁴ A painting probably painted after Gauci's lithograph is now at Wimpole Hall: British School, *Apotheosis of the Royal Family*, 1829, oil on canvas, 69.9 x 57.2 cm (National Trust, Wimpole Hall). Messrs. Colnaghi & Co. requested six copies of the work as did numerous other artists and publishers, including John Flaxman who was renowned for his posthumous representations of the deceased on his funerary monuments.

granddaughter Princess Charlotte with her stillborn baby. The two groups are united by the King and Queen who hold hands at the centre of the composition. The image is accompanied by a quotation from Robert Blair's *The Grave*, which connotes the same sense of eternal bliss that comes from reunion in death that West achieved in his painting of the two children.¹²⁵ The lettering reads, 'Thrice happy meeting! / Nor time, nor death, shall ever part them more!'. Once again, images and text are recycled and repurposed to create a recognisable commemorative image of various members of the royal family across several generations. Much like West's painting, Gauci's print offers a cheerful rendering of their post-mortem existence in heaven. A unified family that has achieved eternal happiness; a fitting monument to a King whose religion and faith in divine providence was his guiding principle.¹²⁶

The allegorical format of the apotheosis was not, however, confined to royalty within child portraiture. Indeed, the royal family did not sit outside wider cultural trends but often responded to them. Less than a decade after West completed his painting, Henry Fuseli painted the young Penelope Boothby, daughter of Sir Brooke Boothby and Susanna Bristoe, similarly on her ascent to heaven within the arms of an angel (fig. 45). Known for the dramatic compositions and supernatural subject matter of much of his painting, Fuseli was an obvious choice to carry out such a commission.¹²⁷ Whereas West's painting displays uplifting vibrancy with his use of bright colours and a sense of joyfulness in the expressions and gestures of the figures depicted, Fuseli's work is a dramatic display of earthly departure with a muted palette and greater focus on the sharp contrast between light and dark. Rather than making her way up to the warm light of heaven as in West's painting, the five-year-old Penelope casts her eyes upwards to the darkness as a putto descends in extreme perspective

¹²⁵ The most famous publication of the poem was printed in 1808 by Robert Hartley Cromek who had commissioned William Blake to illustrate the work. R. Blair, *The Grave: a Poem* (London, 1808), illustration between pp. 8 and 9.

¹²⁶ J. Black, *George III: America's Last King* (New Haven, 2006), p. 187.

¹²⁷ Pressly, *The Fuseli Circle in Rome*, p. vii.

with an otherworldly sprite-like face, more like a depiction of Shakespeare's Puck than the angelic open arms of the putti in West's work. The raised wings of the angel and dramatic posture of the young girl create a sense of swift upward ascent that typifies much of Fuseli's work, and, perhaps, emphasising the speed with which she has been separated from her parents. At the bottom of the composition, just visible amidst the darkness, Fuseli has included a butterfly, symbolic of the fleeting and fragile life of the deceased Penelope, along with an amphora tipped on its side, another common trope of death.¹²⁸ Once again, various visual tropes that would have been easily recognisable to the viewer of this painting convey the overarching narrative of the young girl's depiction. Used in paintings, prints and mourning jewellery, symbols that referred to the fleeting nature of life equipped artists and their patrons with a visual vocabulary that allowed them to evoke a sense of loss and tragedy.

The Boothby parents also commissioned a monument for their parish church, St Oswald's in Ashbourne, Derbyshire from Thomas Banks (fig. 46), which had quite a different effect but clearly spoke to the parents' emotional trauma. It depicts the child as if sleeping along with seven inscriptions in English, Latin, Italian and French, quoting Catullus, the Bible and, significantly, Rousseau's *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Eloise*. In fact, Boothby was well acquainted with the French philosopher who had spent over a year living in Staffordshire not far from Boothby's home, which resulted in Boothby's translation and publication of Rousseau's autobiographical *Premier Dialogue* (1780). In his portrait by Joseph Wright of Derby (1781) (fig. 47) he is shown holding a volume with 'Rousseau' on the spine, in reference to this project. Boothby would have been well acquainted with Rousseau's writing on children, visually evidenced through this innocent and vulnerable portrayal of his 'sleeping' daughter. Considering this work in relation to Fuseli's painting

¹²⁸ Ian Jenkins discusses the eighteenth-century discovery of the funerary function of Greek vases in his article on a family portrait by the Irish artist Adam Buck. See I. Jenkins, 'Adam Buck and the Vogue for Greek Vases', *The Burlington Magazine*, 130/1023 (June 1988), p. 450.

shows the extent to which Boothby celebrated the spotless purity of his child. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this Rousseauian philosophy purported that children were born into the world innocent and thereby gained immediate passage into heaven.

Banks exhibited the model of the monument (fig. 48) at the Royal Academy in 1793, where it ‘attracted a crowd of admiring spectators’, including Queen Charlotte and her daughter who ‘stood over it for a considerable time in silence, and were affected even to tears’.¹²⁹ The fascinating account of a royal display of emotion shows how successful Banks was in creating an image of death that elicited deep feeling regardless of whether the viewer knew the child depicted. However, posthumous portraits of children that were exhibited were not always successful in engendering such a response by non-family members. When Philip Hoare exhibited *Mother and Dead Child* at the Royal Academy in 1781, for example, a critic, rather than pitying the grieving mother, remarked ‘Shocking indeed!’¹³⁰ The ‘sleeping’ Penelope, however, was a relatable cipher of mourning for everyone. Nicholas Penny notes how ‘It seems surprising that so private a work should have been half-intended for such public admiration’.¹³¹ But it was exactly the public nature of the monument, the public expression of the Boothbys’s deep feeling that was significant, making it an exemplar of late eighteenth-century sentimentality. The Boothby parents attempted to deal with their grief by finding permanent ways of commemorating her so that the imprint she left on them would never be forgotten.

This was additionally achieved through the publication of *Sorrows Sacred to the Memory of Penelope* (1796), a literary outpouring of emotion, comprising twenty-four sonnets and two elegies. The text is accompanied by reproductions of both Fuseli’s

¹²⁹ Cited in P. Cunningham, ‘New Materials for the Life of Thomas Banks, R.A.’, *The Builder*, XXI (3 January 1863), p. 4.

¹³⁰ *The Ear-Wig; or An Old Woman’s Remarks on the present Exhibition of the Royal Academy* (London, 1781), p. 9.

¹³¹ N. Penny, *Church Monuments*, p. 115.

Apotheosis and Banks's monument, along with Thomas Kirk's engraving of Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Penelope aged three, scenes that relate to her home, and various symbols that allude to the fragility of life, including a butterfly flying out of a cocoon, a broken and dying tree, and an extinguished torch.¹³² Boothby begins his work with an address to the reader:

The following little works were written to relieve a mind overburthened with grief, and are here collected as a frail monument, designed to withhold for a moment, from the grasp of oblivion, one loved "not wisely, but too well."

The have small pretensions to poetical merit; but they are the expressions of *real feelings*...Receive them with complacency, gentle reader, and mayest thou never experience the sorrows they describe!¹³³

Boothby's publication was hailed as a 'most elegant monument of paternal regret...', combining as it did 'the allied arts of poetry, painting, and sculpture, with that of typography'.¹³⁴ What Fuseli did in paint and Banks in marble, Boothby did in words. His collection of sonnets and elegies epitomises the sentimental expression of 'real feeling' found in posthumous portraiture and in graveyard poetry of two decades earlier; 'a mind overburthened with grief' that could only process the trauma of his daughter's passing through various memorialising acts.¹³⁵ 'Sonnet XII' applauds the work of Banks and his ability to defeat the lifeless, whiteness of marble. He writes:

¹³² No printmaker is given for the reproductive print of Banks's monument. The British Museum holds a similar lithograph, which was made by George & Co. Penelope Boothby is discussed in R. Woods, *Children Remembered: Responses to Untimely Death in the Past* (Liverpool, 2006), pp. 77-78; J. Goodall, 'Conclusion, Part II: Grieving Parents, Grieving Children' in G. Avery and K. Reynolds (eds.), *Representations of Childhood Death*, (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 228-229; J. Bryant, *Thomas Banks, 1735-1805: Britain's First Modern Sculptor* (London, 2005), pp. 52-53.

¹³³ B. Boothby, *Sorrows Sacred to the Memory of Penelope* (London, 1796). Italics my own.

¹³⁴ *The Monthly Review, or Literary Journal*, vol. 10 (London, 1796), p. 316.

¹³⁵ In its narrowest sense the term refers to Thomas Parnell's 'Night-Piece on Death' (1721), Robert Blair's, *The Grave* (1743), Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742-45), and Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751). See E. Parisot, *Graveyard Poetry: Religion, Aesthetics and the Mid-Eighteenth-Century Poetic Condition* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 1-18.

Recorded there exists her every charm,
In vivid colours, safe from change or harm,¹³⁶

The need to remember Penelope as she was is clearly evident in these lines. By commissioning the monument and apotheosis painting, and in writing these lines, Boothby could maintain a sense of paternal protection despite Penelope's passing. Boothby goes on, in 'Sonnet XVI', to celebrate Fuseli's ability 'to cheat these weary eyes, / And raise [Boothby's] drooping spirit to the skies' by depicting Penelope's spiritual passing from this world to the next. The engraving produced by Benedetti was used as the frontispiece of *Sorrows*, pointing to Boothby's own attempt to provide a literary apotheosis of his child. The breadth and variety of commemoration at her death was rare but Brooke Boothby is a pronounced example of a man living out the extremes of this sentimental culture.

Fuseli later pronounced his views of the appropriateness of this kind of posthumous portrayal in his introductory contribution to Blair's 1808 edition of *The Grave*, which, as previously discussed, was a popular textual source of inspiration for artists, including Benjamin West.¹³⁷ Fuseli's 'Advertisement' commends Blair for inspiring artists to go beyond the traditional iconography associated with death. He describes how,

so often to emblematic purposes, that instruction is become stale, and attention callous. The serpent with its tail in its mouth, from a type of eternity, is become an infant's bauble; even the nobler idea of Hercules pausing between virtue and vice, or the varied imagery of Death leading his patients to the grave, owe their effect upon us more to technic excellence than allegoric utility.¹³⁸

Several years had passed between the time Fuseli painted his posthumous portrayal of Penelope Boothby, with its butterfly and broken Greek vase, and him writing these words. It seems that in that time, his thoughts concerning the use of symbolism within depictions of death and the afterlife had clearly changed. Rather than using oft-repeated symbols, artists

¹³⁶ Boothby, *Sorrows*, p. 18.

¹³⁷ Henry Fuseli, 'Advertisement', in Blair, *The Grave*, p. xviii-xx. Fuseli was interested in the work of several English poets during this period, often those who dealt with melancholy subject matter. See F. Antal, *Fuseli Studies* (London, 1956), p. 18.

¹³⁸ Blair, *The Grave*, p. xix.

should ‘connect the visible and the invisible world’ through comparable means to those successfully achieved by Blair in his poem.¹³⁹ The success of the poem, he writes, is in the author’s attempt to ‘wake sensibility by touching our sympathies with nearer, less ambiguous, and less ludicrous imagery.’¹⁴⁰

To illustrate the publication, Robert Hartley Cromek commissioned William Blake, a great admirer of Fuseli, to provide the designs.¹⁴¹ Blake’s illustrations, engraved by Luigi Schiavonetti, provide the visual counterpart to Blair’s poem and embody Fuseli’s interpretation. The subject of the second etching, ‘The meeting of a Family in Heaven’ (fig. 49), shows a mother and father at the centre of the composition, with two children on either side, each pair shown in an embrace.¹⁴² Another child runs in from the right with arms raised in celebration of the reunion. Above these seven figures, two angels are positioned opposite each other looking down on the group. Much like West’s depiction of Prince Octavius on his ascent to heaven, Gauci’s *Celestial Meeting*, and Fuseli’s rendering of Penelope Boothby, Blake ‘lead[s] the eye from the milder light of time to the radiations of eternity’.¹⁴³ It is a world that is comprehensible to the living, allowing them to ‘connect the visible and the invisible world’.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. xx. It might be that Sir Brooke Boothby requested the inclusion of the butterfly and amphora as *Sorrows Sacred to the Memory of Penelope* includes a number of symbols relating to death.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. xix.

¹⁴¹ Cromek originally commissioned Blake to provide the designs and to engrave them but the job of the latter was eventually given to Luigi Schiavonetti. See M. Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (2 vols, New Haven and London, 1981), i, p. 454, and D. Bindman, *The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake* (London, 1978), p. 482, nos. 465-476.

¹⁴² For a discussion of the changes made between Blake’s initial sketch and the final engraving, see Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, i, p. 460, no. 623.

¹⁴³ Blair, *The Grave*, p. xx.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. Blake had previously attempted to depict the transition from this world to the next in his design for the frontispiece to Benjamin Heath Malkin’s, *A Father’s Memoirs of his Child* (1806), written in commemoration of the author’s much loved child, Thomas, who had died aged six. Blake’s design surrounds an engraving of the boy, probably by Robert Cooper, after a miniature painted when he was two years old by Richard Morton Paye (or his daughter,

Whilst the book was a great success, perhaps in part due to its endorsement by influential Royal Academicians, not all reviewers praised Schiavonetti's engravings.¹⁴⁵ The *Antijacobin Review* was scathing in its comments about the new edition of Blair's celebrated poem, writing that the engravings

are executed with much spirit and truth, yet we doubt whether Mr. Schiavonetti has done complete justice to the original drawings...the defect of giving strong corporeal semblance to spiritual forms was much less glaring in them, than in the prints. The figures were more shadowy and insubstantial; and consequently, the effect of the whole was greatly improved.¹⁴⁶

As a result, the illustrations 'totally failed' to draw the earthly and heavenly realms together in art, leaving the reviewer unsure as to whether this was even possible, and was, as a consequence, the result of a 'morbid fantasy'.¹⁴⁷ Regardless of this value judgement, Blake's work, much like his contribution to Malkin's *A Father's Memoirs of His Child*, and Fuseli's *Apotheosis of Penelope Boothby* alongside his commentary in Cromeck's publication of *The Grave*, show a distinct desire to use the death of the innocent child as a way of connecting the earthly and spiritual worlds through the child's immediate passage to heaven at a particular historical moment. At this time, popular Rousseauian notions of childhood innocence sat comfortably alongside Anglican attentiveness to divine providence and the child's immediate passage to heaven. Works of this kind, therefore, contributed to the literal apotheosis of the

Elizabeth Anne Briane). See J. Wordsworth, 'Introduction', in B. H. Malkin, *A Father's Memoirs of his Child* (Poole, 1997). According to Butlin, it is highly likely that Malkin was the anonymous author of the descriptions of the plates in Cromeck's 1808 publication of Blair's *The Grave*. See Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, i, p. 455, no.608.

¹⁴⁵ For a discussion of Blake's reputation and association with other engravers in relation to the Blair and Malkin publications, see G. E. Bentley, Jr. and M. K. Nurmi, *A Blake Bibliography: Annotated Lists of Works, Studies, and Blakeana* (Minneapolis, 1964), pp. 6-7.

¹⁴⁶ *Antijacobin Review and Magazine* (London, November 1808), p. 233, noted in Butlin *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, i, p. 455, no.608, and in G. E. Bentley Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford, 1969), p. 208.

¹⁴⁷ *Antijacobin Review and Magazine* (1808), p. 233.

child, which provided a context in which representations of a child's posthumous existence allowed grieving parents to celebrate their child's ascension to heaven.¹⁴⁸

Comparing Fuseli's *Apotheosis* to Romney's *Ann Wilson and Her Daughter Sibyl* discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that there was a varied yet interconnected range of responses to the depiction of the deceased child during this period, which were connected to contemporary discussions about the nature of childhood. Romney's earlier work elicits emotion through a recognisable neoclassical pose and the focus on the physical separation between the living mother and deceased child. Fuseli's *Apotheosis* on the other hand, is a much more theatrical expression of a child passing from this world to the next. It focuses on the departure of an innocent, unblemished child who will gain immediate access to heaven. By contrast, in the painting by Romney, the mother attempts to pull her child back into a timeless space as a way of conferring comfort.

These diverse attempts to commemorate the death of a child demonstrate a move away from earlier modes of documenting the rupture in a family line in grand seventeenth-century portraiture, as we saw with van Dyck's Pembroke family portrait, to memorialising the child in terms of the emotional impact wrought by their death on the family left behind. Central to this change was the move towards a more outward expression of emotion that took hold of the cultural life of Britain from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. Whilst seventeenth-century parents were no doubt deeply affected by the death of a child, as personal letters and diary entries attest, this grief was expressed through carefully constructed symbolic schema, composition and conspicuous gesturing.

From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, when the expression of emotion was both a sign of virtue and a natural instinct, grieving parents found new ways of commemorating their deceased children through portraiture. As I showed in relation to Romney's portrait of

¹⁴⁸ For a further discussion of the apotheoses of children during the late eighteenth century, see Retford, *A Death in the Family*, p. 85.

the Wilsons, by drawing on neoclassical funerary iconography, an artist could allude to the death of a sitter, infusing the painting with a sense of parental grief. This intermingling of the living and the dead could also be achieved by playing on recognisable portrait conventions as shown by Batoni's portrait of the Barrett-Lennard family. This allowed artists to signify the central place of the child in the family and their determination to retain the familial bond even after their death. In both of these examples, the deceased child is presented as living but in other instances, he or she was drawn or painted from the corpse. Whilst the act of creating a posthumous portrait could have the effect of alleviating the grief of the parent, as we saw in relation to Ramsay's sketch of his deceased son, the association of sleep with death relates to depictions of the Virgin and sleeping Christ Child. Much like the apotheosis images of children that became particularly prevalent towards the end of the eighteenth century, portraits that referred to religious imagery gave assurance of an innocent child's direct passage to heaven.

The display of these portraits has been central to my discussion, often revealing the function and value of posthumous portraits of children. For some parents, these portraits were never intended to be viewed in public, as we saw with Ramsay's portrait of his son, but for others, like Brooke Boothby, commissioning posthumous portraits and circulating them within the public realm preserved the memory of their child in the hope that it would make their passing easier to bear. The prevalence of childhood mortality in this period accounts for this variety of approaches. The death of a child, much like today, was a unique experience that parents feared no matter the frequency with which it occurred.

Chapter 2

‘Where Thou Art, There May We Be Also’: Mourning in Miniature

On 29 May 1812, Admiral Frank Sotheron made a perfunctory note in his pocket diary: ‘Alas My Dear Carry Died. Wrote letters’.¹⁴⁹ Caroline Matilda Sotheron’s funeral took place ten days later at Darrington Church and not long after, her husband commissioned a commemorative portrait miniature (fig. 50). Enclosed within a frame in the form of a snake eating its tail, the young woman gazes out to the viewer, in a simple but fashionable white dress with a shawl thrown over her shoulder. A small piece of paper held within the inside of the framed miniature, identifies the artist as John Wright who adapted and miniaturised a three-quarter-length portrait of the sitter by Thomas Lawrence.¹⁵⁰ He had painted both Caroline and Frank four years earlier (figs. 51 & 52), possibly in celebration of their marriage on 6 October that year.¹⁵¹ Whilst very similar to Lawrence’s original painting, Wright made a number of changes to the portrait. He presented the sitter bust-length and changed the colour of the shawl from salmon pink to a warm yellow, mimicking the gold of the ouroboros frame. In addition, the sitter is depicted against a blank grey wall rather than shown perched on a grassy bank outdoors. These changes can mostly be attributed to various conventions of miniature painting, such as the sitter shown bust-length and the non-descript background common to many miniatures during this period. The subtle changes, however, made by

¹⁴⁹ Gloucestershire Archive, D1571/F757 (Frank Sotheron, Personal Diary, 1812).

¹⁵⁰ In pen and ink on paper inside the miniature, the following has been written: ‘John Wright / Pinxt. / Burlington Gardens, / corner of Old / Bond Street, / 1812 / after the original / picture by / Sir Thomas Lawrence, PRA’, cited in *Intimate Vision*, p. 66.

¹⁵¹ In G. C. Williamson, *Catalogue of the Collection of Miniatures, the Property of J. Pierpont Morgan* (London, 1906), vol. II, p. 100. and S. Lloyd and K. Sloan, *The Intimate Portrait: Drawings, Miniatures and Pastels from Ramsay to Lawrence* (2009), cat. 27, p. 66. the location of the companion portrait by Lawrence of Frank Sotheron was unknown. It has been owned, however, since 1978 by the Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, museum no. 78.3. The institution acquired it from George Eastman, a major benefactor to the university. I am grateful to Kerry Schaubert (Curatorial Research Assistant, Memorial Art Gallery) for providing me with this information over email.

Wright, in terms of both composition and presentation raise the key questions of this chapter: what unique tools did miniaturists have to express the death of a sitter and how did these additional elements change the way in which the viewer engaged with the image of the deceased? How did the tactility of these portable objects invite a particular form of engagement with the posthumous portrait? Does this add to our understanding of the status of portrait miniatures within both its artistic and socio-cultural contexts?

Sotheron's commission provided the widower with an intimate kind of portrait that served a different purpose to Lawrence's original painting. Whilst a full-scale painted portrait of a family would likely be displayed in the more public area of the house, a mourning miniature was not so easily observed. It required an invitation from the viewer to look closely upon the small portrait, which was often worn around the wrist or neck, set within a ring or brooch, or stitched into one's clothing. The viewing dynamics of the miniature offered an alternative means of interacting with the image of the deceased and as such, not only elicits further insight into the function of portraiture within mourning practices, but casts new light on the kinds of painted portraits discussed thus far.

Until the last two decades, much of the existing literature on miniatures was largely descriptive and documentary with little consideration of the context in which they were produced and, as a consequence, the specific role of the miniature within mourning practices. The dictionaries of miniatures and miniaturists by the likes of Basil Long, Graham Reynolds and Daphne Foskett, for example, whilst hugely important in terms of recording the output of artists and establishing timelines of artistic production, do not consider the wider implications of the miniature within contemporary visual and social culture.¹⁵² Katherine Coombs's *The Portrait Miniature in England* extends beyond this cataloguing foundation to consider the

¹⁵² B. Long, *British Miniaturists* (London, 1929); G. Reynolds, *English Portrait Miniatures* (Cambridge, 1952); D. Foskett, *British Portrait Miniatures: A History* (London, 1963); *A Dictionary of British Miniature Painters* (London, 1972); idem., *Collecting Miniatures* (Woodbridge, 1979); idem., *Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide* (Woodbridge, 1987).

place of the miniature within art and society from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, focusing particular attention on working practices.¹⁵³ More recently, Kim Sloan and Stephen Lloyd examined miniatures and other forms of marginalised portraiture in their exhibition catalogue, *The Intimate Portrait: Drawings, Miniatures and Pastels from Ramsay to Lawrence*, where they consider the intimacy of these portraits in terms of both viewing experience and circumstances of creation. Posthumous portrait miniatures feature in this book as a means of highlighting the function of the miniature as a specific type of intimate portrait, but it is not the authors' aim to interrogate fully its place within commemorative practices. The relevance of this exhibition catalogue to the present thesis, rather, is its discussion of intimacy.

The notion of intimacy is approached from a philosophical perspective in Hanneke Grootenboer's work on eye miniatures, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures*. Grootenboer uses these 'intensely private objects' to formulate a notion of intimate vision and discusses their function in visual culture during their brief period of production around 1800.¹⁵⁴ Particularly significant to the present study is her investigation of the crying eye miniature and her theorisation of the dead gaze of eye miniatures produced after the death of the person represented. This is a significant methodological intervention into the scholarship on portrait miniatures, focusing on theories of vision, representation and perception, and drawing on discussions about grief and mourning during the period in question.

Whilst there have been no art historical publications that focus on the role of the miniature within mourning practices in Britain specifically, this was the focus of an exhibition on American miniature painting. The associated catalogue *Love and Loss:*

¹⁵³ K. Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England* (London, 1998).

¹⁵⁴ H. Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures* (Chicago and London, 2012), p. 5.

American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures examines the role of miniature painting in America, inherited from the European tradition, focusing in particular on the miniature as a means of marking ‘joinings or separations’ including births, marriages and death.¹⁵⁵ Due to the close links between British and American artistic practice at this time, this text provides a useful overview of the function of miniatures in mourning practices and demonstrates the influence and continued presence of British art and culture in America at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries.

One of the most significant and sustained studies of portrait miniatures and mourning jewellery in recent years, is the work of Marcia Pointon.¹⁵⁶ She presents the miniature as ‘a sentimentally invested artefact’ and draws on both anthropology and psychoanalysis to assess the relationship between the wearer or beholder and, as she calls them, the ‘portrait-object’, a term she uses to ‘encompass the full range of small jewelled artefacts that incorporate portrait miniatures’.¹⁵⁷ As part of these studies, she plays close attention to the value of hair within mourning jewellery and argues that such objects are ‘peculiarly feminine’ and operate as a kind of secular reliquary.¹⁵⁸ Over the course of this chapter, I will make use of Pointon’s term ‘portrait-object’ as a means of emphasising the particularities of their objecthood and distinguishing miniatures from other portrait types. The possibilities afforded by the various ways in which miniatures were presented, including iconographic framing, the inclusion of hair and the addition of inscriptions, for example, added another dimension to

¹⁵⁵ Frank, *Love and Loss*, p. 1. Another exhibition in the USA has taken the topic of posthumous portraiture more broadly, see S. C. Hollander, *Securing the Shadow*.

¹⁵⁶ M. Pointon, ‘Materializing Mourning: Hair, Jewellery and the Body’, in M. Kwint, C. Breward, and J. Aynsley (eds.), *Material Memories: Design and Evocation* (Oxford, 1999); idem., ‘“Surrounded with Brilliants”: Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Art Bulletin*, vol. 83, no. 1 (March 2001), pp. 48-71; idem., ‘Accessories as Portraits and Portraits as Accessories’, in E.-B. Krems and S. Ruby (eds.), *Das Porträt als Kulturelle Praxis*, (Berlin and Munich, 2016), pp. 45-59.

¹⁵⁷ Pointon, ‘Surrounded with Brilliants’, p. 48. In a comparable way, Jaffe has drawn attention to the unique physical form of miniatures, describing them as ‘composite objects classified as both paintings and decorative arts’, see *Love and Loss* (2000), p. 7.

¹⁵⁸ Pointon, ‘Material Mourning’, p. 80; Pointon, ‘“Surrounded with Brilliants”’, p. 56.

commemorative portraiture and invited a different kind of engagement to other portrait types. The inherent tactility of a small and portable object, sometimes including elements that specifically invited touch and encouraged intimate engagement, brought the body of the living closer to the body of the deceased.

It is my aim to distinguish and further examine the particular role of miniatures in this context and to scrutinise the intimacy of these mobile objects. Whilst I draw on the kinds of documentary sources that I use elsewhere in this thesis, the miniature presents a particular challenge to the art historian by virtue of the large number of portraits of anonymous sitters and artists, particularly in the case of eye miniatures. The output of some miniaturists was vast, amounting to several thousands of portraits painted over an individual artist's career, and few working records of these artists are extant. Even when they do exist, it can be hard to relate these documents to the material artefact. George Engleheart's fee books, for example, include several references to posthumous portrait miniatures, indicated by 'dead' or 'after death' in parentheses after the name of the sitter but I have been unable to locate any of these particular works.¹⁵⁹ Primary sources such as this, therefore, offer a tantalising indication of the existence of such objects without describing the way in which the artist and their patron chose to execute them. In addition, the accessibility of miniatures to a wider client base than oil paintings can make it more difficult to trace the histories of the sitters and individuals who commissioned them.

Even without knowing the characters involved in the creation of a miniature, however, there is much to be gained from studying anonymous works in order to reach a deeper understanding of their function within mourning practices. I focus, therefore, on both

¹⁵⁹ These fee books remain in the private collection of Engleheart's descendants but were reproduced in G. C. Williamson, *George Engleheart, 1750-1829: Miniature Painter to George III* (London, 1902). The fee book refers to the following posthumous portrait miniatures: 'Hume, Mrs. (after death), 1777; 'Milbanke, Miss (dead)', 1779; 'Hume, Mrs. (dead)', 1780; 'Tryon, Capt. (dead)', 1786; 'Garling, Master (dead)', 1807.

identifiable portrait miniatures that allow me to consider associated documentary records and build a picture of the personal, artistic and emotional context in which they came into being, as well as unknown works that demonstrate various modes of commemorative expression that were prevalent amongst grieving members of society. Drawing on the work of Pointon and Grootenboer, I combine historical, anthropological and theoretical approaches, in order to situate these objects within late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century mourning culture and commemorative portrait practices. In addition to unpicking the iconography and artistic techniques employed by miniaturists, I take a new approach to these objects by engaging with discussions concerning kinship and gift exchange to demonstrate how posthumous portrait miniatures bound people together socially and emotionally. The circulation and display of miniatures, as well as the bodily and metaphysical relationship between the viewer and the person depicted will be central to this discussion. This relationship is underscored by considering the importance of the gaze between the dead sitter and the living viewer. Drawing on Grootenboer's work on posthumous eye miniatures, I argue that unique modes of presentation focused the viewer's attention on this 'dead' gaze, which in turn, helped to reunite the living with their deceased friends and relatives.

Whilst miniatures are the main focus of this chapter, in keeping with my approach through this thesis, it is important to consider miniatures alongside other types of commemorative objects associated with intimacy, including portrait drawings and mourning jewellery, making particular reference to the inclusion of hair, in order to situate the miniature within its broader artistic and social context. By looking at the use of particular framing devices, specific mourning iconography, and carefully considered inscriptions, I demonstrate how artists and jewellers drew on and developed a rich body of iconographic material in addition to various methods of display that encouraged an intensely private engagement with the image of the deceased that had distinct function from other types of

commemorative portraiture. This notion of privacy, however, will be complicated by considering the place of the posthumous portrait miniature within the public realm as a social signifier of absence, and as a marker for grieving women, in particular, to perform their spousal or parental duty. This will allow me to show how bodily interaction with portrait miniatures offered a specific means of communicating grief, whether genuine or performed, as well as providing a source of comfort for the grieving by virtue of the unique viewing experience and physical proximity to the depiction of the deceased. Posthumous portrait miniatures often complimented existing portraits of a sitter or were produced as part of a series of commemorative acts. As I will show, this highlights the unique way in which they function in mourning practices.

Mournful contemplation: miniatures and the gaze

The diminutive size of miniatures requires a level of close looking that is inherently intimate and was understood as such during the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁰ Whether held in the hand, worn on the body as part of a locket, brooch or bracelet, or displayed in a case, the size of miniatures, in some cases just a few millimetres in length, encouraged the viewer to lean in and admire the work up-close. Stephen Lloyd has referred to ‘the increased emotional impact of the human face when seen close to’, and it is this proximity to the body and the mode of up-close looking at such an ‘intensely private object’, which was unique to the miniature.¹⁶¹ Even when miniatures were displayed rather than worn or carried, their association with privacy was not lost, rooted in the earliest years of miniature painting in England, when these small portraits were displayed in closets, understood as some of the most private parts of the

¹⁶⁰ See also, *Love and Loss: American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures*, p. 1.

¹⁶¹ S. Lloyd, “‘Perfect Likeness’: An Introduction to the Portrait Miniature”, in Aronson and Wieseman (eds.), *Perfect Likeness*, p. 17; Grootenboer uses describes the eye miniature as an ‘intensely private object’. Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze*, p. 5.

house.¹⁶² Unlike the full-scale oil paintings that were displayed in the most public areas of the house and were intended to demonstrate a family's lineage and its places within the fabric of society, actual or asserted, a closet was only accessible to the owner's most intimate friends and family. The Green Closet at Ham House (fig. 53), for example, enabled intimate engagement with miniatures in contrast to the larger oil paintings of the more public Long Gallery.¹⁶³ Even when collections of miniatures were acquired primarily for artistic merit or the status of the sitters rather than functioning as an expression of intimacy between two friends or family members, such as Horace Walpole's famous 'Classical Temple of Worthies' (fig. 54) – a wooden cabinet designed to hold his collection of miniatures and enamels – the process of opening and uncovering, lent a sense of privacy to the viewing experience.¹⁶⁴

Throughout its history, however, the miniature has featured within larger portraits, serving the symbolic function of showing familial and social bonds. These portraits pull the miniature into the public realm by depicting a moment of private engagement. This follows Pointon's assertion that once a miniature has been reframed and remounted, 'what is essentially a private object (a small-scale portrait) enters social and economic exchange systems, thereby participating in, and contributing to, public life'.¹⁶⁵ This inclusion of miniatures in larger portraits was an act of reframing that gave the miniature a role in public life. Furthermore, it could give public access to the emotional life of the sitter particularly in instances in which the sitter gazed upon a portrait miniature of another. This act of intense

¹⁶² For the display of miniatures in the sixteenth century, see P. Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets', *Representations*, 15 (Summer, 1986), pp. 57-97; and Pointon "'Surrounded with Brilliants'", p. 48.

¹⁶³ C. Rowell, 'The Green Closet at Ham House: A Charles I Cabinet Room and its Contents', in C. Rowell (ed.), *Ham House: 400 Years of Patronage and Collection* (New Haven and London, 2013), pp. 14-31.

¹⁶⁴ Walpole initially displayed portraits of his family and friends inside the cabinet but as his collection grew, his collecting priorities shifted to 'portraits of remarkable persons' by the preeminent artists of miniature painting from the previous two hundred years, see S. Lloyd, 'The Cabinet of Miniatures and Enamels', in M. Snodin (ed.) *Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill* (New Haven and London, 2010), pp. 98-99. See also cat. 171, p. 317.

¹⁶⁵ Pointon, "'Surrounded with Brilliants'", p. 49.

looking and contemplation, emphasised the role of the miniature as a physical manifestation of the emotional ties between two people. In Samuel Johnson's dictionary, 'a gaze' is defined as 'Intent regard; look of eagerness of wonder; fixed look'; the 'gazer' is 'one that looks intently with eagerness or admiration'.¹⁶⁶ Depictions of someone gazing upon a miniature showed the admiration between two people who had been separated and was often used to signify the feelings between a young couple. Indeed, portraits such as this, were not infrequently eroticised to show a young, sometimes scantily clad woman, gazing lustily upon a miniature portrait of her lover (fig. 55).¹⁶⁷

In other instances, the miniature stood in for a person out of sight or no longer present. George Romney's portrait of Mrs Crouch (fig. 56) shows the actress leaning against a rocky bank with a thumb holding open the page of the book she has just put down. Absorbed in her thoughts, she plays with the chain of a portrait miniature depicting her husband, Edward Rollings Crouch, a naval lieutenant, who speeds away on a ship on the horizon. Edward had given the miniature to Anna Maria 'Nancy' Crouch as a memento before his departure and commissioned Romney's portrait with the work taking centre stage, in an attempt to secure his wife's fidelity in his absence.¹⁶⁸ His wish was not granted however, and not long after, Nancy took up with the actor Michael Kelly. Edward had used the miniature as a cypher of longing, even if Romney's portrait did not serve its function as assurance of her loyalty. Portraits such as this became common enough during the late eighteenth century for trades people to use generalised images of similar scenes for a variety of different purposes. F. Fisher, for example, a jeweller from London, included an image of a woman sitting next to an urn on a plinth gazing upon a miniature on his trade card (fig.

¹⁶⁶ S. Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language: In Which the Words are Deduced from their Originals, Explained in their Different Meanings, and Authorized by the Names of the Writers in whose Works they are Found...* (London, 1755) [unpaginated]

¹⁶⁷ Pointon, "Surrounded with Brilliants", pp.64-65.

¹⁶⁸ J. Bryant, *Kenwood: Paintings in the Iveagh Bequest* (Swindon, 2012), cat. 95, pp. 388-391.

57).¹⁶⁹ Where the name and date of the deceased would have been placed on the plinth, however, Fisher advertises his ‘Locketts, Rings, PINS, Bracelets, & HAIR DEVICES’ and printed beneath this vignette, he further advertises ‘MINIATURE PICTURES SET IN GOLD’.¹⁷⁰ Such was the prevalence of this recognisable iconography, it became an eye-catching and easily readable means of promoting a person’s trade.

The association of the miniature with absence inevitably led to its use within commemorative portraiture during an era in which, as explored in chapter one, the ways in which emotion was expressed and performed in art and literature were changing and developing. The discursive role that miniatures could play in portraits such as Henry Raeburn’s *Mrs Johnstone as ‘Contemplation’*, for example (fig. 58), shows the sitter wearing a black veil, gazing at a framed miniature, presumably of her deceased husband, Commodore George Johnstone, with a despondent expression. Beyond the swept back curtain, a mausoleum can be made out amongst the trees. This was a version of an earlier portrait of Mrs Johnstone by Raeburn of 1791, which has minor compositional changes and excludes the mausoleum.¹⁷¹ It has been suggested that this painting may have commemorated the death of her husband in 1787 and the later, c. 1810–15 version, may have been made in commemoration of her son, John Lowther Johnstone who died in 1811.¹⁷² If this were the case, the re-use of a near exact composition to express, no doubt, very real feeling, demonstrates the way in which this visual formula could be used repeatedly to the same effect. The viewer of this work did not need to know who was represented in the miniature in

¹⁶⁹ Fennetaux, ‘Fashioning Death/Gendering Sentiment’, p. 35.

¹⁷⁰ For a further discussion of this trade card and the pervasive use of the female figure of grief in mourning jewellery, see Fennetaux, ‘Fashioning Death/Gendering Sentiment’, p. 35–36.

¹⁷¹ C. Whitfield, *English Ancestors. A Survey of British Portraiture, 1650-1850*, Colnaghi Gallery (London, 1983), cat. 50, p. 80.

¹⁷² Bryant, *Kenwood*, cat. 73, p. 300.

order to understand its function within the portrait. Indeed, the lack of information about the miniature compounded the sense of absence and longing suffered by Mrs Johnstone.

Portraits such as this indicate the contours of the relationship between the miniature and the body, highlighting the intimate contemplation that such a representation could arouse whether mournful in the case of the two portraits of Mrs Johnstone, or sexual, as we saw with Peters's drawing of the young woman gazing upon a miniature in bed. As such, Aileen Ribeiro describes the miniature as a 'devotional relic', exciting comparable levels of intense and up-close looking.¹⁷³ This has, on some occasions, however, led to a misinterpretation of contemporary archival sources. William Wood's ledgers, for example, provide a detailed account of his materials and techniques for each miniature that he painted. He records the pigments used (according to an elaborate coding system), the characteristics of the ivory support and specific supplier, where he sent his miniatures to be 'set', and in some instances, a tracing of the miniature on a mica sheet affixed to the page. In the majority of entries, he notes if a miniature had been 'breathed upon', 'a little breathed upon', or 'not breathed upon'. This has been interpreted as an example of sentimental close-looking but these notes, in fact, provide an indication of his working technique.¹⁷⁴ The moisture of his breath maintained the fluidity of the watercolour so that he could continue to spread the pigment for the desired effect without adding more paint.¹⁷⁵

Portraits in which an absent person was represented by a miniature, whether visible or not, were overt displays of the social bonds that united kin. These portraits clearly demonstrate the personal effect of someone's absence, whether that separation occurred through geography or death. The relationship between people through the objects that bound

¹⁷³ A. Ribeiro, 'Fashion in Miniature', in K. Carter (ed.), *Miniatures at Kenwood: The Draper Gift* (London, 1997), p. 21.

¹⁷⁴ Ribeiro, 'Fashion in Miniature', p. 21.

¹⁷⁵ I am grateful to Alan Derbyshire (Head of Paper, Books and Paintings Conservation, V&A) for his thoughts on the techniques employed by William Wood.

them socially and emotionally, can be productively assessed by looking to anthropological writings on kinship. Marshall Sahlins has recently reconsidered the notion of kinship arguing for an approach that considers ‘mutuality of being’, which he describes as ‘persons who participate intrinsically in each other’s existence; they are members of one another’. He proposes further that ‘relatives emotionally and symbolically live each other’s lives and die each other’s deaths’.¹⁷⁶ The sense that people’s lives are knitted together highlights the gravity of someone’s passing to their kin and suggests that when someone dies part of the living is also lost. Shared existence condemns one person to the fate of another. In the case of eighteenth-century portraits in which two people are represented together, one in the temporal reality of the painting and the other in the depicted past, the injury that death inflicted upon the living as a consequence of this ‘mutuality of being’ is played out for the viewer. Mrs Johnstone, dressed in a black veil and gazing at the miniature of her deceased husband, demonstrates the loss that his passing has inflicted on her own personhood. Just as miniatures that were exchanged between husbands and wives as tokens of affection could be used in portraits to demonstrate their emotional and social bond, the role of the miniature in commemorative portraiture could highlight the rupture of that tie.

Pointon has discussed the gendered nature of miniature portraits and the fact that we only see women holding and gazing upon them in large-scale portraiture.¹⁷⁷ Whilst men owned miniatures and were occasionally depicted looking at them or showing them to a friend, they did not wear them on their body.¹⁷⁸ ‘Indeed’, she writes, ‘the wearing of a miniature was, it would seem, precisely a site for the inscription of sexual difference’.¹⁷⁹ At this time, under *couverture* a married women’s legal identity was subsumed to her husband,

¹⁷⁶ M. Sahlins, *What Kinship is – And is Not* (Chicago and London, 2013), preface.

¹⁷⁷ Pointon, “‘Surrounded with Brilliants’”, p. 59.

¹⁷⁸ Batoni’s portrait, *Sir Sampson Gideon and an Unidentified Companion* (1767), shows the two men in implied conversation about a miniature portrait. For further discussion of this painting, *ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

and so for a woman to wear a miniature of her husband constituted a social branding that indicated the relational status of women to men.¹⁸⁰ This is played out in Angelica Kauffman's pendant portraits of Jane Maxwell, Duchess of Gordon (c. 1772) (fig. 59) and her husband, Alexander, 4th Duke of Gordon (fig. 60).¹⁸¹ While there are no records that state exactly how or where the portraits were hung, the duchess's outward looking gaze indicate that the portrait of her husband likely hung to the right. She is dressed in the guise of the goddess Diana, perhaps in allusion to her husband's passion for hunting and wears a cameo of her husband around her neck.¹⁸² The combination of these elements offers an image of wifely devotion and affection five years into their successful marriage, which had, by that point, produced three children. By contrast, the duke holds a miniature of his wife in his left hand, his index finger and thumb encircling the rim of the frame. He draws the miniature towards himself possessively, looking out to the viewer as if his attention has just been drawn away from gazing upon the miniature. Dressed in Van Dyckean costume, he presents himself as an educated figure with antiquarian interests; an appropriate alternative to the portrait of his wife as the Roman goddess. Viewed together, these marital portraits were carefully encoded to show the gendered roles that underpinned marriage at this time.¹⁸³

The lack of documentary evidence relating to the commission of this portrait makes it impossible to know whether, despite the Roman costume, this is a truthful portrayal of wifely devotion or a performance of a prescribed social role. The same is true of commemorative

¹⁸⁰ B. McDonagh, *Elite Women and the Agricultural Landscape, 1700-1830* (New York and London, 2018), pp. 15-17.

¹⁸¹ For a discussion of portraits of the duchess that were produced after her marriage, including the Kauffman portraits of her and her husband, see H. Carroll, 'The Making and Breaking of Wedlock: Visualising Jane, Duchess of Gordon after Marriage', in J. DiPlacidi, K. Leydecker (eds), *After Marriage in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2017), pp. 129-57.

¹⁸² Another portrait of Jane Maxwell by Joshua Reynolds (location unknown) similarly shows her wearing another miniature, we can presume of her husband, around her neck. This was reproduced in print, see NPG D2449, and translated into an enamel miniature by Henry Bone, now in the possession of the miniature dealer Elle Shushan (October 2018).

¹⁸³ For a discussion of marital portraits, see Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life*, pp. 19-48.

portraits that depict a wife gazing upon a miniature of her absent husband, or a mother and her son, as we saw with the two portraits of Mrs Johnstone. The role of a woman as wife and mother is manifest in both of these works and by demonstrating feeling about their absence, she successfully performs her womanly duty. Nevertheless, whether the portrayal of mournful contemplation was performed or authentic, the miniature recognisably signified absence.

Carrying emotion: ‘where thou art, there may we be also’¹⁸⁴

The conceptual reframing of the miniature within full-scale portraiture invites and, indeed, complicates interpretation of these portrait-objects. Considering physical framing devices and other additions to portrait miniatures in order to signify the death of the sitter offers a counterpoint to the public display of feeling already discussed and focuses in on the essentially private and intimate nature of the portrait miniature. The creation of the Sotheron miniature discussed at the beginning of this chapter was common to many forms of posthumous portraits. The artist copied and miniaturised an existing portrait of the sitter and added, no doubt in consultation with Frank Sotheron, various commemorative elements. The ouroboros, forming the shape of the frame, had become much less popular as a symbolic element of oil paintings during the eighteenth century but by the early nineteenth century it was frequently used as either a framing device for miniatures, as in this example, or as the basis for the design of mourning jewellery.¹⁸⁵ Similarly, the inclusion of hair, a material trace of the person depicted, became a common addition to miniatures, particularly in the case of

¹⁸⁴ Inscribed on the gold box that once contained the miniature of Caroline Matilda Sotheron, cited in Williamson, *Catalogue of the Collection of Miniatures...of J. Pierpont Morgan*, p. 100.

¹⁸⁵ Whilst the image of the snake eating its tale was used to indicate death in many cases, this was not its exclusive use and needed to be considered alongside other indicators of death in order to be confidently read as such. This common symbol could refer to the eternal fidelity of a couple, which may have been the case, for example, with Alexander Gallaway’s miniatures of two members of the Greig family (V&A, P.38-1922 and P.39-1922).

commemorative works. On the reverse side of the Sotheron miniature, hair has been carefully worked over an opaline oval into a feathery, symmetrical arrangement. Long before this period, locks of hair had been exchanged between family members and intimate friends, sometimes merely stuffed into a small envelope, often now found amidst family papers in local archives and in the store rooms of country houses.¹⁸⁶ The gift of a lock of hair or its presentation alongside a portrait miniature did not, however, automatically constitute an object of mourning. Indeed, gifts of hair whether as part of a miniature or an item of jewellery, were exchanged between friends to ‘literally offer a part of oneself’, presented to family members as pseudo-relics, and offered by royalty to their favourites as a reward for their loyalty.¹⁸⁷ In her focused study of the world of women in eighteenth-century consumer culture, Amanda Vickery highlights the value that people attached to objects that had once been owned by or related in some other way to a loved one. Citing the case of Elizabeth Shackleton, a Lancashire gentlewoman, she takes a similar stance to Grootenboer observing how ‘certain possessions literally embodied something of the original owner, like the ring incorporating her dead mother’s hair’.¹⁸⁸

The use of hair in mourning jewellery was a logical extension of this practice and instances in which hair was combined with a miniature, the object as a whole could offer a powerful and affective means of memorialisation by virtue of its visceral reminder of the deceased person’s body. Even in instances in which the hair belonged to someone still living, its severance from the body implied separation and the need to hold on to a physical part of someone out of sight. In the case of the Sotheron miniature, the use of hair as a decorative medium almost seemed to conceal its corporeal origin but in the early nineteenth century,

¹⁸⁶ See, for example, the collection of early nineteenth-century hair at Osterley Park, National Trust.

¹⁸⁷ Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze*, p. 93-94.

¹⁸⁸ A. Vickery, ‘Women and the World of Goods: a Lancashire Consumer and her Possessions, 1751-81’ in J. Brewer and R. Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1994), p. 287.

designs such as this would have been recognised and readily understood as a means of signifying an absent body.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, the addition of hair particularised the miniature beyond its likeness to the sitter. As Pointon writes, in relation to a piece of mourning jewellery that contained a woman's hair,

the hair...serves as signature or portrait – as a representation of her – is singularly her own and is understood as such long before genetics began to play a part in constructions of identity.¹⁹⁰

The recognition of hair as a marker of genealogical specificity is clearly played out in a portrait-object by William John Thomson that on one side, depicts an unknown army officer, and on the other, includes several locks of hair from different family members that combine to make a family tree (fig. 61). At the end of each curl, a small gold medallion gives the birth dates of each of the presumed children of the sitter. Whilst the identity of the sitter is unknown, the dates provided on the medallions indicate that the hairwork was not added to the miniature until over twelve years after it was painted. Marjorie E. Wieseman suggests, therefore, that the evident rehousing of the miniature is likely to have been made as a 'cherished keepsake of a fond wife and mother'.¹⁹¹ It is reasonable to extend this further and suggest that the reframing and inclusion of the hairwork occurred after the death of the sitter, when the severed relationship between the father and his eight children was held in sharp focus. In this instance, hair was being used to physically unite a family and identify each member, even though this information is lost to us today.

¹⁸⁹ Pointon discusses the difference between the simple presentation of hair in the seventeenth century to the decorative designs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in 'Wearing Memory: Mourning, Jewellery and the Body, in G. Ecker (ed.), *Trauer Tragen, Trauer Zeigen: Inszenierungen der Geschlechter* (Munich, 1999), p. 74.

¹⁹⁰ Pointon, "'Surrounded with Brilliants'", p. 62.

¹⁹¹ Aronson and Wieseman (eds.), *Perfect Likeness*, cat. no.166, p. 301.

Previous discussions of the Sotheron miniature refer to the placement of hair under its glass cover, assuming the hair belongs to, or at least, claims to belong to the sitter.¹⁹² There is, however, a notable difference in the hair colour between the inner and outer portions of the design, which may indicate that the hair came from two different people. When Caroline died, she had a daughter, Lucy Sarah, and it is possible that the ‘S’-shaped curl of hair at the centre of the arrangement belonged to the child. The possibility of such a presentation of hair from both the mother and daughter conveys a sense of togetherness and continued presence, even when separated by death. Furthermore, the close positioning of remains from both a living and dead body would forever lock together mother and child in a physical union that would long outlast the life of the young girl. Hair, understood as something incorruptible and everlasting, was used to signify the eternal bond between mother and child even from beyond the grave. Considering this in light of Sahlins’s theory as to the mutuality of being, the coming together of bodily fragments from two people constitutes a physical and very visceral demonstration of the way in which a person’s death affected living relatives and, in turn, sparked a desire to retain a physical connection with the deceased. Mutuality of being in this instance, is manifested through the tactility of physical remnants bound together.

Pointon furthers the role of hair in commemorative practices by suggesting that even when hair is contained behind glass, it ‘provokes this desire’ to touch.¹⁹³ If Lucy Sarah had, in later life, held the portrait-object in her hand, she must have been comforted by the proximity of her own body to a remnant of her mother’s. The hair, displayed alongside a two-dimensional representation of the deceased, recognises Caroline’s bodily existence by virtue

¹⁹² There was a fear that hairworkers would substitute or bulk-up a person’s hair with someone else’s, which resulted in an increased number of women learning how to work hair themselves to prevent the risk of contamination. See Pointon, ‘Wearing Memory’, p. 78. For a previous discussion of the Sotheron miniature that refers to the original ownership of the hair, see *The Intimate Portrait*, cat. 27, p. 66.

¹⁹³ Pointon, ‘Materializing Mourning’, p. 55.

of having come directly from her.¹⁹⁴ The inclusion of hair within the presentation of the miniature, provided the owner or beholder of a portrait-object like this, with a tactile reminder and physical proof of the person represented in the miniature. This reading draws on and expands upon Juliet Ash's writing on the significance of clothes for the bereaved to forge a connection between the living and the dead through touch and the particular power that items worn by the deceased during their lives hold over living relatives.¹⁹⁵ She suggests that

Clothes relate to our feelings more than perhaps any other designed artefacts...after death "next-of-kin" live within memories embodied in objects, garments, photographs which live on when living is over for the dead; while death lives with the living.¹⁹⁶

Ash elevates the power of clothing to connect the living with the dead over artistic forms of representation. This does not, however, take into account the characteristics of miniatures presented like the Sotheron example and the extent to which fragments of a person's body (hair) added an extra, visceral facet to the engagement of the bereaved with the image of the deceased. That said, her suggestion as to the enduring quality of memories and the sense that death becomes a spectre over the living, resonates with my interrogation of posthumous portrait miniatures in this chapter. Ash states that 'Clothes presuppose the three-dimensional human figure as well as defining its absence'.¹⁹⁷ Hair, as a tangible remnant of the deceased, not only presupposes but acts as a bodily reminder of that person's existence.

The commemorative function of the Sotheron miniature was further enhanced by its containment within a gold case. This case no longer exists, but when the miniature was in the Pierpont Morgan collection and catalogued by G. C. Williamson, its inscription was noted:

¹⁹⁴ My discussion of hair and its value as physical proof of existence continues in the discussion of death masks in chapter four.

¹⁹⁵ J. Ash, 'Memory and Objects', *The Gendered Object* (Manchester and New York, 1996), pp. 219-224.

¹⁹⁶ Ash, 'Memory and Objects', p. 219.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 220.

To the memory of Caroline Matilda Sotheron, who died in Kirklington Hall in Nottingham on the 29th of May, 1812, aged 25 years, leaving an only child, Lucy Sarah, aged one year. This tablet is inscribed by her affectionate husband, Frank Sotheron, Rear-Admiral of the Blue.

If Christian Piety, if warm Benevolence,
With all the Beauty, Youth or Talents count impart
To grace the female form and dignify the Mind,
Had Power to stay the uplifted Arm of Death,
Caroline Matilda, thou had'st yet awhile been spared;
To charm and edify thy Sex by thy example;
To raise and cheer the Poor by thy munificence;
To rear thy Infant Daughter with maternal care,
To bless thy Husband with fidelity and love.
But God has called thee to Himself! Thy husband bows,
In humble resignation to the will of Heaven,
He prays 'May our child emulate thy Excellence,
Caroline, where thou art, there may we be also.'¹⁹⁸

The addition of these lines inscribed within the case makes clear the commemorative function of the object. Not only do these words celebrate the worthy life of a woman who died too soon but they were sourced from the monument to Caroline in Darrington Church, near the Sotheron family seat at Darrington Hall, Yorkshire, which had been erected by her husband shortly after her death. The slightly discordant use of the work 'tablet' in the first inscription on the gold miniature case, becomes comprehensible when the original function of the verse is known. As a result of this textual repurposing, the miniature became at once both physical record and commemorative monument in reduced size. The words operated doubly as both a public statement to the congregation of Darrington Church and a personal reminder of Caroline's piety, beauty, charity and motherly tenderness; the epitome of female virtue during this period. In this way, the case operated as a conceptual tomb for the miniature; enclosing the final image of a person who ceased to exist and memorialising her life through a recognisable textual form. In addition, the inclusion of hair beneath the glass further emphasised the tomb-like quality of the portrait-object by literally entombing an actual fragment of Caroline's body. The different sign systems contained within this example – the

¹⁹⁸ Williamson, *Catalogue of the Collection of Miniatures...of J. Pierpont Morgan*, p. 100.

method of framing, the addition of hair, the adaptation of Lawrence's original painting, and the lines inscribed on the now missing gold case – worked together to create a commemorative image that could be held, looked at and cherished by Caroline's grieving husband and later, perhaps, by their daughter. I will further interrogate this interplay of commemorative elements in my discussion of death masks in the final chapter of this thesis.

'Not lost but gone before': artistic and literary repurposing

The reuse and placement of commemorative writing alongside miniatures extended beyond tomb monuments and contributed to the wider cultural phenomenon of recycling and reforming literary sources to express one's own thoughts and emotions. In addition to the birth and death dates of the sitter, there are instances in which lines of poetry were transcribed and encased within a portrait-object. Such was the case with the posthumous portrait miniature of Captain John Whitby by Henry Bone (fig. 62). Whitby had discussed the possibility of commissioning a portrait miniature of himself with his wife, Mary Ann Theresa, about a year before his death in 1806.¹⁹⁹ As a naval captain, he was often at sea during the first years of their marriage and his affectionate address to his wife, 'My Dearest Darling Moll' hints at the desire to provide her with his portrait by way of comfort in his absence.²⁰⁰ It was not until after his passing, however, that his close friend Admiral Cornwallis, on whose estate the couple had resided, commissioned Henry Bone to create a locket with an enamel portrait miniature on the upper leaf.²⁰¹ The squared, preparatory drawing for this miniature (fig. 63) includes an inscription by Bone, which reads 'Late Cap^{tn}

¹⁹⁹ In a letter to his wife, dated 7 July 1805, he mentions their previous discussion about a 'little enamel' and his intention to send her a lock of hair. M148/6 (53/6) 2009/3 Keele University Special Collections (the letters are not numbered individually).

²⁰⁰ Keele University Library, Special Collections and Archive, 53/6. Letter from Captain John Whitby to his wife Mary Ann Theresa, 7 July 1805 [unfoliated].

²⁰¹ When Cornwallis purchased Newlands in Milford on Sea in 1800, he invited Captain Whitby and his wife to live on the estate. Unmarried and without issue, Cornwallis left the estate to Mary Anne Whitby in his will.

Whitby – for Adml Cornwall April – 1806’.²⁰² Whitby had only died on 7 April 1806, so this act of memorialisation was rapid and no doubt indicative of the close friendship between the two naval men.²⁰³ Bone copied a portrait of Whitby by John Hoppner that had been painted not long before (fig. 64) showing him in a proud military, three-quarter pose.²⁰⁴ Enamelled on a locket, the combination of this miniaturised portrait with the various elements contained within it shifted its function from a celebration of military heroism to a site of mournful contemplation.

Inside the locket, on one of the leaves, the essential facts of Whitby’s life have been inscribed – the dates of his birth, marriage, profession and death, alongside that of his daughter’s birth and the month in which Henry Bone executed the miniature, just a few weeks after Whitby’s death. Inside the locket, there is a loose piece of paper, which has been inscribed on one side, in a different hand, with the following (fig. 62.a):

“He was a man take
him all in all, the like
of whom I ne’er shall see again

“Sweet in Manners, fair in favour
Mild in temper, fierce in fight
Warrior nobler, gentler, braver
Never shall behold the light

He was too good for this world, therefore, God in his mercy has taken him to himself.

²⁰² This drawing was incorrectly identified as a portrait of Clement or Henry Whitby by Richard Walker in ‘Henry Bone’s Pencil Drawings in the National Portrait Gallery, *Walpole Society*, 61/546 (1999), p. 349.

²⁰³ Whitby had been Cornwallis’s flag captain. Following Cornwallis’s own death, he was buried alongside Whitby in Milford Churchyard. See A. Lambert, ‘Cornwallis, Sir William’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [accessed online 22 September 2018]. A memorial in Milford Church, erected by Theresa Whitby, commemorates Cornwallis and her parents. A lengthy inscription records that Cornwallis had ‘desired expressly to be buried beside [Whitby]’. Cited in B. Jolly, *Mrs. Whitby’s Locket: the Story of Captain John Whitby - England’s youngest ever Naval Captain and his Redoubtable Wife* (Milford-on-Sea, 2011), p. 77.

²⁰⁴ The portrait of Whitby in the collection of Strickland family collection is described as being after Hoppner. I have not been able to ascertain the whereabouts of the original painting by Hoppner,

These lines comprise two extracts of literary words, the first, a slight adaptation of lines from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and the second, a passage from *The Monk – A Romance* by Matthew Gregory Lewis. At this time, lines by Shakespeare were often used to commemorate the dead – actors in particular.²⁰⁵ Before these words were applied to himself, David Garrick employed them to commemorate the great bard himself, in his 'Ode to Shakespeare' of 1769, later having them inscribed on the statue of Shakespeare that he presented to the town of Stratford-Upon-Avon.²⁰⁶ This formed part of a larger dissemination of Shakespeare's work through more accessible editions of his plays, such as Bell's 1774 edition, as well as constant recycling of his words in novels and poetic miscellanies. These fragments became "relics" to be revered, memorized, and quoted'.²⁰⁷ Such literary 'relics' were not confined to the work of Shakespeare, however, and words of other authors were also published in this fragmentary way. Lewis's controversial Gothic novel, *The Monk*, which was praised by some for its skilful characterisation and derided by others for its tales of immorality, is a more unexpected source for a memorial quotation. It too was similarly featured in poetic miscellanies, such as Rudolph Ackermann's *The Poetical Magazine*.²⁰⁸ The inclusion of these inscriptions in the Whitby locket has been interpreted as an indication of his cultural interests, but they also reveal a changing society that consumed literature in a variety of different ways and adopted the words of others for their own ends, in this instance, as a demonstration of personal feeling.²⁰⁹ Whoever inscribed these lines, however, presumably Mary Anne Whitby or William Cornwallis, added a final consolatory reminder of Whitby's ultimate destination.

²⁰⁵ Jolly, *Mrs. Whitby's Locket*, p. 54. W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Act 1, Scene 2, 1.87-88).

²⁰⁶ C. Jansohn, L. Cowed Orlin, and S. Wells (eds.), *Shakespeare without Boundaries: Essays in Honor of Dieter Mehl* (Newark, 2011), p. 327.

²⁰⁷ C. Salamone, "The Fragments, Scraps, the Bits and Greasy Relics": Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Poetic Miscellany', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 41:1 (2017), p. 7.

²⁰⁸ *The Poetical Magazine; or, Temple of the Muses*, II (1804), pp. 14-20.

²⁰⁹ See Jolly, *Mrs. Whitby's Locket*, p. 54. Adela Pinch discusses this mode of collecting and repurposing quotations in *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 164-192.

Marrying poignant expressions of grief with religious sentiment acknowledged both the emotional reality of Whitby's passing and assurance of his place in heaven.

On the other side of the piece of paper (fig. 62.b), an additional verse has been inscribed:

Forgive, blest shade, the tributary tear,
That mourns thy absence from a world like this;
Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here,
And stayed thy progress to the realms of bliss.
No more confin'd to grovelling scenes of night,
No more a tenant pent in mortal clay;
Now should we rather hail thy glorious flight,
And trace thy journey to the realms of day.

These lines are an adaptation of the poem 'On the death of Mr. Hervey' by the Baptist poet and hymn writer Anne Steele using the pseudonym Theodosia.²¹⁰ The poem had been published in *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional* in 1760 and reprinted on numerous occasions until the late nineteenth century.²¹¹ It later gained further appreciation when it was adapted for the epitaph of a woman named Anne Bury in Brading churchyard on the Isle of Wight, and was later published in various periodicals, miscellanies and guidebooks to the

²¹⁰ 'O Hervey, honoured name, forgive the tear, / That mourns thy exist from a world like this; / Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here, / Fond wish! Have kept thee from the seats of bliss. / No more confin'd to these low scenes of night / Pent in a feeble tenement of clay: / Should we not rather hail thy glorious flight, / And trace thy journey to the realms of day.' Anne Steele, *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional by Theodosia. In Two Volumes. By Theodosia* (London, 1760) vol. II, p. 71. The subject of the poem was James Hervey, a Methodist turned Calvinist clergyman and writer who penned *Meditations among the Tombs* (1746). This was published 'at the height of the literary taste for mortuary sentimentalism. A prose counterpart to contemporary 'graveyard poetry', feeling was central to its brand of religious didacticism', see: E. Parisot 'The Work of Feeling in James Hervey's *Meditations among the Tombs* (1746), *Parergon*, 31:2 (2014), p. 121. For a consideration of Steele's poetic investigation into time and death, see K. Stenke, 'Dissenting from Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*: Christian Time and Poetic Metre in Anne Steele's Graveyard Poems', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 41:2 (2018), pp. 273-288.

²¹¹ Steele's volume of poetry was republished with additional pieces of writing two years after her death by Caleb Evans, *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional. A New Edition. To Which Is Added, a Third Volume, Consisting of Miscellaneous Pieces* (Bristol, 1780). It has been noted that Steele was 'published more frequently – by Baptists and others – than those of any other Baptist writer', see: D. W. Music and P.A. Richardson, '*I Will Sing the Wondrous Story*': *A History of Baptist Hymnody in North America*, (Macon, Georgia, 2008), p. 36.

island up until the nineteenth century.²¹² Originating with the graveyard poetry of the mid-eighteenth century, contemplating epitaphs provided a popular form of entertainment, no doubt in part for the opportunity it gave the viewer to recognise verses of poetry like that of Steele. Such a publication inspired the composer John Wall Callcott who set the words ‘to Music as a Glee for two Trebles & a Bass...’ having visited the churchyard in September 1795.²¹³ The specific words used in the verse included within the Whitby miniature indicate that it was taken from one of these later adaptations of Steele’s poem. Like the other two verses contained within the locket, this poem had been recycled and adapted through a series of commemorative acts. Shifting between different textual forms, Steele’s lines went from poem, to monumental epitaph, to hymn, to commemorative inscription.²¹⁴ Through this process, the deaths of James Hervey, Anne Bury and numerous people whose funeral services included Callcott’s hymn, were commemorated with Steele’s words. Just as Cornwallis, likely in consultation with Mary Anne Whitby would later do, the popular was used to express the personal.²¹⁵ It is often said that there are no words to describe the intensity of the grief felt at loss of a loved one. Recycling literary texts enabled the bereaved to voice their

²¹² See E. Wedlake Brayley and J. Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales, Or Delineations, Topographical* (London, 1805), vol. VI, p. 386. By 1814, the poem was common enough to be referenced in relation to monumental inscriptions more broadly. In a letter to the editor of *The New Monthly Magazine*, a reader remarks that the poem ‘has been immortalized by the music of the celebrated Dr. Callcott, and may not be unknown to some of your readers’, see: *The New Monthly Magazine*, 2/8 (1814), p. 107.

²¹³ In publications of Callcott’s hymn, the authorship of Steele’s poem is generally anonymised or misattributed and was published with the composer’s name only henceforth, see *A Selection of Favourite Catches, Glees, &c. as Sung at the Bath Harmonic Society* (Bath, 1799), pp. 40-41; *The Soul of Harmony: Being a Collection of the Most Admired Glees...* (Norwich, 1804), p. 26; a correspondent attributes these lines to ‘Rev. Mr. Gill’, *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, 10/570 (1832), p. 255.

²¹⁴ Pinch has described the ‘transpersonal’ nature of feelings during this period that ‘wander extravagantly from one person to another’, see *Strange Fits of Passion*, p. 3-4.

²¹⁵ There are other examples of Steele’s poem being used on objects of mourning, such as an intaglio in the Museum of London, no. A19261. I am grateful to Sarah Hoile for drawing my attention to this object.

inexpressible grief. The fashionable and established process of literary quotation provided the means to do this.

Alongside the pieces of text, a lock of Whitby's hair was simply bound (fig. 62.c) and placed within the locket, just as Whitby had earlier discussed with his wife. Unlike the carefully fabricated decorative design of Sotheron's hair, the lock of Whitby's hair is an even more immediate and visceral reminder of his perishable body. One can imagine Mary Anne holding the locket and touching the hair, as she came to terms with the death of her husband, father to her baby, not yet a year old. Just like the literary 'relics' of Shakespeare, Lewis and Steele encased within the locket, the lock of hair was a corporeal fragment that allowed the viewer to retain a piece of the deceased and reflect on the life lived. By holding the locket, the viewer would be greeted by an image of the impressive naval captain as in life and only on opening it, would they be confronted by the reality of his passing and the fragmentary signs that would aid their grief.

This collage-like mode of remembrance was similarly used by artists in their re-use of existing commemorative imagery. As explored in the previous chapter, the image of the deceased ascending to heaven became a popular visual trope that artists, including miniaturists, employed for commemorative works. Made by an anonymous artist, a miniature of Edward Cary Johnston painted around 1789 (fig. 65) shows a young child amidst white and grey clouds, wearing a stylised white dress and looking upwards with hands open in acceptance as he ascends to heaven. The miniature is framed in a glass case with an inscription on the outer bezel that notes the death of the young child. Touchingly, a handwritten note has been retained with the miniature that recounts the occasion of his death:

The hair of my first born beloved Child who lost his life by accident when playing at the breakfast table of my dear Aunt Lady Jane Cary. Edward Cary Johnston was two years and eight months old Obid [sic] Feby 20th 1789.²¹⁶

²¹⁶ Edward was buried in the graveyard at Delgany, later to be join by brother, William Henry Johnston, in 1791, sister, Araminta Johnston in 1791, and father, also named Edward, in

Whilst no hair remains with the note, encased within the miniature on the verso, is a curled lock of hair, tied together by a row of split seed pearls, the whole of which is surrounded by a width of plaited hair, fastened with a buckle. This touching work is a very personal memorial to this young child's passing and would no doubt have comforted the boy's mother as she grieved her loss. This was, in fact, not a depiction of Edward but an adapted copy of a painting by Reverend Matthew William Peters (fig. 66) for Lord Exeter, which showed Charlotte Dundas, the deceased child of Sir Thomas Dundas, escorted to heaven by Mary Isabella, wife of the 4th Duke of Rutland in the guise of an angel.²¹⁷ The painting was exhibited as *An Angel Carrying the Spirit of a Child to Paradise* at the Royal Academy in 1782 (no.31) to much acclaim and reproductive prints were widely circulated in the following years, such as William Dickinson's 1784 stipple engraving (fig. 67).²¹⁸ As Peters's biographer wrote in *The Freemason's Magazine*, the print was

soon dispersed throughout Europe, and no print, we believe, from any picture of whatever master, had so rapid and universal a sale as what followed the publication of the plate from the work we now mention.²¹⁹

1796. See codicil of will of Edward Johnston of Dromin Lodge, The National Archives (TNA) PROB 11/1271/257, and transcript of *Delgany Parish Registers, 1666-1900* (2012), pp. 51, 53.

²¹⁷ There is no mention of the source for this miniature in Aronson and Wieseman (eds.) *Perfect Likeness*, cat. no.65, p. 165. The artist is said to have made numerous versions of this painting. See V. Manners, *Matthew William Peters, R. A.: His Life and Work with a Catalogue of his Paintings and Engravings after his Works* (London, 1913), p. 19.

²¹⁸ See other version of Dickinson's engraving (BM 1876,0708.2578), and versions by other artists, Henry Dawe 'Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven', c. 1800–1830 (BM 2010,7081.4789), Ambrose Legrand, 'Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven, 1797 (BM 1928,0627.2).

²¹⁹ 'Memoirs of Rev. William Peters, L.L.B.', in *The Freemason's Magazine, Or General and Complete Library*, vol. 3 (July, 1794), p. 261. Peters later went on to paint two companion pieces, *The Spirit of a Child Arrived in the Presence of the Almighty*, later engraved by Bartolozzi (see BM 1873,0712.532), and *The Resurrection of a Pious Family at the Last Day*, also engraved by Bartolozzi (see BM 1870,0625.1085). The angel depicted in the first of these companion pieces similarly represents Charlotte Dundas, see Manners, *Matthew William Peters*, p. 58.

So popular was the print, it inspired the design of tomb monuments, such as Richard Westmacott's monument to Elizabeth Stanhope in Bristol Cathedral (fig. 68) and was used in mourning jewellery as well (fig. 69).²²⁰ Indeed, the pervasiveness of the image was such that satirists began to use it in their caricatures, such as Charles Williams's, *The Guardian-Angel* (1805) (fig. 70), which includes the following inscription after the title: 'The Designer is particularly indebted to Mr Peters for the Hint for this Subject', and James Gillray's, *The Guardian Angel* (1805) (fig. 71).²²¹ It may seem curious that such a well-known image, which became a generalised depiction of a deceased child through the subsequent reproductive prints, would be used to commemorate such a personal and private loss. However, in the absence, as we can assume, of another depiction of Edward before his premature passing, the artist made use of a familiar image that could work emblematically to comfort his mother and other living relatives. The lock of hair achieved the kind of specificity discussed earlier, uniting the generalised image with young Edward. Together, the image and the lock of hair operated as a tactile reminder and visual prompt to recall the lost child and meditate on the superior realm in which he now resided.

Deathbed miniatures

Whilst Edward Cary Johnston's mother had to make do with this generalised, spiritual depiction of her son, there are examples in which the earthly demise of the sitter was most emphatically captured by showing him or her on their deathbed. In instances in which there was no existing portrait, artists, rather than having to find an approximate substitute, were

²²⁰ I am grateful to Sarah Hoile for drawing my attention to this brooch. When Robert Strange's engraving after Benjamin West's apotheosis of Princes Alfred and Octavius, a contemporary newspaper noted that the idea for the composition was clearly inspired by Peters's painting. See H. von Erffa and A. Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (New Haven and London, 1986), cat. 575, p. 480.

²²¹ For a literary satire on Peters's work, see Peter Pindar, 'Ode XII', *The Works of Peter Pindar in Three Volumes*, vol.1 (London, 1794), pp. 44-45.

called upon to capture the image of the deceased on their deathbed. Examples of these in miniature are relatively rare but three examples of children who died in their first weeks or years reveal the way in which they functioned as commemorative and consolatory objects. Focusing on the final moments of a child's existence, these particular types of miniature reminded the viewer that the beloved object of their affection was gone and, in some cases, reinforced the notion of parents as temporary guardians of their children, as discussed in the previous chapter.

The miniature of Arthur Stewart (fig. 72), son of Admiral George Stewart, 8th Earl of Galloway and Jane Paget, tenderly depicts the deceased newborn, enveloped in his bed linen and wearing a cotton cap that reveals his two-week-old face in three-quarter profile. His tiny form is almost camouflaged by his surroundings; his pale complexion much like the colour of the ivory support that can be seen between the artist's light touches of white watercolour that indicate the sheets. The inscription on the inner backing card reveals that George Engleheart had started to paint this work just a day after his death.²²² Whilst this miniature is not recorded in Williamson's transcription of Engleheart's fee books, this is one example of the kind of posthumous portraits that he produced that were noted earlier. Measuring just six centimetres in length, the small, portable object would have been carried by the baby's parents and gazed upon in moments of sadness or reflection. This visual record was no doubt intended to help the parents come to terms with his passing whilst acknowledging his brief time on earth. There are no extant records that attest to the grief inflicted upon Arthur's parents at his death, but correspondence about the passing of his cousin, Priscilla Elizabeth

²²² Cited Lloyd, 'Perfect Likeness', cat. 62, p. 162.

Capel, who died in 1815 when the family were living in Brussels, gives a sense of the role that such a portrait could play in mourning practices.²²³

On 25 September 1815, Maria Capel, known as ‘Muzzy’ wrote to her grandmother, Dowager Countess of Uxbridge relaying her ‘the death of our dear little Baby’.²²⁴ Maria goes into great detail explaining Priscilla’s illness and the various treatments her mother, Caroline Capel, had used in hope of curing the baby’s illness. To the family’s dismay, ‘the little angel expired with her face on Mama’s breast’.²²⁵ The baby was removed from her embrace, washed, dressed and laid out, and for the next three days, Caroline cried and knelt by her baby’s deathbed. As Maria notes, it was during this time that they ‘had her picture taken’.²²⁶ Maria sent a further update to her grandmother on the day of the baby’s interment in the Protestant burial ground just outside the city, in which she describes how having laid Priscilla in her coffin the previous night, Caroline had been left alone with the corpse of her baby.

Over the course of these few days, Caroline clearly felt compelled to sit with the body of her deceased baby and to commission an artist to record her appearance before the burial. Whilst there is no precise description about the type of portrait produced, a letter from Caroline to her mother, suggests that it was likely to be a miniature. In this letter, she describes how just a few days after the tragic event, her husband, who had been ill for some time, was advised by his physicians to leave Brussels for a change of scene in hope that it would improve his health. Caroline notes,

²²³ Letters to and from Arthur Stewart’s parents, now held at the British Library, do not contain any reference to the death of their child. See Paget Papers, Vol. XXX (ff.11-57) Add MS 48406.

²²⁴ Marquess of Anglesey (ed.), *The Capel letters being the correspondence of Lady Caroline Capel and her daughters with the Dowager Countess of Uxbridge from Brussels and Switzerland 1814-1817* (London, 1955), p. 140.

²²⁵ *The Capel letters*, p. 140.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 141.

I go with a heavy heart, but I have got the Picture of My Baby to gaze upon & so remind me of the foolish pride I took in her Beauty & the blind security I felt in her flourishing health & strength – Oh Mama, how dare we boast of any thing [sic]!²²⁷

The fact that Caroline was able to bring this object on her travels, suggests a small and portable portrait type, and the implied intimacy of the word ‘gaze’ likewise leads one to assume that it was a miniature. The whereabouts of this portrait is now unknown and one cannot, therefore, know whether it depicted the baby as she appeared in death, or in a spiritualised form as we saw with the Johnstone example, but it is quite possible that it showed her on her deathbed like her cousin Arthur. In any case, it is clear that Caroline felt compelled to record the features of her deceased baby and in doing so, maintain her presence through a material artefact. Being able to hold something may have helped Caroline to feel close to her child. Indeed, she later notes that

from the Window of the Rampart Room I can see at a distance the Wall of the place where she lies, & extraordinary as it may appear I feel a sort of Comfort in knowing I can see it when I please, & a dread of deserting it...²²⁸

These heart-breaking words demonstrates how physical proximity to a deceased child could console the bereaved. When the family returned to England two years later, this proximity was replaced by the immediacy of the portable portrait that could be held in the hand, no doubt offering comfort to Caroline when she could no longer look upon her daughter’s final resting place.

The sensitive rendering of a child on their deathbed in miniature had the potential to offer comfort to the bereaved as the Capel example shows. Whilst Engleheart’s miniature of Arthur Stewart, with his pale colouring and insubstantial form, retained proof of his existence simultaneously making the termination of his life plain to the viewer, other examples show how the deathbed format allowed miniaturists to associate such works with sleeping images, just like those discussed in the previous chapter, thereby lessening the blow of parental loss.

²²⁷ Ibid, p. 144.

²²⁸ *The Capel letters*, p. 148.

Sir William Charles Ross painted a deathbed portrait miniature of Harriet Elizabeth Simson (fig. 73), daughter of George and Mary Ann Simson of Brunton and Pitcorthie in Fife, having died at just five years of age. Encased within a locket, the young girl is shown on her deathbed, her right arm stretched out, hand limp, as if it has just been released by someone at her side. The locket has been intricately decorated with ornamental engraving that includes a depiction of a winged cherub head on the one side, a motif that widely associated with death during the eighteenth century, and on the other a parrot.²²⁹ It is possible that the parrot alluded to the family's connection with India, where Harriet's father had been born 1796, but the image of a parrot also carried Christian connotations.²³⁰ To the miniature, Ross has applied white and grey watercolour sparingly, making use of the ivory support to provide the mid tones, which serves to emphasise the delicacy and sensitivity with which he has depicted Harriet's face. He shows her with flushed cheeks, pink lips, her large eyes closed with lashes indicated by the slightest touches of watercolour. The work does not conceal the fact of her passing but provides an image that may have suggested eternal sleep. Unlike the miniature of Arthur Stewart, which lacks any colour in the face and clearly represents a corpse, Ross and the Simson parents sought an image that acknowledged her passing whilst maintaining something of her lively appearance.

²²⁹ The image of a winged head of a cherub emerged during the Renaissance and gained popularity during the Baroque. This in turn inspired artists in eighteenth-century Britain, including Sir Joshua Reynolds who painted, *A Child's Portrait in Different Views: 'Angel's Heads'*, c. 1786–7 (Tate), which was based on a drawing that he owned by Carlo Maratta (now in the British Museum, museum no.: 1872,1012.3295). The winged head of a cherub was commonly found on gravestones and coffin furniture during the eighteenth century. See Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, p. 367, and S. Hoile, 'Coffin Furniture in London c. 1700–1850: the Establishment of Tradition in the Material Culture of the Grave', *Post-Medieval Archaeology* (2014), pp. 1-14.

²³⁰ The parrot's seemingly miraculous ability to talk, 'resulted in its becoming a symbol of the Immaculate Conception in Christian art. This occurred because the parrot was associated with the exotic East where the Annunciation took place and drew on the old idea of conception occurring through the ear, through the Word'. H. B. Werness, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Animal Symbolism in World Art* (New York and London, 2006), p. 317. See also H. Friedmann, *A Bestiary for Saint Jerome: Animal Symbolism in European Religious Art* (Washington D.C., 1980), pp. 281-282.

Whilst there are no records in the Simson family papers that refer to this miniature, the impact of Harriet's death was discussed in correspondence between various family members. Within a few weeks of her death, the girl's grandfather, George Simson, wrote to his son William (Harriet's uncle), describing the ongoing suffering caused by her passing. On 31 March 1832, he wrote of his daughter-in-law,

Mary Ann is still grieving for the loss of her favourite child, she was a sweet little Creature and won the hearts of every one [sic].²³¹

By showing this 'sweet little Creature' with pink cheeks and blue ribbons in her hair, Ross has managed to capture something of Harriet's character even in death. Whilst deathbed portraits reminded the viewer of the certainty and finality of death, careful and sensitive rendering of the corpse could also ease the suffering of the child's parents. Stephen Lloyd has drawn a comparison between this work and that of the artist Richard Cosway, who drew a posthumous portrait of his daughter Louisa Paolina Angelica Cosway (fig. 74), who died aged six in 1796. Rather than showing the child on her deathbed, however, she is shown in her coffin, indicated by the carefully arranged flowers around her head, the cross placed within her hands resting on her chest, and the ruffled drapery that runs parallel to her body. This is a particularly unusual depiction of a deceased child and may allude to the ardent Catholicism of the girl's mother, the artist Maria Cosway and her insistence that Louisa be brought up in the same faith.²³² In a letter to her husband from Genoa, where Maria was recuperating following the birth of her child, she writes:

The child is my only wish & thought, & my fears only for her religion. From the first impressions depends her sentiments of the true faith, let me repeat you to take care they are of the pure Catholick. May it please the Almighty to enlighten you & show

²³¹ Letter from George Simson to his son William Simson on 31 March 1832. St Andrews, University of St Andrews, Special Collections, MS 30348/159.

²³² In her autobiographical letter of 1830, she describes her early desire to be a nun. Letter from Maria Cosway to Sir William Cosway, 1830 National Art Library (Great Britain). MSL/1953/961.

you the blind errors in which you are not only unhappily fallen into but more unfortunately persist in them...²³³

Regardless of Richard Cosway's own religious beliefs, his sensitive drawing of Louisa expresses how, as Maria wrote, 'Our grief was great'.²³⁴ Unlike the Sotheron, Whitby and Johnston examples, these three miniatures demonstrate a concern with bodily dissolution. Rather than portraying the sitter as in life or depicting their ascent to heaven, each artist, in conjunction with their patron, decided to focus the viewer's attention on the termination of earthly presence. The need to absorb the irrevocability of death allowed the grieving to come to terms with the passing of their loved one.

Gift-giving and inheritance

The miniatures discussed thus far were commissioned by those in mourning for their own comfort and were carried, worn and gazed upon accordingly. In this way, Anne Fennetaux's assessment of the function of mourning jewellery as a 'transitional object whose bodily proximity to the mourner made up for the irretrievable absence of the deceased' can just as well be applied to the portrait-objects of this chapter.²³⁵ The act of commissioning a miniature stood symbolically as a marker of affection between the living and the dead, and when gifted to another, between giver and receiver. Pointon refers to the writing of Marcel Mauss and his argument that 'to make a gift of something is to make a present of some part of oneself'.²³⁶ It follows that the gift of a posthumous portrait miniature made a present of one's own feeling to another grieving kin. The shared emotion suffered by those in grief,

²³³ Maria to Richard Cosway sent from Genoa on 1 March 1793. MSS letters at La Fondazione Cosway, Lodi, cited in S. Lloyd, *Richard & Maria Cosway: Regency Artists of Taste and Fashion* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 67.

²³⁴ National Art Library, MSL/1953/961: Letter from Maria Cosway to Sir William Cosway, 1830.

²³⁵ Fennetaux, 'Fashioning Death/Gendering Sentiment', p. 30.

²³⁶ M. Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1950) trans. W. D. Halls (London, 1989), p. 12, cited in Pointon "'Surrounded with Brilliants'", p. 57.

played out in such an exchange, underscored their kin relations and ties into Sahlin's thesis on the mutuality of being. Before focusing on an example of this specific manner of gift exchange, it is necessary to situate it within a wider context of portrait-giving that occurred as a result of death.

Contemporary wills reveal the frequency with which miniatures and other forms of portraiture were bequeathed from one generation to the next, providing a glimpse into the importance attached to portraiture in terms of commemoration. When Anne, dowager Baroness Trevor composed her will in 1730, the same year as her second husband's death, she bequeathed her miniatures, diamonds and other valuable possessions to various members of her family:

I give unto my daughter Anne Bernard one hundred pounds my diamond girdle buckle my pearl necklace my gold tweezer case with the chain and hook and other things ...and my own picture at half length I give unto my daughter Mary Bernard one hundred pounds my diamond earrings my diamond buckles for my stays my locket set with diamonds with her ffathers hairs a mohair bed that was my mothers and my own picture in little...I give unto my daughter in law Anne Trevor two ffive pound peices of gold her ffathers picture in little and Mrs Prices picture I give to my daughter in law Mrs Cock two ffive pound pieces of gold and the picture of her sister Anne Trevor in little I give to my Daughter in Law Elizabeth Trevor two ffive pound pieces of gold and my daughter Anne Bernards picture in little...²³⁷

This detailed description of the manner in which the dowager Baroness intended her most valued possessions to be distributed amongst her family highlights the various objects that served a memorialising function – miniatures, full-scale portraits, a locket containing hair, pieces of diamond jewellery – and demonstrates the emotional value of such objects. She also carefully considered which objects would be the most appropriate for her inheritors, in this case, her daughters and stepdaughters.²³⁸ She therefore bequeathed, amongst other items, to Anne Bernard, her daughter from her first marriage to Robert, 3rd Baron Bernard, her own

²³⁷ TNA PROB 11/751/417, Will of Ann Baroness Trevor, Dowager.

²³⁸ This is mirrored in the length of time that a person was required to mourn specific relations and patterns of estate inheritance. See R. Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1978), p. 33-50.

half-length portrait in an act of self-commemoration; she anticipates her daughter's need to hold onto a portrait of her deceased mother. The gift of her 'picture in little' to her other daughter Mary, as well as a lock of her father's hair, suggests the likely comfort that such objects would have bestowed. To her stepdaughters from her second marriage to Thomas, 1st Baron Trevor, she bequeathed several other family portraits. To Anne Trevor she gave a miniature portrait of her father, Baron Trevor, to Laetitia Cock, nee Trevor, a portrait miniature of her sister, Anne, and to Elizabeth Trevor, a miniature of her stepsister, Anne Bernard.²³⁹ This web of bequests traced the bonds of both blood and affection between different family members. The gifts she made to her stepdaughters cemented the bonds that they shared with other family members and secured her own continued relationship with them through the very act of giving. The emotional value of these portraits, however, may not have been the sole reason for bequeathing them to her daughters and stepdaughters and it is reasonable to assume that the Baroness was attempting to assure her continued place in the family following her death.²⁴⁰

Wills such as these allowed the living to contemplate their own passing and to make an active statement about their relationships through the bequest of portraits and other commemorative objects. It must also have been a comfort to know that such gifts would assure the continued remembrance of oneself after death. The widely-reported incident in which Princess Amelia gave her father, George III, a mourning ring on her deathbed, inscribed with 'Remember me' clearly demonstrates this desire. It also serves to highlight the powerful effect that such an act could have on the recipient. It was later reported in *The Morning Post*, that 'the affecting incident of the ring, put upon his [George III] finger by the

²³⁹ During the eighteenth century, the term 'daughter-in-law' could be used to mean 'stepdaughter'.

²⁴⁰ Pointon has discussed this notion in relation to jewellery. She describes how when 'bequeathed as heirloom or as gift, [it] carries narratives of continuity and signifies the transvaluation of the material into abstract qualities such as history or spirituality'. Pointon "'Surrounded by Brilliants'", p. 55.

dying object of his tenderness, completed the shock his nature had received' and later in the *Caledonian Mercury*, '...it made an impression upon his feelings which, it is feared, will not easily be removed'.²⁴¹ The phrase, 'Remember me' was also used on the fifty mourning rings (fig. 75) that were ordered from Rundell & Bridge, as well as the two snuffboxes that included miniature portraits of the princess (fig. 76) that her brother, the Prince Regent, commissioned from Henry Bone after an existing portrait by William Beechey. Like other comparable instances in which the dying sought to be remembered through the gift of inscribed mourning rings and other commemorative objects, this anecdote reveals that the value placed on such objects did not lie entirely with the living. Indeed, even when the living were not in the process of dying, commissioning rings for others must have played into their own desire to be remembered in this way following their own death.

The exchange of portrait miniatures that occurred after a person's death, which were then given by family members in their honour, adds another dimension to the emotional and commemorative value of posthumous portrait miniatures. When Amelia's niece, Princess Charlotte, the daughter of the Prince Regent, later George IV, died, her husband, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg gave, as a Christening present, an eye miniature (fig. 77) of his deceased wife to Charlotte Augusta Rich, the daughter of Sir George Rich, Chamberlain of Viceregal Court in Ireland under Marquess Wellesley, who had been present at Princess Charlotte's childbirth and witness to the event that caused her demise. No doubt in an act of sympathetic commemoration, Rich named his own daughter after the tragic princess and, perhaps, in return Prince Leopold acknowledged this deed with the miniature. One might assume that the miniature would represent the princess in the more common bust-length miniature format, much like the way in which Charlotte Jones had portrayed her on other occasions. Instead, however, Prince Leopold commissioned a more intimate depiction of

²⁴¹ *The Morning Post* (3 Nov. 1810), *Caledonian Mercury* (5 Nov. 1810) (Edinburgh, Scotland).

Charlotte's eye, with a rare if not unique method of presentation that heightened the affective power of the work.

Contained within a simple, engine-turned gold locket, the eye miniature, with a diameter of just 15mm, is displayed on top of a loosely plaited lock of the princess's hair. This was a highly unusual way of framing an eye miniature and must have been a powerful statement of the prince's regard for Sir George.²⁴² Upon opening the locket, one would have had to hold the object close to one's own eye, far beyond the physical distance that would have been appropriate in real life, in order to marvel at the detail of its execution; the object provides access to the princess that was only possible in death. In addition, as I previously discussed, the lock of hair functioned as a pronouncement of the legitimacy of the eye miniature and proved the bodily existence of the sitter. Unlike the exposed hair of the Whitby miniature or the careful hairwork of the Sotheron example, the inaccessibility of the Princess Charlotte's hair, placed within the locket, beneath the glass and under the miniature, lessens its call to touch and serves a more declaratory purpose. Such an emphatically intimate portrait displays the web of connections between Prince Leopold, Princess Charlotte, Sir Rich and his daughter. The unfulfilled relationship between Charlotte Augusta Rich and her namesake is materialised through the portrait-object, but perhaps more significantly, in his gift of the miniature, Prince Leopold is offering a part of himself, that is, the memory of his wife, which he seeks to keep alive through the material artefact.

Gazing from the grave: eye miniatures and mourning practices

The Princess Charlotte eye miniature was a relatively late example of a sub-category of miniature painting that briefly existed in the years around 1800. Examples of this type were displayed in various ways but often in the form of jewellery, whether as a brooch, a ring, a

²⁴² Lloyd and Sloan, *The Intimate Portrait*, cat. 30, p. 70.

locket or a bracelet. The often miniscule size of these miniatures and the concentration on a single feature of a person's face amplified the sense of intimacy between the owner and the sitter, and added a secretive and exclusive dimension to this mode of portrayal. Only those who had gazed into the eye of the sitter would recognise its shape, colour and expression. As a result, eye miniatures were often exchanged between lovers, perhaps most famously by George IV and Mrs Fitzherbert, the former of whom was buried with his lover's eye miniature around his neck. It follows that such a discreet and intimate form of abstracted portraiture would find its way into mourning practices. One such eye miniature (fig. 78), for example, is set within a mourning ring that can be identified by the inscription around the band of the ring: 'Mrs Eliz. Toovey. Ob. 20 Nov. 1782 AE 60'. As discussed, mourning rings were often produced in large quantities and given out at funerals, the funds for which were generally provided by the deceased in their will. This example, however, was clearly intended to serve a more personal purpose. By wearing the ring, the owner could re-enact the reciprocal gaze that the owner and sitter shared in life, and in this way, the eye miniature offered both a depiction of the eye of the deceased and the gaze that sprung forth. Pieces of mourning jewellery like this would thereby allow the grieving owner to contemplate the reimagined presence of the deceased offered by the depicted gaze.

Grootenboer devotes a chapter to eye miniatures on which diamonds and pearls have been affixed to the ivory to represent teardrops.²⁴³ Anchoring her discussion to the eye of Thomas Purvis by an anonymous artist (fig. 79), she considers the performative nature of such objects and the unique demands that they made on the viewer. In order to do so, she proposes a 'rhetoric of tears in the context of the cult of sentimentality', making use of the rhetorical figures, *apostrophe* and *prosopopoeia*, to explicate the idea of an active gaze, one

²⁴³ Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze*, pp. 89-123.

that 'is "voicing" a kind of demand' through the addition of tears.²⁴⁴ Central to her thesis is the question of how the eye miniature relates to the dead body and how this might alter the viewing experience. Drawing on the writing of Heidegger and Jean-Luc Nancy, Grootenboer argues that 'crying' eye miniatures painted posthumously were in some ways detached from the deceased body through this act of looking. If the miniature depicted the sitter's eye after their death, then to represent a crying eye supposes that the sitter is crying for their own death, inviting the viewer to cry with them, or crying on behalf of the grieving. In either instance, the eye miniature as depicted gaze outlives its body by continuing to perform to, with, or even for the viewer.

Whilst Grootenboer focuses her study on these 'crying eyes', her thesis provides a productive framework with which to consider other eye miniatures that were commissioned to commemorate the death of the sitter. Contained within a small ivory case, the eye of an anonymous sitter looks out from its red velvet surround (fig. 80). Below the miniature, a piece of paper has been inserted and inscribed with '27th Jany 1817' in one hand, and 'W Pether' in another, presumably the name of the artist, William Pether. The soft blue sky-like surround of the miniature itself, along with the date inscribed beneath it, suggests that it was likely produced following the death of the sitter. Unlike eye miniatures set within pieces of mourning jewellery, its unique display invited a very different kind of interaction between the viewer and the sitter. On the opposite leaf of the case, a mirror was inserted, so that on opening it, the viewer would be met with a reflection of their own eye, alongside that of the deceased. This set up a complex series of viewing exchanges that underscore the relationship between the living and the dead as well as the function of comparable objects in mourning practices.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 91.

Grootenboer proposes that the depiction of a deceased person's eye is an example of *prosopopoeia* in that it gives voice to whomever no longer exists, much like gravestones that are inscribed with first person epitaphs thereby inviting the beholder to mourn their death. In the case of Pether's miniature, the eye 'speaks' to the viewer from beyond the grave, disrupting the temporal reality of the miniature through its animation; the eye, as we are led to believe from the inscription below, was no longer 'alive' in the sense that it relates to the eye of a corpse. In this particular example, however, the reflected gaze of the viewer in the mirror added another dimension to the perception of the object. With the case opened fully, the viewer was presented with two eyes, one depicted and one reflected. Few other eye miniatures more explicitly show what Grootenboer describes as

a genuine reciprocal model of vision in which the demarcation lines between subject and object are difficult to draw, in which, indeed, subject and object seem to be joined without ever having merged into one another.²⁴⁵

The design of Pether's anonymous eye miniature confronted the viewer with this fine line between subject and object. The reflection of one's own gaze in the mirror alongside that of Pether's depicted gaze, acted as a further invitation to cry for the deceased. Together, the depicted and reflected gaze united the living and the dead by capturing the subject and object crying together.

Presenting the real and depicted eyes side-by-side had further implications on the early nineteenth-century viewer's understanding of the object and its role as an object of mourning. The unique mode of display allowed the viewer to locate the deceased and, in turn, maintain some kind of interaction with him or her. This can be best understood by considering a common iconographic trope used in mourning jewellery. A mourning ring that was created for Eliza Clark following her death in 1792 (fig. 81) shows a female figure seated beside an obelisk on which the following inscription has been added: 'TO JOY &

²⁴⁵ Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze*, p. 4.

HAPPINESS I RISE’, followed by ‘ELIZA CLARK OB: 9. OCT. 1792 AE: 15.YR^S’. The woman presses her hands together in a prayer-like position as she looks up to the soul of the deceased, which emerges from the monument and is guided heavenwards by an angel above. The image of a soul breaking free from a tomb and ascending to heaven was fairly commonplace and offered a material reminder of a good Christian soul’s ultimate destination.²⁴⁶ Just as the young boy in Rowe’s consolatory fictional letter cited in chapter one comforted his mother by exclaiming ‘if you could conceive my happiness...you would have celebrated my funeral rites with songs and festivals’, the first person announcement of ‘to joy & happiness I rise’ on the tomb depicted on the mourning ring, offered a cheering rendering of the afterlife. In a comparable way, Anne K. Mellor, in her article on elegies by female writers suggests that elegies intended to offer consolation to the reader, ‘locate that solace in heaven, in the Christian faith in an afterlife that promises reunion with the lost beloved’.²⁴⁷ It is clear that whoever wore this ring in memory of Eliza, the effect of the image and text combined would have helped them to come to terms with her death. In each case, the unique presentation of the miniature and the carefully selected iconography of the mourning ring, provided solace for the beholder by locating the deceased in heaven.

Much like the portraits discussed in the previous chapter, posthumous portrait miniatures helped the grieving to remember deceased relatives and friends, to take comfort and consolation in the material artefact, and to maintain a connection with the deceased. The size, portability and the variety of framing opportunities, however, marked the miniature out as a unique mode of commemoration. In full-scale portraiture, the miniature stood in for the absent body and acted as a cipher of mourning by drawing attention to the bodily relationship between the living and the representation of the dead. As an object in its own right, its

²⁴⁶ See for example, Anonymous, *Memorial for S. C. Washington*, 1789, Yale University Art Gallery, museum no. ILE1999.3.18.

²⁴⁷ A. K. Mellor, “‘Anguish no Cessation Knows’”: Elegy and the British Woman Poet, 1660-1834’, in K. Weisman (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy*, p. 449.

particularity as a post-mortem representation also lay in the opportunities afforded by various modes of presentation.

The bringing-together of various elements created a collage-like effect that distinguished posthumous portrait miniatures during this period from other types of commemorative portraiture. The inclusion of hair, inscriptions either encased or engraved, and unique framing devices offered additional layers to the commemorative act of commissioning a posthumous portrait. Hair, having come directly from the body of the deceased possessed a visceral power to stir the viewer and reinforce the connection between the depiction of the sitter and an actual remnant of their body. This, in turn, bestowed the miniature with a specificity that offered proof of the sitter's existence; a physical trace that materially connected the representation of the deceased to the corporeal reality of their existence. The addition of inscriptions, allowed the mourner to express their feelings, often appropriating the words of others, thereby revealing the eighteenth-century propensity to express one's own thoughts and feelings through the combination of selected literary fragments. This extended to the use of well-known images as a means of representing a specific person.

As the chapter has shown, it was an accepted practice to express the personal with the popular, but on these occasions, hair offered a way of tying the object to the person being commemorated. In other instances, depictions of the moment of death honed in on corporeal dissolution and offered an unmistakable reminder of the death of the sitter. Having considered the various ways in which people commemorated the dead by commissioning miniatures, this chapter argues for the emotional value placed on these objects through an analysis of their circulation amongst family members and friends. The implication of such gifts and bequests once again underscores the importance of the consoling act of looking. All posthumous portraits were created with the viewer in mind, but the miniature offered a

particular and intimate encounter with the image of the deceased, one that could be carried and contemplated in moments of mourning.

Chapter 3

‘And public anguish joins the private woe!’: The Death of Princess Charlotte Augusta¹

On 6 November 1817, Princess Charlotte Augusta, the only daughter of the Prince Regent and Caroline of Brunswick and wife of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, died following an exhausting and protracted labour. Just a few hours before, she had given birth to a stillborn son. In one fatal blow, the ‘Hope and Pride of the People of England’ and future heir to the throne had perished, leaving not only the royal family but the country as a whole in an unprecedented state of grief.² Her passing saw the end to the direct line of succession that had begun with George I’s ascension to the throne in 1714. The anxiety of continuing Protestant sovereignty that had existed throughout Queen Anne’s reign was once again a subject of national concern. The day after Charlotte’s death *The Times* reported they could ‘hardly even fix our historic recollections upon any antecedent period, wherein the nation would seem at the time to have greater cause to grieve’.³ Official mourning ensued, shops and theatres closed, and letters zigzagged across the country, lamenting the death of the most popular royal. Soon word spread throughout Europe; whilst in Venice, Lord Byron wrote, ‘The death of the Princess Charlotte has been a shock even here, and must have been an earthquake at home’.⁴ Up and down the country, newspapers, bordered in black, described the princess’s labour and her dying moments in painstaking detail, and over the following days Prince

¹ Mrs. Cockles, *Elegy to the Memory of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales* (London, 1817).

² The quotation is from an inscription on an engraving of Princess Charlotte by James Anthony Minasi, printed 1 November 1818; the idea of Princess Charlotte representing the hope of the nation was popular in prints too. See ‘England’s Hope’, published in London 12 August 1816 by Griff[...] British Museum, No. 1915,0508.81.

³ *The Times* (7 Nov. 1817).

⁴ Lord Byron to Mr Murray (3 Dec. 1817) in T. Moore (ed.), *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron with Notices of his Life*, (2 vols., Paris, 1833), II, p. 279. Pinch discusses the transnational spread of emotion following the death of Princess Charlotte, see *Strange Fits of Passion*, pp. 177-192.

Leopold's health and general wellbeing were documented frequently. Princess Charlotte and her doting husband were at the forefront of the nation's mind and people devoured every last detail of this tragic and momentous occasion.

A medical statement was swiftly published describing her death and asserting that the public's eagerness to consume this information was 'a natural consequence of their attachment' to the princess.⁵ Numerous elegies, monodies, poems, newspaper articles, and biographies offered celebratory renderings of her life and the occurrences that led to her untimely demise.⁶ More than one hundred and twenty sermons were preached at churches of various denominations throughout the country, many of which were included in the back of Robert Huish's *Memoirs of her late Royal Highness Charlotte Augusta* (1818), and at memorial services throughout the country attendees are said to have wept openly over the lamented princess. Evidence of this wide-ranging response to her death firmly attests to the inclusive and pervasive mourning that ensued after her death.⁷

The outpouring of public grief and its manifestation in visual culture in the months immediately following her death offers a counterpoint to the more intimate and private expressions of grief discussed in the previous two chapters. Whilst I have so far focused on categories of imagery, in this chapter I turn my attention on the unusual case of an individual's death. The array and sheer quantity of portraits produced after Charlotte's

⁵ A. Todd Thomson, *The Authentic Medical Statement of the Case of Her Royal Highness the Late Princess Charlotte of Wales; Extracted from the Forty-Eighth Number of the London Medical Repository* (London, 1817), p. 13.

⁶ The British Library Catalogue contains over two hundred publications that were produced after Charlotte's death including over one hundred sermons delivered nationwide and in different denominational places of worship.

⁷ R. Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness Charlotte Augusta, princess of Wales, &c.:* (London, 1818). The Prince Regent had his copy of this book bound in black, alluding to its mournful content. Publications produced by various Christian denominations such as J. Ivimey, *Reasons why the Protestant Dissenters lament the death of...the Princess Charlotte August...A sermon [on Eccles. viii. 8]* (London, 1817); and S. Spooner, *A sermon, preached at the Roman Catholic chapel, Stonehouse, on Sunday, the 23d of November: occasioned by the much-lamented demise of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte Augusta of Wales* (Plymouth, 1817) indicate the pervasiveness of the nation's mourning.

untimely passing outstripped any other royal death that Britain had seen and would not be seen again until the death of Princess Diana in 1997, so as a case study, it provides a fertile hunting ground for an assessment of the myriad ways in which people chose to commemorate the death of someone with whom they had no personal connection. Of course, the death of Charlotte deeply affected her family and immediate circle, but this has largely escaped scrutiny in studies of this event. In order to bring into sharp focus the strategies used by printmakers and publishers in the creation of Charlotte's posthumous image and to question the effect of these works on the grieving public, I have split this chapter into two sections. In the first half, I analyse the effect that particular portraits had on those that were closest to her, specifically, her husband, Prince Leopold, and her father, the Prince Regent. These include portraits that were being painted up until her confinement and viewed for the first time after her death, as well as those that were commissioned by family members posthumously. Central to this is the manner in which artists and their patrons represented the princess and, in turn, how and where these portraits were displayed. In cases of posthumous portraits, I argue that examples in which Charlotte is shown on her ascent to heaven elevated her earthly status as a virtuous wife and would-be mother whilst offering comfort in the allusion to her ultimate destination.

In the second part of the chapter, I elaborate on the use of the apotheosis in print production, analysing the way in which such a representation played into the concerns of a people that was seeking stability after a period of political turmoil. These prints were eagerly consumed by the public, allowing the nation to participate in the widespread swell of feeling that followed the death of the celebrated young royal. This sense of coming together over a shared tragedy crossed political and religious lines and it is vital to consider the monarchical and political implications of Charlotte's death in order to reach a deeper understanding of the public's investment, both emotionally and materially, in it. Advancing existing examinations

of the princess's posthumous representation in textual and visual form, which focus primarily on her image as a product of the political climate, I will consider these works within commemorative portraiture specifically, questioning the extent to which the political climate affected the way in which she was portrayed after death. How were ad vivum portraits of the princess, which served a political purpose in life by presenting her as the hope of the nation, adapted following her death, and what can this tell us about the role of posthumous portraiture within the context of national mourning? In addition, I will demonstrate that the apotheosis, which was also used to remember other royals and fashionable members of the aristocracy, was closely bound to issues concerning both gender and religion. An in-depth analysis of the poetic verses included within these prints will allow me to delve deeper into the broader culture of mourning, both public and private, within this period.

In order to contextualise these posthumous depictions of the princess, I make use of various textual sources. After the princess's death, authors raced to produce biographies and memoirs that detailed her life, exulted her virtues, and lamented her death. Sermons that had been preached up and down the country were similarly reproduced, either as standalone publications or as supplementary material to the aforementioned biographies. Whilst the laudatory nature of these texts can sometimes obscure the complexity of public grief, they provide a valuable insight into the language used to commemorate the princess and the formation of her posthumous reputation.

Since the 1990s, the subject of Princess Charlotte's death has received steady scholarly attention, however, these efforts have largely focused on literary responses rather than the manner in which she was represented visually. Stephen Behrendt's *Royal Mourning and Regency Culture: Elegies and Memorials of Princess Charlotte* (1997) offers a detailed

account of her memorialisation both in text and to a lesser extent, image.⁸ Esther Schor's chapter on public mourning following Charlotte's death in *Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria* (1994) provides a rich context to the subject focusing on the 'political tensions' inscribed within documentary material produced after her death.⁹ More recently, the subject has aroused the interest of historians of emotion, including Thomas Dixon, who contextualised the reaction to Princess Charlotte's death within a longer history of national mourning in *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (2015).¹⁰ Each of these texts are vital to the present study, for my examination of the posthumous image of Princess Charlotte and what this can tell us about the value assigned to portraiture in commemorative practices in the early nineteenth century. A detailed study of the 'Charlotte' iconography that emerged during her lifetime and was fully realised after her death will demonstrate the value of the portrait as a locus for grief, not only in private, but in public too.

The apotheosis of Princess Charlotte

As the presumed successor to the throne, Charlotte's life was very much lived in the public eye, and many leading artists of the day painted her portrait.¹¹ After her marriage to Prince Leopold in 1816, George Dawe received most of the royal couple's portrait commissions.¹²

⁸ S. Behrendt, *Royal Mourning and Regency Culture: Elegies and Memorials of Princess Charlotte* (Basingstoke, 1997).

⁹ Schor, *Bearing the Dead*, p. 198.

¹⁰ T. Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford, 2015).

¹¹ These include Thomas Lawrence (including Royal Collection Trust RCIN 400968 and with her mother RCIN 407292), George Sanders (Belgian Royal Collection, copy Royal Collection Trust RCIN 407117), Richard Cosway (RCIN 422277), Charlotte Jones (including RCIN 420658 from the set *The Princess Charlotte, from Her Cradle to her Grave*) and Alfred Edward Chalon whose portrait of Charlotte on a terrace became one of the most widely circulated image of the princess in print before and after her death (see RCIN 605398).

¹² O. Millar, *The Later Georgian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, (2 vols., London, 1969), I, p. xli.

Dawe was working on a portrait of the princess right up until her confinement, at which point he took the painting back to his residence to make the finishing touches.¹³ Eager to have the portrait of his beloved wife, soon after Charlotte's death, Prince Leopold instructed Dawe to return the portrait to Claremont, the residence that they had shared near Esher in Surrey. Dawe later received another commission, probably from the princess's uncle, the Duke of Sussex, to paint a posthumous portrait of the princess (fig. 82), quite unlike the composed depiction of the princess in his final portrait painted in life.¹⁴ Rather than showing her as an accomplished young royal seated within the comfort of her home, Dawe's posthumous portrayal of the princess is a striking, otherworldly image.¹⁵ Looking out at the viewer,

¹³ Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness Charlotte Augusta*, p. 676. There are numerous versions of Dawe's portraits of the princess, which are very similar in composition, including a half-length (1936-0012-92, New Zealand Museum Te Papa Tongarewa), three-quarters-length (NPG 51, RCIN 406478) and full-length (Belgian Royal Collection), which was most notably engraved by William Say on 1 December 1817 (RCIN 605421). For a complete list, see Andreeva, *Geniuses of War, Weal and Beauty*. However, the specific portrait to which Huish refers has not yet been established. In *The Morning Chronicle* it is noted that Dawe was painting 'a full length likeness' (*The Morning Chronicle*, 4 December 1817). This precludes the NPG painting, which remained in the artist's studio until his death, and RCIN 406478, which is another half-length portrait. The full-length portrait now in the Belgian Royal Collection was exhibited at the Royal Academy before the princess's death and cannot be this work either, if one is to take this newspaper report as fact.

¹⁴ I have been unable to identify any documents that attest to the Duke of Sussex's commission but the lettering along the bottom of its reproductive print, which I will discuss in greater detail later on (RCIN 605447), indicates that the original painting was in the duke's collection: 'From an Original Painting in the Possession of H. R. H. The Duke of Sussex'. Additionally, in a brief list of the duke's collection published in 1820, 'The Apotheosis of her late Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales, three quarters.—Dawe' is listed in the dining parlour, which presumably refers to this painting. T. Faulkner, *History & Antiquities of Kensington* (London, 1820), p. 562. I am grateful to Dr Joanna Marschner (Senior Curator, Historic Royal Palaces) for providing me with this reference. The painting was later transported to the royal collection at Herrenhausen Palace in Hanover probably after Prince Ernest Augustus, brother to the Duke of Sussex and uncle to Princess Charlotte, became King of Hanover. It is mentioned in the 1844 inventory of Herrenhausen, No.71 - *Charlotte von Wales, Tochter Königs Georg IV. In Wolken schwebend. Kniestuck* (Charlotte of Wales, daughter King George IV. Mid- Cloud. Bent elbow). I am grateful to Juliane Schmieglitz-Otten for sharing this information.

¹⁵ This portrait remained in the Hanoverian Royal Collection until the 2005 Sotheby's sale, 'Property from the Royal House of Hanover', Munich, 5 October 2005, lot 588. It has therefore escaped critical attention and has yet to be referenced in any scholarly publications. In the Sotheby's sale catalogue (2005), the Boris Wilnitsky Fine Art catalogue (2014) and

Princess Charlotte rises up through the clouds with her right hand clutching her brooch and her left arm extending downwards, accentuating her upwards trajectory.¹⁶ She wears what appears to be a sheer, perhaps muslin dress, which was particularly fashionable during the Regency period. In the portraits painted during her lifetime, however, she wears lavish silk dresses that were embroidered and bejewelled and is rarely shown wearing white.¹⁷ The only hint of embellishment is the ribbon and brooch beneath her bust, and simple stitching along the neckline of her dress and on the tops of her sleeves. The flowing white fabric of the dress, accentuated by the sheer orange scarf loosely draped and billowing around her shoulders, conveys a sense of her departure from the earthly world and her transition into her spiritualised form. Rather than showing the princess as she was in life, or on her deathbed, Dawe depicts her ascent to heaven. The image of an apotheosis expresses her transformation from a mortal to divine state through a process in which body and soul were simultaneously exalted to the heavenly realm.¹⁸

As I showed in the first two chapters, by the late eighteenth century, the apotheosis had become a popular posthumous depiction, glorifying the deceased and offering assurance of their place in heaven. There was a long tradition of such images in European art that

Shapiro Auctions catalogue (2015), this painting has been incorrectly identified as *Her Late Royal Highness Princess Charlotte* by George Dawe that was exhibited in the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy, London, 1818, No. 42. In *The Morning Post* (2 May 1818), however, the dress worn by the princess in this portrait is described as 'black velvet'. This clearly precludes the Duke of Sussex's apotheosis of his niece and refers in fact to an earlier work by Dawe that is now in the Belgian Royal Collection, a copy of which is in the British Royal Collection RCIN 405263. Furthermore, the Prince Regent said that he was with his daughter when she sat for the portrait, see T.W. Whitley, *Art in England*, 2nd edn (2 vols., New York, 1973), i., pp. 237-388.

¹⁶ I have been unable to identify this piece of jewellery but the fact that Charlotte is clutching it on her ascent to heaven suggests that it may have been the gift of someone that she has left behind.

¹⁷ One of the few exceptions is Charlotte Jones's miniature of 1813 in the Belgian Royal Collection, Brussels, in which the princess is shown in white. This was reproduced a number of times in print and miniature, such as Thomas Lee's enamel miniature of 1814 in the British Royal Collection (RCIN 421866).

¹⁸ P. Rapelli, *Symbols of Power in Art* (Los Angeles, 2011), p. 66.

stemmed from ancient Greek and Roman stele as a way of conferring honour on celebrated figures of the day, particularly an emperor or his family members. These were known to the British either through travels to Europe or reproductive prints that were published or circulated within Britain.¹⁹ *The Apotheosis of Sabina* (136–138 A.D.) (fig. 83), for example, which commemorates the wife of Emperor Hadrian by showing a winged figure, possibly Nike, carrying her body to the heavens whilst her husband, sitting in the right-hand corner, points to her departing form, was known through such reproductive works.²⁰ This stele had been incorporated into the Arco di Portogallo in the late antique period, which spanned via Lata (now via del Corso). It was later demolished in 1662 but prints and drawings by several different artists show the relief panel within this context.²¹ This iconographic theme re-emerged in Christian visual culture, particularly during the Renaissance. Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin* (c. 1516–18) (fig. 84), for example, depicts the Virgin Mary standing on a cloud, surrounded by angels and looking up towards God. Below her, the Apostles witness her departure with awe and fascination. This kind of composition was similarly found in depictions of saints ascending to heaven. It was later adopted by the ruling elite in order to assert their right to leadership, particularly during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, as can be seen from Peter Paul Rubens's *Apotheosis of James I* (c. 1632–1634) (fig. 85) at the Banqueting House, Whitehall.²²

By the end of the eighteenth century, the apotheosis had become a popular and prevalent way of depicting children after their death and was also the means by which heroes,

¹⁹ 'apotheosis, n.', *OED Online*, www.oed.com/view/Entry/9468 (23 Feb. 2015); C. Lindgren, 'Apotheosis/Deification', in H.E. Roberts (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography* (Chicago & London, 1998), p. 47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²¹ Fred S. Kleiner notes works by the following artists: Giovanni Antonio Dosio, Pirro Ligorio, Carlo Fontana. See F. S. Kleiner, 'Arco di Portogallo', in N. Thomson de Grummond (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology* (Abingdon and New York, 1996), p. 77.

²² E. De Pascale, *Death and Resurrection in Art* (Los Angeles, 2009), p. 365.

whether military, political, or both, were sometimes immortalised in visual form. As I discussed in chapter one, this was the way in which Benjamin West depicted the two deceased children of George III and Queen Charlotte. West also became known for his use of the ‘Epic Composition’, which offered largely fictitious representations of the dying moments of military heroes including General Wolfe and Lord Nelson.²³ Much has been written about these paintings and, as I state in the introduction to this thesis, these works, by virtue of their heroic content, fall outside the remit of this study. West’s depiction of Nelson’s ascent to heaven, however, offers a means for questioning the motivation for showing Charlotte on her ascent to heaven, and how such depictions would have been understood by contemporary Britons. This raises the issue of gender within both the context of posthumous portraiture and the political climate of the day. To what extent was the use of this iconographic form in posthumous depictions of Charlotte related to but distinct from contemporary heroic apotheoses? Can this add to our understanding of the role of posthumous portraiture within the public domain?

West’s *Sketch for a Monument to Lord Nelson* (1807) (fig. 86) and its alternative version *Immortality of Nelson* (1807) (fig. 87) were both exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1807 (nos. 194 and 217). West was responding to a call from George III to ‘consider the best mode of perpetuating the memory of Lord Nelson’. In the exhibition catalogue, West describes how his design (no. 194) draws together painting, sculpture and architecture to exploit the unique capabilities of each form of art: the allegorical capabilities of painting, the appropriate and sombre effects of the sculpted elements, and the mark of honour conferred through the architectural elements. With only slight variations, the painted composition depicts the naval hero’s slumped body on clouds, surrounded by angels and supported by the winged figure of Victory. Neptune, waist-deep in water below, offers

²³ *The exhibition of the Royal Academy, MDCCCXI. (1811). The forty-third.*, (London, 1811), no. 116, p. 9. See also Erffa and Stanley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*, cat. 108, p. 220.

Nelson's body to a mournful personification of Britannia. Elsewhere in the painting, allusions to Nelson's achievements are symbolised, depicted and inscribed, the combined result of which creates a mournful yet celebratory image of a new entry into the pantheon of British military heroes.

Though Dawe's painting of Princess Charlotte lacks attendants and attributes or symbols that relate to her life, her ascent to heaven and transformation into the divine state honours and glorifies her through this mode of antique and Christian iconographic assimilation. The fact of her womanhood is also significant and speaks to an increasing focus on the place and idealisation of women within the royal family that had gathered momentum over the course of the previous century and was to become a point of national discussion three years later during the trial of Charlotte's mother, Caroline.²⁴ This highlights the complex position of this kind of posthumous representation because, whilst it takes a comparable form to military apotheoses as exemplified by West's *Nelson*, it was used to celebrate the expressly feminine qualities of Princess Charlotte and other young women of her generation. Such a mode allowed artists like Dawe to refer to depictions of the Assumption of the Virgin and in doing so highlight their superior female qualities.

The focus on her womanhood emerged within the context of an increasing antipathy towards her father, the Prince Regent. The nation had suffered high taxation as a result of its military campaigns, and unemployment was widespread.²⁵ The royal family's luxurious lifestyle caused unrest amongst the people and the Regent received the brunt of this discontent; he was 'the embodiment of national corruption and repressive tyranny'.²⁶ His unpopularity came to a head on 28 January 1817, less than a year before his daughter's death,

²⁴ There is much literature on the public outcry about the treatment of Caroline and the support that she received from women across the country. See, for example, Colley, *Britons*, p. 271-276 and A. Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton and Oxford, 2004), pp. 177-207.

²⁵ E.A. Smith, *George IV* (New Haven & London, 1999), p. 167.

²⁶ Smith, *George IV*, p. 168.

when the Prince Regent's carriage was attacked on its way to the opening of the session at the House of Lords. *The Morning Chronicle* described the throng of people in St James's Park and Parliament Street, who were 'vociferous', calling out 'the most outrageous epithets...as he passed along'.²⁷ The Prince Regent's reputation as an extravagant and licentious monarch did nothing to help his popularity and he was castigated for his harsh treatment of his wife and daughter. After Charlotte's death, people were shocked to discover that no member of her family had been with her during her accouchement; she had been abandoned in death as she had been in life.²⁸

With such a prevalent feeling of distrust for the Regent before, and indeed, after Charlotte's death, she emerged as an emblem of hope and was represented as such in word and image; a welcome replacement for her profligate father. Thomas Lawrence went so far as to assert that 'Popular love...saw in her a promised Elizabeth'; a powerful, *female* leader.²⁹ The monarchical uncertainty following her death prompted many writers to portray her as 'Our departed Saint' and it is this sentiment that Dawe evoked, and responded to, in his portrait of the princess.³⁰ The future Queen of England had, as Linda Colley observes 'merged in death with the Queen of Heaven'.³¹ This association is striking and calls into question the reasons for adopting a format that clearly found its antecedents in Catholic depictions of the Assumption of the Virgin. As several historians have observed, in post-Reformation England royal women assumed the role of idealised womanhood creating a

²⁷ *The Morning Chronicle* (29 January 1817).

²⁸ For further information and supplementary sources about the lack of attendants at the accouchement, see Schor, *Bearing the Dead*, p. 227.

²⁹ G. Somes Layard (ed.), *Sir Thomas Lawrence's Letter-Bag* (London, 1906), p. 107. See also S. Parissien, 'The Tudors Reinvented: The Regency and the Sixteenth Century', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 170 (2011), pp. 115-128.

³⁰ Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness Charlotte Augusta*, p. 630.

³¹ Colley, *Britons*, p. 272. Nicholas Penny points out the incongruity of this type of imagery, noting that the ascension of a figure even by Roman Catholics is reserved for the Virgin Mary. See N. Penny, 'English Church Monuments to Women Who Died in Childbed between 1780 and 1835', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 38 (1975), p. 327.

Protestant alternative to the cult of the Virgin.³² Sometimes this took the form of an apotheosis but equally, royal and aristocratic women were often presented as exemplary models of feminine virtue through, as I discussed in chapter one, group portraits in which they play a central and motherly role. Charlotte's grandmother, Queen Charlotte, for example, was often portrayed as a virtuous and aspirational model of womanhood. Steadfastly loyal to her husband George III and mother of many children, she personified a kind of ideal to which middle-class members of society could aspire.³³

Dawe's painting does not, however, fully conform to the richly allegorical nature of other apotheoses due to the lack of celestial figures escorting the princess on her ascent to heaven. A comparison can here be drawn with Peters's *An Angel Ascending to Heaven* discussed in the previous chapter, which is similarly composed of a vacant area around the ascending figures. In her discussion of this earlier painting, Pointon comments on the scarcity of this compositional decision in English art at this time and it is possible that Dawe sought inspiration from this well-known painting.³⁴ By depicting the princess in this way, Dawe draws attention to her continued relationship to those on earth; the princess looks out at the viewer rather than extending her gaze upwards towards heaven. In Huish's biography, he writes, 'from her celestial sphere, she has viewed the tears of an afflicted nation; of a dejected sire, and a disconsolate husband'. The princess's biographer writes a literary pendant to Dawe's painting, focusing on her continued interest in the lives of those she has left behind. In this way, these depictions, both visual and literary, mirror the kind of consolatory literature

³² Colley, *Britons*, p. 278. See also H. Smith, *Georgian Monarchy: Politics and Culture, 1714-1760* (Cambridge, 2006) and Fennetaux, 'Fashioning Death/Gendering Sentiment', p. 37.

³³ This image was nurtured by the royal family despite the plethora of caricatures of the Queen throughout her life as consort, including those directed at her attempts to advise her wayward son during his regency. See C. E. Roman, 'Disrespect: Undermining the Royal Image', in *Enlightened Princess*, pp. 253-255.

³⁴ M. Pointon, *Strategies for Showing: Women, Possession, and Representation in English Visual Culture, 1665-1800* (Oxford, 1997), p. 257. Peters's painting is regularly cited in the literature on apotheoses as previously discussed in relation to West's *Nelson*.

discussed in chapter one. There is a sense that even in death, Charlotte maintains a maternal concern for her people.

By showing Charlotte devoid of attendants or allegorical figures signifying her royal status or the impact of her death on the nation, this is a less conventional rendering of her apotheosis. Dawe was not the only artist to adopt this mode of posthumous representation, but other attempts were less experimental and figured more closely to the kind of heroic apotheoses discussed earlier on. By comparing Dawe's painting to *The Apotheosis of Princess Charlotte Augusta, Princess of Wales* (fig. 88) by Henry Howard, Dawe's departure from more conventional apotheoses becomes even more distinct and provides insight into the way in which such a representation functioned on the public stage. In Howard's work, painted the year after the princess's death, she is depicted on her ascent to heaven, holding her baby in her arms, accompanied by two angels.³⁵ Below her, there are two female figures: the first, Britannia with her arms outstretched towards the departing princess on the left, and second, the figure of Hope, lying prostrate on the floor, loosely clasping an anchor and wreath. To the right of the composition, a darkly clad male figure bends over in a position of despair, presumably Prince Leopold. Clouds part above the princess as she looks up towards the golden light with angels awaiting her arrival. In this way, the painting conforms much more explicitly to the apotheosis imagery found in Classical and Christian art, and indeed, to West's painting of Nelson's ascension to heaven, than Dawe's work. Significantly, Howard's painting was exhibited at the British Institution in 1818 (No. 208) in contrast to Dawe's painting, which was never exhibited publicly but remained in a private collection.³⁶ Howard's

³⁵ This mode of representation – depicting a deceased woman and child ascending to heaven – was not common but there are comparable compositions in tomb monuments produced in the years around 1800. See for example, John Flaxman's monument to Sarah Morley at Gloucester Cathedral.

³⁶ This was one of two works by Howard at Petworth by 1835. Egremont also owned *Windsor Park* (c. 1789–1835) NT 485043. It is, perhaps, significant that Howard exhibited his painting at the British Institution with its practice of forging comparisons between the Old

work was intended for a public audience and accordingly, the artist created a more instructive image that would have been readily understood by the grieving public. By 1835, the painting was in 3rd Earl of Egremont's collection at Petworth where it was displayed in the purpose-built North Gallery, used by the earl to showcase the best of contemporary British Art.³⁷ This was the most public space in the house, and exposed the painting to a large audience. The earl was a close acquaintance of the Prince Regent, so the display of the painting can be understood as a show of allegiance, friendship and sympathy.³⁸

Due to the unprecedented public interest in Princess Charlotte's death, Howard, like many other writers, publishers and artists capitalised on the commercial potential of this significant event. And he was indeed successful in his strategy. *The Repository of Arts* praised Howard for providing the public with an image of the much-lamented princess, describing how 'the sculptural department of the Institution looks naked without the model of some work destined to express the public feelings on this melancholy occasion'.³⁹ The article even goes so far as to say that they are convinced that the directors of the British Institution would have paid the sculptor for a portrait of the princess, such was the public interest in her death.⁴⁰

Despite the popular and commercial desire for such an image, Howard's method of depicting the princess was not universally celebrated. *The New Monthly Magazine* captured

Masters and works by contemporary artists. See C. Roach, *Pictures-within-Pictures in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Abingdon, 2006).

³⁷ No. 81 in the inventory of pictures belonging to the 3rd Earl of Egremont, catalogued by Henry Wyndham Philips. I am grateful to Peter Symonds at Petworth House and Park, National Trust, for this information.

³⁸ Their relationship was famously documented in Thomas Phillips's painting, *The Allied Sovereigns at Petworth, 24 June 1814 (George, 1751–1837, 3rd Earl of Egremont, with His Children Looking on, is presented by George, Prince Regent, to Tsar Alexander I of Russia in the Marble Hall at Petworth with the King of Prussia, Frederick William III)*, painted the year of Charlotte's death in 1817 (Petworth House, National Trust).

³⁹ 'Exhibition of the British Institution', *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashions, Manufactures &c.*, No. XXV (1818), p. 166.

⁴⁰ 'Exhibition of the British Institution', p. 166.

the waning interest in this particular form of apotheosis iconography noting ‘the age of this sort of compositions [*sic*] is rapidly passing away’.⁴¹ This followed a similar criticism of West’s depiction of Nelson’s ascension. Writing about the engraving produced after West’s painting, a critic expressed his hope that artists would cease to depict the dead in this kind of allegorical form stating that ‘the invisible world is not within the artist’s province’.⁴² Both comments echo Fuseli’s earlier statements about the challenge of posthumous representation that I discussed in chapter one. Seen within this context, Dawe’s work emerges as a more experimental approach to a traditional form that was reaching the end of its lifespan. By depicting the princess looking directly towards the viewer, Dawe’s portrait offered a personal and more intimate encounter with the princess’s posthumous image, demonstrating her concern for those she has left behind.

Nevertheless, Dawe would have been well aware of the public interest in portraits of the princess following her death. Renowned for his commercial shrewdness, he was, in fact, excluded from the Royal Academy Club, as Joseph Farington described, on account of his ‘disgraceful conduct of puffing Himself in the Public Papers & in every way in His power’, including a non-sanctioned advert for one of his portraits of Princess Charlotte, his ‘puffs abt. His Portrait of Princess Charlotte’.⁴³ This led to the strategic disbanding of the Academy Club (which was later re-formed without the disgraced artist).⁴⁴ Following his removal, Dawe published an engraving of his posthumous portrait of the princess, executed by Thomas Woolnoth (fig. 89) with minor alterations to the composition, namely the positioning of the

⁴¹ *The New Monthly Magazine*, 9/50 (London, 1818), p. 157.

⁴² *Quarterly Review*, 3 (1810), pp. 223-24 cited in Erffa and Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 225.

⁴³ J. Greig (ed.), *The Farington Diary by Joseph Farington, R.A.* (8 vols., London, 1922-1928), viii., p. 160. For the non-sanctioned advert of the 1817 portrait of Princess Charlotte, see G. Andreeva, *Geniuses of War, Wealth and Beauty: George Dawe RA Pinx* (Moscow, 2012), p. 26.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

right arm and her dress.⁴⁵ The lettering along the bottom of the print indicates that the print was a commercial enterprise but as Woolnoth's obituary published in the *Glasgow Herald* states, 'Prince Leopold...allowed only twelve prints to be struck off, in order to preserve their value'.⁴⁶ Whilst no other sources corroborate this report written over fifty years after the event, it is worth considering within the context of other prints published after Charlotte's death, and, indeed, the painted portraits. It may have been that Dawe proposed the publication of the prints to Prince Leopold who decided to buy the entire edition and pass them on to relatives and close friends. Or perhaps the prince wanted to limit ownership to the most esteemed buyers. Whatever the scenario, the suggestion that Prince Leopold wanted to 'preserve their value' plausibly implies his desire to intervene in the commercial exploitation of Charlotte's image and take ownership of her memorialisation, which underscores the agency that such images possessed.

'A melancholy consolation': The power of portraiture as a site of remembrance

In the weeks leading up to her death, the pregnant princess was not only painted by George Dawe but by the celebrated portraitist Sir Thomas Lawrence (fig. 90), the experience of which he described in detail to his close friends Mrs Wolff and Joseph Farington.⁴⁷ Farington meticulously chronicled the events that followed the princess's death as well, paying particular attention to the conflict between the Prince Regent and Prince Leopold over the ownership of Lawrence's portrait, both of whom were 'anxious to possess it'.⁴⁸ This disagreement may have been stimulated in part by their fractious relationship (Leopold was

⁴⁵ It was not uncommon for Dawe to create modified versions of his work, see Andreeva, *Geniuses of War, Wealth and Beauty*, p. 260.

⁴⁶ *Glasgow Herald* (20 Jan. 1871).

⁴⁷ Somes Layard, *Sir Thomas Lawrence's Letter-Bag*, pp. 104–113; Greig, *Farington Diary*, viii., pp. 146–149, 156. It has not been possible to include an image of Lawrence's original painting in the Belgian Royal Collection, so an image of a copy has been included.

⁴⁸ Greig, *Farington Diary*, viii., pp. 151–152.

well aware of the abuses the Prince Regent had inflicted upon Charlotte), but it also signifies the value ascribed to portraiture in the immediate aftermath of the sitter's death.⁴⁹

Furthermore, this incident shows the desire to possess or control the image of the deceased after their death as a way, perhaps, of honouring the memory of the deceased and placing it in a context in which they would have chosen – in the case of Princess Charlotte, Claremont – or to take ownership of an image from which the viewer could derive comfort.

Three days after Charlotte's death, the Prince Regent requested the portrait from Lawrence and the artist dutifully agreed. Farington describes how 'His Royal Highness...was so much affected that He could not look at it' and demanded that 'the Cloth which covered it shd. [sic] not be taken off the picture till He could [bear] looking at it'.⁵⁰ Such was the Regent's apparent distress at the loss of his daughter, the very sight of her image was too much to endure. Farington later describes Prince Leopold's request to have the portrait, arguing that the Regent was not the intended recipient.⁵¹ Following the eventual arrival of the painting at Claremont, Lawrence, in a letter to Mrs Wolff explains how before presenting the portrait to the widower, he showed it to other members of the household. Lawrence recounts how Dr Short, Chaplain to Charlotte and Leopold, 'looked at it for some time in silence, but I saw his lips trembling, and his eyes filled to overflowing'.⁵² He also describes how Sir Robert Gardiner, Equerry to Leopold, was unable to look upon the portrait and could not stay in the same room.⁵³ These details show the immensity of a portrait's effect on the viewer and

⁴⁹ During her childhood, Charlotte lived in near complete isolation and her mother's visits were severely restricted. The Prince Regent's harsh treatment of his daughter was well documented in the Press and was even debated in the House of Commons by her uncle on 19 July 1814. See: *The Morning Post* (20 Jul. 1814).

⁵⁰ Greig, *Farington Diary*, viii., pp. 148-149. See also J. Coote, *A biographical memoir of the public and private life of the ... Princess Charlotte Augusta of Wales and Saxe-Coburg* (London, 1817), p. 201.

⁵¹ Farington recounts how Lawrence had received the commission from Princess Charlotte and that she had intended to give the portrait to Leopold on his birthday on 16 December.

⁵² Somes Layard, *Lawrence's Letter-Bag*, p. 109.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 109-10.

constitute a return to earlier modes of emotional expression that emerged during the mid-eighteenth century, as I discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Just as Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* offered a new image of male emotional expression that was not at odds with manliness and, indeed, demonstrated a sensible soul, so too did Leopold, almost fifty years later, exhibit qualities that were prized as a sign of his deep affection for his wife.

When the portrait was presented to Leopold, Lawrence notes how he 'saw it and was absorbed in contemplating it'.⁵⁴ Huish describes how 'the contemplation of it often imparts a melancholy consolation to the illustrious viewer'.⁵⁵ On 8 December 1817, a month after Charlotte's death, the *Caledonian Mercury* described how 'His Serene Highness has since kept it under lock and key, in his own private room, where he constantly sits'.⁵⁶ Leopold's intense private engagement with her portraits and his urgent desire to possess a lasting image of his departed wife was shared and communicated with a public audience navigating their own responses to Charlotte's premature death. In both instances, the portrait is an affecting force; it is a painful reminder of Charlotte's death but also acts as a way of upholding her memory and offering some sort of consolation. Prince Leopold was filled with regret that he did not have a picture of his stillborn child: 'My grief did not think of it, but if [only] I could have had a drawing of it!'.⁵⁷ As we saw with Ramsay's portrait of his dead baby in chapter one, focusing one's grief on a portrait could relieve the owner of intense sadness and help them to come to terms with their loss. The further implication is that having an image of the deceased was a crucial element of the mourning process in its visual bestowal of comfort.

Huish elucidates this idea further by describing how 'melancholy extracts its food and is kept alive by objects'.⁵⁸ Though he makes clear that these objects do not need to have any

⁵⁴ Greig, *Farington Diary*, viii., p. 155.

⁵⁵ Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness Charlotte Augusta*, p. 676.

⁵⁶ *Caledonian Mercury* (8 Dec. 1817).

⁵⁷ Somes Layard, *Sir Thomas Lawrence's Letter-Bag*, p. 111.

⁵⁸ Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness Charlotte Augusta*, p. 684.

intrinsic value – an item of clothing, a watch – the idea of objects feeding the sorrow of a mourner is significant.⁵⁹ Mellor argues that elegies by female poets in the long eighteenth century sustained bonds of family and friendship between the living and the dead, instead of, rather than in addition to, offering consolation.⁶⁰ Huish's description, however, illustrates the complex and even contradictory role of portraiture within the grieving process that is neatly summed up in the idea of 'melancholy consolation'; these portraits simultaneously offered comfort whilst prolonging the grief that was 'kept alive by objects'. In this way, Huish's pronouncement corresponds to Edmund Burke's mid-eighteenth-century assertion that it is

the nature of grief to keep its object perpetually in its eye, to present it in its most pleasurable views, to repeat all the circumstances that attend to it.⁶¹

So unlike Mellor's elegies that functioned as personal expressions of emotion through an established literary form, Dawe and Lawrence's portraits operated as visual stimuli that elicited responses in the viewer. These portraits should, therefore, be understood as catalysts of emotion.

'Our national calamity': participating in the nation's grief⁶²

The portraits by Dawe and Lawrence were all reproduced in print, which raises an important question as to the value of posthumous portraiture within the public realm and emphasises the fact that commemorative portraiture was a multimedia phenomenon. The national outpouring of emotion called for a wider circulation of commemorative works and, as a consequence, a vast quantity of prints were made, medallions struck off, and printed designs transferred onto

⁵⁹ Ash, 'Memory and Objects', pp. 219-224. Coote also writes that 'the most inconsiderable articles once possessed by the lamented Princess, became endeared to him by fond recollections', see Coote, *A biographical memoir...*, p. 199.

⁶⁰ Mellor, "'Anguish no Cessation Knows'", p. 444.

⁶¹ E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. A Phillips (Oxford, 1992), p. 34.

⁶² Charlotte's death was described as a calamity in many contemporary publications, including 'French Female Fashions' in *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashions, Manufactures, &c*, the Second Series, 4/24 (London, 1817), p. 365.

ceramics, all of which were eagerly consumed by the devoted nation.⁶³ This follows a longstanding tradition of the public expressing their grief at the death of a reigning monarch, which, Amy B. Oberlin has argued, was ‘part of the ideal relationship to the monarch’ that, for the middle classes, provided a means of demonstrating ‘polite gentility’.⁶⁴ The motivations for collecting these prints, whether personal, political or social, is key to understanding the relationship between Princess Charlotte and the nation, and the extent to which one can talk about emotion on a national scale. Having explored grief at the personal and familial level, it is important to consider the ways in which the personal became public through the circulation of prints, constituting the richest and most varied body of the commemorative material produced after Princess Charlotte’s death.

Many of these prints included portraits of the princess after paintings from life. Whilst some were positioned alongside symbols of mourning, others were newly conceived posthumous portraits, adopting a range of established iconographies that alluded to her royal status, her political position, and her image as a woman of virtue. These prints went far beyond the standard commemoration of royal deaths both in their range and number. An analysis of the way in which they were formulated, and the sources that printmakers were drawing upon, reveals the status and value of posthumous representations within a public context, as well as drawing attention to the specifics of Charlotte’s death. This must take into account the additional factors that contributed to such pervasive mourning beyond the tragedy of her passing, including the lack of monarchical certitude. Further aspects that reinforced the bond between Charlotte and her subjects must also be considered, particularly with regards to women and the perils of childbirth. The public outpouring of grief manifested

⁶³ For an overview of commemorative ceramics covering the period immediately following Charlotte’s death, see J. May and J. May, *Commemorative Pottery 1780-1900: A Guide for Collectors* (London, 1972), pp. 28-30.

⁶⁴ A. B. Oberlin, ““Share with me in my Grief and Affliction””: Royal Sorrow and Public Mourning in Early Eighteenth-Century England’, *Parergon*, 31/2 (2014), p. 120.

in these posthumous representations was complex and raises the question of how far the term ‘emotion’ can be applied to a populace.

Behrendt discusses the ways in which Charlotte was portrayed in print before and after her death, referring to both literary and visual sources.⁶⁵ He argues that prints depicting the princess contributed to the myth-making that surrounded her and were used as a means of creating a hopeful, feminised image of future monarchy that would see an end to the troubles of recent times. Whilst Behrendt considers a number of prints that were published after Charlotte’s death, his concern is with the political undertone of such works rather than their value within commemorative practices. Similarly, Schor’s chapter on literary responses to Princess Charlotte’s death focuses on the ‘rhetorical *uses* of grief’ both to domesticate the royal family and hold it up to the nation as a moral measure.⁶⁶ Whilst the social and, indeed, political context is key to understanding these prints as documents of a particular historic moment, I am primarily concerned with the artistic context in which they were produced, the ways in which they functioned as commemorative objects in comparison to other types of posthumous portraiture, and how they compared to the commemoration of other royal deaths.

The language used to express the seemingly unbridled outpouring of grief nationwide provides a clear indication of the way in which Princess Charlotte’s death was perceived. Many of the newspaper reports that were published in the following days emphasised the public’s shared emotion, the ‘universal mourning’.⁶⁷ The day after her death, *The Morning Post* described the unique, deeply affecting, and widespread grief that had swept through the nation:

No occurrence within our recollection has ever produced such general, sincere, and deep affliction throughout the Metropolis of the Empire, at this most lamentable and heart-rending event. Every bosom swells with sorrow, while thousands are seen to give vent to their grief in tears; nor will the sorrow and grief be less poignant

⁶⁵ Behrendt, *Royal Mourning and Regency Culture*, pp. 34-77.

⁶⁶ Schor, *Bearing the Dead*, pp. 196-229, esp. p. 200.

⁶⁷ ‘Preface’, *The Annual Register* (London, 1817), p. iv.

throughout the whole of the widely-extended dominions over which it was but yesterday fondly anticipated a long and illustrious line of Princes of the Houses of BRUNSWICK and SAXE COBURG would have reigned. These hopes however are now for ever blasted, and mankind has received in this sad visitation a lesson that must make a deep and lasting impression on the short-sightedness of man and the vanity and weakness of all earthly grandeur.⁶⁸

The passage begins by focusing on the human tragedy of the event and the intense outpouring of emotion that followed. In the preceding years, Charlotte's life had been the focus of much attention in the press and the public were keenly aware of the various restrictions that the Prince Regent had imposed upon her, as well as the challenging situations she had faced with her quarrelling parents. Her marriage to Prince Leopold, widely considered a love match, and the subsequent joy of her pregnancy, presented a hopeful image of the future monarch, a loving wife and mother, that would not be fulfilled until the accession of her cousin, Queen Victoria, in 1837. The princess's grandmother, Queen Charlotte, gave an indication of the love between the young couple, ripped apart by her death, in a letter to her Lady-in-Waiting, Countess Harcourt:

Her Leopold made Her Completely Happy for without Him She enjoyed Northing, & Clarmont [sic] was indeed Her Earthly Paradise, & God be praised that the Prince can have nothing to reproach Himself with but can say with Truth I made Her Happy.⁶⁹

The tragedy of her passing was, therefore, keenly felt at a private level by her immediate family, and by a nation who had watched her grow from a strong-willed child to the epitome of a virtuous woman. Returning to *The Morning Post*, the author paints a picture of a weeping nation, overcome by grief at the loss of such an esteemed princess, which then gives way to the broader implications of her death; the dashed hope of two illustrious royal households continuing the direct line of succession of the British monarchy. This extract, like many others produced at the time, demonstrates the mixed nature of public feeling, which combined human tragedy with monarchical uncertainty.

⁶⁸ 'London', *The Morning Post* (7 Nov. 1817).

⁶⁹ Bodleian Library, MS Eng. D. 3881, fo. 312: Queen Charlotte to Elizabeth, Countess Harcourt (11 Nov. 1817).

The sense that this loss was something that affected the nation as much as it did Charlotte's family is further evident in an address to Prince Leopold that was included in a monody published soon after his wife's death:

Such a line of conduct [leaving Leopold to grieve without interruption] might be correct, were the *occasion* not – what it is – were you not what you are – and were the kingdom not so intimately connected with it – But, as “Time” and Dissipation (the physician of brutes) cannot heal *your* WOUND, nor recover our united LOSS; surely it can be no infringement upon delicacy, feeling, or prudence, instead of flying from that which must inevitably pursue us, to turn, to face, and contemplate our Calamity, to educe Good from this seeming Evil – and, by mutual condolence, to suffer the reciprocities of unfeigned Sympathy to distil their softening influence, eradicate the venom of rankling sorrows, and render our condition supportable...⁷⁰

The author implores Leopold to mourn his loss with the nation and to seek comfort in mutual consolation. This implies some level of comparable feeling between the widower and the nation who were ‘so intimately connected’ with his wife’s death. Indeed, much of the literature produced at the time presented Charlotte’s death as something that was personally devastating. In one of the princess’s contemporary biographies, the author, James Coote, writes that in the two weeks following her death, ‘the nation has resembled one family mourning over a favourite child’.⁷¹ Similarly, in *The British Review*, the author explains that ‘Our loss, indeed, has all the character of a personal misfortune...Every man and woman of the land has lost a relation’.⁷² The characterisation of the nation’s grief as a personal misfortune is vital to consider in relation to the commemorative prints that were produced after Charlotte’s death almost all of which, included a portrait of the princess to which the public could direct its lamentation.

The portraits incorporated into these prints were either reproduced from an existing work, modified and sometimes adapted through a strategic iconographical scheme, or entirely

⁷⁰ J. Rondeau, *Leopold's Loss, Or England's Tears O'er the Urn of Her Beloved Princess, Charlotte Augusta: A Monody* (London, 1817), p. 3.

⁷¹ Coote, *A biographical memoir*, p. 56. See also *The Morning Post* (8 Nov. 1817).

⁷² ‘The Late Princess Charlotte’, *The British Review and London Critical Journal*, 11/12 (London, 1818), p. 9.

newly conceived. Keenly purchased by the public, these prints allowed each owner to participate in this shared sense of loss. The *Annals of Fine Art* refers to the desire to partake in this national occasion:

Commemorations of her virtues and her severe, though short sufferings, are eagerly sought after by all ranks of people; and portraits, medallions, emblems, allegories, verses, of all descriptions and prices, have issued from the press.⁷³

Industrialised printing processes and commercially-minded publishers and manufacturers enabled this kind of commodification of the public event, which, as Behrendt has shown, made it possible for people to have ‘a physical material stake in events like Charlotte’s death’.⁷⁴ By 2 January 1818, Farington noted the success of Colnaghi’s print after Lawrence’s portrait, who had already received subscriptions for two hundred proofs at four guineas each and one hundred and fifty impressions at two guineas each, in addition to the twelve proofs ordered by the Prince Regent and six ordered by Prince Leopold.⁷⁵

This desire to own one of these prints is reminiscent of the tradition of collecting portrait prints, or ‘heads’ of famous figures, which were brought together and bound in biographical histories in order to ‘perpetuate the Memory of...English Persons’.⁷⁶ These economically accessible prints produced after Charlotte’s death, however, were bought by a grieving public whose primary concern was not about the taxonomic ordering of the past but as a means of navigating the uncertainty in which the country now found itself and the desire to commemorate the death of a figure who was widely seen as a symbol of hope for the future of Hanoverian Britain. Through the use of poetic quotation and symbolic arrangement,

⁷³ ‘New Prints’, *The Annals of Fine Art*, vol. 3 (London, 1818), p. 107.

⁷⁴ Behrendt, *Royal Mourning and Regency Culture*, pp. 177-8.

⁷⁵ Greig, *Farington Diary*, viii., p. 160.

⁷⁶ See L. Peltz, *Facing the Text: Extra-Illustration, Print Culture and Society in Britain, 1769-1840* (San Marino, CA., 2017). See also Pointon’s discussion of James Granger’s popular *Biographical History* in relation eighteenth-century collecting habits and the trend for extra-illustration in *Hanging the Head*, pp. 53-78.

often including or disrupting existing iconography associated with the princess, printmakers and publishers explicitly referred to this rupture in the Hanoverian line of succession.

A fitting iconography

Throughout royal history, portrait prints offered a powerful means of establishing a particular image of monarchy. In the previous century, portrait prints that were commissioned by the royal family, depicting the royal consorts, Queen Caroline (wife of George II), Princess Augusta (wife of Frederick, Princes of Wales), and Queen Charlotte (wife of George III) were used to convey a particular public image of themselves, despite or perhaps in response to the unflattering caricatures that were simultaneously published.⁷⁷ These widely circulated prints helped to address concerns about the Hanoverian dynasty by demonstrating the feminine attributes of female royal consorts who acted as caring protectors to both their families and the state. For each generation, these prints promoted these royal women as ‘ideal patriotic mothers, whose tender care of their many offspring served national as well as dynastic interests’.⁷⁸ Prints that showed the deceased Princess Charlotte with her stillborn son, therefore, provided a potent and affecting image of a young woman who was stopped short of fulfilling her duty as mother to an heir and protector of the state. Rather than offering a stable image of the state of the nation’s sovereignty, many of these prints drew attention to the lack of it by subverting the existing iconography that had developed over the course of Charlotte’s lifetime.

From her earliest portraits, artists drew upon established royal motifs, creating an iconography befitting a young princess. Examining the development of this iconography over the course of her life and considering how it was adapted after her death offers insight into

⁷⁷ Queen Charlotte, suffered, as Cynthia Roman has recently asserted, ‘the full force of caricature from the most brilliant practitioners of the genre’. Roman, ‘Disrespect’, p. 255.

⁷⁸ Albinson and Hallett, ‘Cornucopia: Royal Female Portraiture’, p. 104.

public feeling at both the human tragedy of the event and the resultant lack of monarchical certainty. An engraving by G. Bartolozzi published in 1797, after one of her earliest portraits by Richard Cosway (fig. 91), is rich with symbolism that refers to her royal status and acts as a starting point of the development of Charlotte's iconography. The young princess is shown in her cot, gently stirring in her sleep. Lying on the floor by the side of her cot, a lion, symbol of Britain's might, looks out at the viewer with a protective stare. On the other side of the cot, an ermine-edged mantle hangs over the corner in a luxuriant pile, reminding the viewer of her royal position. By way of further and perhaps more explicit reminder, a plume of Prince of Wales feathers decorates the canopy above the princess's head. In addition to these firmly established royal signs, two doves are perched beneath the cloud-like feathers, facing one another with beaks touching in a kiss. The lion, the doves, the ermine decoration, the plume of feathers all work together to assert Charlotte's royal heritage and as a result, were frequently used and adapted by artists in their posthumous portrayals of the princess to emphasize the impossibility of her future sovereignty.

These images and motifs were sometimes uniquely associated with Charlotte and did not need to be used in their entirety to be understood as belonging to her, and others were repurposed royal symbols that were easily recognisable to members of the public.⁷⁹ These symbols commonly referred to her royalty, her virtuous character, and the idea that she offered a hopeful future for the nation.⁸⁰ Indeed, during her life, as much as after her death, the princess often embodied the very concept of hope, as evidenced by a print that shows her leaning upon an anchor (fig. 92), the standard iconographic trope for Hope.

In a stipple engraving by Thomas Illman after Peter Henderson (fig. 93), published in 1818, these symbols coalesce to create an image that reflects the public grief of the nation

⁷⁹ Behrendt, *Royal Mourning and Regency Culture*, p. 43.

⁸⁰ For an assessment of prevalent symbols and attributes associated with Princess Charlotte see Behrendt, *Royal Mourning and Regency Culture*, ch.2, pp. 34-77.

and the uncertainty in which it now found itself. The princess is depicted in a celestial realm, her head surrounded by clouds. Looking down on the princess and gently touching her head, an angel, perhaps Charlotte's spiritualised self, carries her deceased child heavenwards. A circle of stars hovers above her head and beneath the angel's right foot, as an upturned crown and sceptre tumble downwards. Towards the bottom left corner of the vignette, a bunch of wilting flowers is depicted, including several unopened buds, alongside doves, one of which is dead or dying having been pierced with an arrow by the skeletal embodiment of Death.

The various symbols contained within this image explicitly refer to the loss of sovereignty. The upper portion of the image shows all that had been lost – the angelic mother and baby boy. By presenting this maternal image to the public, the print operated like many other representations of Hanoverian royal women by drawing attention to the importance of female fertility to the maintenance of dynastic power.⁸¹ The tragic effect of prints like this lay in the fact that Charlotte had been unable to fulfil her maternal duty in both a literal and metaphorical sense, unlike her recent female ancestors.⁸² The circle of stars around the portrait head draws on Marian imagery emphasising the notion of Princess Charlotte as an idealised version of womanhood, standing in place of the Catholic cult of the Virgin.⁸³ This is starkly contrasted with the sense of loss illustrated in the lower half of the image amidst the bulbous clouds – the upturned crown and sceptre, the dying dove, and the flowers, symbolic of the wilting hopes of the nation and the fragility of the royal line of succession. Below the image this sense of loss is amplified by the following inscription:

She whom the Muses, whom the Loves deplore,

⁸¹ C. Campbell-Orr, 'Partners in Power', in Marschner, *Enlightened Princesses*, p. 68.

⁸² For a discussion of the 'narrative of royal fertility' within the context of Hanoverian royalty, see Albinson and Hallet, 'Cornucopia', p. 80.

⁸³ Depictions of the Virgin Mary with a circle of stars above her head stems from a verse in Revelation: 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the Sunne, and the Moone under her feete, and upon her head a Crowne of twelve Starres', Revelation XII:I, The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments [Authorised King James Version (London, 1611) EEBO eBook. Accessed 4 September 2015 at <http://bit.ly/1IOhRwx>

E'en she, thy pride and pleasure, is no more;
In bloom of years, in all her virtue's bloom,
Lost to thy hopes, and silent in the tomb.

These lines were taken from a poem written by David Mallet on the death of Lady Elizabeth Anson in 1761, addressed to her father Lord Hardwicke, in which the author describes the feelings of Lady Anson's husband at her death.⁸⁴ Elizabeth Anson, daughter of the Lord Chancellor and part of a formidable political and familial network, balanced party politics with cultural and artistic patronage, and her early death was a blow for both.⁸⁵ Here Mallet emphasises the terrible sadness of her premature passing; the 'bloom' of her youth sharply contrasted with her deceased body lying 'silent in the tomb'.

Much like the appropriation of literary fragments encased within miniatures, as discussed in the previous chapter, the publisher, in this instance, sourced a commemorative verse, intended for someone, else to convey the grief of the nation. This kind of print, which combined imagery with verse, fitted into the same tradition of quotation discussed in the previous chapter. The use of Mallet's poem also suggests the currency that such sentimental words, so typical of the second half of the eighteenth century, still held during the Regency period, at least within the context of the commemorative print culture that responded to the princess's death. At the beginning of the original poem, Mallet describes how 'The firmest heart dissolves' when in mourning and that tears 'Adorn the living while they grace the dead'.⁸⁶ Whilst these lines were not included in the inscription beneath the vignette, Mallet's poem, having been republished in an edition of his work just five years before, as well as in various poetic miscellanies in recent years, was well known and it is likely that many people

⁸⁴ D. Mallet, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1762), pp. 73-77. Lady Elizabeth Anson was married to Admiral Lord Anson, a celebrated Royal Navy officer.

⁸⁵ E. Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c. 1754-1790* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 65-66, 139-140.

⁸⁶ Mallet, *Poems on Several Occasions*, p. 74.

would have been able to identify the source of these lines.⁸⁷ These additional lines demonstrate the value of tears as honourific gifts to the deceased, inviting the reader to cry as an act of commemoration. The short extract from the poem that the publisher chose to include on the print, however, focuses on the idea of the princess as a rose, her life cut off when in full bloom.

The symbol of the rose was by no means unique to Princess Charlotte, but during her lifetime, it became closely associated with her image. She often wore a prominent rose headdress and the flower soon became her identifying attribute in portraits that the public consumed through engraved reproductions and original compositions. Charlotte's use of the rose suggests her agency in the formation and cultivation of her own image during her lifetime, relating as it did to earlier portraits of royal women including, most famously of all, Queen Elizabeth. This gave artists a recognisable symbol to include within their posthumous depictions of the princess, which became particularly potent thanks to the well-known association between a rose being cut off in bloom and the death of a young woman. These included Dawe's depiction of the princess and her husband in their box at Covent Garden Theatre (fig. 94), reproduced in print by William Thomas Fry, as well as his 1816 portrait of the princess sitting on a couch for which a print was made by Henry Dawe and Thomas Hodgetts (fig. 95). Perhaps one of the most famous of the portraits showing the princess in her rose headdress, is by Alfred Edward Chalon, repeatedly reproduced in print both before and after her death (fig. 96).⁸⁸ Indeed, soon after her death, a rapidly printed publication on

⁸⁷ T. Park, *The Poetical Works of David Mallet. Collated with the Best Editions by Thomas Park* (London, 1813), pp. 134-137. For poetic miscellanies, see, *A Complete Edition of the Poets of Great Britain* (ed.) E. Anderson (London, 1795), vol. 9, p. 718; *The Works of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland with Prefaces, Biographical and Critical*, (ed.) S. Johnson (London, 1800), vol. 7, p. 217.

⁸⁸ Henry Hoppner Meyer produced various prints after this painting in the years around Charlotte's death: see RCIN605398 for its first state, and RCIN605399, RCIN605400, and RCIN605401 for its later states. Robert Cooper also produced prints after Chalon's portrait published by Rudolf Ackermann: see RCIN605404, RCIN605406 and RCIN605407.

the life and death of the princess described the reproduction of Chalon's portrait as so full 'of life, and splendor [sic], and joy' that for a moment, the viewer could 'avoid feeling the acutest regret at the suddenness and manner of her death'.⁸⁹

In a number of the posthumous prints of Charlotte, the rose continued to appear, bestowed with a new, multi-layered symbolic value. Not only did it come with the existing association with the princess, but it also referred to the idea of a young woman being plucked in the bloom of her youth. In Pietro William Tomkins's curious stipple engraving (fig. 97), published in December 1817, the metaphor is made explicit by inserting the face of the princess into the centre of a rose. The flower is not wilting and upturned, but shown in full bloom, in its prime like Princess Charlotte was at the time of her death. The tragedy of this severed rose is thereby made all the more conspicuous. The perils of royal lineage are, in this instance, indicated by the thorny stem and the tragedy of the event. The 'tears of an afflicted nation' are visualised with the droplets of moisture on one of the leaves. Beneath the image, the following verse has been printed:

A Rose, of loveliest form and hue,
In Britain's royal garden grew,
It's ornament and pride;
Delighted on its charms we gaz'd,
When fate the whelming tempest rais'd –
It budded, and it died!

These lines are an adaptation of 'A Coburg Rose', published in *The Cypress Wreath for the Tomb of Charlotte*, a volume of poems published shortly after the princess's death.⁹⁰ Once again, the rose reflects Charlotte's youthful beauty and charm that 'budded' only to die too soon. The single bud in the print, therefore, functions doubly as the unfulfilled blossoming of

⁸⁹ *Sketch of the Early Life and Last Moments of Her Royal Highness The Princess Charlotte Augusta of Wales, Who (to the Inexpressible Grief of the British Nation), Departed this Life November VI. M.DCCC.XVII* (Newcastle-under-Lyme, 1817), p. 26.

⁹⁰ Gwilliam, J., *The Cypress Wreath for the Tomb of Princess Charlotte...* (London, 1817). Tomkins also published a song with these words, *The Royal Rose. Sacred to the Memory of H. R. H. the Princess Charlotte, sung by Mrs. Salmon* (London, 1817).

her stillborn child. The idea of her as the nation's 'ornament and pride' alludes to her good character, so often placed in opposition to that of her father. This was certainly the case during her lifetime and continued to be so in the wake of her death.

That the rose later came to be associated with Charlotte's cousin, Queen Victoria, demonstrates the iconographic continuity between the two royal women and how symbols were re-cast to adapt to a changing social and political context. As Margaret Homans notes, Victoria was often associated with a rose around the time of her coronation.⁹¹ She goes on to quote the chorus of a ballad called 'Queen Victoria', which shares striking similarity to 'A Coburg Rose' in its sentiment.⁹² Just like Charlotte, Victoria is portrayed as a beautiful rose with 'unthreatening virtues' despite the broader function of the ballad as a call to rescue the poor and reform Parliament.⁹³ Homans provides additional examples of portraits in which Victoria is shown holding a rose, demonstrating its continued function as a symbol of the nation's virtuous 'ornament and pride'.⁹⁴

The 'unspotted' Princess: a model of virtue

The lettering at the bottom of Tomkins's print which refers to Britain's 'ornament and pride' alludes to the central role that Charlotte played in the social lives of ordinary Britons. In the wake of her death, she came to be seen as 'a model of female virtue, excellence, and perfection'; qualities to which the formation of her image was firmly tied.⁹⁵ As discussed, the apotheosis became a popular means of representing the princess and this extended to

⁹¹ M. Homans, *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837-1876* (Chicago, 1998), p. 11.

⁹² D. Thompson, *Queen Victoria: The Woman, the Monarchy, and the People* (New York, 1990), p. 95.

⁹³ Homans, *Royal Representations*, p. 11.

⁹⁴ Homans goes on to argue that for Victoria the best solution to the concerns about female rule were to marry. This concern about having a female monarch did not come to a head in Charlotte's lifetime as she never made it to the throne but her relationship with Leopold may have allayed these fears, as Albert's presence was later to do for Victoria.

⁹⁵ Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness*, p. xiv.

commemorative prints as well. This mode of representation not only created a saintly image of the princess but reminded the public that her death should be understood as a ‘happy act’, and similar sentiments were at play in Benjamin West’s depiction of Princes Alfred and Octavius. Indeed, in another print by Thomas Lord Busby (fig. 98) the printmaker promotes this idea with the inscription, ‘of CHARLOTTE & her Infant SON, NASCENTES MORIMUR. Happy Voyager! no sooner launch’d, than arrived at the Haven!’. Even the event of Charlotte’s stillborn son is conceived, in this work, as a faster passage to the glories of heaven. In Coote’s biography of the princess, he includes the following lines of poetry, which stresses this idea further:

Weep, Albion, for thy fondest hope is blasted—
weep, Brunswick, for thy brightest gem is faded—
weep! —Yet wherefore weep? Her life was spotless,
and eternal happiness is her reward.⁹⁶

At first, it seems that the author is encouraging the reader to express their emotion through tears, which were often, as discussed, conceptualised as a gift to the deceased. The final two lines, however, remind the reader that for a good Christian soul, death itself is a reward and should not be lamented but celebrated.

In Fry and Wright’s engraving of 1818 (fig. 99), Charlotte’s ascent to heaven with her baby carried by an angel on a cushion, forms the focus of the composition. Almost half of the image, however, is rich with symbolism that once again, plays on the iconography that had been established during her lifetime and affirms the tragedy of her passing whilst indicating the joy that awaits in heaven. Charlotte is depicted with her characteristic rose headdress, her arms open as she embraces her destination, greeted by an angel from above. Beneath her rising form, a number of figures gather around a tomb decorated with her initials ‘PCA’. With her head cast downwards, Britannia is shown in the bottom left corner, her shield, helmet and spear discarded as she leans against the monument in grief. Immediately below, a

⁹⁶ Coote, *A biographical memoir*, p. 316.

lion rests its head between its paws in despondence, recalling Bartolozzi's print of the princess in her bed published soon after her birth.

In this commemorative image, the lion's expression is transformed from one of simmering protectiveness to sad resignation. On the other side of the image, three infants clamber upon the figure of Charity, one looking up to Charlotte, another with head in hand, and the smallest, cradled in her arms. This tender grouping offers a reminder of Charlotte's renowned compassion and perhaps provides a would-be image of her as a mother. Behind this figure, Hope, holding an anchor, raises her right arm up towards the princess, head bowed in mournful repose, and behind her, the personification of Faith, bearing a cross and gesturing towards Charlotte's tomb, signals the earthly remains she leaves behind as her spiritual form ascends to heaven. Like the Illman print, dead or dying doves are shown at the foot of the steps and just visible in the background Windsor Castle can be identified, like a distant and unfulfilled promise.

The iconography that had emerged during Charlotte's lifetime is shown alongside the figures of Charity, Hope and Faith, qualities that called to mind the parallel that was repeatedly drawn in posthumous prints between the princess and, as Behrendt writes, 'that other female friend to humanity the Virgin Mary'.⁹⁷ In prints such as this, Charlotte is portrayed as being 'unspotted', as a 'pattern for future generations'; these praiseworthy words raising her up to a divine state. In addition to the various symbols that refer to her royal status, Charlotte ascends to heaven on a bed of clouds much like depictions of the Assumption, with an angel escort who holds a crown of stars above her head. These iconographical references would have been clearly recognisable to people who bought this print and the associative values readily understood. As her biographer Huish writes,

⁹⁷ Behrendt, *Royal Mourning and Regency Culture*, p. 20.

...it was in the display of every Christian virtue, in the exercise of every religious duty, in the fulfilment of every moral obligation, and in the practice of every conjugal affection, that she shone conspicuous.⁹⁸

As such, he argued, she should be held up as a model of Christianity and womanhood. Indeed, the idea of Charlotte's virtue was cultivated during her lifetime, which emerged in discussions about her education. When Hannah More made her suggestions as to the appropriate curriculum for the prince (implying Princess Charlotte), the idea of encouraging Christian piety and creating a 'Royal Example' was paramount.⁹⁹ Following Charlotte's death, her achievements both intellectual and moral were celebrated and used as a way of inspiring children and women alike – stories of her loyalty to and affection for Prince Leopold abounded, as did reports of their Christian habits such as distributing Bibles amongst the poor.¹⁰⁰ Regardless of the potential fictionality of these accounts, the deification and celebration of virtue bestowed on the princess made her an aspirational 'pattern for future generations'. These lofty apotheosis images and words did not, however, make her a remote figure, but one with whom women could sympathise as well as look up to. She had battled with a challenging family but married for love, only to succumb to death in a manner that was all too real for contemporary women.¹⁰¹ Nicholas Penny has argued that within the upper classes, dying in childbirth at this time was 'common enough to be a matter of universal anxiety and at the same time rare enough to be tragic'.¹⁰² I would argue that the death of a woman in childbirth was tragic irrespective of the frequency with which this occurred but Penny's reflection on these deaths highlights the prevalent fear of such a fate for a young women. For the middle classes who were collecting these prints as well, a significant decline

⁹⁸ Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness*, p. xiv.

⁹⁹ H. More, *Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess* (2 vols., London, 1805).

¹⁰⁰ Huish recounts an incident in which the princess gave a guinea to a young boy in order to buy a Bible. Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness*, p. 156.

¹⁰¹ Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, pp. 277-8.

¹⁰² Penny, 'English Church Monuments to Women Who Died in Childbirth', p. 315.

in childbed death did not occur until the twentieth century. The prints published after Charlotte's death, therefore, had a wide-reaching appeal. They commemorated the death of a figure whose premature demise was a very real concern for one sector of society and distressingly familiar to another.

A companion piece: posthumous prints of the royals

It is clear that the nationwide grief that emerged after Princess Charlotte's death set her apart from the public feeling associated with other royal deaths. As I will show, comparatively few prints were produced of royal women and men of earlier generations after their death and those that were made, were often adaptations of existing prints with the addition of inscriptions that referred to the sitter's passing. As a newspaper in Edinburgh conveyed, 'This expression of the public sympathy (unlike the usual mourning for Princes) is, on the present occasion, not less genuine than it is general'.¹⁰³ Despite the rapidity and quantity of deaths in the following years – Queen Charlotte in 1818, the Duke of Kent in 1820, George III in 1820 and Queen Caroline in 1821 – the number and variety of commemorative prints never came close to matching that of Princess Charlotte.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the manner in which they were depicted posthumously differed greatly to the plethora of compositions produced after Charlotte's death. For these commemorative prints, some of the typical mourning iconography was used but none of the deceased royals were shown ascending to heaven, with the sole exception of Gauci's celestial meeting of the royal family discussed in chapter one. This implies that this particular type of depiction emphasising virtue was considered more appropriate for young women and, as we saw in the opening chapter, children. Whilst there were heroic apotheoses of men like that of Nelson and Wolfe, comparable prints published

¹⁰³ *Edinburgh Star*, (11 Nov. 1817) cited in E.B. Hamilton, *A Record of the Life and Death of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte* (London, 1817), p. 104.

¹⁰⁴ The same can be said of commemorative pottery. See J. May and J. May, *Commemorative Pottery 1780-1900*, pp. 31-50.

after the death of Charlotte's aunt, Princess Amelia, in 1810 and other aristocratic ladies too highlight some of the aspects that made this mode of representation particularly appropriate for young women.¹⁰⁵

Dying at twenty-seven, just a few years older than Princess Charlotte at her death, posthumous representations of Amelia cultivated a similar image of a virtuous woman, mourned by the nation, albeit to a much lesser extent than her niece who was destined to rule. These depictions indicate that the ways in which Charlotte would later be represented were already established modes of commemoration in the years preceding her death. In a print by A. & G. Minasi after a drawing by Louise Anne Byam (fig. 100), Amelia is shown on her ascent to heaven, guided by an angel who points upwards. Her right foot, which floats just above what appears to be a balcony, suggests that she has just left this world for the next. Fictively engraved on this architectural surface, Amelia's dates have been given along with 'obiit sed non abiit', 'died but not gone'. Beneath the image, a short inscription has been added, conveying the same sense of destiny that was later to be given to comparable depictions of Princess Charlotte. It begins with 'The call of Heaven with humble Resignation I obey', which is followed by lines from Handel's Oratorio *Jephtha*:

Farewell, thou busy World, where reign
short hours of Joy, and Years of Pain
Brighter Scenes I seek above
In the realms o Peace and Love.

Much like the aforementioned prints of Princess Charlotte, word and image are combined to present Amelia's death as a joyful event, and heaven, a place of eternal happiness.

¹⁰⁵ In addition to the 'heroic' apotheoses already discussed, other notable male figures were celebrated in a similar way. Both Handel (see BM 1922,0710.391) and Captain Cook (see BM 1849,1003.83) were commemorated in this way as was George Washington in America (see The Metropolitan Museum of Art 83.2.159). In each case, these celebrated figures had excelled in human endeavour and their ascension to heaven was deemed an appropriate means of commemoration. Like the women discussed thus far, they were celebrated for their virtues, so whilst it was more common to see the apotheosis of a woman or child, men too, were sometimes depicted in this way.

Such posthumous depictions of young women were not confined solely to royalty, however, and there are several contemporary examples that show aristocratic sitters on their ascent to heaven or inhabiting a celestial setting. Just a few years before Amelia's death, Cosway drew a posthumous depiction of Maria Caroline Manners, Lady Duff (fig. 101), who died aged thirty in 1805, which was published by Ackermann two years later (fig. 102). Whilst Cosway's drawing of the deceased Lady Duff and its subsequent print do not show the young woman on her ascent to heaven, she occupies a celestial realm that hints at her heavenly existence, or at least, impending ascension to that realm, which is emphasised by the pointed hand of the putto by her side. In the accompanying inscription, once again, the reader is told that death is a return from whence a person came and that this passage to heaven is only possible by leading a virtuous life:

Stranger, or Friends in this faint sketch behold
An Angel's figure, in a mortal mould
is human beauty through the form excell'd
Each feature yielded to the Mind it held.
Heav'n claim'd the spark of its ethereal flame,
And Earth return'd it spotless as it came.
So die the good, the beautiful and the kind
And, dying leave a Lesson to Mankind.

The language used here corresponds to contemporary literature concerning physiognomy that equated outward appearance to the inner self. Drawing on ideas from Greek philosophy, including those of Plato and Socrates, the Swiss theologian Johann Kaspar Lavater promoted this idea, arguing that physical beauty reflected inner beauty and ugliness, immorality.¹⁰⁶ The author's pronouncement that 'Each feature yielded to the Mind it held' arises from this school of thought and manifests itself in the depiction of the beautiful Lady Duff.

The accompanying print depicts her sister, Catherine Sophia, Lady Heathcote (fig. 103), as Flora whose 'living charms be here', so that in spite of her sister's death, her

¹⁰⁶ J. C. Lavater, *Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy With Ornamental Caricatures, and Finished Portraits*, trans. Rev. C. Moore (4 vols., London, 1797), vol.1, p. 113.

continued presence is ‘to comfort and to please’. The poetic verse that accompanied this print, from which these lines come, along with the elegant depiction of Lady Heathcote who glides across a landscape holding flowers in her skirt, distinguishes the sisters as notable beauties. Indeed, contemporary newspaper reports make frequent reference to their attendance at balls, suppers, and visits to the coast, noting their ability to attract the eyes of admiring crowds.¹⁰⁷ After the death of Lady Duff, similar vocabulary later used to describe Princess Charlotte is given to describe the tragedy of her passing, of a ‘person cut off so suddenly in all the bloom of beauty’, the ‘ornament and boast of society’.¹⁰⁸ The subsequent list of attributes, her ‘urbanity of manners, the most excellent heart, and a disposition the most active in fulfilling all the charities of life’, conjures a similar sense of virtue that was evident in her outward appearance.¹⁰⁹ These commemorative prints, whether posthumous in the case of Lady Duff, or from life, in the case of her sister, indicate the place that women held in early nineteenth-century society as guardians of the nation’s morality and religious wellbeing. In these examples, the Fair of Britain’s Isle, the ornaments of the nation, represented a sense of morality that was indigenous but vulnerable.¹¹⁰ The apotheosis or angel-like depictions of Princess Charlotte thereby became the most fitting means of commemorating her death, which had terminated the prospect of a future female ruler. That is not to say that there were no concerns about female sovereignty, but the image of the apotheosis highlighted the virtuous character of the princess and at the same time could be used to critique her unpopular father.

¹⁰⁷ *The Morning Post* (16 Oct. 1806).

¹⁰⁸ *The Morning Post* (27 Dec. 1805).

¹⁰⁹ *The Morning Post* (27 Dec. 1805).

¹¹⁰ In her chapter on the depiction of female saints and angels during the eighteenth century in Britain, Pointon argues that these images ‘served to disempower the non-English and non-Protestant other’ whilst revealing the cultural capital that religious imagery held in the contemporary society. See ‘Protestants and “Fair Penitents”’: with Special Reference to St Cecilia’ in Pointon (1997), pp. 229-306.

The apotheosis was undoubtedly one of the most common and popular ways of commemorating Princess Charlotte and other young women in this period. The fashion for certain types of commemoration and the constant recycling of various motifs alongside poetic quotation, highlight the ways in which printmakers and publishers were clearly inspired by and inspiring each other. Of the prints discussed, many were published by Ackermann whose interest in such depictions of deceased royals and aristocrats was undoubtedly more commercial than it was sentimental, and he often produced prints that would act as companion pieces to existing works. Henry Meyer's engraving of Charlotte after Alfred Edward Chalon's original portrait (fig. 96), for example, was published by Ackermann in 1816 and became one of the most well-known portraits of the princess.¹¹¹ Following her death, Ackermann returned to Chalon's famous work and published a commemorative print that incorporated a reduced version of the portrait along with weeping putti on either side of a monument bearing details of Charlotte's life (fig. 104). Shortly before the print was made available, notices in several publications indicated that the print would be an 'exact companion' to the existing commemorative print of Princess Amelia (fig. 105) 'with corresponding and appropriate allegory'.¹¹² In the Charlotte print, the design of the monument is more decorative, the putti put on a more overwrought display of sadness, and the image includes an array of symbolic objects that allude to her position, character and untimely passing, but the overall composition is much the same. The fact that the Charlotte print was conceived of as a companion to the Amelia print clearly indicates that these adaptations signified the difference of their status and the impact of their deaths for the wider public. It also highlights the collectible nature of these prints as discussed earlier and

¹¹¹ This was the only whole-length portrait of the Princess Charlotte to have been engraved. After her death, further prints were produced to satisfy 'the prevailing impatience' to possess such a celebrated likeness of the deceased princess. *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashions, Manufactures, &c.*, 2/5 (1818), p. 250.

¹¹² *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashions, Manufactures, &c.*, vol. 4, (1817), p. 368; Coote, *A Biographical Memoir*, p. 366.

underlines the idea that the motivation for having a material stake in the commemoration of the princess extended beyond expressing sympathy and a sense of patriotism. In a comparable fashion, John Bell republished a very slightly adapted print that had been produced in the wake of Amelia's death to commemorate the death of her father, George III, in 1820 (figs. 106 and 107). The only adaptation to this design was the removal of Amelia's initials 'PA' from the urn over which a figure mourns. The roundel double portrait, with angels pointing upwards and a female figure slumped over an urn, suggest an established language of mourning that could be reused to commemorate the deceased no matter who they were.

Combining the earthly and spiritual realms

The public grief was undoubtedly compounded by Prince Leopold's loss. Artists frequently included depictions of the afflicted widower, bent double in grief over the dead body or tomb of his wife in a comparable fashion to the apotheosis by Howard discussed earlier.¹¹³ Edward Orme, for example, published an engraving by John Swaine after a drawing by William Marshall Craig (fig. 108) that shows Leopold clasping his head in despair at the foot of his wife's deathbed, her arm loosely wrapped around their stillborn son. Above this tragic scene, the princess's soul is shown ascending to heaven, guided to her celestial crown by a putto, with two angels in prayer on either side. Whilst both the apotheosis of the princess and her grieving husband featured in paintings, there are no examples of this combination of Charlotte's earthly body and spiritual form in a single painted work. Comparable compositions are found, rather, in monumental sculpture. Commemorative prints of this kind, therefore, functioned in a way that was more akin to these more inherently public works.

¹¹³ In addition, the frontispiece to Huish's *Memoirs* shows Leopold slumped over the foot of a monument to his dead wife, who is represented by her portrait bust.

Shortly after Charlotte's death, the Duchess of York patronised a subscription to raise the funds required to erect a monument in her memory. In order that the subscription 'might embrace all classes of persons', it was decided that even the smallest donation would be welcomed and that no sum was to exceed a guinea.¹¹⁴ The duchess had originally intended the subscription to be open only to women, no doubt recognising the impact that Charlotte's death had had on the female population, but this was soon overturned and all members of the public were invited to subscribe, eventually raising a staggering £12,346 19s 1½d.¹¹⁵ By the time that Huish published his biography of the princess in 1818, it had so far been agreed that the monument would be designed by Matthew Cotes Wyatt and would consist of a temple containing a statue of Charlotte, surrounded by a monumental group, and it would be erected in a public location.¹¹⁶ By 1821, the sculptor allowed visitors to view the monument in his studio, which did not, after all, include a temple. Then, after much discussion about the eventual location of the monument, St George's Chapel was decided upon and it was finally unveiled in the Urswick Chantry in 1826 (fig. 109).¹¹⁷

Wyatt's dramatic monument excites even more pathos than Orme's print in its portrayal of Princess Charlotte's spirit leaving her earthly body. Her corpse is covered in a shroud, the tips of the fingers on her right hand just visible beneath the hem. Her earthly body is surrounded by veiled figures representing the four corners of the globe bent over in mourning, their featureless faces emphasising the emotive power of their presence. Above the group, Charlotte's spiritual body ascends to heaven, her upwards trajectory accentuated by the triangular composition of the design. On either side, two angels accompany the princess

¹¹⁴ Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness*, p. 690.

¹¹⁵ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxxix (1819), p. 179, cited in Penny, 'English Church Monuments to Women Who Died in Childbirth', p. 327.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ There was some outcry that a monument paid for by the public should be displayed in a private royal chapel. See *The Literary Chronicle for the Year 1824* (London, 1824), p. 141. For further details about the creation of the monument see Nicholas Penny, 'English Church Monuments to Women who Died in Childbirth', pp. 327-328.

on her ascent, one of which holds the stillborn child in her arms. For some contemporary viewers, this theatrical representation of the princess's transition from earthly to heavenly state focused too much on the 'painful reality' of her death, which might 'have been better left to the imagination', but Wyatt's monument by no means put an end to this type of design.¹¹⁸ Penny has identified several other versions of this type of composition from the 1840s in which both body and soul are shown together, including Peter Hollins's monument to Georgiana, Countess of Bradford at Weston in Staffordshire (fig. 110) and Joseph Edwards's monument to Charlotte White at Berechurch Essex (fig. 111).¹¹⁹ Both of these monuments, however, portray the deceased in their living state, dreaming about their spirit being conducted to heaven.¹²⁰ This implies fulfilment of their earthly wishes, which, as the inscription of Charlotte White's monument states, was attained by 'the exemplary discharge of every duty / and the practice of all Christian virtues'.

Both types of monument simultaneously show the earthly and spiritual bodies of the deceased, whether in the form of a dream, as in the case of the Hollins and Edwards monuments, or at the very moment at which the soul leaves the body as in the Wyatt example, and focus on the comfort that such an image could provide. This continued into the late nineteenth century through another memorial to Princess Charlotte. In 1880, Queen Victoria commissioned a tripartite relief from Francis John Williamson to commemorate the lives of both Charlotte and her husband Leopold (fig. 112), which now resides in St George's Chapel, Esher, having originally been intended for Claremont.¹²¹ In the first panel, Charlotte is shown once again on her deathbed, her head turned slightly outwards towards the viewer. A male figure, presumably Leopold, kneels by her bedside and looks up to witness her ascending soul holding their stillborn son. To the right of the composition, an angel looks

¹¹⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 96 (1819), p. 350.

¹¹⁹ Penny, *Church Monuments*, pp. 92-97.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 92.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p. 168.

down to the widower whilst gesturing up towards Charlotte's spiritual form. The other two panels illustrate, in order, an act of charity, and Leopold's acceptance of the Crown of Belgium with Britannia looking on in approval. Whereas in other posthumous depictions of Charlotte, both in print and sculpture, her virtuous acts are implied by the apotheosis format and sometimes even the personification of Charity, in this monument, her virtue is played out explicitly for the viewer in clear celebration of her exulted character.

Until Charlotte's death, there were few, if any instances of such a prevalent outpouring of emotion at the death of a royal. Despite being only a princess and not yet a reigning monarch, her image became the embodiment of thwarted hope and political uncertainty. Whilst much of the scholarship on this outpouring of emotion considers literary responses to her death, in this chapter I have shown how these texts – biographies, poems, sermons, letters, newspaper articles – can be used productively to examine and make sense of her posthumous image in the form of both painted portraits that were commissioned by members of her family and commemorative prints that were widely circulated to a mourning public. The notability of her death accounts for the density of written evidence and provides a rich body of material that builds a clearer picture of the way in which posthumous portraits of various kinds were perceived, displayed and circulated in the early nineteenth century. For many of the portraits discussed thus far, this evidence is fragmentary or non-existent and, in this way, the case of Princess Charlotte's death is vital to a discussion of posthumous portraiture in this period.

Chapter 4

‘A subject for reflection’: the death mask as material memory¹

Attempts to posthumously represent a sitter spanned different types of portraiture and, as outlined in the preceding three chapters, were used in different ways within mourning practices. As I have shown, the creation of these portraits relied on existing visual evidence, whether an earlier portrait painted, drawn or sculpted from life, or, indeed, a death mask. On some occasions, a combination of these types of portraiture were used together. The experience of viewing a death mask, however, was unlike that of an artistically rendered portrait. As the plaster coated the face of the deceased, it captured the unique physical features of that individual. The casting material, rather than being shaped by the artist’s will, took its form from the corpse itself. The death mask was inherently deathly by virtue of this process and is, therefore, key to a discussion of posthumous portraiture. In this chapter, I will focus on the various ways in which the death mask was used, from artistic aid to representative object in its own right. Focusing on these complicated objects will allow for further analysis of issues addressed elsewhere in the thesis, such as the politics of display, notions of public versus private, and questions about gender. The process of making the death mask distinguishes this kind of representation from other types of portraiture and raises several questions that I will seek to answer over the course of this chapter. Firstly, I will assess the extent to which proximity to the body via the cast-making process had an impact on the way in which these objects functioned within commemorative practices. Related to this issue I will consider how modes of display could give new meaning to the death mask and provide a rich and multifaceted commemorative work. I will also investigate the effect that different casting materials had on the meaning of the death mask and how this was of

¹ Greig, *Farington Diary*, iii., p. 231.

particular importance in the early nineteenth century with the burgeoning interest in secular relics.

Much of the extant documentary sources on the production and use of death masks is found in the diaries of the famed chronicler of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century art world, Joseph Farington. These diaries, as we have seen in the previous chapter, provide an essential foundation for understanding the social life of art, artists and patrons in this period. Significantly, his accounts of conversations with artists show how the death mask held a central position in the practice of particular artists, mostly notably the sculptor Joseph Nollekens. Farington recounts a conversation with the sculptor about his death mask of the assassinated Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval (fig. 113) who had been shot outside the House of Commons on 11 May 1812,

On the morning after Mr. Perceval was assassinated the Revd. Mr. Long called upon Him [Nollekens] from His Brother Mr. Charles Long, Paymaster of the Forces, to desire Him to take a cast from the face of Mr. Perceval provided the family would consent to it. Mr. Long then made application to Lord Arden and they agreed to it. – Nollekens then went to Mr. Perceval’s apartments at the Treasury, and was there shewn into a room where He saw the body of Mr. Perceval laid upon a table, with His clothes on and just as He was when assassinated. . . He took a cast from the face and that very successfully. He looked at the *wound* made by the Pistol Bullet fired by Bellingham, it was about 3 inches above the *left pap.* – Mr. Perceval’s face had a slight cut upon the cheek & lip caused by His falling.²

Nollekens took the cast back to his studio and, as Farington relates, ‘Everyday numbers of persons call to see the Cast, – Noblemen, Ladies–Gentlemen, and many are much affected when viewing it’.³ This may have been due to the tragedy and drama of his passing but the notion that the death mask ‘affected’ the viewer reveals much about the way in which these curious objects were conceptualised and the attention that they commanded. In a comparable way, when the Irish poet Thomas Moore visited the shop of amateur phrenologist James Deville, Moore describes how his friend Bowles was ‘a good deal unsettled by the sight of

² Greig, *Farington Diary*, vii., p. 84.

³ *Ibid.*

the castes [sic] after death'.⁴ The death mask, therefore, was an affecting and unsettling force by virtue of its physical proximity to the body of a person stripped of life. This highlights the central concern of this chapter: how did death masks generate a different kind of response to the artistically rendered posthumous portraits discussed in this thesis so far, and what can this tell us about their place within contemporary commemorative practices?

The historiography of death masks is paradoxically limited and diverse. Passing reference has been made to the practice of using death masks to create posthumous portrait busts but there are few publications for which death masks constitute the main focus of study. Laurence Hutton's publication of *Portraits in Plaster* (1894), which constituted a compilation of photographs of his large collection of life and death masks and brief history of how he acquired each cast, was only followed by Ernst Benkard's *Das Ewige Antlitz: Eine Sammlung von Totenmasken* in 1923, translated into English as *Undying Faces: A Collection of Death Masks* in 1926. Benkard similarly presented a collection of photographs of death masks, with little analysis of their function.⁵ Whilst Hutton considers the death mask as a form of portraiture, much like Benkard, the central concern is with the celebrity of the named 'sitter', rather than the ways in which death masks functioned as commemorative representations of the deceased. Death masks appeared again in only a handful of publications in the 1980s including Mosche Barasch's article on the mask in European art and Robin Cormack's analysis of ancient death masks within his study of medieval icons.⁶ Beyond these historical studies, death masks tend to feature within studies of the history of science and anthropology,

⁴ Deville had previously worked in the studio of Nollekens, making casts from moulds. Smith (1829), p. 321; *Diary of Thomas Moore*, (ed.) John Russell, (London, 1854), vol. 5, pp. 68-9.

⁵ L. Hutton, *Portraits in Plaster, from the Collection of Laurence Hutton* (New York, 1894); E. Benkard, *Undying Faces: A Collection of Death Masks with a Note by Georg Kolbe*, trans. M. M. Green (London, 1929).

⁶ M. Barasch, 'The Mask in European Art: Meanings and Functions', in M. Barasch and L.F. Sandler (eds.), *Art the Ape of Nature: Studies in Honor of H. W. Janson* (New York, 1981), pp. 253-64; R. Cormack, *Painting the Soul: Icons, Death Masks, and Shrouds* (London, 1997).

such as Edinburgh University's exhibition for the Phrenological Society's collection of death masks in 1988 and Iris J.M. Gibson's article 'Death Masks Unlimited' (1985).⁷ More recently, the death mask has regained the attention of several art historians, including Emmanuelle Héran with her exhibition catalogue, *Le Dernier Portrait* (2002). This provides a historical overview, particularly in France, of this practice that allowed the living to retain a record of the deceased whether in a private setting or widely circulated.⁸ There are several descriptions of death masks in publications about the practice of particular artists, the most extended study of which can be found in Malcolm Baker's recent book on eighteenth-century marble sculpture.⁹ Pointon's article on death masks is the most focused art historical study and provides a foundational piece of scholarship for art historians undertaking research into these objects.¹⁰ Pointon focuses her attention on the 'material specificities' of these 'difficult-to-categorize, and yet fascinating, things' but does not consider them in relation to commemorative portraiture more broadly speaking.¹¹ This diverse range of texts does not provide any exploration of the way in which death masks were conceptualised during any period in history, nor do they consider their role within commemorative portraiture practices. This chapter addresses this omission and draws out the death mask from its liminal position

⁷ Scotland's Cultural Heritage and University of Edinburgh, *Death and Life Masks of the Famous and Infamous* (Edinburgh, 1988); I.J.M. Gibson, 'Death Masks Unlimited', *British Medical Journal (Clinical research Edition)*, 291/6511 (21–28 December 1985), pp. 1785–87. This provides a brief account of the history of death masks, focusing on those of medical men and those that exhibit evidence of post-mortem examination.

⁸ 'Ce "dernier portrait" - masque mortuaire, peinture, dessin ou photographie - demeurait dans le cercle étroit de la famille et des amis, mais, dans le cas des personnalités connues, pouvait connaître une large diffusion publique' ('This 'final portrait' – death mask, painting, drawing or photograph – remained within the narrow circle of family and friends, but, in the case of well-known personalities, could be widely disseminated'. Translated by author.). E. Héran (ed.), *Le Dernier Portrait* (Paris, 2002).

⁹ M. Baker, *The Marble Index: Roubiliac and Sculptural Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven, 2015).

¹⁰ Pointon, 'Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things', pp. 170–195.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 170.

within the history of art, to a discussion of posthumous portraiture in the ‘long’ eighteenth century.

The absence of the death mask within art history is likely due to the fact that as material artefacts, death masks elude easy classification, existing somewhere between art, commemoration, science and anthropology, a fact compounded by the noticeable lack of contemporary sources about the production and display of death masks, aside from the accounts provided by Farington.¹² The lack of textual and in some instances material evidence presents a challenge to the art historian in situating the death mask within an artistic and social context. Where there is a severe lack of documentary sources, in the case of death masks of women for example, it is only possible to shed light on issues and open up paths of research rather than provide a conclusive line of argument.

The seeming lack of subjectivity inherent in the cast-making process is crucial to the way in which they were perceived during this period and is the point of departure for this chapter. Unlike the artistically rendered posthumous portraits discussed in this thesis thus far, the death mask was created through a mechanical process in which the face of the deceased gave the plaster mould its shape and it was from this that the death mask was cast. Whilst sculptors often adjusted and made additions to the death mask, as I will discuss in depth, its essential form did not come from the hand of the artist and had, therefore, a different status. This raises a number of questions regarding likeness, encompassing both the limits and possibilities afforded by the production process. The sense of immediacy through cast-making will be analysed against a backdrop of eighteenth-century theory about invention versus reproduction, as well as the contemporary conceptualisation of plaster as an artistic medium, particularly its relationship to memory. The practice of Nollekens provides ample opportunity to dissect these issues as there are few other artists whose use of death masks has

¹² In Baker’s discussion of the death mask as model, he draws upon this source material as well. See *The Marble Index*, pp. 189-91.

been recorded to such a degree. Furthermore, there are several instances in which casts taken by Nollekens were used by other artists to create posthumous portraits, amplifying their value as an authoritative image and, consequently, artistic aid.

Considering the significance of the death mask as a means of creating posthumous portraits opens up further questions about its value as a commemorative object in its own right. Two unique examples for which the politics of display are central to an understanding of the death mask as a distinct form of commemorative portraiture are explored in this chapter. The death masks of Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830) and Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) stress the subtle shift that transformed the death mask from portrait to secular relic during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The crucial role that display and unique modes of presentation played in this reconceptualization, as well as the associative values of particular materials, are central to this discussion.

Materiality

Joseph Wright of Derby's *Corinthian Maid* (1780s) (fig. 114) illustrates the famous story by Pliny, in which a young woman draws around the shadow of her lover's body, cast by the flame of a candle.¹³ This act was generally seen as the origin of painting, for as the Roman author writes, 'all agree that it began with tracing an outline round a man's shadow'.¹⁴ As the story goes, the woman's father then pressed clay within the outline and made a sculptural

¹³A. Bermingham, 'The origin of painting and the ends of art: Wright of Derby's *Corinthian Maid*', in J. Barrell (ed.), *Painting and the Politics of Culture: New Essays on British Art 1700-1850* (Oxford, 1992), p. 148-9. Bermingham lists a number of artists who also painted the *Corinthian Maid* in the latter half of the eighteenth century, including John Hamilton Mortimer, Alexander Runciman, David Allan, James Barry, Angelica Kauffman, Giovanni Battista Cipriani and George Romney.

¹⁴ Pliny, *Natural History, Volume IX: Books 33-35*, trans. H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 394 (Cambridge, MA, 1952), p. 271.

relief.¹⁵ The tale was thus understood as documenting not only the origin of painting, but sculptural modelling as well, and during the eighteenth century, found its way into theoretical writings and dictionaries concerning the arts, such as Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopaedia, or, An universal dictionary of arts and sciences*.¹⁶ It is a story about loss and the creation of art that is motivated by love and provides a helpful means of unpacking the eighteenth-century conceptualisation of cast-making and the production of death masks in particular. The outline drawn by the Corinthian Maid is 'like a footprint, the sign of a lost presence' or, indeed, the imprint of a face on a plaster mould used to cast a death mask.¹⁷ The mould acts in the same way as the Corinthian Maid's tracing in that, to use Bermingham's words, 'it has no substance; it is an empty cipher, a project that can only be completed by the maid's own memory of her lover'.¹⁸ The commemorative act of producing a death mask, however, is completed by casting, that is, by filling out the 'empty cipher'. The memory is made material through the mechanical process.

In her discussion of the Corinthian Maid, Lisa Saltzman highlights how the original tracing bears 'something of a relationship of physical contiguity to their subjects...an art of the index' and it is this relationship to the original, that is, the deceased body, that gave the death masks their representational authority.¹⁹ Capturing the shadow, or making the mould, as opposed to subjectively representing a figure, are mechanical acts that do not originate in invention. Bermingham has discussed how, as a consequence, the emblem of the Corinthian

¹⁵ For a broad overview of the Corinthian Maid within art history and theory in Europe, see R. Rosenblum, 'The origin of painting: a problem in the iconography of Romantic Classicism', *Art Bulletin*, 39 (1957), pp. 279-90.

¹⁶ 'Statuary', in E. Chambers, *Cyclopaedia, or, An universal dictionary of arts and sciences: containing an explanation of the terms, and an account of the several subjects, in the liberal and mechanical arts, and the sciences, human and divine: intended as a course of ancient and modern learning* (London, 1728), p. 125.

¹⁷ Bermingham, 'The origin of painting and the ends of art', p. 139.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ L. Saltzman, *Making Memory Matter: Strategies of Remembrance in Contemporary Art* (Chicago and London, 2006), pp. 2-3.

Maid during the eighteenth century existed within ‘a no man’s land between the fine and industrial arts’ and seemed ‘to address the newly problematized relationship between them’, following Reynolds’s promotion of invention over imitation in his Discourses.²⁰ Even though Reynolds was talking about painting rather than sculpture his distinction between the art of ‘nature’ and the art of ‘invention’, goes some way to situate the death mask within its artistic context during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.²¹ As an imprint from nature, the death mask did not function like a portrait that had been ‘invented’ by an artist, but its physical contiguity with the deceased body, to use Saltzmann’s words, imbued it with a powerful sense of authenticity and loss.

The tale of the Corinthian Maid does not, however, describe the actual process of casting from the body, even though it relates closely to this by virtue of the so-called indexical process. Pliny lays this out later on in his text:

...the first person who modelled a likeness in plaster of a human being from the living face itself, and established the method of pouring wax into this plaster mould and then making final corrections on the wax cast, was Lysistratus of Sicyon...Indeed he introduced the practice of giving likenesses, the object aimed at previously having been to make as handsome a face as possible.²²

In this description, the cast taken directly from the human face gives a ‘likeness’ as opposed to a ‘handsome’ portrayal. From this very early description of life-casting, of which artists would have been well aware in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the cast is taken to be an authentic, truthful representation; one that did not, and indeed, could not flatter the sitter unless adapted later on. Unlike the clay, used by the Corinthian potter to fill-out the absent body of his daughter’s lover, the malleable wax took on the exact form of the face unaffected

²⁰ Bermingham, ‘The origin of painting and the ends of art’, p. 152.

²¹ Malcolm Baker has commented on the lack of ‘any substantial or sustained contemporary critical discourse’ on sculpture. See M. Baker, *Figured in Marble: The Making and Viewing of Eighteenth-Century Sculpture* (Los Angeles, 2000), p. 9. It is, therefore, necessary to consider broader discussions about portraiture and art in order to assess contemporary responses to techniques and processes related to the production of death masks.

²² Pliny (1952) p. 373-4.

by creative will. Both the process and the characteristic properties of the material, therefore, are essential to an understanding of how people conceptualised these objects in the years around 1800, when the tale of the Corinthian Maid was synonymous with artistic production.

Whilst contemporary dictionaries and encyclopaedias about art described various cast-making processes, there are few accounts that describe casting from the human face and where they do exist, a general description is provided rather than precise instructions. In Benkard's publication, however, there are a series of instructions given by the sculptor Georg Kolbe (1877–1947) on the making of death masks, which were unlikely to have changed much in the two hundred years or so before his account was published.²³ He begins with a descriptive explanation of the way in which the face changes after death:

So long as the blood is yet warm and the muscles yet in action, the face is transfigured as if in the final glow of youth. Then the body grows cold, the features stiffen and change.²⁴

Kolbe writes that the dead resemble 'withering plants' and so the death mask must be taken before these physical changes occur. He advises that the head must be tilted low to avoid compressing and augmenting the soft contours of the face, the eyes and lips should then be closed and the chin propped up. Each feature of the face, he writes, is easily distorted and the process should, therefore, be considered closer to modelling from life than taking a cast from an inflexible, positive image. Although casts taken after the rigidity of rigor mortis has set in can be striking, 'what' he asks, 'are such masks to us?'.²⁵ Clearly for Kolbe, the purpose of the death mask was not so much to replicate nature in death exactly, but in providing an image that adequately represented the person in life. 'The smile of a soul released' must be

²³ Comparing this early twentieth century text to Benjamin Robert Haydon's 1821 summary description of the process of taking a life mask, we can assume that the method had changed little in the intervening period. See *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, Historical Painter, from His Autobiography and Journals*, comp. and ed. Tom Taylor (London, 1853), vol. 1, pp. 136–38.

²⁴ Georg Kolbe, 'How death masks are made', in Ernst Benkard, *Undying Faces*, p. 43.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 44.

shown devoid of the contorting effects of disease and suffering and must be handled carefully. On a practical level, Kolbe advises the following:

...the part where hair is growing are painted over with a thin solution of modelling clay or with oil, so that the plaster may not adhere when it is poured over. The skin itself contains enough fat and needs no preparation. The outline of the mask, the parts on the neck, behind the ears, and so on, are surrounded with the thinnest of damp paper...A large bowl of plaster of the consistency of soup is ladled over the face a few millimetres in thickness; then a thread is drawn over the middle of the forehead, the bridge of the nose, the mouth and the chin. A second bowl of more solid plaster is spread over the first layer like pulp...and before it sets the thread is drawn away, dividing the whole into two halves. As soon as the outer layer has set hard, the halved mould is broken apart and carefully detached from the head...The halves thus detached are immediately fitted together again and clamped, the negative is cleaned and refilled with plaster. Roughnesses on the covering outer shell are carefully chipped away with mallet and chisel, and there we have the positive, the finished mask.²⁶

Through this process, the death mask brought the viewer as close as possible to the body of the deceased, going beyond other modes of artistic representation.

Plaster as material memory

Examining the perception of plaster during the period in question, further reveals the way in which death masks were understood by contemporary viewers. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, artists made plaster casts of sculptures and architectural fragments in order to record and transport objects from one time and place to another; a practice, as people understood it, that was ‘very ancient; and that ‘twas made use of about earthen figures and plaister [sic] figures a long time before it was known how to cast in metal’, as described in *Dictionarium polygraphicum* (1735).²⁷ Plaster was, therefore, a material that directly related to absence and memory as it could stand in for an object out of sight or no longer present. In addition to this notion of absence by virtue of its physical characteristics, it also exhibited visual properties that were bound both to memory and artistic practice. Copying

²⁶ Kolbe, ‘How death masks are made’, pp. 44-45.

²⁷ ‘Casting’, J. Barrow, *Dictionarium polygraphicum: or, the whole body of arts regularly digested...* (London, 1735) [unpaginated].

casts of ancient and contemporary sculpture was an essential part of an artist's training and students at the Royal Academy Schools underwent a rigorous and carefully managed programme of study whereby their draughtsmanship was slowly improved through the methodical copying of casts. As the first programme of study laid out:

There shall be Weekly, set out in the Great Room, One or more Plaister Figures by the Keeper, for the Students to draw after... The Plaister Academy, shall be open every Day (Sundays and Vacation times excepted) from Nine in the Morning till three in the Afternoon.²⁸

When many of these artists travelled to Europe to study the great works of Greek, Roman and contemporary sculptors, they similarly attended drawing schools including the French Academy in Rome, where drawing from casts was a fundamental part of the education provided.²⁹ It was believed that through repetitious copying of ancient and contemporary works in this manner, forms and compositions would be locked in a visual bank of references to be drawn upon throughout the artist's career. Indeed, the practice of copying from casts became a mainstay in the careers of many artists. The monochromatic nature of plaster helped artists to finesse their drawing skills without the distraction of colour. Francis Legatt Chantrey, for example, would sometimes 'take a plaster cast of [a] subject's lips because, if they were of a high colour the form of the mouth would be distorted.'³⁰

Plaster was conceptualised in a series of related ways. It was a material bound to a process of production, which enabled the viewer to experience an absent object or body. In

²⁸ Minutes of the Council to discuss 'Rules & Ordered', 27 December 1768, cited in C. Saumarez Smith, *The Company of Artists: The Origins of the Royal Academy of Arts in London* (London, 2012), p. 114.

²⁹ The uses and popularity of the French Academy in Rome is discussed in T. Macostay, 'Plaster casts and memory technique: Nicholas Vleughel's display of cast collections after the antique in the French Academy in Rome (1725-1793)', *Plaster Casts: Making, Collecting and Displaying from Classical Antiquity to the Present* (eds.) R. Frederiksen and E. Marchand (De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 181-188. For responses from visiting students and Grand Tourists see E. P. Bowron, 'Academic Life Drawing in Rome 1750-1790' in *Visions of Antiquity. Neoclassical Figure Drawings*, (ed.) E. P. Bowron (Los Angeles, 1993), pp. 75-85.

³⁰ S. Dunkerley, *Francis Chantrey, Sculptor, from Norton to Knighthood* (Sheffield, 1995), p. 132.

addition, its monochromatic nature made it a key part of artistic training, which sought not only to finesse draughtsmanship but also to concretise various forms and compositions into the mind's eye of an artist. It is essential to acknowledge and keep in mind these various associative values when considering the use and effect of death masks during this period. Whether used by an artist as a visual aid or displayed as an object in its own right, the process and nature of cast materials distinguish these death masks from artistically rendered posthumous portraits.

Capturing likeness

The artist who is best known for his use of death masks to create posthumous portrait busts is the sculptor Nollekens. In his biography, J. T. Smith describes the value placed on these objects by the artist, as artistic models and, as Smith implies, as a source of income:

Nollekens, after reading the death of any great person in the newspaper, generally ordered some plaster to be got ready, so that he might attend at a minute's notice.³¹

A number of these occasions are recounted in the diaries of Nollekens's friend, Farington, which can be used to consider the role of death masks in artistic practice more broadly.³² One of the sculptor's most famous stock pieces, his portrait bust of William Pitt the Younger, was created in this way (fig. 115).³³ During his lifetime, Pitt refused to sit for Nollekens following a disagreement over a monument for Westminster Abbey; a falling-out described by Smith.³⁴

³¹ J.T. Smith, *Nollekens and His Times*, (ed.) W. Whitten (New York and London, 1829), p. 367.

³² Malcolm Baker discusses the use of death masks in creating portrait busts, paying particular attention to Nollekens in Baker, *The Marble Index*, pp. 189-191. See also J. Gage, 'Busts and Identity' in *Return to Life: A New Look at the Portrait Bust*, eds. P. Curtis, P. Funnell, and N. Kalinsky (London, 2001), pp. 38-40.

³³ According to Smith, 'He also executed at least seventy-four busts in marble, for almost every one of which he had one hundred and twenty guineas; and there were upwards of six hundred casts taken at six guineas each'.

³⁴ Nollekens and Pitt had fallen out over the sculptor's monument to William Bayne, William Blair, and Lord Robert. See J.T. Smith, *Nollekens and his Times*, p. 370.

After Pitt's death, however, Nollekens was asked to take his death mask (fig. 116). Farington visiting the sculptor's studio with George Beaumont on 30 March 1806 describes the scene:

...to see the cast of Mr Pitt's face taken after He was dead by Nollekens who told us that at Eleven o'Clock on the morning on which Pitt died at a *quarter part four* [23 January 1806], Mr. Angerstein came to Him. *Mr. Angerstein* said that a resemblance of great a man shd. Be preserved; and asked Nollekens if cd. not go to Putney & take a Cast from his face; to which Nollekens replied He cd. go in an hour, which he did in Chaise, & met Mr. Angerstein there, who, having applied to the Bishop of Lincoln & obtained His permission, Nollekens proceeded to take the cast.³⁵

In this instance, the request for a posthumous representation of the former Prime Minister was made by a devoted supporter, John Julius Angerstein, who believed that the image of so great a figure should be immortalised.³⁶ Lord Harcourt, for example, kept a death mask of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his study as a show of his admiration for the philosopher's work.³⁷

Nollekens was soon tasked with numerous commissions to reproduce his bust of Pitt. According to Farington, by 30 March 1806, the artist had eight commissions, by 17 May 1806 the number had risen to 21 at 100 guineas each, by 19 September 1806, the number had gone up again to 35, and finally, by 6 June 1807, Nollekens had the staggering number of 52 commissions, still at 100 guineas a piece. In addition to the busts themselves, Nollekens also sold casts of them, increasing the number of portraits even further.³⁸ He was, however, concerned about the implications of selling his work to so many people for fear of it becoming too common. He refused to produce a cast of Pitt's bust for Lord Thomond,

³⁵ 30 March 1830, Greig, *Farington Diary*, iii, p. 174.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ C. Campbell Orr, *Queenship in Britain 1660-1837: Royal Patronage, Court Culture and Dynastic Politics* (Manchester, 2009), p. 256.

³⁸ In his biography of Nollekens, Smith writes that 'He also executed at least seventy-four busts in marble, for almost every one of which he had one hundred and twenty guineas; and there were upwards of six hundred casts taken at six guineas each'. Smith, *Nollekens and His Times*, p. 370. Similarly, Herman W. Liebert describes how Nollekens 'took a death mask and from it made busts and statues that brought him over £17,000', W. Liebert, *Johnson's Head: The Story of the Bust of Dr. Samuel Johnson Taken from the Life by Joseph Nollekens, R.A., in 1777* (New Haven, 1960) [unpaginated].

Governor of the Country of Clare, and a Privy Counsellor in Ireland, for a year, in order to preserve the interest and appetite in his work.

The death mask, by virtue of having come into contact with the deceased person's face via the mould, was key to this act of memorialisation.³⁹ With his cast of Pitt's face, Nollekens could then make a posthumous portrait. The death mask was evidently not, however, sufficient as a standalone model in this commemorative undertaking. The painter William Owen, who had previously painted Pitt, told Farington that he had seen the former Prime Minister's death mask

from which, He said Nollekens wd. never be able to make a bust at all like him witht. the use of a picture to assist Him. –Hoppner saw the Cast with Owen & said “Nollekens you must come to me for assistance.”⁴⁰

After all, Hoppner had not even recognised the sitter at first ‘but after contemplating it some time the likeness grew upon him’.⁴¹ Owen described Hoppner's portrait of Pitt (fig. 117) as his best work demonstrating his ability ‘to express a character in Mr. Pitt's countenance in which Hauteur & something of disdainful severity were so predominant’ rather than ‘to soften it’ as other artists were given to do.⁴² This incident calls into question various issues regarding likeness and exposes the perceived limits of the death mask as a representation of the deceased and, therefore, as a model for a posthumous portrait. Smith, for example, describes how the death mask of Charles James Fox by Nollekens was ‘ghastly...totally unlike as the features are to those of Mr. Fox when living’.⁴³ Various additional techniques and processes were, therefore, required if the death mask was to be a useful model. Evidence for this can be found in various accounts of Nollekens's creation of posthumous portrait

³⁹ The imprint of the mould had an indexical relationship to the sitter unlike other forms of posthumous portraiture, which were iconic, relating to the sitter by resemblance. See C. S. Peirce, ‘Logic as Semiotic: the Theory of Signs’, *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, R. Innis (ed.) (Indiana, 1985), pp. 4-23.

⁴⁰ 15 March 1830, Greig, *Farington Diary*, iii, p. 162.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Smith, *Nollekens and His Times*, p. 382.

busts. In Smith's biography, he describes other techniques used by the artist with regard to a bust of Lord Lake:

...after he had taken the mask, [Nollekens] muttered the following soliloquy: 'Now, let me see, I must begin to measure him; where's my callipers? I must take him from his chin to the upper pinnacle of his head; I'll put him down in ink; ay, that will do; now, I must have him from his nose to the back part of his skull; well, now let's take his shoulders; now for his neck; well, now I've got him all.'⁴⁴

As this passage shows, Nollekens supplemented the information provided by the death mask with measurements of the various distances between the features of the face and a sketch of the sitter's features in ink. The following stage of the process is illuminated by Farington in his account of Nollekens's use of Pitt's death mask:

...to assist Him in making it like, Lord Mulgrave, has lent him Hoppner's portrait of Mr. Pitt for some days, and we agreed [Beaumont and Farington] that the Bust in *Clay*, now working by *Nollekens* is a most excellent like-ness having the true expression of Mr. Pitt's face.

In this instance, the likeness of the portrait bust was further enhanced by friends of Pitt who shared their knowledge of his physiognomy with the artist. It is not clear whether this input was invited but, as Farington's account suggests, Nollekens responded to their comments willingly:

He [General Phipps], & His brother, Lord Mulgrave, attended Nollekens while He was modeling it almost daily & continued to make observations to Him till they saw a perfect likeness. – They remarked as [it] went on what parts were too full or what too thin till they were satisfied with it.⁴⁵

As these passages make clear, the process of creating a posthumous portrait could not rely on the death mask alone. Measurements of the actual face were used as well, in addition to a portrait painted from life and the input of the deceased sitter's friends. This combined system

⁴⁴ According to Smith's account of the incident, the death mask was taken by Nollekens's assistant Sebastian Gahagan before Nollekens took the measurements of the face as described here. Smith, *Nollekens and His Times*, p. 367.

⁴⁵ 30 March 1806, Greig, *Farington Diary*, iii, p. 239. Baker has similarly drawn attention to the collaborative effort to create a 'like' posthumous portrait. Baker, *The Marble Index*, p. 190.

allowed for the most ‘like’ portrait possible and thus the most effective object of commemoration.

Nollekens was not alone in his use of death masks in this way, as artists including Thomas Banks, Francis Chantrey and Richard Westmacott similarly created posthumous portrait busts with the aid of a death mask.⁴⁶ The practice was also not confined to the work of sculptors, since painters too drew upon casts, including Thomas Lawrence for his portrait of Pitt (fig. 118).⁴⁷ As with Nollekens, there had been much discussion over Lawrence painting Pitt during his lifetime but the commission never came to fruition. In order to execute a posthumous portrait at the request of Angerstein, therefore, the artist consulted both the death mask and the bust by Nollekens. As Farington recounts in his diary, Lawrence had decided to make an announcement in every newspaper ‘giving the circumstances which related to His painting the picture of Mr. Pitt, viz: from memory – Nollekens Bust, & the Mask’ but ‘had not thought it proper’ to use the work of other painters, despite the advantage that this might have given him.⁴⁸ As he describes it, the bust and the death mask, the two existing representations of Pitt, acted as physical manifestations of memory that could be referred to in subsequent portraits. Using a painted portrait, he infers, might result in too

⁴⁶ Chantrey, for example, made a death mask of the youngest Robinson child, which he used to sculpt one of his most famous monuments known as *The Sleeping Children* at Lichfield Cathedral. See J. Holland, *Memorials of Sir Francis Chantrey* (Sheffield, 1851), p. 276; John Steell similarly made use of death masks where possible, including his portrait busts of Dr Abercromie for the Royal College of Physicians and Lady Sophie Rutherford. See unpublished thesis by R. Lieuallen, ‘A Sculptor for Scotland: the Life and Work of Sir John Robert Steel, RSA (1804-1891)’ (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2002), p. 171; Richard Westmacott made use of death masks in his practice, including that of Frederica of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the Duchess of Cumberland’s stillborn child. See F. Eggers, *Life of Christian Daniel Rauch of Berlin, Germany* (Boston, 1893), p. 224; Berthel Thorvaldsen used a death mask to create his posthumous portrait bust of Cardinal Consalvi. see A. Yarrington, ‘Marble, Memory and Theatre’, p. 107. Perhaps significantly, the sculptor owned a copy of Thomas Lawrence’s portrait of the cardinal at Windsor Castle and it is possible that he referred to this when sculpting the posthumous portrait bust.

⁴⁷ George Francis Joseph similarly made use of a death mask taken by Nollekens to create a posthumous portrait, in this instance, of Spencer Perceval. See Smith, *Nollekens and His Times*, p. 276.

⁴⁸ 12 May 1808, Greig, *Farington Diary*, v, p. 60.

close a copy rather than an artistic representation based on an individual response to a figure. In each case, drawing together different types of physical and artistic information was crucial in creating a posthumous portrait that adequately represented the deceased as in life. It was the interaction between these types of information that was important, and whilst the death mask played a significant role in this process, it would not suffice as a singular model in its own right. This raises an important issue concerning the role of the death mask as a commemorative portrait when presented on its own rather than operating as a model for an artistically rendered posthumous portrait: how could a death mask serve a commemorative function if it was not deemed a close enough likeness to the deceased to be used as the sole model for a portrait? This key concern will be addressed in the second half of this chapter.

‘...very properly refused’: death masks of women

As Prime Minister and a principal public figure, Pitt was an unsurprising candidate for a death mask. As previously noted, the cast was requested by one of his many supporters, Angerstein, who felt that ‘a resemblance of so great a man shd. Be preserved’. The numerous busts after the death mask sculpted by Nollekens and his assistants provide a material insight into political networks and allegiances at the turn of the nineteenth century and follow the tradition of creating and displaying portrait busts to commemorate British worthies. In addition, the death mask contributed to a phenomenon during this period of collecting autographs, which, Pointon has argued, marked ‘the shift from a concern with the sign for the historic person to an interest in the trace of that person’s actual existence’.⁴⁹ Having a portrait by an eminent sculptor of a notable figure was as much an expression of personal or professional devotion as it was an expression of fashionable taste. It comes as little surprise

⁴⁹ Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p. 67. This continued into the nineteenth century as Samantha Matthews discusses in ‘Psychological Crystal Palace? Late Victorian Confession Albums’, *Book History*, (2000), vol. 3, pp. 125-154.

then, that so few death masks of women were created within this context and that those which were cast, rarely survive. Of the sixty-six life and death masks listed in Laurence Hutton's *Portraits in Plaster* only three of these are of women. Of these three, just one represents a British woman, Sarah Siddons, but Hutton casts doubt on the attribution and suggests that it is more likely to be taken from life than after death.⁵⁰ Likewise, in the Edinburgh Phrenological Society's collection of death masks, women do not appear in the collection until the mid-nineteenth century, when the practice of phrenology was at its height.⁵¹ Of course, the function of the death mask for this pseudo-science versus its value as an artist's model is very different, so the increase in the number of death masks of women from this period, is of little significance to a discussion of artistic and commemorative practices. The relative lack of female death masks created from the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries is particularly relevant when considering issues of likeness and the use of the death mask by artists. It also sheds light on the way in which death masks, as commemorative objects in their own right, were perceived in England versus continental Europe during this period.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the death of Princess Charlotte resulted in a public outpouring of grief, which instigated the creation of numerous commemorative works and petitions for many more. Her contemporary biographer, Huish, describes a request to take her death mask within this commemorative context:

Immediately on the decease of the Princess Charlotte, application was made by several artists for permission to take a mask likeness of the Princess. The

⁵⁰ Hutton, *Portraits in Plaster*, p. 45.

⁵¹ Phrenology, a term first used by Drs Gall and Spurzheim in 1815 is now the disregarded 'theory that the mental powers or characteristics of an individual consist of separate faculties, each of which has its location in an organ found in a definite region of the surface of the brain, the size or development of which is commensurate with the development of the particular faculty; the study of the external conformation of the cranium as an index to the position and degree of development of the various faculties'. See 'phrenology, n.', *OED Online*, www.oed.com/view/Entry/142982 (18 Mar. 2018).

permission was, however, very properly refused, for no justifiable pretence existed for making such an application, when so many excellent likenesses by the first artists are already before the public...we hope never again to witness in the followers of an elegant art, a conduct that argues, not merely a want of right feeling, but an ignorance of the common rules of decency and propriety.⁵²

This extract offers an enlightening window into the ways in which death masks were perceived, particularly with regards to portraiture in the normative sense of the word, and raises a number of questions about women, portraiture and propriety in Britain during this period. These requests by artists underscore the notion that the cast of such a prominent figure would give credence to any related posthumous portrait, particularly when there was wide public interest in such portraits, as Nollekens had so profitably discovered a decade before with Pitt. Whilst the value of the death mask as model is acknowledged, however, there is a clear sense of unseemliness with regards to the very act of petition. Huish claims that a death mask of the princess would only be necessary if no portrait of the sitter from life already existed, but as the Pitt example shows, this was not the case for men and a death mask, in this instance, was deemed necessary despite the existence of a very 'like' portrait by Hoppner. The idea that such a request should be 'very properly refused' in the case of Princess Charlotte, and that it demonstrates 'a want of right feeling' and 'an ignorance of the common rules of decency and propriety' evidently shows that the very act of taking a death mask of a woman, particularly one of exalted social status, broke certain artistic and gender codes. This may have been due, at least in part, to the method of casting, which resulted in a level of physical proximity to the woman's body that would not have been appropriate in life, or perhaps a sense that the reproductive possibility of the death mask made it more difficult to assume control of its circulation. Following the death of the famed opera singer Maria Malibran in England in 1836, requests were made 'to take a sketch of the features, or to make

⁵² Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness*, p. 678.

a cast from the head and face' but in accordance with her husband, Charles Auguste de Bériot's wishes, these requests were refused as he,

...particularly desired that no cast of the head or face should be taken, nor any portrait, and that no *post mortem* examination should be made; and, in short, that the body should not be touched by any one, except in the course of the necessary preparations for interment.⁵³

Within royal circles in continental Europe, whatever social or artistic rules that prevented a death mask of Princess Charlotte from being taken, or indeed, of Malibran, did not apply. Charlotte's first cousin once removed, Queen Louise of Prussia, had died quite young just seven years earlier and when she did, a death mask was taken (fig. 119). Although the practice of taking death masks in Europe was similarly longstanding, this suggests that, unlike in Britain, it was not considered inappropriate to take a death mask of a woman, including one of high status and indicates a greater degree of familiarity and congruousness with these objects. Indeed, the queen's death mask was put on display at Hohenzollern for public consumption amongst other artefacts from her life and the mould used to make the death mask was later used to create a wax bust.⁵⁴

In England, the issues surrounding death masks of royal women extended to the aristocracy as well. Following the death of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, Nollekens took her death mask and displayed it in his studio. On viewing the death mask, Farington describes how the sculptor,

...had refused to make a Bust of the Duchess of Devonshire from the Cast, as He could not undertake to make it like what she appeared to be.⁵⁵

⁵³ *Memoirs and Letters of Madame Malibran with Notices of the Progress of the Musical Drama in England*, ed. Comtesse de Merlin, (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1840), ii, pp. 95-96.

⁵⁴ Grootenboer uses the death mask of Queen Louisa to examine the relationship between portraiture and the notion of a dead gaze. She also demonstrates how the queen's death mask was used for various kinds of posthumous portraiture. Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze*, pp. 117-121.

⁵⁵ 17 May 1806, Greig, *Farington Diary*, iii, p. 231.

As a result, the Duchess's sister, Lady Bessborough 'had taken away the *first Cast* which was taken'.⁵⁶ Similarly, following the death of Princess Amelia in 1810, Mr Tyrwhit asked Nollekens to take a death mask of her, at the behest of her brother, the Prince of Wales. When he arrived at Windsor, there was a delay in giving him access to the body and it was eventually decided that

...it would not be desirable [sic] to take the proposed Cast on acct. of the great alteration in the countenance of the Princess caused by a long indisposition it was determined that no Cast should be taken.⁵⁷

Whilst the proportions of the princess's bone structure would have been captured by the cast, the expected dissimilarity to her face in life would have made the cast an unreliable model for the sculptor. It seems that even when used as a model for an artist rather than something that was to serve a singularly commemorative purpose – there is no mention of the death mask being cast for any other purpose – the object must conform to standards of portraiture, that is, a woman shown at her most beautiful, not ravaged by death. The 'alteration in countenance' of Princess Amelia's death mask and the scarred, aged face of the Duchess of Devonshire, would not have been appropriate records of their physical appearance. As I discussed in the previous chapter, beautiful young women were considered the 'ornament and boast of society', their outward beauty reflecting the superior morality of the nation as a whole. That posthumous depictions of women like Lady Duff, one of the Fair of Britain's Isles, became a collector's item, suggests that there was little place for death masks, which could not flatter the sitter, nor display the inherent virtue of a young woman, even when, as Kolbe advises on the making of a death mask, the moulder seeks to capture 'The smile of a soul released' rather than the ravaged expression that could be inflicted upon the face through disease or a painful death.

⁵⁶ Ibid. It has not been possible to trace the whereabouts of the Duchess of Devonshire's death mask.

⁵⁷ 23 May 1812, Greig, *Farington Diary*, vii, p. 84.

Even if these casts had been intended as commemorative objects in their own right, there may also have been a question over ownership. Was it that a request to make a death mask of a woman infringed upon the emotions of the deceased person's family and should only be made as a very last resort? Whilst the death mask of Princess Charlotte was refused, a degree of access to the body was permitted:

To make of the hand and arm of the Princess Charlotte was considered to be so exactly conformable to the rules of symmetry, that a plaster cast of the hand and lower part of the arm was taken by a celebrated artist, and now stands on a table under a glass cover, in the private sitting-room of Prince Leopold.⁵⁸

In other words, due to the conformity of the princess's hand and arm to contemporary notions of beauty, the 'celebrated artist' was allowed to cast these body parts. Despite the appearance of dismemberment, these casts were deemed an appropriate form of commemoration, maintaining a tangible connection to her body.⁵⁹ According to Thomas Lawrence, Prince Leopold did, after all, exclaim: 'Those beautiful hands, that at the last, when she was talking to others were always looking out for mine!'.⁶⁰ It may have been that the level of physical proximity between the moulder's hands and the deceased woman's face when taking a death mask engendered this sense of impropriety, whereas, the touching of hand-on-hand sat more comfortably within the social norms that restricted the non-romantic physical closeness between men and women's bodies.⁶¹

Modes of presentation: the case of Sir Thomas Lawrence

The cast of a hand or arm represented the deceased in a unique way that bridged the gap between the living and the dead without centring that connection on facial features. Just like

⁵⁸ Huish, *Memoirs of Her late Royal Highness*, p. 678.

⁵⁹ Pointon discusses casts of body parts in 'Deathliness of Things', pp. 186-191. Of particular interest to the Charlotte anecdote is Pointon's discussion of the hands of Elizabeth and Robert Browning, cast together in an everlasting clasp.

⁶⁰ Somes Layard, *Sir Thomas Lawrence's Letter-Bag*, pp. 111-12.

⁶¹ I have not come across any examples of female artists taking or using death masks.

death masks, they demonstrate how casts functioned as objects in their own right, greatly affecting the viewer, whether causing reflection on life and death, or memorialising the deceased. The appropriateness of making a cast and displaying it was central to the way in which these objects affected the viewer, and thus, the remainder of this chapter focuses on two unusual examples of death masks, where unique presentation provoked particular responses. The death masks of Sir Thomas Lawrence and Sir Walter Scott, demonstrate how death masks served a variety of purposes in this period beyond their use as artistic models and should, therefore, be considered as an essential part of a discussion about the role of portraiture in commemorative practices.

The death mask of Sir Thomas Lawrence (fig. 120), a portraitist who, as we have seen, made use of these casts in his own practice, highlights the gap between the inventiveness of artistic portraiture and death masks, and the way in which remnants from a person's life could contribute to a more encompassing representation of a person after death. Cast in plaster and coated with an off-white paint, it rests on a sculpted pillow, the head fully moulded and the suggested body tucked beneath the covers revealing just a corner of the bed shirt to the viewer. With his lips slightly parted and his eyelids faintly creased, he has an expression of calm repose as if peacefully sleeping. Whilst there are other examples of death masks placed on a pillow, whether real or fictive, it was far more common to see a death mask extended at the neck and attached to a stand (fig. 121) or fitted with hooks on the reverse for hanging (fig. 122), rather than creating the illusion of a real-world setting.⁶² The nature of this display, however, provides an intimate encounter with Lawrence's image, forming a fragment of the imagined space of the artist's bed. Its display zooms in on the moment of death itself.

⁶² Almost all of the death masks from the Phrenological Society's collection in Edinburgh are on sculpted stands, whereas as the death masks in the Laurence Hutton collection are mostly fitted with hooks on the reverse for hanging.

The death mask was placed within a wooden box with a lid that enclosed a mezzotint version by Samuel Cousins of Lawrence's final self-portrait (fig. 123). Encased within a separate compartment within the lid, Lawrence's chalk, stubs and pencil, along with a lock of his hair are displayed, mirroring the religious practice of containing actual remnants of a person's body within a reliquary. At the time of its donation to the National Portrait Gallery, the death mask and its box was accompanied by a cast of Lawrence's right hand (fig. 124), a sign that was widely considered the outlet for creative inspiration. The coming-together of these various elements worked to create a multi-faceted portrait of the artist, a descriptive and literal substitution for the body. The constituent parts expand Richard Brilliant's definition of portraiture as a 'comprehensive sign', by including a variety of elements that represent or refer to the artist's body.⁶³

Whilst there is no definitive evidence regarding the sculptor or moulder who was responsible for making the cast (the National Portrait Gallery describes the maker of Lawrence's death mask as "unknown artist"), the prolific collector of death masks, Laurence Hutton, claimed that the mask was made by the sculptor Edward H. Baily.⁶⁴ Richard Walker supports this assertion by noting the similarity between Baily's posthumous marble bust of Lawrence (fig. 125) and the death mask, suggesting a clear familiarity with the painter's facial features.⁶⁵ Similarly, there is no evidence of the request for the death mask to be taken,

⁶³ R. Brilliant, 'Portraiture', *Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly (Oxford, 1998).

⁶⁴ Hutton, *Portraits in Plaster*, pp. 138-141. This is referenced in Richard Walker, *Regency Portraits*, p. 311, which also mentions that there is no reference to the making of the death mask in D. E. William's detailed description of Lawrence's death in *The Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence* (London, 1831). Hutton's cast of the death mask is inscribed 'A. L. Vago / London', *Laurence Hutton Papers*, Box 26, ex. 91, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. This would have been made several decades after Lawrence's death as Ambrose Lewis Vago was born in 1839. See 'Ambrose Lewis Vago', *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851-1951*, http://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/person.php?id=ann_1441022835 (12 Feb. 2018).

⁶⁵ Walker, *Regency Portraits*, p. 311. Walker suggests that Baily may well have consulted Lawrence's death mask in order to create his posthumous portrait.

although records show that it was owned by Archibald Keightley, friend and executor of Lawrence's estate, who left it to his daughters after his own death.⁶⁶ It is likely, therefore, that Keightley made the request much like Angerstein did after the death of his friend Pitt. The plausibility of this is strengthened by a close study of the particularities of its eventual display and an analysis of the intimate and performative encounter that would have been experienced by the viewer. The inclusion of a print after Lawrence's final self-portrait allowed the viewer to absorb an image of him in life, before lifting the lid and crossing the boundary between past and present, life and death, to witness the uncanny image of Lawrence's dead face.

The process of accessing the death mask in this way is lost in its current display within a plastic box but imagining the act as it was originally conceived provides a potent insight into the ceremonial contact that this kind of display engendered.⁶⁷ The close positioning of these binary modes of representation highlighted the separation between life and death and emphasised the sense of an existence beyond the grave. The first image, a self-portrait, is a subjective representation of the artist from his own perspective, albeit through a reproductive print. The artist looks out to the viewer with self-confident composure, in contrast to the withdrawn, dead gaze of his death mask underneath, thus preventing direct engagement with the viewer.⁶⁸ Enclosing the death mask in this way, rather than moulding it onto a stand or inserting a hook for hanging in the obverse side, shifted the focus away from the death mask as artistic model, to a memorial intended for a particular audience through a carefully orchestrated viewing experience.

⁶⁶ They subsequently donated the object to the National Portrait Gallery in 1911. See Registered Packet 1634, National Portrait Gallery, London.

⁶⁷ Pointon discusses the display of the death masks in relation to touch in 'Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things', pp. 185-6.

⁶⁸ Grootenboer suggests a 'present-absent gaze' of death masks in *Treasuring the Gaze*, pp. 117-121.

In this way, Lawrence's death mask is best studied within the context of a culture of relics that became increasingly pronounced over the course of the nineteenth century, with roots in the practices of the mid-eighteenth century.⁶⁹ Deborah Lutz discusses this revival of relic culture during the nineteenth century, which she argues developed into a more secular and intimate form of remembrance.⁷⁰ This, she proposes, was the result of a twofold drive to retain proof that the deceased still existed in some way and to focus one's attention to the moment of loss at the point of death.⁷¹ Viewed in these terms, the death mask forced the viewer into an almost liminal position; it was life-affirming whilst also acknowledging the loss of that life. Lawrence's death mask and its display case thus acted as a personal tie between the deceased and the original owner. Assuming that this was Keightley, his inclusion of objects that Lawrence touched on a daily basis in addition to an actual remnant of his body epitomises Lutz's argument about the use of relics in the nineteenth century to both memorialise the dead and keep their memory alive in the present.

The distinct signification of these objects requires a more theoretical means of analysis in order to crystallise the value of the death mask and relative importance of display. Whereas the death mask is an imprint of the body by second remove, Lawrence's pencil, stub and chalk relate to the artist by way of touch, adding another non-visual facet to the viewer's interpretation of the object. Just like the holy relics of Christian practice, these objects could be viewed as secondary relics, having been owned, used and touched by Lawrence himself. The preservation of these objects was not uncommon at the time. For example, when the artist Richard Parkes Bonington died, his father sent 'one large Case [of] all the Reliques [sic] of my Dear Child's Talents and Industry...' to Thomas Lawrence.⁷² Akin to a saintly

⁶⁹ Lutz, 'The Dead Are Still Among Us', p. 129.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 128. Lutz's article provides a concise history of secular relic culture in Europe, highlighting the similarities with holy relics.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Richard Bonington to Thomas Lawrence, 16 February 1829, *Lawrence's Letter-Bag*,

shroud stained by the blood of Christ, the items were imbued with a fascinating allure by virtue of their original proximity to the artist's body via the cast-making process.⁷³ They did not resemble the artist nor were they part of him but they still possessed a kind of presence-as-absence, an intangible aura of authenticity, albeit in an entirely different way.⁷⁴ As Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of indices makes clear, just as 'A sundial or a clock *indicates* the time of day', so too did Lawrence's tools indicate his existence and artistic genius, in a sense, keeping them alive in the present and, conversely, recognising that the act of artistic creation was now at an end.⁷⁵

The other significant addition to the lid of the container was the lock of Lawrence's hair. Like his tools, the hair was not a likeness or a representation of the artist but the abject remains of his body. In her study on abjection, Julia Kristeva notes that hair assumed 'the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite'.⁷⁶ The hair had not merely come into contact with Lawrence but was actually part of him. This added another dimension to the presentation of his death mask. It proved that Lawrence had been there, that, as Roland Barthes writes, he had 'been absolutely, irrefutably present'.⁷⁷ As discussed in chapter two of this thesis, preserving the hair in this manner was a way of literally holding on to the body, as well as the memory, of a person after death. As Pointon writes, jewellery that incorporated human hair originated in the Middle Ages and was particularly prevalent in Christian practice, which, she goes on to suggest, was due to a passage from the book of Revelations in which a lock of hair

p. 213.

⁷³ Didi-Huberman and Repensek, 'The index of the absent wound', pp. 63-81.

⁷⁴ Peter Geimer has discussed the special significance given by holy relics which had come into direct contact with Christ's body. See P. Geimer, 'Image as trace: speculations about an undead paradigm', trans. K. Gellen, in *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 18/1 (2007), p. 11.

⁷⁵ Peirce, 'Logic as Semiotic', p. 13.

⁷⁶ J. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: an Essay in Abjection*, trans. L. S. Roudiez (New York, 1982), p. 4.

⁷⁷ R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. R. Howard (London, 1981), p. 77.

can be taken as a sign of possible reunion with the deceased.⁷⁸ Holding on to an actual body part was a way of bridging the divide between past and present, living and dead. By the nineteenth century, jewellery that incorporated locks of hair was commonplace, used as a synecdoche for the deceased. Thomas Laqueur explains that

It became the corporeal auto-icon par excellence...the real standing for the symbolic – perhaps not eternally incorruptible but long lasting enough, a bit of a person that lives eerily on as a souvenir.⁷⁹

The use of Lawrence's hair in this case, presented in conjunction with the death mask, is an interesting example of an assembly of index and symbol, or the real as symbol, as an all-encompassing mode of remembrance. The imprint of Lawrence's face cast in plaster was given a new and weightier significance by this actual vestige of the man. Geoffrey Batchen considers this meeting of signs in relation to pieces of jewellery that combine a photograph and a lock of hair, providing a productive point of comparison for the present example.⁸⁰ Pointing out the increase in the inclusion of photographs and hair in mourning jewellery during the nineteenth century, he questions if it was necessary to combine the two together, and if so, what the one did to the other under these circumstances. The photograph, he argues, is 'present as a visual trace even when absent as a material thing', so why interfere with an image that functions so well with a physical remnant that is so crude and carnal?⁸¹ The same, of course, can be said for the death mask as it raises the question about the effect of the lock of hair on the viewer to the experience of Lawrence's cast, which described his face as opposed to an abstract remnant of his body.

⁷⁸ M. Pointon, 'These fragments I have shored against my ruins', in *The Story of Time*, ed. K. Lippincott (London, 1999), pp. 198-201.

⁷⁹ T. Laqueur, 'Clio looks at corporeal politics', in *Corporeal Politics* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), p. 16-18.

⁸⁰ G. Batchen, 'Ere the Substance Fade', *Photographs Objects Histories* (London, 2004), pp. 32-47.

⁸¹ Batchen, 'Ere the Substance Fade', p. 39.

Batchen considers the relationship between the photograph and lock of hair as a way of memorialising the life of a loved one in relation to a commemorative locket in which a photograph has been placed in one side and a lock of hair encased in the other. In this way, the ‘unhindered immediacy of representation’ that characterises photography is met face-to-face with the actual remnant of the person depicted.⁸² The implication of this coupling, however, is that the one is not sufficient without the other. The photograph does not adequately represent the person depicted and neither does the synecdochic lock of hair. Batchen’s assertion that in this juxtaposition the photograph emerges as an image that sacrifices its own materiality in favour of its referent (the person depicted) is similar to Louis Kaplan’s argument about the photograph as an invisible, a ‘transparent’ gateway to the original referent.⁸³ Though Lawrence’s death mask was taken directly from the face and relates to the mechanical nature of the photographic process in this way, its three-dimensionality imbues it with a sense of touch that is lacking in photography. The viewer, rather than having to visually transpose the photograph from image to reality, could absorb another sensory layer provided by the death mask. Interestingly, Batchen reflects on the lack of touch in photography, suggesting that the addition of hair helps to close the gap between the viewer and the viewed, and between the image of the subject and their past physical existence.⁸⁴ Considering the Lawrence example in these terms shows how the death mask worked doubly to link the past with the present through the tactility of the cast as well as through the small tuft of hair.

For the contemporary viewer, therefore, the experience provided by this object was both optic and haptic and provided a rarefied encounter with the death mask.⁸⁵ Lawrence’s

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 40.

⁸⁴ Batchen, ‘Ere the Substance Fade’, p. 41.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Batchen uses these terms to describe a daguerreotype encased alongside a patch of fabric from the clothes of the deceased.

lock of hair and his artistic accoutrements, alongside his death mask, presented the viewer with a combination of abject remains, associative markets, and physical imprint, all of which worked together to create a more intense portrait experience and thus, to take Batchen's words, 'a secular object [was] given a potentially sacred aspect'.⁸⁶ In a letter written a few days after Lawrence's death between his friends Mrs Hayman and Elizabeth Croft, Hayman writes, 'Your idea of the Hand was beautiful. The hair will indeed be very valuable...'.⁸⁷ Whilst the cast of his hand and lock of hair may refer to that which accompanied the death mask, it is also possible that they were separately commissioned by Croft. Regardless of their eventual use and setting, Hayman's description demonstrates the significance of objects that were so closely connected to Lawrence's body and gives some indication of how their inclusion within the display of the death mask would have been perceived. Hayman struggled to make sense of his death, as she went on to describe in the letter:

I cannot convince myself that He who was so much more alive than any other Human being now lies an insensible corps [sic] in the scene of all his Fame and Glory...

A memento from his actual body helped to process this loss whilst also reminding her of her friend's physical decline. Almost two weeks after their initial exchange, Hayman wrote to Croft again thanking her for a lock of his hair: '...I am very grateful for the Hair; it was part of the great change I grieved to see in him'.⁸⁸ This remnant of his body not only confirmed his death but preserved his memory along with, as in the Keightley cast, the tools he put down as his artistic career and indeed life came to an end. The multitude and variety of signs that were given in this example, provided an all-encompassing image of Lawrence that acknowledged both his life and his death. At the same time, the viewer was called upon to

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Mrs Hayman to Miss Croft, 17 January 1830 cited in *Lawrence's Letter-Bag*, p. 230.

⁸⁸ Letter from Mrs Hyman to Miss Croft, Gresford, 17 January 1830, *Lawrence's Letter-Bag*, p. 231.

contemplate the moment of death itself, which for some, is likely to have led to a self-reflexive consideration of their own mortality.

‘A sweet sleep’

The viewer would have been in little doubt that the cast of Lawrence’s face was taken after death thanks to the unique display of the object, the sculptural additions, namely the bed shirt and bedsheet, all clearly designed to situate this image of Lawrence in a particular setting – his deathbed. Depicting someone on their deathbed, whether in the last moments of life or immediately following death, is a common sub-genre of British portraiture and emotional scenes of someone’s dying moments also featured in numerous novels of the period.⁸⁹

Deathbed scenes often portrayed the dead and dying within intimate settings and emphasised familial unity, sometimes including, for example, a depiction of the second wife within the composition. This practice was particularly prevalent during the seventeenth century as I discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Whilst the composition of these portraits emphasised the place of the deceased within the family, it was also common to focus on the body and its setting, as in Anthony Van Dyck’s famous *Venetia, Lady Digby, on her Deathbed* (1633) (fig. 126).⁹⁰ Her devastated husband, Sir Kenelm Digby later described the exactness of the painting, which, he writes,

...is the Master peece of all the excellent ones that ever Sir Anthony Vandike made, who drew her the second day after she was dead; and hath expressed with admirable art every circumstance about her, as well as the exact manner of her lying, as for the likenesse of her face; and hath altered or added nothing about it, excepting onely a rose lying upon the hemme of the sheete, whose leaves being pulled from the stalke in

⁸⁹ In the introduction, I referred to some of these texts including Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1748). Running to hundreds of pages, *Clarissa*’s death is a protracted tale of a noble and Christian passing.

⁹⁰ *Venetia* Stanley’s husband commissioned this work as well as a death mask, casts of her hands, and preserved a lock of her hair. See P. Davidson, *The Universal Baroque* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 63-4.

the full beauty of it, and seeming to wither apace, even whiles you looke upon it, is a fitt Embleme to express the state her bodie then was in.⁹¹

Deathbed portraits like this had a profound and consoling effect on the viewer, recording as they did the last moments at which the body appeared as in life. This practice continued in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as I have shown. In chapter three, I described how Prince Leopold was devastated not to have a portrait of his stillborn son and in chapter one, I considered Allan Ramsay's compulsion to paint a sketch of his young child after death, never to be shown publicly until his own passing.

By concentrating on the face of the deceased, the relationship between deathbed portraits and death masks is clear. Whoever created Lawrence's death mask would have been well aware of this artistic context. Furthermore, the method of display required the death mask to lie flat and thus the very act of viewing it from above rather than face-to-face, would have amplified the sense of looking down on someone in bed.⁹² The association to deathbed portraiture would have been readily understood and the finality of death thus reinforced. Certain portrayals of deathbed scenes, however, offered a fiction that likened the image of death with sleep. This metaphor was a common form of expression used to describe both the corpse and representations of it. Lawrence himself, for example, described the face of John Kemble after death 'as calm as if he had been in a sweet sleep' and when Nollekens made a death mask of an unnamed woman's husband, Smith quotes him as saying, '...you had better let me close his eyelids; for then, when I cast him in my mould, he'll look for all the world as if he was asleep...'.⁹³ Many church monuments similarly referred to death as sleep, particularly those constructed in the seventeenth century.⁹⁴ This sense of liminality, an image

⁹¹ V. Gabrieli, *Sir Kenlem Digby* (Rome, 1957), pp. 246-48 cited in J. Ingamells, *Dulwich Picture Gallery: British* (London, 2008), p. 104.

⁹² Pointon, 'Casts, Imprints and the Deathliness of Things', p. 185.

⁹³ *Lawrence's Letter-Bag*, p. 175; Smith, *Nollekens and His Times*, p. 367.

⁹⁴ Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, p. 352.

that fictively teetered on the boundary of life and death, was fitting for an object that existed at the edge of portraiture, neither an original work of art by virtue of the mould, nor a representation of the deceased that adequately showed them as in life.

The use of this metaphor stemmed from both the Bible and classical texts that formed the cornerstone of elite education in Britain.⁹⁵ For example, in his fifth poem, the Roman poet Catullus (c. 84–54 BC) compares death to continuous sleep: ‘For us, when the short light has once set, / remains to be slept the sleep of one unbroken night’ and in Horace’s dirge for Quintilius, he writes, ‘So then, sleep without end lies heavy on Quintilius’.⁹⁶ Additionally, the idea of sleep as a transitory state before the resurrection of the dead was a key tenant of the Bible:

But I would not haue you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleepe, that ye sorrow not, euen as others which haue no hope.⁹⁷

St Paul continues to explain that at the coming of the Lord, the dead and the worthy who lived on earth would meet the Lord above. Death, therefore, did not constitute complete obliteration of a person but rather the intermediary state between life and posthumous existence because as Jesus says in John 11:25, ‘hee that beleueth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he liue’.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ For a discussion of classical education in Britain during the second half of the eighteenth century, see Coltman, *Fabricating the Antique*, pp. 28-30. M. B. Ogle discusses the use of sleep as a metaphor for death in ancient texts and to a lesser degree, Biblical passages in ‘The Sleep of Death’, *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 11 (1933), pp. 81-117.

⁹⁶ Catullus, T., ‘Poems’, V, 5-6, *Catullus. Tibullus. Pervigilium Veneris*, trans. F. W. Cornish, J. P. Postgate, J. W. Mackail. rev. G. P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library 6. (Cambridge, MA, 1913), p. 7; Horace, ‘Odes’, I, 24, 5-6, *Odes and Epodes*. ed. and trans. N. Rudd. Loeb Classical Library 33. (Cambridge, MA, 2004), p. 69.

⁹⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

⁹⁸ There was significant debate at this time about the resurrection of the body over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Udo Thiel provides an overview of debates about identity and the resurrection-body in, ‘Religion and materialist metaphysics: some aspects of the debate about the resurrection of the body in eighteenth-century Britain’, in *Philosophy and Religion in Enlightenment Britain: New Case Studies*, (ed.) R. Savage (Oxford, 2012), pp. 90-111.

Whilst there are clear textual and artistic precedents for this metaphor, the idea that an artist might transform an image of the deceased, whether cast, drawn or painted, into a fictive pose that suggests sleep, also speaks to a more emotional interaction with such a work.

Elizabeth Croft recounted her impression of a drawing by Lawrence of her deceased brother (fig. 127), Richard Croft, accoucheur to Princess Charlotte:

In 1818 he made a drawing of my brother in his coffin, and by his magical power contrived to give it the appearance of sleep in his armchair. I am certain he considered it one of his most exquisite performances, as he constantly sent for it when he had artists dining with him. One friend called it “the triumph of Genius over death”⁹⁹

The drawing is rendered with the utmost delicacy in graphite and red chalk. Croft’s body has been loosely suggested and whilst it is impossible to detect an armchair as such, he is clearly seated rather than lying flat in a coffin. Lawrence has made sensitive use of red chalk to pick out certain features, including the lips, cheeks, ears and around the eyes, which together, enliven his expression and make the portrait appear more lifelike. Through his ‘magical power’ Lawrence restored the corpse to a sleeping being with flushed cheeks and lips slightly parted, giving the illusion of breathing.¹⁰⁰ As Elizabeth Croft’s quotation states, the drawing demonstrates Lawrence’s ability to overcome death through his art, or as she goes on to write, ‘the triumph of Genius over death’. Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that Elizabeth Croft ever owned the drawing, nor whether it provided comfort in her grief, it is probable that works such as this allowed the viewer to indulge in the fictitious subject

⁹⁹ I am grateful to Hugh Douglas Page Croft, the owner of this drawing, to permit my use of this image and to Jane MacAusland for discussing its condition in her studio. The National Trust owns a copy of this drawing (NT 537598), which is on display at the Croft Castle. According to unsubstantiated National Trust records, this copy was made by Mrs Keightly’s daughter with Lawrence’s own pencils, lent for the purpose. If this was the case, it would constitute a fascinating example of the relic-like status of Lawrence’s artistic tools, which I discuss in greater depth later in this chapter.

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion of the primacy of drawing in Lawrence’s practice see A.C. Albinson, ‘Delineating a Life: Lawrence as Draftsman’, in A.C. Albinson, P. Funnell and L. Peltz (eds.), *Thomas Lawrence: Regency, Power and Brilliance* (New Haven and London, 2010), pp. 129-33.

because it suspended the reality of a loved one's passing, thereby lessening the blow of the loss.

It has been suggested that this idea of adding a flush of colour to the face of the deceased was at play in the presentation of Jonathan Swift's death mask (d. 1745) (fig. 128). T.G. Wilson suggested that the first cast of Swift's death mask, taken before his post-mortem, had been painted in balsam of copaiba, which 'when first applied would be flesh coloured, but which would later turn dark brown'.¹⁰¹ The yellowish brown colour of copaiba, however, would probably have given the death mask an appearance closer to that of wax but this was a substance used for its tactile verisimilitude to human flesh.¹⁰² Whereas, in the case of the Croft drawing and Swift's death mask, sleep could be suggested through judicious use of colour, for Lawrence's death mask, sleep was implied by adapting the cast sculpturally.

Whilst acting as a means of processing emotional trauma, the metaphor of death-as-sleep was also used to lessen fear of the corpse. In a lithograph by Richard James Lane (fig. 129), a cast from Lawrence's face is reproduced from three different angles. Beneath this, a line from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has been appended, 'The Sleeping and the dead. Are but as pictures'. The implication of Lady Macbeth's statement to her husband is that people should not fear the dead, or indeed the sleeping, because, through lack of animation, they cannot harm the living. The cast represented in the print was not, however, a death mask but a cast taken from the life when the artist was aged thirty-four. Nevertheless, the truncated appearance and expressionless face imbued the image with a deathliness that the printmaker and publisher exploited in the creation of the print. Indeed, the 1906 publication of

¹⁰¹ T.G. Wilson 'A Hitherto Undescribed Death-Mask of Dean Swift', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 81/2 (1951), p. 112.

¹⁰² The use of copaiba by painters and conservators has been discussed in a more recent article, which provides helpful information about the characteristics of the balsam. See I.D. van der Werf, K.J. van den Berg, S. Schmitt, and J.J. Boon, 'Molecular Characterization of Copaiba Balsam as Used in Painting Techniques and Restoration Procedures', *Studies in Conservation*, 45/1 (2000), pp. 1-18.

Lawrence's Letter-Bag, included a reproduction of this print next to the section entitled 'Death'.¹⁰³ The deathly image of the cast and idea of sleep elide in this work so that the viewer is not horrified by the image but approaches it as a work of commemoration, or even reverence.

The presentation of Lawrence's death mask created a unique viewing experience that provided an enhanced commemorative representation of the man. Whilst this mode of display was unique, it highlights the way in which the death mask functioned and was regarded as a posthumous representation more broadly. Unlike a painted, drawn or sculpted portrait, the death mask provided a trace of Lawrence that was amplified by the inclusion of objects from his life and a lock of his hair. Together these elements acted as testament to his existence in a visceral sense. Rather than representing Lawrence at the height of his earthly powers, the presentation of his death mask shone a spotlight on the very fact of his death. The adaptation of the cast to make Lawrence appear as if he were asleep lessened the blow of his passing and connected it to a Christians sense of the transitory nature of death.

'There was perhaps nothing...of greater interest than the original Mask'¹⁰⁴

As the Lawrence example makes clear, the mode of display was integral to the perception of a death mask. The various casts of Sir Walter Scott's death mask emphasise this even further. Such was the interest in the death of the celebrated Scottish writer, a post-mortem was conducted in order to ascertain the cause of his death and later published for public consumption.¹⁰⁵ During this examination, the upper part of his cranium was removed in order

¹⁰³ *Lawrence's Letter-Bag*, inserted between pp. 226 and 227.

¹⁰⁴ *The Scott exhibition, MDCCCLXXI: Catalogue of the Exhibition Held at Edinburgh, in July and August* (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 167.

¹⁰⁵ Details of the post-mortem, provided by J. B. Clarkson, was reproduced in J. G. Lockhart's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh, 1845), p. 219.

to examine the brain, which left a large scar across the head. Soon after, a death mask was taken and cast in plaster (fig. 130) ‘no doubt under the directions and inspection of the medical gentleman referred to’ and subsequently found its way into the ownership of James Hope Scott, the husband of Charlotte Lockhart, Sir Walter Scott’s granddaughter.¹⁰⁶ A further bronze cast of the death mask was made ‘some years later’ by the artist John Steell for Hope Scott, which was then displayed at Abbotsford (fig. 131).¹⁰⁷

The original death mask cast in plaster oscillates between art and science, portrait and relic, during a period in which the function of the death mask as a commemorative object started to shift and, in this instance, culminated with the creation of the later bronze cast. As previously shown, the death mask was not only viewed as an artistic model for a portrait, albeit of a very particular nature, but, as the nineteenth century progressed, was presented as a kind of secular relic fascinating contemporary viewers for its relational association with a person and the objects that were sometimes displayed alongside it. As I will discuss in greater depth in the conclusion of this thesis, the invention of the daguerreotype and other early methods of photography came to dominate the arts as a mechanical process of image-making. This coincided with, and was in part responsible, for the decline in death mask production.

The capacity for the death mask to capture the features of a person’s face and the extent to which this posthumous cast effectively represented the living both in terms of

¹⁰⁶ *The Scott Exhibition*, p. 167. Following the death of Charlotte’s elder brother Walter Lockhart-Scott in 1853, the couple inherited Abbotsford, where they had already been living for several years as tenants. Numerous other casts were made of Scott’s death mask and are now found in both public and private collections, including the Phrenological Society’s collection at the University of Edinburgh, which holds two versions.

¹⁰⁷ The date of this bronze cast is unknown. Lieuallen does not refer to it in his unpublished thesis and catalogue raisonné of John Steell, even though he does refer to other death masks. Rather than using Scott’s death mask to create his posthumous portrait of Scott for the Prince’s Street monument Lieuallen notes that Steell referred to Chantrey’s 1828 bust of the writer. The current staff at Abbotsford do not know when the bronze death mask was made, nor when or where it was first put on display by James Hope Scott. John Rutherford’s guide to Abbotsford published in 1850 does not refer to the death mask and as Hope Scott did not inherit the house until 1853, it seems unlikely that the bronze death mask was on display before then, or even cast by this point.

appearance and the expression of character, was the locus of debate concerning these objects. This interest in physiognomy had dominated art theoretical writings on portraiture for centuries but the idea that the body could reveal something essential about a person's character achieved prominence in the early nineteenth century with the development of phrenology. Founded by Dr Franz Joseph Gall, this controversial analytical system was adopted by Dr Johann Gaspar Spurzheim who joined Gall as his dissector and co-worker during his studies as a doctor. As the latter wrote,

in the features of the face, and more especially in the expression of the countenance, we shall often find indications of mental faculties, and of what is passing within.¹⁰⁸

Although ridiculed by some, amongst Britain's supporters of the theory was George Coombs, who in 1820 established the Phrenological Society and in 1828 published the successful *Essay on the Constitution of Man Considered in Relation to External Objects*.¹⁰⁹ After this, numerous other phrenological societies were founded throughout the country, in each of which a collection of death masks and casts of skulls were gathered together. These casts were usually taken from people who possessed some extreme character or talent; they were faces of the 'famous and infamous', to take the title of a 1988 Edinburgh exhibition.

Scott's death coincided with the rise of phrenology and the gruesome scar across his cranium, captured by the death mask, is testament to this. The aggressive mark of this procedure, which had additionally altered and elongated the shape of the skull, could have been removed as part of the cast-making process, and indeed, it was often smoothed over in later casts.¹¹⁰ But the original death mask retained the scarring, thereby complicating the

¹⁰⁸ Anon. II (review), 'Phrenology in connexion with the study of Physiognomy. G. Spurzheim, M. D. Part 1. Characters, with 34 plates', *Medico-Chirurgical Review, and Journal of Medical Science*, 5 (London, 1826), p. 469.

¹⁰⁹ G. Coombs, *Essay on the Constitution of Man Considered in Relation to External Objects* (Edinburgh, 1828).

¹¹⁰ See, for example, the casts of Scott's death mask in the Phrenological Society's collection, Edinburgh (no. H172), and the Laurence Hutton collection of death masks, Princeton (C0770/Box 32).

purpose of the object. This was not simply a lasting memorialisation of Scott but a scientific record. Whereas the artists who created the death mask of Lawrence and the deathbed study of Croft sought to vivify the representation of the deceased by making the corpse appear like a sleeping body, the scar across the cranium of Scott's mask was a brutal reminder of his death, as well as the scientific interest in his mental faculties. This cast was exhibited at the Scott's centenary exhibition in 1871 and the accompanying catalogue states that it was in the possession, not of a phrenologist but a family member.¹¹¹ This was not, therefore, an object of phrenological interest but neither was it a comforting posthumous representation. It instead existed as a secular relic, that is, 'Something kept as a remembrance, souvenir, or memorial; a historical object *relating to* a particular person, place, or thing; a memento'.¹¹² If this is to be a productive way of considering the death mask, the setting and mode of display becomes particularly significant.

Whilst there are no records that attest to the precise location of Scott's plaster death mask at Abbotsford, it is clear from the 1871 exhibition catalogue that it was on display in the house, which, following Scott's death, was occupied by his granddaughter and her husband, James Hope Scott. Walter Scott's treasured home in the Borders was packed with objects of varying individual value that richly described moments in Scottish history.¹¹³ Though a fictitious composition, William Allan's portrait of Scott in his study at Abbotsford (fig. 132) is illustrative of the writer's interest in the material culture of Scotland's past. Together, Allan and Scott selected a range of objects from Abbotsford described in detail when they were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1832:

¹¹¹ *The Scott exhibition*, p. 167.

¹¹² 'relic, n.'. *OED Online*, www.oed.com/view/Entry/161910 (28 Mar. 2018)

Italics my own.

¹¹³ For a description of this practice of collecting non-religious relics that began in the sixteenth century, see Lutz, 'The Dead are Still Among Us', p. 129.

...Near the bookcase are hung an ancient border bugle, James the Sixth's travelling flask, and the sporrán or purse of Rob Roy M'Gregor. Behind the bust of Shakespeare is Rob Roy's long gun, above which is Claverhouse's pistol.¹¹⁴

Sitting amongst this assortment of objects, Scott holds up and reads Mary Queen of Scots's proclamation of her marriage to Lord Darnley, yet another memento from Scotland's past brought into the depicted present. Illuminated by the manuscript, which reflects the light from the window behind him, Allan confers a sacred-like aura onto the man as he sits within his study – a microcosmic vessel of Scotland's past. Just like the objects around his, Scott is representative of a historical moment, a figure who finds his place in the cultural life of the present by anchoring himself to, and engaging with, objects and events from history. The display of his death mask within this context emphasised this notion even further. Placed alongside these artefacts, Scott's death mask was a Scottish relic in just the same way as James VI's flask or Claverhouse's pistol.

On the day of Scott's funeral, his friend the writer Sir Thomas Dick Lauder recounted his urge to peer into the window of Scott's study. His description is punctuated by pseudo-religious vocabulary:

Our attention was attracted, by observing the window of the study open, and we were led to look within, *impelled* by no idle or blameable curiosity, but rather like a *pilgrim* approaching the *shrine* where his warmest adoration has ever been paid.¹¹⁵

Lauder refers to the study as a 'sacred penetralium'. His experience of looking into the room as 'if the great magician himself had been seated in the chair', conveys the feeling that Scott's presence lingers amongst 'the different articles [that] remain much in the same places they occupied when [he] had last seen them'.¹¹⁶ No object must have possessed this sense of departed presence more emphatically than the death mask; a relic within its shrine. Indeed, this became even more pronounced when Hope Scott commissioned the sculptor John Steell

¹¹⁴ *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy: MDCCCVVVII* (London, 1832), p. 14.

¹¹⁵ *The Scott exhibition*, p. 167.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

to re-cast the death mask, which he displayed for visitors to Abbotsford. This iteration cast in bronze rests on a cushion with folds of fabric underneath his chin also rendered in bronze. It is not possible to date this cast with any precision, but it was not mentioned in a guidebook to Abbotsford published in 1850.¹¹⁷ Had it been on display at this time, it is likely to have been commented upon as it was the most popular exhibit at Scott's centenary exhibition in 1871, as noted in the accompanying catalogue; 'There was perhaps nothing...of greater interest than the original Mask'.¹¹⁸ It is likely, therefore, that this later cast was made in the 1850s or 1860s, which falls outside the timespan of this thesis. It is necessary to touch upon the presentation of the bronze cast, however, as this example marks the point at which the death mask reached its limit as a mode of commemoration.

At the start of this chapter, I questioned the extent to which the proximity to the body of the deceased provided by the death mask affected the way in which these objects functioned within commemorative practices. As I have shown, this contact imbued the death mask with a sense of authenticity that drew the viewer closer to the body of the deceased. This did not result in an image that the contemporary viewer understood as an accurate representation of the deceased as they were in life, and as my discussion of Nollekens's practice shows, other forms of portraiture were often used alongside the death mask in order to create an artistically rendered 'like' portrait. This demonstrates the different status of the death mask and the painted or sculpted portrait but also reinforces the artistry of portraiture that went beyond the use of precise physical measurements to accurately capture the

¹¹⁷ J. Rutherford and J. H. Rutherford, *Rutherford's Guide to Melrose, Abbotsford, Dryburgh, Kelso, and Jedburgh, etc.* (Edinburgh, 1850). In recent years, the bronze death mask was displayed in a small closet adjacent to Scott's library (it is now on display in the visitor centre). The staff at Abbotsford do not know when it was first put on display in this location, so we can assume that it was there for some time. According to *Rutherford's Guide*, in 1850, the closet contained 'what must be viewed by all with the deepest interest, the body-clothes worn by Sir Walter previous to his decease. They are locked within a glass-case placed upon a table...'. Rutherford and Rutherford, *Rutherford's Guide*, pp. 19-20.

¹¹⁸ *The Scott exhibition*, p. 167

character of a person. My discussion of the Lawrence and Scott examples reinforces the complexity of the death mask as an authentic portrayal of the deceased by demonstrating how the bodily contiguity between the corpse and the cast helped to distinguish the death mask from other forms of portraiture, operating on the boundary between portrait and relic. This relates to my second point of enquiry concerning the effect of different modes of displaying the death mask. Existing at the juncture of portrait and relic, the manner in which the Lawrence death mask was displayed invited a particular form of engagement that encouraged the viewer to consider the life and death of the sitter as they opened the display box and viewed the contents. The addition of attributes from his life and actual remnants from his body heightened the commemorative function of the object in a comparable fashion to the memorialising framing techniques of portrait miniatures. Hair, operating as physical trace and tactile reminder of the sitter's body, lent additional specificity to the death mask, contributing to this multifaceted form of commemorative portraiture. This was further pronounced by the casting material, which, as I showed with regards to the Scott death mask, imbued the cast with various associative values and forged connections with other forms of commemorative portraiture. Whilst the death mask, in many ways, stood apart from the other forms of posthumous portraiture discussed in this thesis by virtue of the cast-making process, the various modes of its display, its status as an object that could be circulated widely or kept within the home, and the role played by gender in its creation show that there was more that united than separated the death mask from other form of posthumous portraiture at this time. Nevertheless, its indexical relationship to the body of the deceased made the death mask the fulcrum of posthumous portraiture in the 1830s, positioned between longstanding artistic modes of portraiture and the new medium of photography that would soon come to dominate commemorative portrait practices.

Conclusion

Scott's death mask marked the apex of death mask production as a form of commemorative portraiture during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Perceived not just as a representation of the deceased but a relic-like imprint of the corpse, the death mask began to take on a role that no other portrait-type of the period could equal by virtue of the cast-making process. Whilst these casts continued to be made later into the nineteenth century, they largely became the purview of phrenologists and anthropologists who were interested in the shape and size of a person's head rather than the capacity for a death mask to act as a tactile representation of the deceased. Just a few years after Scott's death mask was cast for the first time, William Henry Fox Talbot and Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre both succeeded in fixing photographic images, the former, on paper, the latter, on silver-plated sheets of copper. From this point on, the photographic image became the predominant mode of representing the dead. This relatively inexpensive process allowed a far broader sector of society to possess a visual and physical reminder of their deceased loved one. The technical similarities between the death mask and the photographic image has been made by Batchen and others, sharing as they do an automatic process of production in which the physical body of a person was a necessary part of making.

Whilst the photograph became the dominant mode of commemorative portraiture from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the various ways in which these images functioned and were displayed demonstrates the inheritance of earlier posthumous portrait conventions.¹ Much has been written about the ways in which early photographers aped the artistic strategies employed by painters in order to stake their claim as artists in their own right and, further, to argue for the photograph's potential as an artistic medium. The same can be said of

¹ Much like earlier forms of portraiture that similarly gained currency in America, post mortem photography flourished from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. See Stanley B. Burns, *Sleeping Beauty: Memorial Photography in America* (Altadena, 1990).

photographic posthumous portraiture, which drew on many of the compositions and methods of display discussed in this thesis. A sepia *carte-de-visite* of a young child, Alfred Evans (fig. 133), taken after his death by an unknown photographer in 1868 shows the ten-month-old boy laid out on what appears to be an armchair, dressed in his nightgown with a blanket wrapped around his tiny form. If it were not for his slightly sunken eyes, one might mistake the image for a sleeping child. Much like the posthumous portraits of previous generations, the impact and emotional charge of the photograph was tempered by presenting the child in this manner. One can imagine his parents, holding onto this small piece of paper, the final trace of their son's existence, and mourning his passing, perhaps seeking comfort from this proof of his existence.

A similar photograph from around the same period affixed to a *memento mori* card (fig. 134), shows a child laid out on a bed with hands to the chest holding a cross, much like Cosway's drawing of his child Louisa following her death sixty or so years before. Beneath the photograph, two verses of poetry have been printed:

"Art thou sleeping? Art thou waking?
Tell us, darling child.
Through thy slumbers are there breaking
Voices soft and mild, --
Angel voices calling to thee,
None but thou can hear,
Angel whispers come to woo thee
To a brighter sphere?"

"On my couch my eyes are closing
To this world of pain;
Wakes my soul to this reposing,
Ne'er to sleep again.
I am sleeping; I am waking;
Sleeping to this earth,
But from tears and sorrow breaking
To a heavenly birth."

Once again, the association between sleep and death that we saw in the previous chapter is played out for the nineteenth-century viewer; presenting a less disturbing image of the child as if asleep whilst recognising the transition of the child's spirit from this world to the next.

It is possible that the card was originally printed without any photograph as a commercial venture, providing a template for those in mourning to customise with an image of their deceased loved one. Much like the designers of mourning jewellery of the previous decades who had presented their customers with patterns for hairwork, or the printmakers who had made use of recognisable mourning motifs in commemorative prints, canny publishers like John Hodges who produced this *memento mori* card readily understood the market for the material culture of commemoration, which flourished throughout the Victorian period.² Of course, hairwork and mourning jewellery continued to prosper throughout the century but the mode of depicting the deceased in such objects shifted to photography. As discussed in the previous chapter, Batchen has shown how mourning locketts, for example, which would once have contained a miniature portrait of the deceased, perhaps with a lock of the sitter's hair, as we saw with the Whitby example, soon contained a photographic portrait.

Looking beyond the purview of this thesis to the later nineteenth century and the various ways in which the post mortem photograph became the prominent mode of commemorative portraiture clearly demonstrates the same impulse to hold on to the image of the deceased, something which has persisted throughout history. Photographers were the inheritors of a commemorative form that contributed to a period of frenzied fascination with death that emerged during the so-called Victorian cult of death. The photographic portrait brought about the decline of other forms of portraiture discussed in this thesis and, as a consequence of this new inexpensive process, the commemorative function of portraiture was

² For an analysis of the Victorian commercialisation of death, see D. Cannadine, 'War and Death: Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain', *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. Joachim Whaley (London, 1981), pp. 187-242.

opened up to a far broader consumer base. The apparent truthfulness of the photographic image, despite the potential for varied compositions and adaptations which could be made to the image during the printing process, augmented the way in which people valued these objects. Photographs bore witness, they recorded that which no longer existed in a way that other, subjective modes of portraiture could not do.

The central aim of this thesis has been to investigate the impulse to commemorate the dead through posthumous portraiture and to assess the various ways in which artists and their patrons chose to create such depictions. Close examination of these works reveals the crucial role that the posthumous image of a person played in mourning practices. In order to do this, it has been vital to consider the artistic, socio-cultural and religious context in which these portraits were produced. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, the expression of emotion became the key tenant of sensibility, which had a profound effect on the manner in which artists depicted the deceased and the grieving engaged with such images. Whilst there were no fixed criteria for such portrayals, there was an emergence of recognisable motifs, compositions and modes of display, which were used to convey their commemorative function.

Many of the portraits discussed are well-known but this thesis adds to existing scholarship by bringing them together not as a coherent group but as a constellation of works that show the various approaches made by artists to maintain the presence of the deceased in the lives of the living. By doing so, these works demonstrate social relations between friends and associates, parents and their children, and between royalty and their subjects. The few existing studies on this subject, whilst providing a vital foundation to this thesis, focus on specific portraits types. It has been my aim, therefore, to show how a more encompassing study that considers the potential for different portrait types to commemorate the dead

through different means, thereby affecting the viewer in different ways, can deepen our understanding of posthumous portraiture within the context of eighteenth-century mourning practices. For example, whilst a miniature might provide an intimate encounter with the deceased and a tactile reminder of their existence, a commemorative print might be circulated on a large scale and possessed by many.

In addition and indeed fundamental to this study has been an understanding of posthumous portraits as aesthetic objects that were created at a particular art historical moment. Over the course of this thesis, I have drawn together motifs that traversed different portrait types and contributed to a burgeoning visual culture of death. These emerged during an era in which artists both looked back to the Renaissance and ancient Classical past and experimented with new ways of representing the post mortem state *a priori*. Alongside this, I have also demonstrated the extent to which different portrait types functioned in divergent ways and how the display or handling of a particular work affected the way in which the viewer engaged with the image of the deceased. Considering these works within a broader artistic context, I have shown how artists also adapted and played on existing portrait conventions in order to indicate the death of the sitter and commemorate their existence.

By looking at different accounts of people's responses to these portraits, it is clear that they were understood, used and displayed in different ways, serving to maintain the presence of the deceased, provide comfort in the surviving viewer yet prolong feelings of sadness. These portraits could also serve as a reminder of one's own mortality, to seek comfort in divine providence, and to sustain social bonds. As I have shown, however, it is important to recognise other factors that gave rise to these works. Whilst the culture of more overt expression of feeling took hold from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, there were still concerns over the perpetuation of the family line. Similarly, people continued to publicly

demonstrate their admiration or allegiance to a notable figure by purchasing posthumous portraits through reproductive means.

This highlights the distinction between public and private or, in many instances, the blurred lines between the two. As I showed in chapter two, the miniature, whilst understood as a more intimate form of engagement between the viewer and the sitter, could be used in full-scale portraiture to connote absence, repositioning it from the private to public realm. In chapter four, I showed how the death mask, which could be recast numerous times and circulated amongst family, friends and devoted supporters, could be presented in such a way as to invite a unique and personal encounter with the final image of the deceased. Regardless of the traditional associations of a portrait type defined as either public or private, posthumous representations slid between these categorisations in order to serve the various needs of the living.

Modes of display, therefore, did much to shape the conception of these works, which has been a significant aspect of this study as a result. This highlights another sea change in the way in which portraits were presented during this period. Whilst a particular portrait may have been intended for a family home, it may also have been displayed publicly in one of the new exhibiting institutions. Similarly, a portrait displayed in the home did not necessarily limit its audience because, as shown in relation to Batoni's portrait of the Barrett-Lennards in chapter two, many of these houses were visited by members of the public. In addition, during the period, artists often welcomed visitors to their studios and, in some instances, allowed friends of the deceased to comment on the likeness of a posthumous portrait, just as Nollekens did in his portrait bust of Pitt.

This particular example highlights another aspect of this thesis that offers new insights into portraiture of this period. Materials and processes of making had much to do with the way in which people conceptualised commemorative works. As I showed in chapter

four, this was particularly pronounced with death masks, which hovered on the boundary of art and imprint and raised issues about what constituted a likeness, a key aspect of theoretical discussions about portraiture at this time. Approaches to display and casting materials demonstrate how these curious objects, which reached their apogee during this period, edged towards the kind of secular relic that came to dominate Victorian commemorative practices. Indeed, as discussed above, the process of casting, no matter the object, imbued the casting materials with memorialising associations. The technical correlation between the cast and the photographic image shows how this new medium was conceptualised in a comparable way. Similarly, the continued use of certain commemorative elements throughout the nineteenth century – the inclusion of hair and various objects that related to the life of the deceased sitter – highlights the porous nature of this timeframe and demonstrates the inheritance of various commemorative strategies.

Throughout the thesis, the coming-together of word and image has been a persistent theme. In chapter two, I discussed the prevalent use of literary quotation in portrait miniatures, whether engraved into the frame or enclosed within it on a piece of paper. This speaks to a broader tendency to use the words of another to express one's own thoughts and feelings, allowing the grieving to give voice to their sadness through established and recognisable language. This continued into the early nineteenth century as I showed in chapter three with regards to the commemorative prints that were produced after the death of Princess Charlotte. Poetic verses primarily supplemented the commemorative function of these prints and helped the viewer to mourn the death of the princess in a manner that harked back to earlier modes of expression. This use and repurposing of text added another dimension to posthumous portraits and, as I have shown, provides an insight into some of the common passages of text, and visual and literary tropes used across different portrait types.

My exclusion of depictions of heroic deaths has allowed me to focus on the emotional charge of these words to the viewer, rather than the respect and admiration of patriotic valour. Even in the case of Princess Charlotte, the language surrounding her death, both visual and literary, was highly emotive and personal even when there was no direct relationship between the princess and the consumer of her posthumous depictions. This suggests a return to earlier modes of expression that dealt with the needs of the public at a particular moment of widespread grief. The tools and strategies that had been formulated in the latter part of the eighteenth century to remember the dead provided the means by which the tragic occasion of Charlotte's death, in terms of both the human tragedy and the resulting monarchical uncertainty, could be adequately commemorated.

This thesis began with the question: if all portraits had the capacity to comfort the grieving, what else did posthumous portraits offer the bereaved and how was this achieved by artists and their patrons? Posthumous portraits provided an outlet for the bereaved to express their grief by using allegory, recognisable commemorative motifs, framing devices and specific modes of making, and by playing on existing portrait conventions. They also provided a focus for deep feeling which, as I have shown, left many unable to process their grief. Posthumous portraits maintained the social bonds established in life and provided comforting images of the post-mortem existence of the dead. Commissioning or indeed personally creating these portraits also functioned as a public statement of one's emotion and showed a level of adherence to modes of mourning and cultural patterns of grief that emerged within a culture of sensibility. Much like any other portrait commissioned to mark a particular moment in the sitter's life, posthumous portraits commemorated the final moment of a person's existence, recording their final image for perpetuity.