Introduction

> I am altogether uncertain, whether to look upon my self as a man
> building a monument, or burying the dead?
>
> Alexander Pope, *Collected Works*

> Oh, my oblivion is a very Antony, and I am all forgotten.
>
> William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*

> Every man's death diminishes me.
>
> John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*

In the preface to his collected works, Alexander Pope claims ironically that
publishing his poems may be the surest way to consign them to an
unmarked grave. Pope pictures himself in both cases disposing of a corpse,
whether burying it in an unmarked grave or constructing for it a magnif-
icent tomb. He is his own works' chief mourner, and the (textual) body he is
burying appears to be his own.

Early in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Egyptian queen watches
Mark Antony refusing to mourn his wife's death. Cleopatra mocks Antony
acidly for neglecting proper grief, even for her sexual competitor. Cleopatra
then explains, but also forgets her rage, by imagining that she will share
Fulvia's fate. Her "oblivion" *is* Antony, the person who might fail to
remember, to grieve, her death.

John Donne in Meditation 17 of his *Devotions* seems to hear his own
death in the passing bell for another soul. Feverish in his bed, he wonders
uneasily if the bell *is* ringing for him, but he also embraces that greater
reality as a pastoral promise: that he is involved in the deaths of others.
Donne likewise prays for the obverse, that his own death will mark, will
diminish, the world.

These three performative texts[1] thus envision an anxious bond between
the forgettable dead and the voice of the living mourner who may be
implicated in the same oblivion. This dangerous but central cultural alliance
and identification between the dead and the living in post-Reformation

1

England grows in significance under the pressure of Tudor and Stuart crises of faith, practice, and social order. Certainly with the demolition of purgatory in the English Reformation, an enormous apparatus of death began to totter, and thinking about and responding to the dead thus came under state and popular surveillance in new ways. In particular, as the dead were imagined to be less transitory, less moveable than they had been in purgatory, mourners became in more than doctrinal ways the new liminal subject of scrutiny, as the dead had been before them. This shift of energy from the dead to the living remnant meant that mourning as well as death became, not only in theological ways but in many others as well, increasingly a site of similar social anxiety. This deconstruction is more or less directly visible in homiletic exhortations as well as in church rites and regulations. In social politics, medical practices, and architectural styles, mourners also adopted different roles and functions. Royal proclamations and popular practice, monuments and memorials, and, finally, a broad variety of literary discourses likewise refigure the similitudes between mourners and those they mourn.

This book will examine four particular sites of this complex connection between the dead and the living who mourn them. Inheritance rites and mourning rituals for aristocratic families were both controversial and highly regulated by the Elizabethan state because of their role in the transfer of power from a dead noble to a living heir, for instance; here the metaphors of transference between the dead and the living are dynastic as well as symbolic. Chapter 1 will explore this nexus of mourning and inheritance in the work of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke. As Catholic saints were exiled from Heaven (and replaced by new Protestant icons), devout clients had to pray in new ways to new saviors. Chapter 2 will consider how this devotional mourning and devotional patronage are connected in Aemelia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. In the fashionable melancholia of Stuart England, men and women are offered a kind of exalted imaginative dying in which subjects dissolve into their mourning artifacts. Chapter 3 will consider love-melancholy and its distinctive ideology of denatured sorrow in Mary Wroth's *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. Later in the seventeenth century, as the king himself became a martyr and his courtiers his rather precarious mourners, political grief became a high-risk game of alliances. Chapter 4 considers how retreat, escape, and political mourning intensify and complicate the elegiac gestures in Katherine Philips' lyric verse. Both the dead and mourners are in these various ways symbolically linked to each other in post-Reformation England, affectively, socially, memorially, and politically. When Richard Morysine suggests in 1544 that "we be framed and fasshioned by these.iii. thynges, Knowlege, Wyt, and

Memorie," he implies that memory makes the mourner as well as the mourned.[2] Richard Day, in 1608, makes the same point when he says that "oblivion is as a grave."[3] Forgetting, being forgotten, and being dead, are risks that the dead and the living ironically share, in more vivid terms in this era that must keep reinventing the remembering of the dead.

The textual focal points for this study will be poems by these four women writers from 1570–1670 who work out, in local and literary terms, the chains linking mourners and the ones for whom they grieve. Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), proposes to usurp her dead brother's voice in elaborate metaphorical substitutions of titular inheritance and social status drawn both from Elizabethan aristocratic mourning rites and from ideologies of mournful prophecy so prevalent in the sixteenth-century Reformed polemic. Pembroke revises the practices defining the mourner of an aristocratic lineage in her poems dedicated to her famous dead brother, Philip Sidney (Chapter 1). In Aemelia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), Lanyer makes her patrons into mourners and herself into their client as she reinvents saints and intercession. Lanyer's authorizing doctrines of grief, complaint, and sympathy complicate her patronage gift from a mid-dling poet to aristocratic mourners (Chapter 2). Mary Wroth's nostalgic romance *Urania* (1621) and her equally nostalgic lamentory sonnets show a series of grieving lovers who become shells of themselves in the poems they extrude. The Jacobean medical cult of melancholy and its affective leakages create in Wroth's hands a landscape of memorial objects which are just as absent as their mourning subjects (Chapter 3). Katherine Philips' politicized elegies of the 1650s and 60s reveal how complicated it was to grieve for public figures and intimate friends alike in an era where the wrong allegiance to the dead could mean death for the mourner. In her works, the mutually con-stitutive political positions of mourners and the dead in the civil wars and Restoration are fascinatingly complicated (Chapter 4).[4] In every case, the literary work witnesses these complicated bonds between the remembrance of the dead and the memorability of the mourner. These texts also acknowledge that they cannot, even as they strive to, guarantee their own "promises of a second life in literary monuments."[5] In each of these cases, the texts are thus multiply cloaked in mourning garments, invoking all of the possibilities of oblivion that Pope, Shakespeare, and Donne imagine.

The chapters that focus in turn on these four writers necessarily study a number of literary genres that employ and engage the voice of mourning. Chapters 1 and 3 discuss the formal elegies of Pembroke and Philips, respectively, that address all of the literary traditions in poems of grief and mourning. The formal elegy characteristically commemorates the dead,

articulates the mourner's grief, grapples with the meaning of death itself, and generates a poetics of mourning. These features mark both ancient and contemporary, as well as the Greek, Latin, French, and English elegies that Renaissance writers knew.[6] These same significant combinations of memory, feeling, belief, and art are just as present, however, in Lanyer's short epic, with its prose and poetic appendages; in Mary Wroth's two enormous prose romances and her equally extensive collection of sonnets and sonnet-sequences; and in Katherine Philips' commemorative odes and poems of lament that are only sometimes labeled as elegies. Spoken grief is clearly voiced through many different textual paradigms.

These four authors, Pembroke, Lanyer, Wroth, and Philips, speak to the social exchange of mourning not least because they were all particularly interactive literary figures. In literary coteries and through familial and patronage alliances, all four had or sought to foster contemporary reputations to which others responded and of which their own writings speak.[7] Their literary works explicitly engage with others, and they speak both of and through grief in deliberately artful ways. In addition, their works are particularly culturally illuminating because they are positioned on various interstices: between religion and politics, patronage and faith (Lanyer and Pembroke); between one and another literary fashion (Wroth); and between one and another set of alliances (Philips).[8] These four writers are exciting authors to study because their varying tactics for appropriating the liminality of the dead for the mourner in transit suggest so many of the wider social tensions in the midst of which they write. Lastly, Pembroke,[9] Lanyer, Wroth, and Philips are ideal subjects for and evidence of the complexities of post-Reformation mourning because all four so spectacularly and persistently employ the elegiac voice.[10] Their sophisticated literary output is overwhelmingly concerned with sorrow, lamentation, loss, tears, mourning, and absence. Whether their works claim to be personal or fictional, use named personae or hidden ones, employ social, biblical, or dramatic contexts, their original works (for Pembroke and Philips were fairly prolific translators as well) are significantly interested in mourning's social and literary uses.[11] When Roland Barthes asks for a "history of tears," these four writers provide part of the answer.[12]

II

In the century following the Protestant Reformation, grief remained a doctrinal question and problem, especially as in many respects "Christianity is nothing if not a vast technology of mourning."[13]

Gradually, and in some instances rapidly, Reformers at every level worked to strip from the culture not only purgatory but also the buildings, monuments, and rituals that attended it, the whole elaborate liturgical, economic, and symbolic systems by which mournful survivors interacted with the dead.[14] Whether England experienced a long Reformation or a short one, a thoroughgoing reform in all social spheres or a more hierarchical and gradual change,[15] or whether Protestant ideologies became entrenched through a process of mutual confessionalization, death-rites and concepts were a central piece of the turmoil created in England after the 1530s.[16]

The tense and difficult functions of grief and mourning in post-Reformation[17] theologies build on the central possibility that the dead have handed over to the living the dangerous journey to purity that purgatory once represented. From continental Reformers' writings and through English Reformed spiritual discourses, in monuments and memorials as well as in medical discourses around grief, mourners are often figured in the terms that are used to describe the dead: evanescent and potentially transgressive subjects because of their liminal and transitive status. The fate, status, and progress of the dead become the conformable certainty (known, in fact, from before the creation of the world), while mourners become, in many respects, the substitute subject of theological, medical, and political concern. This displacement only works, of course, because those who have died are often re-imagined in those who are living.

This uncertain trade between the dead and the grieving is central to Reformed reactions to 'Romish' grief. Convinced that the memorial rituals of the Roman Catholic tradition were a corrupt lie that misled the faithful about the truth of Christ's salvific power and bound them in an unending superstitious belief in magical gifts to save their loved ones from purgatory, English Reformers sought to de-centralize the mourning cults that they saw as instrumentally heretical. As Thomas Becon argues in *The Sick Mannes Salve* (1561), "the papistes haue long bewitched the eies of the simple, by making them beleue, that the soules of the faythfull go not straightwaies after their departure, vnto eternal glory, but rather vnto purgatory, a place of their own deuising for the maintenance of their idle bellies, there to lie miserablie puling, til they be redemed by trentalles, by pilgrimages going, by pardons. &c."[18] Article XXXI of the Elizabethan Church of England makes the same assertion, that "the sacrifices of Masses, in which it was commonly said, that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits."[19] Article XXII of the Church of England even more explicitly denounces "The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory" as "a fond

thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."[20] Particularly in the early decades of the Reformation, but also in the seventeenth century's many resurgences of anti-Catholic sentiment, this attack on purgatory and its attendant memorial technologies seems to have been accompanied by a persistent anxiety over both excessive grief and formal mourning as signs of either a lack of faith or of the wrong kind of faith. Calvin's influential commentaries make the argument in theological terms: "Paul does not demand of us a stony numbness, but tells us to grieve in moderation, and not abandon ourselves to grief like unbelievers who have no hope."[21] In his commentary on Psalm 130, Calvin makes the point more explicitly:

> So much the more detestable then is the barbarous ignorance of the Papists, in shamefully profaning this Psalm by wresting it to a purpose wholly foreign to its genuine application. To what intent do they mumble it over for the dead, if it is not that, in consequence of Satan having bewitched them, they may by their profanity extinguish a doctrine of singular utility? From the time that this Psalm was, by a forced interpretation, applied to the souls of the dead, it is very generally believed to be of no use whatever to the living, and thus the world has lost an inestimable treasure . . .. Thus it comes to pass, that by praying [the papists] only augment their own sorrows and torments, just as if a man should lay wood upon a fire already kindled.[22]

Since purgatory enabled certain ways of channeling devotional grief into pardons and indulgences, as well as memorial masses and sponsored prayers for the dead, the denial of purgatory clearly had wide-ranging implications for the practices of mourning.

One sure indication of these urgent efforts to discipline grief is the hyperbolic and censorious terms with which sorrow is frequently defined. Mourning is often denounced in its exaggerated form as alien, pathological, and deformed. Tudor Reformers decried those "wailing the dead with more than heathenish outcries."[23] Calvin, in his commentaries on the gospels, suggests that "this is a common disease, that [they] . . . eagerly increase their grief by every possible means."[24] Calvin proposes to discipline grief, explaining how "the vanity of our mind makes us sorrow or grieve over trifles, or for no reason at all, because we are too much devoted to the world . . . our feelings are sinful because they rush on unrestrainedly and immoderately."[25] Early English Reformers like Hugh Latimer and William Perkins pick up on Calvin's exhortations and explain that only a godly sorrow will be blessed, "as the wicked, when they weep, they are sorrowful . . . so we must learn to be content; to go from weeping to laughing."[26] Richard Hooker likewise exhorts his listeners that "though the cause of our heavinesse be just, yet

may not our affections herein bee yeelded unto with too much indulgencie and favour."[27] Certainly many clerics, theologians, and doctors were anxious for these reasons to manage the boundaries of grief; they wrote tracts and funeral sermons throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that repeatedly returned to this question, with titles such as *The Meane in Mourning* (1597), "The Perfection of Patience" (1640), "A Restraint of exorbitant Passion" (1640), *An Antidote Against Immoderate Mourning* (1659), and *A consolatory Discourse to prevent Immoderate Grief* (1671).[28] From explicit denunciations of what was seen as the Catholic cult of the dead, a cult that Protestant Reformers saw as interfering with true faith and trust in God, to a vague but persistent anxiety over excessive grief, post-Reformation England was awash with these attempts to manage, contain, and limit grief.

As part of this Reformed attempt to discipline mourning rites, grief's otherness was certainly sometimes cast in gendered terms as a hyperbolic extreme of effeminacy. Andreas Hyperius, in *The Practice of Preaching*, instructs his readers that "all that be of a sound iudgement, doe thincke it very uncomly and womannishe to lament without measure, and to take so impaciently the chaunce that happeneth; in comfortinge . . . so to increase sorrowe, as that a womannish kinde of wayling and shricking should follow . . . [doth] incurre reprehension."[29] Hyperius says that "it becommeth men chiefely to imbrace all manhood and prowesse" when faced with death, lest effeminate weakness rob them of "constancye."[30] Henry King, at the far end of this period, explains that his grief, the tears of which would "betray more of the weaker Sex than is fit for me own," has made him inarticulate and "uneloquent".[31] A doctrinal claim that feminine sorrow is a just and correct consequence of Eve's transgression was sometimes invoked to support this association of unfettered grief with effeminacy.[32] A 1640 funeral sermon entitled "Death in Birth, or the Frute of Eves Transgression" rehearses the argument that "there is a . . . punishment inflicted upon all women kind in answer to the . . . sinnes committed by our Grandmother *Eve* . . . it was pronounced presently upon her, that her sorrowes . . . should bee multiplied."[33] Tears are thus both an effect and a sign of woman's originary trespass. Thomas Playfere, in his tract *The Meane in Mourning*, honors women's tears, but also says this: "Naturally (saith S. Peter) the woman is the weaker vessel, soone moved to weepe, and subject to many, either affectionate passions, or else passionate affections. The sinne of a woman was the ruine of man. Therefore these women . . . wept the more."[34]

As the chapters of this book will explore in more detail, however, sorrow was also prized as a sign of spiritual sensitivity, prophetic insight, and proper

self-awareness.[35] Even without the English Catholic traditions that contin-
ued to celebrate (perhaps even more intensely than in the past) compunc-
tion, the *donum lacrimarum*, and the mourning rites[36] that were meaningful
to many confessional Protestants like Donne, there was certainly no wide-
spread Protestant attempt to pretend that grief ought to be entirely
suppressed.[37]

One way in which grief was praised was through its analogy to repent-
ance. Mourning for another and mourning for oneself were particularly
understood to be mutually edifying processes with similar terms. William
Perkins urges, "Put not off repentance therefore to the last poynt: take
Davids early in the morning, stay not till to morrow . . .. [T]hou must spend
the day in mourning the night in watching and weeping, and thy whole
time in prayng." Playfere argues that the turtle-dove/pigeon offerings in
Leviticus represent "a paire of mournefull eyes" that the preacher ought to
have.[38] "His eyes, which are glazed with teares, when they weepe for the
sinnes of the people" are what Playfere prizes; "the Prophet David was so
valiant, that hee overcame a mightie huge Giant . . .. [Y]et when he came to
preach, he was so soft-hearted, and so tender-eyed, that he sayd, mine eyes
gush out rivers of water, because men keepe not thy law."[39] Funeral sermons
often quote both Ecclesiastes 7:4 – "It is better to go to the house of
mourning, then to go to the house of feasting"[40] – and Paul's explanation
that mourning is a righteous act. Bishop John Jewel explains that Jesus
healed "sometimes by mourning and sorrowing."[41]

Exegetical readings of *Revelations* often pursue this logic on a broader
scale. They make the political analogy between the Protestant movement
and the woman in the wilderness, a Una figure who "laments and mourns";
the 1560 Geneva glosses make this connection clear.[42] This view of the
English or Protestant churches as the true (and female) mourners for the
corruption of the world and of the church was a powerful trope among
English polemicists.[43] Proper grief, penitential sorrow, and lamentations
were seen as biblically authorized, spiritually necessary, and signs of proper
affection and correct self-understanding. Women's tears were often imag-
ined to exemplify these virtues, and they were cited, in the repentant sorrow
of Mary Magdalene, the grief of Jesus' mother, the lamentations of Rachel,
and the sufferings of the early women-martyrs, as particularly important
analogues for Protestant piety, just as they had been and continued to be
signs of Catholic saintliness.[44] Playfere praises Mary Magdalene: "that
winfull woman, because shee loved much, therefore shee washed Christes
feete with her teares . . . because shee washt Christs feete with her teares,
therefore Christ crowned her head with his mercies."[45] Foxe's new

Protestant saints, such as Lady Jane Grey or the Guernesey women martyrs, suggest a saintly tenderness of heart entirely valorized in the new Protestant pantheon. Foxe quotes Lady Jane Gray's prayer before her death: "Be not abashed to come home againe with Mary, and weepe bitterly with Peter, not only with sheding the teares of your bodily eyes, but also powring out the streames of your hart, to wash away out of the sight of God the filth and mire of your offensiue fall. Be not abashed to say with the Publicane, Lord be mercifull vnto me a sinner."[46]

In medical ideologies of the period, as Chapter 3 will discuss further, a similarly contradictory ethics was attached to grief, as sorrow was believed to be humorally necessary, natural, and corrective, though also by the same standards potentially obsessive, disabling, and disruptive.[47] Galen's discussions of the "aboundance of the humour flowing to the part"[48] define sorrow in particularly literal ways that correspond to Augustine's argument that tears are the blood of the soul. Erasmus relies on this analogy in his "Funeral Oration for Berta Heyan," where he describes how "whenever I imagine the dear, sweet face of Berta, tears immediately burst forth from my eyes, like blood from a wounded soul, as it were."[49] Erasmus explicitly defends his sorrow as a natural form of human expression: "who in his right mind would think it shameful for a man to be stricken by human emotions?"[50] As Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* asserts in describing grief from a medical context, "tis a naturall passion to weep for our friends, an irresistible passion to lament, and grieve."[51]

Medical concerns about excessive passion certainly frame it as a form of political unrest through the analogies of the body politic; Burton cites the shamefulness of "grave staid men otherwise" lamenting like "those Irish women, & Greeks at their graves, [who] commit many undecent actions, & almost goe besides themselves."[52] In a similar image, he exhorts his listeners that "we should not dwell too long upon our passions, to be desperately sad, immoderate greivers, to let them tyrannize."[53] Henry More, in a letter to a grieving parent, personalizes this sentiment as he explains: "[I was] unquiet till I had contributed what I could to the fortifying of your minde against the assaults of excessive passion."[54] This attempt to manage grief, often by assigning to it militarist metaphors of "assault," seizing possession, or tyranny, tries to exert social control just as sermons and doctrinal exhortations were doing. In the medical philosophies of late Elizabethan and Jacobean practice, then, grief was both natural and potentially dislimning.

Commemorative ceremonies, monuments and texts, as the chapters of this book will explore further, exemplify this considerable cultural anxiety, interest, and even violence attached to grief, both in the early decades of the

Elizabethan Reformation marked by the demolition of monuments and again during the civil wars' iconoclastic phases.[55] Tombs and monuments, for instance, make manifest these conflicts over the place of mourning in a universe without purgatory, rendering concrete concerns over how the living should relate to the dead.[56] Church monuments, in their texts and sculptural structures, had served a double purpose in pre-Reformation church architecture, not only to beseech the prayers of the living to assist the dead through purgatory, but also to always create a familial or dynastic presence in the most public indoor space of most communities. The dead served notice to the living but also about them, in marble plaques, canopied tombs, paving stones, statues, and effigies. Peter Sherlock notes, for instance, how Anne Clifford establishes her own female lineage by erecting a monument inscribed to remember the living mourner as much as the dead: "in whose memory Ye Ladie Anne Clifford Countisse of Dorsett, her deare cosen at her owne costes & charges hath erected this monument."[57] Clifford's text lays claim to her cousin's memory and thereby the right of cousinship by being the "author" of this monument. Sherlock describes the heralds' efforts to strengthen the 1560 proclamation on monuments in order to protect "tombs as a key source of evidence for lineage,"[58] and he cites Edward Coke, the great Elizabethan jurist, ruling that funerary objects "belong to the deceased's heirs . . . they are in the nature of heir-looms . . . as in manner of inheritance."[59] In this sense, memorials and monuments continued to function as a litmus test and a guarantor of social status involving both the dead and the living, inextricably connected.[60]

This monumental connection between the dead and the living changes form, but in some respects not function, over the Tudor and Stuart centuries. Historians such as Sherlock and Peter Marshall note the significant shift from the "ora pro nobis" messages of pre-Reformation monuments, in which the living observer is invited to contribute to the dead's transit to heaven in prospective fashion, to a commemorative and retrospective mood inviting remembrance, but this new emphasis was just as determined to bind the living to the dead in a debt of obligation. Sherlock notes that, "in the 1580's, tombs began to speak of memory as a sacred duty. The idea of remembering as a holy activity in and of itself was an early strategy for altering intercessory petitions"[61] – memory itself, as Cleopatra imagines, is the new requirement of mourning. The demands of the dead on the living continued throughout the seventeenth century, with new alternate mottos implying that the dead have a lesson to offer the living as well: "quisquis" mottos, "as I am now, so shall you be" and the "sic transit" declarations: "so passes the glory of the world" both mark late Tudor and Stuart