‘I mourn for them I loved’: The Material Culture of Love and Loss in Eighteenth-Century England

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the material culture of love and loss in eighteenth-century England through the lens of emotions. My study builds on scholarly works on material culture, emotions, death, love, and loss. It examines objects used to declare love, to express grief, and to say farewell.

Chapter One introduces the historiography of this topic, outlines the methodology used, and problematises the issues and questions surrounding the relationship between individuals and objects during this period, such as the eighteenth century “consumer revolution,” and the rise of sentimentalism. This chapter also introduces what I term the “emotional economy,” or the value placed on an object based on emotional significance regardless of its intrinsic value.

Chapter Two explores love tokens and the role they played in not only the expression of romantic love, but the making and breaking of courtships and marriages. This chapter concludes that the exchange of tokens was vital to the expression of love, and was an expected emotional behaviour to progress a courtship into a marriage.

Chapter Three explores the material culture of death, focusing on tokens created and distributed for the comforting of mourners, and the commemoration of the dead. It’s findings confirmed that mourners valued tokens and jewellery, particularly those made with hair belonging to the deceased in order to maintain a physical connection to their loved ones after their passing.

Chapter Four presents two case studies wherein objects are examined for their emotional value and demonstrates how objects were used to express emotions amongst the lower orders. Both the tokens of the London Foundling Hospital and the coins painstakingly inscribed by convicts express their feelings about parting. In the case of the Foundling Hospital tokens, mothers expressed grief, love, and hope for their children. Convict tokens also express grief, love and hope, and compare their situation to those of slaves, beg their loved ones to remember them well, and not to forget them.

Chapter Five concludes by finding that individuals relied upon objects to express emotions and asserts that by examining the connections between emotions and material culture we can discover more about the emotional lives of the eighteenth-century English.
Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. i
Declaration by author ........................................................................................................ ii
Publications during candidature ....................................................................................... iii
Publications included in this thesis ..................................................................................... iv
Contributions by others to thesis ....................................................................................... iv
Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree .... iv
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................... v

Chapter 1 - Introduction .................................................................................................... 1
  Historiography ............................................................................................................... 1
  Emotionology ............................................................................................................... 6
  Sentimentalism ............................................................................................................ 7
  The “Consumer Revolution” ....................................................................................... 12
  Thesis Structure ......................................................................................................... 17

Chapter 2 - Emotions and the Material Culture of Love ............................................... 20
  Jewellery .................................................................................................................. 36
  Hairwork .................................................................................................................. 41
  Rings .......................................................................................................................... 44
  Miniature Portraits ..................................................................................................... 47
  Emotions and Tokens of Love ..................................................................................... 50

Chapter 3 - Emotions and the Material Culture of Death ............................................. 53

Chapter 4 - Emotions and Objects: Two Case Studies ................................................. 71
  The Tokens of the London Foundling Hospital ......................................................... 71
  Convict Love Tokens ................................................................................................. 87

Chapter 5 - Conclusion ................................................................................................... 95

Bibliography ....................................................................................................................... 98
  Primary Sources ........................................................................................................ 98
  Secondary Sources ..................................................................................................... 103
List of Figures

Fig. 1- Gold pendant embroidered with birds and set with pearls under crystal c. 1700. Victoria and Albert Museum M.22-1960. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 2- Heart-shaped silver locket, embossed with figure of Cupid. Inscribed ‘Noe heart more true than mine to you’ c. 1690-1700. Victoria and Albert Museum M.3-1958. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 3- Heart shaped gold locket with crystal compartment for hair c. 1775-1800. Victoria and Albert Museum 933-1888. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 4- Gold pendant surrounded with rock crystals and an enamelled Cupid under glass. Inscribed in gold wire JE ME MEURS MA MERE c. 1675-1700. Victoria and Albert Museum M.21-1960. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 5- Posey ring crafted from white quill and stained gut. Inscribed ANN CHILCOTT c. late 18th century. Victoria and Albert Museum 374-1908. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 6. - Gold posey ring with stars in relief. Inscribed ‘Many are thee starrs I see yet in my eye no starr like thee.’ c. 17-18th century. The British Museum AF.1342. © Trustees of the British Museum

Fig. 7- Enamelled gold ring set ivory silhouette and hair under glass c. 1780. Inscribed JE CHERIS JUSQU'A SON OMBRE. Victoria and Albert Museum M.174-1962. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 8- Eye miniature in ouroboros frame c. early 19th century. Victoria and Albert Museum P.47-1977. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 9- Pair of wooden snuffboxes, shaped like shoes c. 1800-1900. Victoria and Albert Museum T.1550A-1913. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 10- Gold morning ring with enamelled hoop and monogram in gold thread c. 1714. Inscribed ‘AR obt 1 Augt 1714 aeta 49 (yeares?) in ye 13 y o Reigne.’ The British Museum AF.1506. © Trustees of the British Museum

Fig. 11- Gold mourning ring enamelled in black with white border c. 1801. Inscribed in reserve on front enamel in gold lettering, ‘MB Agd 16 SB Agd 12 WB Agd 10 EB Agd 9 TB Agd 7 RB Agd 5 CB Agd 2.’ Interior of band is inscribed ‘Died from the 16th to the 23rd Feby. 1801.’ Victoria and Albert Museum M.18-2004. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 12- Gold locket with painted ivory miniature under glass and surrounded by plaited hair. c. 1775-1800. Inscribed 'BEC', and 'I Mourn for them I loved.' Victoria and Albert Museum 945-1888. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Fig. 13- Gold locket with painted ivory miniature and hair compartment in the back c. late 18th century. Inscribed ‘I ALONE CAN HEAL.’ Victoria and Albert Museum 950-1888. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 14- Gold brooch shaped like a ribbon and bow, set with diamonds and sapphires surrounding a lock of hair under glass c. 1754. Inscribed ‘ELIZ EYTON OBIT FEB 1754 AET 81.’ Victoria and Albert Museum M.121-1962. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 15- London Foundling Hospital billet book entry. London Metropolitan Archives A/FH/A/9/1/24 Foundling 2907.

Fig. 16- London Foundling Hospital billet book entry. London Metropolitan Archives A/FH/A/9/1/127. Foundling 11989.

Fig. 17- London Foundling Hospital billet book entry. London Metropolitan Archives A/FH/A/9/1/128. Foundling 3536.

Fig. 18- London Foundling Hospital billet book entry. London Metropolitan Archives A/FH/A/9/1/128. Foundling 11490.


Fig. 21- Convict Token, not dated. Convict Love Tokens Project, National Museum of Australia 2008.0039.0265. Photo by George Serras, National Museum of Australia.

Fig. 22- Convict Token c. 1835. Convict Love Tokens Project, National Museum of Australia 2008.0039.0166. Photo by George Serras, National Museum of Australia.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This thesis analyses the emotional culture of love and separation in eighteenth-century England by examining tokens used to declare love, to commemorate betrothals, to mourn the dead, and to say farewell. These tokens include jewellery, human hair, inscribed or broken coins, and fabric. I will investigate the emotional culture behind the creation and distribution of these objects, demonstrating that they had contemporary importance across the socio-economic spectrum. By examining these objects and the contexts in which they were used, I can identify how people in eighteenth-century England negotiated emotions such as love and grief through the creation and distribution of tokens. The cultural and social influences that guided emotional expression through the exchange of material culture demonstrate the prevalence and importance of using physical objects to express the emotional.

Historiography

Scholars of love and death during the early modern period often recognise that objects may have significance beyond their economic value.¹ Some have touched upon the emotional significance of objects, focusing on specific aspects of their emotional potential. Lucinda Becker, for example, likens the use of mourning jewellery to a deathbed ritual that developed in the seventeenth century. Becker argues that this ritual was particularly important to women because it allowed them to exercise some control over their worldly goods, while ensuring

the preservation of their memory. Becker highlights that gifts of small or no monetary value, such as a “little sagging chair” given by a dying woman to her niece, were used to acknowledge emotional attachments and provide a practical object that was also of sentimental value. This can also be seen in the will of Earls Colne widow Mary Cowlin. Cowlin gave each of her children a substantial sum of cash as well as household goods. With each gift she included at least one silver teaspoon either marked with various initials such as M.C (probably her own initials), and J.C. (possibly her husband), amongst others. By dividing and distributing the teaspoons, Cowlin added a personal piece of remembrance with her gifts of cash or furniture.

Lucinda Becker’s consideration of the sentimental value of objects is atypical. While many historians recognize the importance of analysing material culture, they often minimize or ignore the emotional potential of such objects. Instead, material culture has been analysed for cultural meanings. Connections have been drawn between objects and the idea of self, or objects as status symbols, but these analyses have not extended to consider the interconnectedness of objects and emotions. David Cressy, for example, claims that early modern courtship rules required the giving and acceptance of tokens. Cressy does not, however examine the emotional experiences these gifts could evoke. Likewise, Claire Gittings writes that mourning jewelry became increasingly popular in the eighteenth century due to a growing emphasis on worldly commemoration, but does not problematise the emotional benefits a mourner might receive from commemoration of the dead through the use of jewellery. Marcia Pointon links mourning jewellery to a desire to cope with death during a time of increased secularization. However, much remains to be said about the purpose

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3 Ibid.
4 ERO D/ABR/30/442, [93000565], Mary Cowlin, 1809.
mourning tokens may have served in coping with death. Julie Park explores how eighteenth-century objects were used to devise new versions of selfhood. In Park’s study, the ‘self’ refers to the physical, corporeal self, but not the emotional self. The influence of commemoration, secularization, and selfhood are important factors to consider when analysing eighteenth-century tokens. Yet it is important to recognise that one of the primary reasons for their existence and exchange, was the emotional expression that such objects could convey. Julien Litten, for example, follows the development of the funeral trade over the last 500 years, but links the material culture of death to the increased consumerism of the eighteenth century, but does not address the emotional purpose the material culture serves. Consumerism is a common explanation offered for the proliferation of tokens and consumer objects in general during the eighteenth century, and an explanation that this thesis will challenge. While social and economic conditions did influence the manner in which people used objects to mourn and love, such objects were not merely used to display wealth or status. Instead they represented the desire to corporealise emotions such as love and grief.

My study does not challenge the social and cultural peculiarities that Litten, Gittings, Pointon, Becker and Park have pointed out, but instead seeks to expand upon these concepts. Adding to David Cressy and Marica Pointon’s studies, this thesis seeks to answer questions about emotions and tokens. What type of objects were used to express emotions? Why were these objects chosen, and what purpose did they serve? What materials were used to create them and what were the meanings behind their symbols and construction? Was the intrinsic value comparable to the emotional value of such objects?

Key works by Susan Stabile, Helen Sheumaker, and Christiane Holm have sought to explain the emotional value of eighteenth-century tokens.\textsuperscript{10} Christiane Holm, in her study of hairwork, used in love and mourning tokens, claims that over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mourning jewellery and love tokens became increasingly valued for emotional, as opposed to economic reasons.\textsuperscript{11} Holm uses the popularity of hairwork as an example of what I term the ‘emotional economy.’\textsuperscript{12} In the emotional economy, value is based on the emotional significance given to an object often entirely without regard to its economic value. For example, Christiane Holm explains that a small lock of hair was worthless economically, but contained emotional significance and widespread sentimental value as a token. Susan Stabile explains the emotional value of the hair by identifying that mourning jewels, used in combination with hair, were an attempt to physically connect the living with the dead.\textsuperscript{13} Stabile claims that hair, the physical remains of the dead, when worn in a locket or other jewel, creates actual physical contact between the loved one and the mourner, and transcends the corruptible body, which was priceless.

Hair jewellery creates a physical bond that exists as long as the jewellery is worn by someone who wishes to remember the deceased.\textsuperscript{14} Here, the act of memory is an expression of grief made physical - not by sobbing or weeping, but by using a physical remnant of the loved one’s body to soothe the pain of lost physical contact. This connection with the dead was highly valuable in the emotional economy. In Helen Sheumaker’s study of memory and material culture, \textit{Love Entwined}, Sheumaker also investigates the emotional and the physical history of hairwork.\textsuperscript{15} Sheumaker determines that mourning objects helped to validate the

\textsuperscript{11} Sheumaker, \textit{Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America}, 139.
\textsuperscript{12} Holm, "Sentimental Cuts: Eighteenth-Century Mourning Jewelry with Hair," 140.
\textsuperscript{13} Stabile, \textit{Memory’s Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America}, 179.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Sheumaker, \textit{Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America}. 
experience of mourning, by providing a physical reminder that the mourner’s pain was real, and demonstrable to others.\textsuperscript{16}

To summarize; objects, memory, and emotions are linked. I will argue that emotions served to connect eighteenth-century consumer desires with, in the words of Sheumaker, “higher faculties,” such as emotions.\textsuperscript{17} Objects were not merely objects, but talismans and treasures of the heart. My thesis aims to pick up where other histories of love and death and material culture in the eighteenth century have left off. While I accept the impact of consumerism on the development of tokens during the eighteenth century, I intend to investigate the impact of other, more emotional influences on tokens, such as romantic love and courtship, death, child abandonment, and life-long separation caused by convict transportation. In addition, this study will address some of the cultural influences that impacted the symbolism and style used in tokens, such as sentimentalism. These cultural influences also had an impact on the emotional expression of eighteenth-century English people. For example, sentimentalism was an important force in the idea of affection and love as a useful pre-requisite to marriage, the idolisation of “the tender mother” and the “sentimental family.” Sentimentalism was an important influence on the attachment of emotional meanings to objects and will be discussed later in this introduction.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 11.
Emotionology

The history of emotions is a new field of study pioneered by the historians Peter and Carol Stearns, William Reddy, and Barbara Rosenwein. All four historians define the study of the emotions (emotionology) as the investigation into the attitudes that groups and societies maintain toward emotions and their appropriate (or inappropriate) expression, as well as the impact of these emotional rules on human conduct. Reddy and Rosenwein disagree as to when emotional expression in communities or regimes occurred. Reddy favours the eighteenth century as the starting point, while Rosenwein argues emotional expression existed in medieval England. While it is clear that emotions were expressed in medieval England, by the eighteenth century the outward use of different emotions became more socially acceptable. In eighteenth-century England, emotional expressions were closer to current emotional styles and therefore more recognisable to scholars than emotional expressions from earlier periods. In short, the evidence of emotion in the eighteenth century is more prevalent, and more prolifically tangible. Expression does not mean experience, and I do not claim that the eighteenth-century English people experienced greater or fewer emotions than in the medieval or early modern period. But, rather, it became more common to express certain emotions with which we would be familiar today and to express these emotions with and through objects.

Barbara Rosenwein argues that individuals in society are members of many emotional groups, which she terms “emotional communities.” Emotional communities, according to Rosenwein, are the same as social groups, and include families, guilds, neighbourhoods, and

20 Ibid.
parish church members, among others. Examination of emotional communities reveals the emotional values of both the individual and the community. These values include forms of emotional expression that the community encourages and discourages, the nature of interpersonal relationships, and the community’s relationship with other social groups and emotional communities. Some emotional communities that will be explored in this thesis include parents, families, lovers, mourners, and convicts transported to the colonies. The emotional connection between the members of these communities and the physical objects they used to represent their emotions forms the foundation of this thesis.

**Sentimentalism**

In eighteenth century England, there came to be what Roy Porter described as “a growing emphasis on the culture of the heart, on sensibility, and on private moral judgment.” He continues, “in the eighteenth century the shrine of morality moved within the self.” This new emphasis on the heart is reflected in the culture of sentimentalism. C.J. Barker-Benfield writes, “the constellation of ideas, feelings and events which comprised the culture [of sentimentalism] was a central feature of eighteenth-century Britain.” This statement is echoed by a number of other historians of eighteenth-century Britain. The terms ‘sentiment’ and ‘sentimentalism’ referred to a type of emotional expressionism with moral underpinnings. Sensibility and sentimentalism were rooted in an ideal of emotional progress. For the sentimentalist, a sentimental public indicated a modern, advanced society. Contemporary proponents of the cultivation of sensibility came to invest it with spiritual and moral values. To be ‘sentimental’ was to be sensitive, to care about the suffering of others,

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23 Ibid., 253.
27 Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling*, 140.
even fictional others, and therefore to be of good moral character. Sentimentalists equated responses such as crying, blushing, and fainting, with moral refinement and eventually, spiritual superiority.\textsuperscript{28} The novelist Laurence Sterne went so far as to call sensibility a gift from God.\textsuperscript{29} An intense pity for suffering, frequent weeping, and the reading of sentimental novels were some characteristics of the eighteenth-century sentimentalist. Roy Porter describes some sentimentalists as “sometimes collapsing into mawkishness, melancholia, and perhaps anorexia nervosa” due to emotional distress.\textsuperscript{30} Sentimentalism’s encouragement and celebration of “natural feelings” rendered it at odds with the attitudes of rationalists.\textsuperscript{31} Rationalists distrusted feelings and emotions, and reacted negatively to what they termed the ‘cult of sentiment.’\textsuperscript{32} Some moralists also distrusted sentimentalism and emphasized the potential sinfulness of unchecked emotions.\textsuperscript{33}

It is often difficult to identify emotions, represented in written works produced in the eighteenth century, due to the rapid changes to terminology.\textsuperscript{34} The flexibility of the word sentimentalism was such that it eventually became analogous with feeling, consciousness, and eventually gender.\textsuperscript{35} Throughout the century, the terms ‘sentiment’, ‘passions,’ ‘sensibility’ and ‘affect’ or ‘affection’ were sometimes used interchangeably, or had distinct contrasting definitions. For example, by the end of the eighteenth century, ‘passion’ described a negative emotion by contemporary standards, an emotion that rendered humans unreasonable and possibly out of control. ‘Sentiment’, was used to refer to calmer, more cultivated emotion, although this changed as the term ‘sentiment’ became associated with the

\textsuperscript{28} Park, \textit{The Self and It: Novel Objects and Mimetic Subjects in Eighteenth-Century England}, 56.
\textsuperscript{31} Barker-Benfield, \textit{The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain}, 19, 67.
\textsuperscript{32} Bell, \textit{Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling}, 2.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Barker-Benfield, \textit{The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain}, 17.
cult of sentimentalism, a development with distinct social and cultural implications. The word ‘sentimental’ together with the closely associated ‘sensibility’ became widely used in eighteenth-century England. Sensibility often referred to a pre-disposition to sentiment. For example, The Monthly Magazine defined sensibility as “that particular structure, or habitude of mind, which disposes a man to be easily moved, and powerfully affected by surrounding objects and passing events.” The sentimental person is “so susceptible of every impression of joy and grief, that scarcely a moment of their lives passes without its pleasures or its pains [sic].” Sentimentalist thought was represented by its most common medium – the sentimental novel, a genre associated with the middling sort. The individuals who read and wrote sentimental literature were known to contemporaries as members of the ‘cult of sensibility’ or the ‘cult of sentimentalism’. These were literate men and women, typically of the middling to upper classes, who wrote or read sentimental fiction.

In fiction, the word sentiment refers to a combination of the meanings of ‘principle’ and ‘feeling’. Michael Bell has outlined how two sentimental novelists, Samuel Richardson and Laurence Sterne, used these words. In the 1740s, Samuel Richardson’s characters used the word ‘sentiment’ to refer to moral principles. In the 1760s, Laurence Sterne used the word to mean ‘feeling’. Bell attributes the success of the culture of sentiment to the genre of the novel, because it allowed the author and reader to do something different, to explore emotions and create a “language of feeling.” Popular expressions of the time are filled with

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37 “Question: Ought Sensibility to Be Cherished or Repressed?” The Monthly Magazine 2 (October 1796) P.706-709, 706.
38 Mullan, Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century, 19.
39 Bell, Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling, 19.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., 12.
42 Mullan, Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century, 15.
the language of sentiment; they refer to the ‘luxury of’ sorrow, love, grief or fear, the ‘tenderness’ of the heart, and ‘weeping’ from joy, love and grief.\textsuperscript{43} In Erik Erämetsä’s study of the language of sentimentalism as used in both novels and in life, the emotional core of sentimentalism is revealed through speech.\textsuperscript{44} Erämetsä’s research shows that “parallel with the growth of sentimental literature, a sentimental vocabulary came into being. Certain words, first employed for their ordinary values, acquired emotional colouring.”\textsuperscript{45}

All this is not to say that before the rise of sentimentalism, emotions were irrelevant, unexpressed, or non-existent. Sentimentalism, to borrow the words of Michael Bell, is a “phase in a much larger process.”\textsuperscript{46} This process began with a “coming apart of ‘thought and ‘feeling’ over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,” which led to Sentimentalism, and eventually, the emotional awakening of late eighteenth and the early nineteenth-centuries known as Romanticism.\textsuperscript{47} The idea that one could follow one’s “heart”, as a distinct entity that existed alongside, and often opposed to, one’s “head”, is a feature of this development. This becomes evident when examining the changing ideals of marriage and family in the eighteenth century, discussed later in this thesis. More importantly, sentimentalism influenced how people thought of, and expressed, the emotions attached to the material culture that will be the focus of this study. If the eighteenth century was both a sentimental and consumerist era, it follows that the objects consumed might then take on sentimental and therefore emotional value. Love and mourning tokens may not have been merely objects used to emulate others. Writers and readers, preachers, congregants, parents, children, manufacturers and consumers promoted sentimentalism and the investment of feeling into

\textsuperscript{43} Campbell, \textit{The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism}, 141.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{46} Bell, \textit{Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling}, 11.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
The eighteenth-century turn towards feeling and emotional expression as appropriate behaviour influenced and reconfigured society’s attitudes towards objects.

The impact of sentimentalism on the exchange of objects can be seen when examining sentimental literature. In Samuel Richardson’s classic Sentimental novel *Clarissa* (1748), the dying Clarissa bequeaths not only her goods, but also jewellery that contains her hair, with the express intention of invoking memories of her and the pain of her death, in those to whom these gifts were given. C.J Barker-Benfield gives several literary examples. In Tobias Smollet’s *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), Lydia Melford, a character “intended to typify the young, moral-reading women of feeling,” sends her close friend Laetitia poesy rings to be distributed to their mutual friends along with a sentimental letter. The young narrator Emily St. Aubert of Anne Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) appealed to her readers as those “who know from experience, how much the heart becomes attached even to inanimate objects.” Emily St. Aubert describes her responses to the memories attached to household objects associated with her dead father: “The chairs, the tables, every article of furniture, so familiar to her in happier times, spoke eloquently to her heart…Not an object, on which her eye glanced, but awakened some remembrance, that led immediately to the subject of her grief.” That objects could provoke memory and inspire strong emotions is repeated in Mary Hays’ *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796). Emma Courtney, standing in the library of her dead friend laments, “where, alas! could she turn, and not meet new objects to give acuteness to grief?” Jane Austen, though critical of what she considered to be the excessive emotional indulgence of sentimentalists, recounts Fanny Price’s emotional reaction on encountering the possessions of a dead friend: “she could scarcely see an object in that room

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49 Samuel Richardson quoted in ibid., 209.
50 Tobias Smollet quoted in ibid.
51 Anne Radcliffe quoted in ibid., 210.
52 Anne Radcliffe quoted in ibid.
53 Mary Hays in ibid.
which had not an interesting remembrance connected with it.”

The “Consumer Revolution”

The eighteenth century is characterized by the changing relationship between objects and people. Scholarly ideas about a newly “consumerist” eighteenth-century society has led to the neglect of the deeper relationships between objects and people, relationships which Ross J. Wilson terms “myriad... rich, and complex”.

Objects in eighteenth-century England were used to represent and reinforce social, cultural and emotional values and behaviours. Objects could communicate emotions. Evidence for this can be found in contemporary writing, philosophy, and most significantly, in the rich traditions formed around token creation and exchange. “It-narratives,” that is, stories written from the perspective of an object such as a coin or a pin-cushion, demonstrate the significance of objects as communicators.

In the case of it-narratives, objects communicated social commentary about their own social and emotional roles in the lives of contemporaries. The importance of objects as communicators of emotions has taken a backseat to their potential significance as symbols of status. This is because eighteenth-century English objects are the subject of a larger debate about the evolution of a “consumer revolution”.

The theory of a “consumer revolution” in eighteenth-century England was developed by economic historians Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H. Plumb. Heavily influenced by Thorstein Veblen’s theory of conspicuous consumption, McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb

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54 Jane Austen in ibid., 211.
argue in *The Birth of a Consumer Society* that consumer society had its genesis in eighteenth-century England, and the authors outline England’s descent into mass consumption by the end of the century. The crux of McKendrick et al’s argument is:

There was a consumer revolution in eighteenth century England. More men and women than ever before in human history enjoyed the experience of acquiring material possessions. Objects which for centuries had been the privileged possessions of the rich came, within the space of a few generations to be within the reach of a larger part of society than ever before, and for, the first time, to be within the legitimate aspirations of almost all of it. Objects which were once acquired as the result of inheritance at best, came to be the legitimate pursuit of a whole new class of consumers.

McKendrick et al’s theory of an eighteenth-century consumer revolution has not gone unchallenged. Social scientist Colin Campbell has argued that *The Birth of a Consumer Society* relies on incorrect assumptions about consumer motivations. Campbell rejects the existence of a consumer revolution based on emulation, instead attributing the “demand” aspect of emerging consumerism to a “genealogy of feeling extending from […] sentimental and Romantic writers of the eighteenth century.” This contrasts with McKendrick et al’s argument regarding emulation and new wealth. McKendrick et al’s theory attempts to explain some unique phenomena. The middle classes of eighteenth-century England experienced a new world of goods that were previously unavailable to them. Global exploration and expansion brought new consumables into a voracious market. As the wealth of the middle class grew, and the amount of available commodities increased, contemporary society became increasingly concerned about emulation, and the increasingly blurred lines of social status.

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59 Ibid.  
60 Ibid., 1.  
62 Colin Campbell “Purchasing Power and the World of Goods” in ibid., 89.  
64 Aileen Douglas argues, “The it-narrators of later eighteenth-century-fiction are emblematic of a burgeoning consumer culture which seems, to contemporaries, to dissolve the marks of social class and render the barriers between social orders fragile and vulnerable.” Janine Barchas echoes this: “The eighteenth-century’s fascination with material culture and the material permeability of social class was responsible for the popularity of it
Emulation as a strong causal factor for a consumer revolution is not only contested by Colin Campbell, but also by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu questions Veblen’s theory that social competition inspires imitation, as opposed to differentiation. Bourdieu depicts a system in which each class tries to distinguish itself from the other classes with distinctive goods and lifestyle. Veblen, Bourdieu, and McKendrick et al may not all agree on the theory of emulation, but they all put consumer behaviour down to “other-regarding” behavior, which is not necessarily an unemotional state. Amanda Vickery has also challenged the notion of imitative consumption and the idea that goods “only convey information about competitive status”, or that the desire for goods is primarily an other-regarding behaviour. Vickery objects to the idea that all objects contain the same meanings for all consumers, and builds her case based on the letters of eighteenth-century gentlewoman Elizabeth Parker. Parker and her friends often commented with amusement on what they considered to be the excesses of the “fashionable.” Parker herself only valued objects that were utilitarian, or enhanced familial and emotional connections. While Vickery clearly demonstrates that for the gentry, at least, objects had emotional significance, she argues, "Sentimental materialism may have been a luxury many women simply could not afford." Many emotional objects can be found among the lower classes; tokens were left with foundlings at the London Foundling Hospital, and inscribed coins were created and distributed by convicts sentenced to transportation. Bridget Rose gave Edward Arden a sixpence and a cluster of nuttles [nettles] along with the message that “as close as these three stuck together, so fast should her hart [sic] stick to novels.”

67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Vickery in Brewer and Porter, Consumption and the World of Goods, 293.
Carved knitting sticks, spindles, and bobbins are also examples of inexpensive, but highly meaningful objects that were given as love tokens.

Vickery’s subjects may not have felt the need to emulate, however, contemporaries certainly found it to be a motivating factor for consumers. In the February 1785 edition of The Lady’s Magazine, one writer started a serial on “One of the leading Causes of Prostitution, The Dress of Servant Girls above their Station,” observing that in the past “it was possible to judge of people’s rank by their exterior” and that by the 1780s, “one is momentarily in danger of mistaking a modern mop-squeezer for a capital tradesman’s wife.” In 1725 Daniel Defoe complained; “it is a hard Matter now to know the mistress from the Maid by their Dress.” This was an ongoing trope, and not restricted to the eighteenth century, however, it serves to show that emulation of the “better” classes was a concern for some.

While Vickery’s study provides evidence that the gentry may not have tried to emulate the “fashionable,” it is clear that the country-dwelling gentry subjects she investigated did desire objects that they felt distinguished them as coming from the ranks of the gentry. In this case, spending may have been emulative in the sense that it allowed the gentry to keep up with the changing dictates of fashion within their own class and location. One way this can be seen is through literature either condemning or condoning burgeoning materialism in social commentary. Contemporaries debated on the meaning and consequences of consumerism. Some felt that conspicuous consumers extended wealth to

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72 Gillis, For Better, for Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present, 43.
tradesmen, which “increased the amount of wealth in general circulation.”Bernard Mandeville’s book “The Fable of the Bees” also advocates excessive consumption for the sake of public economic benefit. Mandeville argues that consumerism leads to trade which keeps the economy in good condition, thus keeping the standard of living high and consumable services available and providing necessary employment. Still, for others, consumerism represented material gain at a great moral cost. Daniel Defoe describes England in 1732 as “populous, rich, fruitful; the Way of living large, luxurious, vain and expensive.” In the poem “The Task”, William Cowper bemoans the obsession with consumer novelty:

We have run
Through ev’ry change that fancy at the loom,
Exhausted has had genius to supply;
And, studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance, a little used
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.

Regardless of whether or not a consumer revolution occurred, objects factored into people’s every day lives in a way they had not done before. To try to find a “one size fits all model” to explain or describe this phenomenon serves no purpose. Jack Goldstone contends: “no real societies experience only simple gradual evolution, or Colin Campbell’s notion of the evolutionary break. Rather, cyclical, linear, and discontinuous patterns of change are combined and superimposed to produce actual social histories.” Campbell, McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb do not recognize that one can arrive at a consumerist society not by a direct path, but by a combination of the forces described by both historians.

80 Ibid.
Whatever the causes, the eighteenth-century English public had more money, more goods, and more desire to spend money on goods and services, and I contend that the emotional economy was partially responsible for this.\textsuperscript{84}

This thesis is concerned not with the bundling of eighteenth-century consumer behaviour into a neat package, but rather with unraveling it, and exploring the emotional motivations for the creation and use of certain types of objects. The argument that objects in the eighteenth century are merely used to emulate or trump one’s betters, overlooks an important drive in humans to connect with other humans, which is to express emotion. It is not so surprising, then, that when confronted with the new consumer delights of the eighteenth century, people appropriated objects to communicate and connect with others emotionally. Sometimes this manifested itself in the maid’s desire to dress like a lady, but more importantly for this thesis, it often manifested itself in the desire to use objects to create tangible expressions of emotion, regardless of social class or economic status.

**Thesis Structure**

This chapter has provided an introduction to this thesis, an historiographical appraisal of relevant research, and outlined the theoretical framework for my analysis. Chapter 2: ‘The Material Culture of Love’ will examine the material culture of romantic love during the eighteenth century. During this period, the emotional rules of courtship and contracting marriage changed, and the reasons for this change will be analysed with a focus on the theories of scholars of the early modern family. I will use contemporary fiction and poetry to provide insights into the impact of sentimentalism on eighteenth-century thought and expression of emotion through material culture. This chapter will also analyse the material culture of love itself, specifically focusing on objects such as jewellery, hairwork, convict

\textsuperscript{84} Grant McCracken’s concise summary: “Consumption was beginning to take place more often, in more places, under new influences, by new groups, in pursuit of new goods, for new social and cultural purposes.” Nicole Eustace, “The Cornerstone of a Copious Work: Love and Power in Eighteenth-Century Courtship,” *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 3 (2001).
coins, and foundling tokens. The symbolism of love tokens such as lockets, brooches, chatelaines and rings will reveal the expectations and emotions of the individual giving the object, as well as the wearer. Chapter 3: ‘The Material Culture of Death’, will provide the context for practices surrounding death and dying in eighteenth-century England. It will cover the culture of death during this period, with a focus on how the emotions surrounding mortality were expressed, and in what contexts. Material culture, such as mourning clothing and its connection to emotional communities is discussed. Influencing factors, such as the rise of sentimentalism and evangelism, and their impact on the expression of grief and the fear of death will be included. Chapter 3 also focuses specifically on mourning jewellery- its symbolism, use and significance. This chapter explains the connection between material culture, emotions and memory, and their special significance in the creation and use of mourning jewels. An analysis of the material culture of death will reveal how people coped with loss, both publicly and privately through tokens. Chapter 4 will focus on two different kinds of farewells. People living in the eighteenth century were affected by long periods of separation as family and friends travelled or relocated to the American colonies, families sent children out to work, and men and women conducted trade and other business away from home. This thesis discusses two kinds of highly emotionally charged separations: transportation to Australia as punishment for criminal offense, and the surrender of children to the London foundling hospital by indigent mothers. Both the criminal awaiting transportation, and the mother preparing to surrender her child, had time to create physical objects commemorating these separations. Convict coins, which served as the farewells of English men and women soon to be deported to Australia, illustrate the emotions these people experienced as they prepared to leave their home and loved ones, potentially permanently. Foundling tokens are also illustrative of the intense emotions mothers experienced on leaving their children behind at the London Foundling Hospital. In the case of the Foundling Hospital
foundlings, the children never wore or kept the tokens as these were kept by the institution to help identify the child with its parents. While some tokens are merely scraps of fabric cut from the arm of the mother’s garment by the intake staff, and therefore have no intended sentimental value, other tokens brought in by mothers include: poetry, letters, and embroidered fabric created for this specific purpose. An examination of convict coins and foundling tokens provides evidence of how sentimental objects can add to our understanding of the emotional experiences of different groups and individuals, especially from the lower orders of society.

This thesis will analyse and determine what material culture can tell us about the emotions that accompany experiences such as love, death, abandonment, and transportation in eighteenth-century England. In my conclusion I will draw together these themes, and review the connections between emotions and objects that have been explored here, demonstrating how emotions and material culture can give us new insights into the experience of love, death, and loss in the eighteenth-century.
Chapter 2 - Emotions and the Material Culture of Love

The culture of courtship and marriage during the eighteenth century has been the subject of intense scrutiny by historians.¹ Some scholars, such as Lawrence Stone and Daniel Scott Smith, claim that the eighteenth century saw the development and resolution of a conflict between ideas about the importance of marrying for love versus marrying for economic and social reasons.² Stone and Smith claim that this conflict ended with the social acceptance of marriages contracted based on love and affection, and the diminished importance of economic considerations in contracting marriage during the eighteenth century.³ Other scholars, including David Cressy and Amanda Vickery have refuted the argument that ideals about love and marriage underwent a significant change during the eighteenth century.⁴ It is important to discuss this debate here as it pertains to changes in the emotional rules of eighteenth century English society, and partially explains the proliferation of love tokens during this period.

Lawrence Stone in The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 outlines his view of families and how they changed throughout the early modern period, as well as the impact these changes had on courtship and marriage practices at all social and economic levels of society.⁵ Stone identifies three types of families: the “open lineage family,” of 1450-1630; the “restricted patriarchal nuclear family” of 1550-1700; and the “closed domesticated

³ Ibid.
nuclear family” of 1640-1800. According to Stone, the “open lineage family” embraced outside influence, and individual autonomy and privacy were not important ideals. Instead, the interests of the group, the family or the village, were prioritized over the individual. Stone further claims that marriages were arranged with no regard for love or affection, and deep emotional attachments were considered unadvisable due to high rates of mortality. Furthermore, property acquisition was the goal and binding interest of the family when it came to arranging marriages. As such, marriage was not an “intimate association based on personal choice.” Instead, marriage was an economic and religious necessity; channeling sexual drives into procreation, and setting up the division of labour that ensured survival. According to Stone, marrying for love or companionship, or outside of parental approval, was rare. In the “restricted patriarchal nuclear family”, which, according to Stone, developed in 1550 and lasted until 1700, the nation-state, the religious sect, and the husband and father replaced the village and the family. During the late seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, discussions about marriage focused on issues of parental involvement, autonomy, romantic love, companionship and wealth. Finally, with the rise of what Stone terms “Affective Individualism”, the “closed domesticated nuclear family” of the eighteenth century began to prevail. The family was bound together by affective, or emotional ties, while maintaining personal freedom as an ideal. This constituted a break from previous emotional rules and ideals that placed greater value on the larger group over the smaller, the extended family over the nuclear family, and marriage not for companionship but for social and economic gain. Stone claims that during this period men and women, with the exception of those of royal

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6 Ibid.  
7 Ibid., 3.  
8 Ibid., 4.  
9 Ibid.  
11 Ibid.  
12 Ibid., 7.  
13 Ibid., 273.  
14 Ibid., 7.  
15 Ibid.
blood, selected marriage partners based on their own wishes, not parental wishes, and that they were primarily motivated by personal affection. Stone claims that this was a change that occurred during the eighteenth century, and that by the end of that century: “marriage at the free choice of bride and groom and based on solid emotional attachment was increasingly common.” Stone is not alone in his argument. Other historians, such as Daniel Scott Smith, have identified the eighteenth century as a turning point in two fundamental factors in courtship decisions: the motivations and aspirations of parents vs. those of the courting couple, and the value placed on love versus economic and social factors in the making of marriages. Daniel Scott Smith’s study on parental control of marriages in Hingham, Massachusetts confirm Stone’s view that the “parental-run marriage system” of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century eventually became the “participant-run marriage system” of the nineteenth century. This, of course assumes that the “participant-run” courtship was based primarily on emotional considerations.

Other scholars have confirmed the findings of Stone and Smith. Ruth Bloch identifies a change in emotional rules in eighteenth-century society, which began to place a “growing emphasis on the redemptive qualities of human love, including romantic loves between men and women.” Colin Campbell’s research on sentimentalism in eighteenth-century England echoes these findings. According to Campbell, “although love was no eighteenth-century discovery, attitudes toward it did change significantly at this time, making it not only fashionable but [...] a sufficient motive for marriage.” Furthermore, Campbell argues “all the features which we recognise today as characteristic of romantic love become clearly

16 Ibid., 8.
17 Ibid., 286.
19 Ibid.
21 Campbell, The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism, 27.
outlined for the first time” (during the eighteenth century). Some of these characteristics include the idea that there is only one person in the world suitable for another, love at first sight, and love as the most important thing in life.

This constitutes a significant change in the way courtship, romantic love, and marriage was being practiced, and the evidence reflects this; the abundance of love tokens can only occur in a society that allows for the expression of romantic love. This thesis does not argue that romantic love did not exist before the eighteenth century, rather that contemporaries took a radically different attitude towards love as the basis for marriage.

The evidence (literature, commentary, court cases, and diaries) reveals that at least for the middling sort and the gentry, love became more of a consideration in courtship, and that the courting couple had more independence in choosing a mate than ever before. This does not, however, mean that either love or practical concerns ruled entirely. The eighteenth-century daughter of a gentleman might expect to choose her husband based on love but she would most likely find that love within her own social and economic group, or risk being ostracised from her family and social peers.

The impact of these changes on the labouring class and the poor is difficult to say. Olwen Hufton describes marital choice as “geographically circumscribed” for the labouring class and the poor. Most parents were unable to provide much, if anything, as a dowry for their daughters who typically sought employment in domestic service. Hufton also raises the point that it was difficult for parents to impose boundaries on children who were likely to have been working away from home, and were in their mid to late twenties by the time they

22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
married. Keith Wrightson claims that the courtship of the poor was relatively unsupervised. Cressy also claims that the labouring classes may have acted less formally and with more independence, but adds “no firm social distinctions can be drawn.”

Not all scholars agree that courtship and marriage practices underwent a significant change in the eighteenth century. Amanda Vickery especially refutes Stone’s claims, and argues: “We should be suspicious of the entrenched argument that the eighteenth century saw the substitution of the arranged marriage with the romantic betrothal”, and that “the eighteenth century witnessed a great surge of romantic emotions which washed away all mercenary stains is unlikely in the extreme.” David Cressy also claims that Stone’s argument is wrong, but for different reasons to those of Vickery. Cressy argues that gaining consent of the engaged parties was nearly as important as parental consent in arranging marriages, and that affection was a fundamental part of choosing a marital partner by the seventeenth, not the eighteenth century.

Stone claims that some, especially women, were seeking romantic love as a basis for marriage by the end of the eighteenth century. This was certainly not true for all women, although it is clear that an important shift did occur earlier in the century. Courting couples and their families went from giving priority to social and economic considerations to giving the same weight to mutual affection. This change occurred as the result of a debate about how the institution of arranged marriage was conducted in eighteenth-century England. This debate took the form of social commentary, disseminated through novels, magazines, newspapers, and advice manuals. Studies of reading habits in the eighteenth century have

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27 Ibid., 126.
shown both men and women consumed novels, newspapers and magazines. The elite and the
middling sort were the largest consumers of reading material. Evidence shows that there were
readers lower down on the social scale as well. Jan Fergus’ study shows that while
provincial labourers did not often purchase novels, newspapers or magazines, domestic
servants frequently did. Ian Watt argues that “two large and important groups who probably
did have the time and opportunity to read were apprentices and household servants, especially
the latter.” Watt makes this claim based on the ability of domestic servants to access light to
read by, the income with which to buy books (as their room and board was provided), as well
as the leisure time necessary to read. Richard Altick echoes Watt’s assertion based on an
increase in provincial schools and the generally increased availability of printed matter. A
widespread reading public would have been tuned into the public discourse on values in
making marriages.

Popular guidebooks and advice manuals argued over the importance of emotional
connection before and during marriage. Over the course of the eighteenth century, several
new editions of the seventeenth-century Christian guidebook, New Whole Duty of Man,
instructed: “No law obliges a man to marry; but he is obliged to love the woman whom he
has taken in marriage”, and “marriage cannot be enterprised with any hopes of felicity,
without a real affection on the one side, and a good assurance of it on the other.” In 1704
the writer Daniel Defoe asks, “Where there is no pre-engagement of affection before
marriage, what can be expected after it?” Defoe also laments, “how little is regarded of that
one essential and absolutely necessary part of the Composition called Love, without which

34 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
the matrimonial State is, I think, hardly lawful." In 1706 the writer Mary Astell argued that the only appropriate motivation for marriage was “settled and well-reasoned affection.”

Joseph Addison, editor of *The Spectator* opined, “Those marriages generally abound most with love and constancy that are preceded by a long courtship. The passion should strike root and gather strength before marriage be grafted on to it.”

Popular fiction provides evidence that forcing couples into marriage was a concept that contemporaries had begun to find troubling. Lawrence Stone claims that Samuel Richardson’s popular novel *Clarissa* was written “in protest of mercenary marriage.” In *Clarissa*, an heiress runs away with a rake named Lovelace in order to avoid a marriage that her parents wish to force upon her. Lovelace rapes her, and Clarissa “chooses death” (ostensibly dying of a broken heart) over marriage to Lovelace. Subsequently, the term “Lovelace” is used to refer to a seducer. This novel, a bestseller, garnered much attention and sympathy for the heroine, and prompted the publication of a series of novels and plays wherein choice in marriage is supported, including *The History of Tom Jones* (1749), *Pamela* (1740), and *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn* (1759).

In the novel *The History of Tom Jones* (1749), Henry Fielding presents a woman named Sophia struggling with “two views of marriage - the old and the new”. Sophia decides on a compromise, wherein she will not marry without her father’s permission, but refuses to marry a man she does not choose herself, the implication being, a man she does not love. In Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela*, Mr. B, the master of the house, marries his virtuous maidservant Pamela, despite the enormous social gap. This is a happy marriage and Pamela is eventually accepted by Mr. B’s

40 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 276.
43 Ibid., 280.
44 Samuel Richardson and Sheila Ortiz Taylor, *Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady* (New York: Signet Classics, 2005).
45 Oxford English Dictionary, "Lovelace, N." (Oxford University Press).
48 Ibid.
family and peers. Sarah Fielding’s *The History of the Countess of Dellwyn* is a cautionary tale about the risks of mercenary marriage. In this novel Charlotte Lucum, a naïve and innocent girl, is persuaded by her father to marry a very rich old man. This marriage ends in disaster as a bored and unhappy Charlotte is caught having an affair with the young Lord Clermont. Charlotte is subsequently divorced by her husband and scorned by society. These novels used fictional characters and situations to describe the nature and consequences of contemporary marriages formed for social or economic reasons. In all of these examples, marriages contracted for money ended disastrously.

William Hogarth’s series of paintings, titled *Marriage-A-La Mode* (1743) depict the collapse of an arranged marriage and its consequences. In the first plate, Hogarth depicts a young couple, the daughter of a rich Alderman and the son of an Earl from their engagement to their untimely deaths. The Earl Squanderfield [his name a comment on the titled aristocrat who squanders his money] is clearly interested in marrying his son, the Viscount Squanderfield, to a wealthy heiress in order to pay off a mortgage, while the Alderman is interested in the Earl’s title. The future bride looks bored and the Earl’s lawyer flirts with her. The bridegroom does not notice, as he is busy looking in a mirror. Two dogs are unhappily chained together on the floor, clearly a representation of the future couple. The next plate, “The Breakfast Scene” depicts the couple at home. It is 1:20 pm, and the Lady Squanderfield is having morning tea, stretching lazily in her chair. The household dog is curiously sniffing a handkerchief falling from the Viscount’s pocket, indicating that the handkerchief smells of someone else, probably a woman. The following plates show both husband and wife in decline. The husband, now the Earl Squanderfield, is visiting a quack doctor to cure his

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52 See notes for plates 193-8 in ibid.
53 Ibid.
venereal disease, while his wife carries on an affair with the flirtatious lawyer from the first panel. In the final two scenes, the Earl is killed in a duel with the lawyer, and the Countess commits suicide with laudanum after the lawyer is executed for murder. The couple’s child, who has rickets, reaches for her dead mother, while the Countess’ father is shown removing the ring from her finger, and an emaciated dog steals a pig’s head from the dinner table.\textsuperscript{54}

This loveless marriage results in the ruin of the family: the death of the wife, a sickly motherless child, and a debauched and immoral husband. A popular play, ‘The Clandestine Marriage’ (1745), directly influenced by \textit{Marriage a-la-Mode}, satirised the arranged marriage.\textsuperscript{55} In this story, a wealthy heiress has secretly married her lover, a kind but impoverished man, while her parents intend to marry her to an aristocrat. This time, the story ends happily as the pair are accepted by the family despite the difference in wealth and status between the couple.\textsuperscript{56} In this story love prevails over money and social status.

The messages of \textit{Marriage a-la Mode} and ‘The Clandestine Marriage’ are clear. Marriage was thought to be a preventative to vice and immorality, but only if the marriage was successful, and it is clear that marriages made for only money were believed to end badly. There is evidence that in the debate over love versus money, love was beginning to win by the end of the century. This change is represented in literary fiction, through women’s letters to one another regarding their courtships, and also in advice manuals and lady’s magazines. When the French writer François de la Rochefoucauld visited England he remarked “the English have much more opportunity of getting to know each other before marriage.”\textsuperscript{57} He estimated that “three marriages out of four are based on affection, and one can see by experience that most of them are perfectly successful.”\textsuperscript{58}

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\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} George Colman, David Garrick, and James Townley, \textit{The Clandestine Marriage, a Comedy}, 2d ed. (London: T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt etc., 1766).
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
Not all historians agree that the literary evidence points to changed values. Amanda Vickery claims that eighteenth-century literature idealized romantic experience, and that this does not indicate changed behaviour.\(^{59}\) Yet literature does not exist in a vacuum, rather it is created as a response to the social environment and personal experiences of both the author and the reader. The proliferation of fiction and commentary on this subject is proof that something had changed, or was in the process of changing. Vickery bases her argument against the existence of the romantic marriage on evidence that women still considered economic security as an important factor in choosing a partner.\(^{60}\) I agree with Vickery that all mercenary strains did not vanish by the eighteenth century, however, the fact that many women were even able to argue for “love or money” and consider love to be a real option is revolutionary in itself. Regardless of whether or not mercenary pre-arranged marriages had met their end in the eighteenth century, as Stone argues, or if this change already occurred by the seventeenth century as Cressy argues, it is clear that the ideals that eventually led to the romantic betrothal as a standard are established firmly during the eighteenth century, based on pre-existing practices. The romantic feelings of men and women had come to be important, and were now considered a relevant factor in the selection of a marriage partner. Thus courtship became a highly emotional undertaking, and involved the use of material culture to express these emotions.

During the eighteenth century, the expression of romantic love in courtship began to rely heavily on token exchange, be it through letters, gloves, or jewellery. This was a shared culture for the labouring, the middling sort, and the gentry. While the objects changed in value depending on the economic situation of the giver, the customs remained the same for all. Henry Best writing about Yorkshire in 1641, describes a process of token exchange that if modified in economic value could have occurred between a courting couple of the gentry: “the


\(^{60}\) Ibid., 44.
third time he [the courting man] visiteth, hee perhaps giveth her a tenne shilling peece of gold, or a ringle of that price; or perhaps a twenty shilling peece, or a ringle of that price; then the next time, or next after that, a payre of gloves of 6s. 8d. or 10s a payre; and after that, each other time, some conceited toy or novelty of less value."  

61 It is possible that the intrinsic value of the gifts decreased as the courtship progressed because the gifts may have been more personal and emotional as the couple came to know each other. Alan MacFarlane claims that the “fairings”, or small gifts, (a term that originated from fairs, which were a popular destination for provincial youth), that people gave to their paramours, such as flowers, gloves and ribbons “marked the attachment and, hopefully, discouraged others, as does the present day engagement ring.”  

62 These types of gifts were inexpensive and accessible to the labouring class. Their low economic value made them no less significant to their recipient, and are further evidence for an emotional economy in gift giving.

In the ballad ‘O’ Dear What Can the Matter Be,’ a popular song from the late 1700s, a young woman eagerly awaits the material signs of her lover’s affection, though these objects were not costly:

O’ Dear what can the matter be,  
Dear, Dear, What can the matter be?  
Johnny’s so long at the fair  
He promised to buy me a pair of blue stockings,  
A pair of new garters that cost him but twopence  
He promised to buy me a basket of posies,  
A garland of lilies, a garland of roses  
A little straw hat to set off the blue ribbons,  
To tie up my bonny brown hair.  

Another example of common courtship culture is the importance of the wedding ring, without which, according to John Gillis, not even a peasant bride would consider herself “properly wed.” David Cressy argues in reference to courtship culture: “When we find Kentish and Derbyshire yeoman, East Anglican and North Country clergy, rural and metropolitan tradesman and gentry from all over England […] behaving in a similar manner, it is clear that we are observing the workings of a common culture.” This thesis will examine objects of varying economic value, in order to show that the culture of gift giving was alive across the social scale, and to indicate that the monetary value of an object was less important than its emotional significance to the recipient.

In two pieces in the *The Spectator*, the editor Richard Steele uses a metaphor for the culture of love tokens. Steele illustrates "The Dissection of a Beau’s Brain" and "The Dissection of a Coquette's Heart," filling the Beau’s brain and the Coquette’s heart with “Ribbons, Lace and Embroidery, wrought together in a most curious piece of Network.... Another of these...Cavities, was stuffed with invisible Billet-doux, Love-Letters, pricked Dances, and other Trumpery". “Other Trumpery” no doubt referred to popular love tokens, most commonly jewellery, gloves, miniatures, and snuffboxes. These items were important to the progress of a courtship. A late seventeenth-century ballad entitled *Faint Heart never won Fair Lady, or "Good Advice to Batchelors (sic.) - How to Court and Obtain a Young Lass*, instructs suitors to:

Win her with Fairings and sweetening Treats,

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67 Oxford English Dictionary, "Trumpery, N. And Adj." (Oxford University Press). Trumpery is defined as: “Something of less value than it seems”; hence, “something of no value; trifles; worthless stuff, trash, rubbish.” Not necessarily economically worthless, though, as the Oxford English Dictionary gives an example from Shakespeare’s *Winter's Tale* (1623) iv. iv. 598, I haue sold all my Tromperie: not a counterfeit Stone, not a Ribbon, Glasse, Pomander, Browch keepe my Pack from fasting.
Lasses are soonest o'ercome this way;  
Ribbons and Rings will work most strange feats,  
and bring you into favour and play. 68

The entry for “presents” in *A dictionary of love: Or the language of gallantry explained*, describes gifts in terms of courtship:

A term of great power and energy, and, generally speaking, the shortest way for a lover to get to his journey’s end. There are proportioned to the fortune and rank of the person upon whom the design is. A duchess may fall to a diamond-necklace, and a chambermaid to a tawdry ribbon. It has even been known, that a silly girl has been seduced by a dozen of stick cherries. In short, the great art is, how to adapt, place, proportion, and time them. 69

Breach of promise of marriage suits show how important tokens were in making and sealing courtship bonds. Legal judgments as to whether an engagement or a marriage had taken place would often depend on whether or not tokens had been exchanged, and if so consideration was given to the type of token and the context in which it was give. 70 In one breach of promise suit, Thomas Cullen stated that Susan Merchant had been given “a piece of money and a pair of gloves with silver fringe from Thomas Cullen, as tokens of his love,” and when she received them she had “made many serious protestations of the continuance of her love and affection to him the said Thomas Cullen and that she would never forsake him as long as he lived.” 71 Courtship necessitated expression with objects, particularly in an era when love letters were customarily sent to family members or friends of the beloved, and women were discouraged from revealing too much emotion to potential suitors. 72 A woman could encourage a man in courtship, but "not so far as to become an object of gossip among peers, or an object of parental criticism." 73 Betsy Sandwith never recorded her feelings for suitor

68 Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady: / or, / Good Advice to Batchelors / How to Court and Obtain a Young Lass (London: J Millet, 1692).
71 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
Henry Drinker in her diary. Instead she kept a tally of her needlework for three years.\textsuperscript{74} Everything she made was either for a family member or a clergyman, with the exception of two watch chains she made for Henry Drinker.\textsuperscript{75} For women, who were more often on the receiving end of courtship gift exchange, bestowing a handmade gift on a suitor signified serious intentions, intentions that could remain comfortably unspoken. When the writer Elizabeth Graeme wanted to show regard for her suitor William, she turned not to words but instead made him a watch chain as a memento.\textsuperscript{76} During 1699-1700 Henry Jack, the vinter and master of the Bell Tavern in London courted Abigail Harris, daughter of an organ maker.\textsuperscript{77} Henry Jack showed as much love to Abigail as “twas possible to express.”\textsuperscript{78} Jack did this by lavishing her with gifts, which included “a ring which his own mother gave him with some of her own hair worked into it with a crystal round it, a medal, a snuff box, a fan, and a tortoiseshell comb.”\textsuperscript{79}

Gift-giving in courtship was gendered in nature. Women were encouraged to be careful about expressing interest in, and encouraging, suitors. This meant that men did the majority of gift-giving during courtship. Giving love tokens sometimes caused men considerable anxiety. The way a courtship token was received was thought to not only provide information about the recipient’s interest in the person offering it- but also offered insight into the recipient’s personality. William Franklin, bitter after the end of his courtship to Elizabeth Graeme, recalled that her reaction to the gift of a muff should have made him realize that she lacked “soft emotions.” Franklin explains the reasons for the gift: “I must confess, I had a tender motive for sending her a Muff. As she was often pleased to liken me to Tom Jones, and express herself much delighted with the story of Sophia's muff in that

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 525.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} Stone, Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England 1660-1753, 49.
Novel, I could not help flattering myself that this might, in the same Manner, tend to raise or keep alive some Soft Emotions in my Favour.’”  

Elizabeth’s reception of the gift was found wanting by Franklin, who complained that she referred to it as a ‘gawdy Geegaw.’ Franklin interprets her reaction to the gift in two ways - first that she was “anxious to take all opportunities of showing I held not the least remains in her Esteem, or that she thinks it somewhat presumptuous in me to make her any present at all”, and that she lacked the qualities of the literary heroine he likened her to: “I see there is no intrinsic Merit in a Muff. It can have no Avail where a Sophia's Breast is wanting.” Elizabeth’s reaction to William Franklin’s gift caused him to believe that she was not only uninterested in his affections, but perhaps not the woman he thought she was after all. Such was the importance placed on the emotional response to a gift by the recipient. Additionally, Elizabeth’s displeasure at what was likely a costly gift indicates that she did not place value on gifts that didn’t suit her.

Elizabeth expected her suitor to know the kinds of gifts she might like. For Elizabeth, the muff was a gift that did not rate highly, regardless of cost. If her suitor knew her better, he would give a gift that held value in her own emotional economy.

If a gift did not evoke the intended emotions, this could cause anxiety. Sometimes a positive response to a gift could also be questioned. Robert Herrick’s “The Carkanet” expressed anxiety about whether or not his feelings were reciprocated or if his beloved merely liked his gift:

Instead of Orient Pearls of Jet,  
I sent my love a karkanet  
About her spotlesse neck she knit  
The lace, to honour me, or it:  
Then think how wrapt was I to see  
My Jet enthrall such Ivorie

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80 Ibid.  
81 Ibid.  
82 Ibid.  
84 A jewelled necklace or collar.  
85 The string of the necklace.
Herrick’s anxiety, as expressed in the implication that his lover wore his necklace either “to honour me, or it”, may have come from experience. John Gillis argues that many women would encourage gifts from several men to recognize their status as suitors, and some women abused this custom.⁸⁷ Gifts were thought to have magical power, and to give someone a piece of clothing or a lock of hair was to “place oneself in that person’s possession.”⁸⁸ Strong emotions were also thought to be endowed with supernatural powers.⁸⁹ One custom dictated that a courting couple broke a coin to signal their intention to marry, and if the courtship came to an end due to unfaithfulness, the unfaithful one had to return their portion of the split coin, or “awful consequences might overtake the unfaithful one.”⁹⁰

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⁸⁸ Gillis, *For Better, for Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present*, 32.
⁸⁹ Ibid., 33.
Jewellery

In the eighteenth century sentimental jewellery became a popular means of emotional expression. Pieces of sentimental jewellery were often small in scale and used inexpensive materials such as enamel, pinchbeck (an alloy that looked like gold), and semi precious gems. These pieces could be proffered as a means of celebrating a romantic relationship, a betrothal or marriage, or as a reminder of a dearly departed loved one. Used as love tokens or mementoes of those departed, these small objects were a symbol of intimacy and love.

These styles used to commemorate love and death were very similar. Only by looking closely at symbols and inscriptions are we able to tell love tokens from mourning pieces. Bright colours might indicate that the loved one is alive, since the colours black and white were typically only used in mourning pieces. Sentimental rings were frequently gifts between close friends. These often held miniatures, silhouettes, or inscriptions, sometimes in French, such as 'Doux et sincere' or 'the farther I fly the faster we tye'. Many heart-shaped crystal lockets were tokens of friendship. Giardinetti, meaning 'little garden', rings and brooches were little vases or flowerpots of tiny gemstone flowers. These were typically exchanged between friends and contained no secret symbolism, but acted more like a bouquet of flowers for someone who was loved and admired. In the later eighteenth century, French style 'amatory' jewels were popular friendship tokens in England. These were pendants and brooches with blue enamel or paste surrounded by pearls. The interiors featured hair under glass. They were inscribed with French words or sayings, such as "amour" and "L'amitie set

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91 Ibid., 43.
94 Ibid., 16.
95 Ginny Redington Dawes et al., Georgian Jewellery 1714-1830 (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2007), 134.
97 Ginny Redington Dawes et al., Georgian Jewellery 1714-1830 (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2007), 143-4.
tout,' meaning: this is a trifle…friendship is everything. Many heart-shaped crystal lockets were also tokens of friendship. It is often difficult to tell friendship jewels from love tokens as both kinds of tokens used similar motifs, as well as human hair, however, elements of the emotional economy are evident through these acts of giving.

Some love tokens required secrecy and “covert expression.” This was accomplished primarily through symbolism. During the sixteenth century, symbolism pervaded the arts and crafts, and by the seventeenth century became popular in commercial jewellery designs. Emblem and device books were published, with symbols derived from Latin and Greek classics. Ancient scripts such as Egyptian, Norman French, and Gothic were also used in jewellery. Many of these symbols persisted well beyond the eighteenth century, and are still used today.

The most common symbol in eighteenth-century love jewellery is the heart. The heart took various forms: asymmetrical witches’ hearts, flaming hearts, twin hearts, hearts with crowns, stout hearts, hearts pierced by arrows, and hearts surrounded with pearls. The heart was often used as a shape for lockets, pendants, brooches and hairpins. Figures 1 and 2 show common uses of the heart shape in jewellery. Figure 1 is of an eighteenth-century English gold pendant in the shape of a heart, surrounded by pearls, which represented purity. Under the faceted crystal glass lies a tiny embroidery of two birds, a popular symbol of romantic love, commitment, and faithfulness. This item would most likely have been a wedding or anniversary gift, as the birds were symbols commonly affiliated with marriage. The locket in Figure 2 is a more inexpensive and simpler example of a heart-shaped token.

98 Ibid., 144.
99 Ibid.
100 Scarisbrick, Jewellery in Britain, 1066-1837: A Documentary, Social, Literary, and Artistic Survey, 265.
103 Ibid., 8.
104 Ibid., 10.
105 Dawes et al., Georgian Jewellery 1714-1830, 136. Dawes et al. describe these asymmetrical hearts as “witches” hearts, but offer no explanation for them.
This locket is small, light in weight and silver. It depicts a Cupid preparing to fire an arrow from his bow. Despite its modesty, it is inscribed with a highly emotional declaration: ‘Noe heart more true than mine to you.’

Fig. 1 - Pendant with embroidery under crystal, c. 1700. Victoria and Albert Museum, M.22-1960. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 2 - Silver locket, c. 1690-1700. Inscribed ‘NOE HEART MORE TRUE THEN MINE TO YOU.’ Victoria and Albert Museum, M.3-1958. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Other frequently used symbols include padlocks, torches, angels, cherubs, and wings. Lover’s knots, bows, and ribbons symbolized secret love. Musical instruments were also popular symbols, especially guitars, lyres, and mandolins, which symbolised

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106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
Animals were also popular symbols in love jewellery. Salamanders symbolized passion, and ducks, thought to mate for life, symbolised marital fidelity.109 Doves represented purity, bees, industry, butterflies for the soul, and snakes for eternity.110 The ouroboros, sometimes called ‘the serpent of eternity,’ symbolised eternity and endless renewal.111 Similarly, the mythical phoenix, a regenerative bird reborn from the ashes of its own periodic destruction was often used as a symbol of renewed or revived love.112

Other symbols carried more direct messages. A pansy flower carried the message ‘think of the giver.’113 Moths swarming a diamond-topped candle represented a warning of the dangers of passion.114 A distaff meant ‘fate weaves our destiny.’115 A sea vessel symbolised victory over the storms of love.116 The rose, sacred to Venus, represented love, which was always accompanied by the danger of hurt, symbolised by thorns. One gold-mounted pendant made in 1760 contained an enameled gold rose surrounded by the inscription: JAMAIS LA ROSE SANS L’EPINE (never a rose without a thorn). This expression highlights love and pain, both emotions that are part of the experience of love and loss.117

Gemstones also contained symbolism. Diamonds represented constancy, sapphires the soul, emeralds symbolised faith, and rubies represented romantic passion.118 Combinations of coloured stones conveyed messages. For example, a ring with a diamond and a ruby would have symbolised, or perhaps pledged, enduring passion.119 Love tokens in the shape of padlocks were popular, and particularly treasured when they contained an acrostic message

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108 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid., 139.
111 Ibid.
112 Bury, An Introduction to Sentimental Jewellery, 10.
113 Munn, The Triumph of Love: Jewelry 1530-1930, 14.
114 Ibid., 57.
115 Dawes et al., Georgian Jewellery 1714-1830, 139.
116 Bury, An Introduction to Sentimental Jewellery, 16.
118 Ibid., 49.
119 Dawes et al., Georgian Jewellery 1714-1830, 140.
with gemstones. The first letter of the word for a gemstone would be used to spell out a word. One example contained a ruby, emerald, a garnet, amethyst, another ruby, and a diamond to spell ‘REGARD’. Another contained lapis, opal, vermeil, and emerald to spell ‘love’. Symbols rendered tangible the sentiments associated with love, thereby investing love tokens with emotional meanings. Perhaps the most emotionally powerful element of a love token, human hair was a symbol of the corporeal, and therefore acted a representation of the lover’s physical presence.

120 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
Hairwork

Commonly used in both love and mourning tokens, hair was a potent symbol of a human body, and therefore a powerful talisman. In 1711, in a letter in response to a discussion in *The Spectator* about the best token to comfort separated lovers, the writer declared that “I have never found so much benefit from any as from a ring in which my mistress’s [sic] hair is plaited together very artificially in a kind of true lover’s knot.”123 Women were encouraged to make their own hair jewellery, and manuals provided instructions on the various knots used in hairwork, as well as how to cut, clean and sew the hair into jewellery.124 Hair was commonly used in lockets, rings and pendants. Lockets were highly popular love tokens, especially as they could hide hair or miniatures. Figure 3 shows a heart shaped locket that is intended to reveal the hair instead of hiding it. The hair would be plaited so as to be seen from the outside, as a decorative part of the jewel in its own right, not as a secret or hidden addition. In this ring, the hair is the jewel to be seen, because it was highly valuable in the emotional economy.

![Enamelled fede ring](image)

*Fig. 3 - Enamelled fede ring c. 1706. Inscribed 'Dudley & Katherine united 26. Mar. 1706'. Victoria and Albert Museum, 302-1867. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

123 Richard Steele, *The Spectator* No. 245, December 7 1711.
Pamela Hammon suggests that the gift of hair implies that two lovers are bound together, and “can also suggest the anxiety inducing idea that one love is made captive to the other by it.”\textsuperscript{125} The gift of a lock of hair during courtship signaled serious intentions. An unmarried woman was only supposed to give hair to a man if they were engaged.\textsuperscript{126} In Jane Austen’s novel \textit{Sense and Sensibility}, Margaret Dashwood spies her sister Marianne clipping a lock of hair for John Willoughby, and is thus convinced that they are engaged.\textsuperscript{127} There is also another anxiety inherent in the gift of hair. If lovers are aware that they must be “bound” together, then they are also aware that they can be parted, especially if due vigilance is not paid. The hair bracelet is part of this process, which is also an attempt to bind love to the physical and therefore more permanent realm of objects. Figure 4 is of a hair jewel with an inscription that expresses the anxiety and pain of love. At the center of the rounded pendant is an enameled Cupid holding a heart in both of his hands against a background of hair. It is surrounded by rock crystals that give the appearance of tears. Inscribed on the reverse is ‘Je Me Meurs Ma Mere,’ or, ‘I am dying, Mother’- a line spoken from Cupid to his mother Venus in an ancient Greek poem.\textsuperscript{128} The inscription expresses anxiety and heartache, possibly painful emotion brought on by unrequited or secret love.

\begin{itemize}
\item Batchelor, \textit{Dress, Distress and Desire: Clothing and the Female Body in Eighteenth-Century Literature}, 27.
\item Bury, \textit{An Introduction to Sentimental Jewellery}, 44.
\item This is according to the information provided by the V&A about the item. Museum number [M.21-1960]. See: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O126134/pendant-unknown/
\end{itemize}
Fig. 4 - Gold pendant with enameled Cupid over woven hair c. 1675-1700. Victoria and Albert Museum, M.21-1960. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Rings

In the eighteenth century the ring was the most meaningful love token, as the unbroken circle continued to represent eternal commitment and love. Cressy claims, “rings remained the central emblem of the betrothed couple until the present day, showing remarkable continuity in the face of legal and cultural changes.” Even the tradition of wearing the wedding ring on the fourth finger of the left hand, or the “ring finger” due to a belief that a vein runs from there directly to the heart, has survived. Rings also outnumber other types of sentimental jewellery, as they were worn by both men and women and were given by all who could afford them. With the introduction of the gold substitute pinchbeck, such rings were affordable for most. Rings also represent some of the earliest sentimental jewels. Poesy rings, which originated in the Middle Ages, were the most common, and retained popularity until the eighteenth century, when they evolved into modern wedding bands. Poesy rings were inexpensive plain gold hoops inscribed with messages, typically in French, which was considered the language of courtship. These rings were used most often as courtship, wedding, and mourning rings. The inscriptions were chosen from a published collection such as “Love’s Garland, or Posies for Rings, Hand-kercers and Gloves,” and “Cupid’s Posies for Bracelets, Hand-Kercers and Rings, with Scarfes, Gloves and Other Things / written by Cupid on a day when Venus gave him leave to play.”

132 Ibid.
133 Scarisbrick, Jewellery in Britain, 1066-1837: A Documentary, Social, Literary and Artistic Survey, 262.
inscriptions ranged from the lighthearted- DOUX ET SINCERE (Sweet and Sincere), to more serious and emotional: “as true to thee as death to me.”

The English writer Dr. Samuel Johnson defined a ring as "a circular instrument placed upon the noses of hogs and the fingers of women to restrain them and bring them into subjection." Despite Johnson's cynicism, after his wife died in 1752 he kept her wedding ring boxed by his bed for the rest of his life. The inscriptions on poesy rings were highly important to contemporaries. Samuel Pepys records that his family spent several hours roasting a lamb and deciding on a poesy for Pepys’s brother’s wedding ring. These rings also acted as a reminder of the highly emotional significance and memory of a wedding. A 1799 edition of Lady’s Monthly Magazine suggested that a wedding ring could act as an important touchstone during moments of emotional upset during a marriage: "Always wear your wedding ring for therein lies more virtue than is usually imagined if you are ruffled unawares, assaulted with improper thoughts, or tempted in any kind against your duty cast your eye upon it and call to mind who gave it to you, where it was received and what passed at that solemn time". Figures 5 and 6 show an inexpensive and a more expensive example of a poesy ring. Figure 5 is a late eighteenth-century poesy ring made from stained gut and white quill. The materials used in this ring are uncommon; typically even the cheapest poesy ring was made from metal, while this ring was made from materials that would likely be found on any farm or abbatoir. This is an important example of how the traditions of emotional expression reached even the lowest classes, and how the emotional economy rendered economically valueless objects valuable. Despite the unusual materials, the ring does not deviate from the standard inscription, it is lettered ‘ANN CHILCOTT’ with a heart.

138 Luthi, Sentimental Jewellery, 6.
139 Dawes et al., Georgian Jewellery 1714-1830, 132.
140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
A more expensive example can be seen in Figure 6, a gold band is enameled with a chased motif of sixteen gold stars. It is inscribed and enameled on the interior with the inscription:

‘Many are thee starrs I see yet in my eye no starr like thee.’

Fig. 5 - Stained gut and quill ring c. 18th century. Inscribed ‘ANN CHILCOTT’ with a heart. Victoria and Albert Museum, 374-1908. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 6 - Gold posey ring with stars in relief c. 17th-18th centuries. Inscribed ‘Many are thee starrs I see yet in my eye no starr like thee’. The British Museum, AF.1342. © Trustees of the British Museum.

The poesy ring eventually became what was known as a ‘keeper’ ring, as a result of the popularity of another ring, the diamond ring, during the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{142} The purpose of the keeper was to prevent the diamond ring from slipping off.\textsuperscript{143} The keeper was

\textsuperscript{142} Scarisbrick, \textit{Rings: Symbols of Wealth, Power and Affection}, 25.
\textsuperscript{143} Dawes et al., \textit{Georgian Jewellery 1714-1830}, 134.
a plain gold band like the poesy, or a gold band enameled, pearled, or set with gemstones.\textsuperscript{144} These rings evolved into the modern sets popular today- a diamond solitaire or similar as an engagement ring paired with a ‘keeper’, now known as a wedding band.

\textbf{Miniature Portraits}

Miniature portraits themselves were highly valued as love tokens throughout Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{145} Lady Louisa Connelly wrote to her sister: “you have no notion…how happy I am to have so sweet a picture of you as I have to wear constantly; it’s the greatest pleasure almost I have, to look at it so constantly as I do.”\textsuperscript{146} Connelly focuses not on the value of the miniature, which was no doubt made from precious metals, but her ability to conjure the image of her beloved sister at any time she likes. The portrait miniature was the precursor to the photograph, giving the wearer an object, a talisman for reflection and memory, through the powerful physical sense of sight. In the novel \textit{The Delicate Distress} (1787) Seymour, the husband of protagonist Emily Woodville, struggles with his love for a French marchioness.\textsuperscript{147} Seymour finds that a miniature portrait of his beloved causes him emotional turmoil, and locks the portrait away, throwing the key into the fire so that “it might not be in my power to gaze away my reason, for that night, at least.”\textsuperscript{148} For Seymour the portrait of his mistress stirs emotions that he cannot counter by reason or obligation to his wife. For Lieutenant Ralph Clarke of the First Fleet, looking at and kissing his wife’s miniature every day formed an essential ritual that comforted him in a frightening new world: “my only happiness that I have is the kissing of my Betsy’s dear picture and my little boy’s hair that she sent. I would not part with it for a Captains commission.”\textsuperscript{149} Many portrait miniatures were mounted in lockets that included locks of hair, adding

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{145} Richard Steele, \textit{The Spectator} No. 245, December 7 1711.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 53.
\textsuperscript{148} Elizabeth Griffin, \textit{The Delicate Distress, a Novel: In Letters}. In Two Volumes, (Dublin 1787).
another corporeal feature and furthering the emotional value and intimacy of these tokens. Miniatures were worn as necklaces, rings and brooches. An interesting example of a portrait miniature [Figure 7] is the silhouette. The silhouette was a cheap and simple method of portraiture that became popular around 1775. This particular silhouette sits under the crystal bezel of an enameled gold ring. Under the bezel lies a plaited panel of hair. The border is enameled black and inscribed ‘JE CHERIS JUSQU’A SON OMBRE’, or ‘I cherish even her shadow.’ Much like the hidden panel of hair, silhouettes concealed the identity of the subject. A more secretive version of the miniature portrait was the eye miniature portrait, which showed only the beloved's eye, so as to obscure his/her identity, and often included a lock of hair. [Figure 8]. This eye miniature is framed by a gold ouroboros, symbolizing eternity. On his death in 1830, King George IV was found to be wearing an eye miniature of his mistress, Maria Fitzherbert.

Fig. 7 - Gold silhouette ring. Made in 1780. Inscribed 'I cherish even her shadow'. Victoria and Albert Museum, M.174-1962. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

150 Griffin, The Delicate Distress, a Novel: In Letters, In Two Volumes. 32.
151 Scarisbrick, Rings: Symbols of Wealth, Power and Affection, 117.
152 Phillips and Thomas, Jewels & Jewellery, 67.
Snuffboxes were also popular love tokens and often contained miniature portraits along with, enamel and precious stones. Some were designed to resemble a love letter that has been sealed and addressed. The white enamel lids open to reveal a portrait miniature or a message inside. The miniatures inside snuffboxes served as a constant reminder of a loved one as the box would be opened several times a day, and perhaps even shared with others. These may have been popular amongst military men, according to one writer to *The Spectator* in 1711: “I am acquainted with many a brave Fellow, who carries his Mistress in the Lid of his Snuff-box, and by that Expedient has supported himself under the Absence of a whole Campaign.” Figure 9 shows two snuffboxes made to look like shoes. Shoes were popular symbols of love and marriage and these may have been courtship gifts intended for a couple to carry.

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153 Ibid.
155 Ibid.
Emotions and Tokens of Love

Love tokens contained emotional value that was far greater than their intrinsic value. In 1761 a widow named Elizabeth Dell took William Doudall to court for theft, the main item in dispute was a poesy ring that belonged to her mother-in-law. Elizabeth Dell says of it: “it was my husband’s mother’s wedding ring, which he desired before he died. I would never part with it.” A physical fight ensued in which William threatened to break Elizabeth’s arm for the ring to which Elizabeth said “I would lose my life first”, indicating that she would not give up the ring regardless of any physical abuse. Elizabeth also testified that William convinced her to give up her money under the pretense that they would get married, but she does not try to get any financial settlement over this, her main concern is the ring which she wanted back due to its emotional value. Records of criminal proceedings for theft provide evidence of a dogged determination to preserve sentimental objects at the risk of bodily harm. During a violent highway robbery in 1734, the victim Mary Colson told the men who attacked her that she was pregnant, and begged the men to let her keep her wedding ring.

even offering to “send them twice the value of it to any Place that they would appoint, and never complain of them.” They did not comply. In another highway robbery in 1721, the Lord Viscount Lisbon was violently robbed of a sword, 12s. and a snuffbox. Lisbon, despite having a pistol pointed at his chest, begged that his pregnant wife be allowed to keep her wedding ring. It is clear that Lisbon thought the emotions inspired by the loss of her wedding ring might cause problems with her pregnancy. Lisbon did not beg for any other items back, only the item with sentimental value. This time the thieves complied and left the woman her ring. Another such robbery occurred in 1750. This victim so lamented the loss of her wedding ring that the thieves thought it was made of gold, although it turned out to only be a cheap metal. The ring was valueless to thieves, but valuable enough to the victim to risk begging for it back. In this case an object that held little intrinsic was worth a woman endangering her life. In this way love tokens were transformed objects that moved beyond economic value. In Henry Fielding’s 1742 novel, the eponymous Joseph Andrews, Andrews refuses to give up a piece of a broken coin that he wears as a love token. Despite needing money on several occasions, he refuses to use it, saying “Not to preserve my life from starving, nor to redeem it from a robber, would I part with this dear piece!” For Andrews, the gold coin ceased to be money, it was transformed by emotions into a priceless and powerful talisman. Just as the one woman’s valueless wedding ring gained immense personal value due to emotional attachment, emotional attachment could also render objects of no monetary value emotionally priceless.

While romantic love and gift exchange are not phenomena restricted to the

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161 Ibid.
eighteenth century, a new emphasis on the importance of love in contracting marriage explains the proliferation of love tokens during this period. While the ‘consumer revolution’ and emulative behaviour may have made expensive goods easier to obtain or strive for, the emotional motivations behind love tokens are the primary reason for their creation and distribution. Love tokens expressed the intricacies of the heart through symbolism. Pendants, rings, lockets, hairwork and miniatures served to create a physical link between lovers that engaged the senses and therefore reified and legitimized romantic love. The intrinsic value of love tokens changed in line with social and economic status; however it was the emotional value of the objects involved that made them important.
Chapter 3 - Emotions and the Material Culture of Death

This chapter will analyse the connection between mourning tokens and emotions related to death, particularly grief and memory. Examining this material culture reveals how people used objects to cope with loss, both publicly and privately. Some historians, such as Claire Gittings and Lucinda Becker suggest that the early modern period was characterized by an increasing anxiety over death.¹ Death was a familiar face in everyday life. From 1657 to 1686 the population of England fell from 5.25 million to less than 4,865,000.² There were numerous years where the death toll rose to over ten percent. Mortality rates were also particularly high in 1660-81, 1727-30, and 1741-42.³ Diseases such as whooping cough, small pox and “putrid fever” were prevalent.⁴ Death was certainly on the minds of the English people. Most deaths took place at home which meant that more people were in close contact with the dying.⁵ The bodies of the dead remained at the place of their death until burial, typically at home, and were attended to by family members or servants.⁶ The washing and dressing of a body for burial was usually performed by family members.⁷ Those who could afford to would often pay female servants or midwives to perform this service.⁸ Despite the claims of Lawrence Stone, high mortality rates did not mean that people were detached from the deaths of loved ones, or failed to grieve for the dead. For example, ‘grief” was a listed cause of death for 46 individuals in the 1665 London bills of mortality.⁹

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¹ Gittings, Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England, 13; Becker, Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman, 11.
³ Ibid., 174-75.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Gittings, Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England, 8.
⁸ Ibid., 429.
Literature on death was in high demand, particularly during the eighteenth century. ‘Memento Mori’ literature, such as William Sherlock’s *Hell’s Everlasting Flame, A Practical Discourse Concerning Death* (1689), John Hayward’s *The Horror and Terrors of the Hour of Death* (1707), Edward Young’s *Night Thoughts* (1742), and in 1759, William Romaine’s *The Knowledge of Salvation Is Precious in the Hour of Death* were reprinted dozens of times over the century. Elizabeth Rowe’s *Friendship in Death* (1728) featured a series of imaginary letters from the dead to the living, reminding them about death, and attempting to dissuade them from sinfulness or indifference, as well as offering consolation to the grieving. All of these texts reflect the sentiment of *memento mori* (remember that you will die), which was an element of a distinct culture of death that existed since the publication of the *Ars Moriendi* in 1415 and 1450 and lasted until the end of the eighteenth century. The *Ars Moriendi* provided spiritual advice on how to die a ‘good death’, a death that would lead to salvation. A good death and salvation could only be achieved by a good life and *memento mori* reflected the necessity of preparation for death on a daily basis. The culture of death inspired by the *Ars Moriendi* was also reflected in artwork. *Vanitas* artwork began as a style of Dutch artwork that explored the futility of worldly pursuits. *Vanitas* symbolism included skulls, coffins, rotting fruit, skeletons, and hourglasses, and eventually influenced the *memento mori* style of mourning jewellery that will be analysed later in this chapter.

Some scholars contend that by the end of the eighteenth century, death loses a considerable amount of its Christian symbolism. Sentimentalism, Evangelicalism, and the Enlightenment all influenced eighteenth-century attitudes towards death. A new emphasis

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12 Ibid.
13 Oxford English Dictionary, "Vanitas, N." (Oxford University Press).
15 Ibid., 209.
on taking the terror and fear out of death and dying developed, and it is during this period that sleep became a metaphor for death.\textsuperscript{16} Previously, according to Peter Sherlock, “death was a fearsome adversary and the bearer of pain and suffering. Grief was balanced by the assured hope of salvation.”\textsuperscript{17} As the world became increasingly secular, the hope was to be remembered, that fear to be forgotten.

Sorrow was considered to be a natural and normal response to the death of a loved one, and contemporaries expressed grief in a similar fashion as we do today.\textsuperscript{18} It was considered indecent not to mourn the dead, however, displaying too much grief was also considered inappropriate.\textsuperscript{19} According to David Cressy, grief was different to mourning; grief was an inward emotional state, while mourning was a practice and a performance.\textsuperscript{20} Books such as Reverend Zachary Taylor’s \textit{The Decency and Moderation of Christian Mourning} (1702) were dedicated to controlling the outward display of grief.\textsuperscript{21} Mourning was one way of controlling grief and channeling it into socially appropriate customs. The ritual of mourning, according to Randolph Trumbach, had three different purposes: “it indicated to outsiders that one properly valued the relationship: it kept peace with living relations for whom such public ceremony was important; and it allowed one to cope with one’s own grief”.\textsuperscript{22}

The most public way that eighteenth-century English society displayed grief was through mourning dress. This of course did not include the poor, who could not afford special mourning costume. The seventeenth-century Jacobean preacher Robert Hill gave six reasons to maintain the practice of mourning and the use of mourning costume.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 206.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Peter Sherlock, \textit{Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England} (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 71.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Houlbrooke, “The Age of Decency: 1660-1760,” 187.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Cressy, \textit{Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England}, 438.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Houlbrooke, “The Age of Decency: 1660-1760,” 187.
\end{itemize}
1. By it we keep a memory of our friend
2. We are drawn to some humiliations
3. We are put in mind of our own mortality
4. It argues His love that bestows it upon us
5. By this means many poor are clothed
6. It is but a legacy of the dead to the living.  

The wearing of special mourning clothes is an ancient practice. The basics of mourning dress in England survived changes in fashion for centuries and were comprised of dark colours, especially black, crape, and veils and head coverings. The posture of mourning, along with the lines of the draping fabric suggest “yielding, drooping, as well as weeping.” The drooping is conveyed by the widow’s long veil and the long black “wheeper scarves” in men’s hats. The drooping fabric and greyish colours are reminiscent of the willow tree, which is associated with sadness. The very clothing on the mourner’s back must submit to grief. The origins of ‘widows weeds,’ or the mourning garments of widowed women, can be found in the robes of early Christian nuns. As many pre-Reformation women became nuns after being widowed, widow’s weeds were influenced by the style of nun’s habits. The colours black, white and grey also evoked the humble dress of monks and nuns. “Nun’s veiling” was often recommended for women in mourning.” Widows also adopted the black and ash grey robes of nuns, as well as the ubiquitous black veil. Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas suggest that mourning dress was intended to evoke humility and submission “towards death and the Deity. A submissive attitude…is also expressed in the way mourners

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25 Ibid., 44.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 37.
30 Cunnington and Lucas, Costumes for Births, Marriages & Deaths, 153.
31 Ibid.
32 Taylor, Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History, 40.
tend to cut themselves off from the world by covering the face.”

The dark veil known as a “widows’ shroud” is a good example of this. People who wanted to appear modest and humble sometimes wore clothing similar to second mourning. To ignore mourning requirements was to risk disrespecting the dead, and to in turn one day become the disrespected dead, a fate that the eighteenth-century English feared more than death itself.

Mourning attire served as an emotional marker, distinguishing those who were closest to the deceased. The funeral costume of the chief mourner was always different to that of other mourners. Not only did this distinguish who was closest to the deceased, but the person who was thought to be experiencing the greatest lost and therefore suffering. The severity of the mourner’s loss and corresponding grief was also distinguished by the quality and price of mourning clothes and jewellery distributed to them by family members of the deceased before the funeral. Sir Ralph Verney wrote in 1685 that “Sir Richard Pigott was buried very handsomely…we that bore up the pall had rings, scarfs, hatbands, shamee gloves of the best fashion,” indicating that the principal mourners had special clothes and accessories.

Verney goes on to say that the rest of the gentry attending the funeral had rings (but not hatbands, scarfs and gloves), while the servants wore special gloves. The quality of the objects distributed to mourners was also a distinguishing element. Samuel Pepys’ funeral rings came in three prices, from 10 to 20 shillings a piece, and were distributed in line with status and demonstrates an economic and emotional distinction between mourners.

Keeping up with mourning requirements could be very expensive. Sir Ralph Verney advised his nephew in 1685 that a country squire "may save the cost of blacks by staying

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33 Cunnington and Lucas, Costumes for Births, Marriages & Deaths, 145, 52.
34 Ibid., 154.
35 Gittings, Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England, 120.
38 Ibid.
39 Lou Taylor sources this information about Peyps from Bertram Puckle, Funeral Customs: Their Origin and Development (1968) page 268, however I could not find this information in this source.
much at home." In 1661, after a streak of family deaths, Samuel Pepys wrote "To church, my wife with me, whose mourning is now grown so old that I am ashamed to go to church with her." New clothes were needed for each of the three degrees of mourning, as it was seen as disrespectful to the dead to skimp on mourning clothing. Lou Taylor writes: "It was considered demeaning to be seen to skimp. This showed both lack of respect for the dead and lack of respect for the ordained social order. It was the combination of these two emotions which gave mourning regulations such a grip on society." In addition to mourning clothes, jewellery was important to all who could afford it. Unlike mourning clothes, jewellery continued to be worn after the mourning period. Lou Taylor argues that mourning jewellery served three basic functions: it was a reminder to the living of the certainty of death, it acted as a status symbol as jewellery and accessories became another potentially expensive item required for socially correct bereavement, and acted as a souvenir of the deceased. It was during the eighteenth century that evidence of the popularity of mourning jewellery appears. Mourning jewellery was initially distributed as a social marker of wealth and hierarchy, a part of a series of funeral objects designed to impress, such as elaborate coffins, hearse, and monuments. Arianne Fennetaux argues that while mourning jewellery continued to be a means of social distinction, it became increasingly invested with sentiment over the course of the eighteenth century. Mourning jewellery became sentimental jewellery.

43 Ibid., 185.
44 Holm, "Sentimental Cuts: Eighteenth-Century Mourning Jewelry with Hair," 139.
Mourning Jewellery was not only used to display respect and regard, but to comfort those left behind. Appropriate mourning jewellery was just as important as mourning clothes, and was also guided by as many rules as mourning dress. According to Lou Taylor, if a shiny jewel was worn instead of the appropriate matte jewel during deepest mourning, this could have serious social consequences.\(^\text{47}\) Mourning clothes and jewellery had to avoid having any kind of shine or reflective surface, due to the belief that the soul is vulnerable in a reflected image.\(^\text{48}\) Mourning jewels, which often contained personalized inscriptions, such as initials and dates, are evidence of the growing desire to be remembered. Mourning jewellery often consisted of rings, lockets, brooches, pins, chatelaines, necklaces, earrings and finger rings.

The giving of objects, especially mourning tokens, often took place as part of the deathbed ritual, which represented the start of public mourning.\(^\text{49}\) The English writer John Evelyn recorded the details of his mother’s deathbed in 1635: “Therefore, summoning all her Children then living, embracing every one of us in particular, she gave to each a Ring with her blessing, and dismissed us.”\(^\text{50}\) Many individuals planned memorial jewellery to be distributed after their death long before they reached the deathbed. In 1818, James T. Power, fearing he would die on a trip to Sierra Leone, wrote to his lover Julia Woodforde detailing his plans to have a mourning ring made:

> I purchased yesterday a Diamond Mourning ring, I will place a brade [sic] of your hair and mine in it. ON the inside I will inscribe James T Power died…” leaving a vacancy for the date if this should be my fate shortly you will receive an account of the time and get it filled up and I have no doubt you will regard the ring with affection and wear it on my account.

Powers explains the emotional motivations for having the ring made, mostly for the comfort of his beloved should he die:

\(^\text{49}\) Becker, *Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman*, 139.  
You will consider this a romantic proceeding, anticipating what may not happen, very true, but as it may happen will it not be a pleasure in my last moments to think you possess such a memento besides you ask for a lock of my hair, your desire will thus be gratified. Please send me a small lock of yours to place in it as soon as possible.”

Taking care to leave material remembrance for mourners seems to be especially common amongst women in female friendship groups. Ann Ingram wrote to her friend Barbara Johnson about the death of a mutual friend, Henrietta: “In her will she has named you, Miss Dodswell and Mrs. Beck to whom she has left a ring. I will get it made and sent you as soon as possible but must beg you to send me the size you would choose. To you three only has she bequeathed this remembrance. You three were the friends most dear to her.” Henrietta may have commissioned poesy rings that were less valuable to be distributed to mourners at her funeral, but saved the more expensive and meaningful pieces for her closest friends. Ralph Houlbrooke writes that mourning rings distributed to close friends would be distinguished by superior workmanship or more expensive materials than those given to more emotionally distant friends and relatives. The mourning ring commissioned for Barbara by Henrietta demonstrated Barbara and Henrietta’s emotional connection as Henrietta thoughtfully had the ring made in Barbara’s favourite colour. Ann writes, “I must tell you everything she desired me to say to you- in the first place as to the ring- she bid me tell you, she had it with blue because you was particularly fond of that colour but (if the ring did not fit you) she charged me to have a larger hoop put to it, so […] if it doesn’t fit your finger return it to me, to have it altered […] It is her own hair under the crystal and the initial letters of her name.” Henrietta has taken special care to ensure that the ring represented their emotional connection and celebrated both their friendship and ensured that her memory would live on through Barbara. Goggin and Tobin argue that the individually made mourning

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52 Ibid., 30.
jewellery left by a friend acted as a representative object whose physical proximity to the mourner addressed some of the feelings of loss due to the absence of the deceased.\(^{55}\) These objects provide comfort to the mourner. Lady Louisa Cathcart, on the death of her brother designed memorial lockets for her and her three siblings.\(^{56}\) Lady Louisa described the locket as: “a large locket with a little black ribbon bow, to be worn always, with Hair which I have got enough for four and a little inscription in black and white enamel round the name on the back…[so that] we might have them all the same to wear always.”\(^{57}\) The locket was designed to provide comfort to the mourning family, ensure her brother Charles’ remembrance and bond the family together in their loss.

Distributing hair also gave mourners a sense of comforting the dead, by ensuring their memory would go on. In 1638 Ralph Verney wrote to his brother after the death of his daughter Anna Maria, “you shall wherewithal receive a ringe filled with my dear gerle’s hair; she was fond of you…therefore I now send this to keep for her sake.” Verney asks his brother to take the hair, not to comfort him, but “for her sake,” because “she was fond of you.”\(^{58}\) In this way the living could fulfill the wishes of the deceased by ensuring that their memory lived on. Rings were the most common mourning pieces, and were typically designed before death with instructions for distribution included in the deceased’s will.\(^{59}\) Memorial rings originated before the Reformation, but gained popularity in the following two centuries.\(^{60}\) By the eighteenth century, distribution of mourning rings at funerals was customary, however, the value of the rings ranged from cheap and simple poesy rings, to the more elaborate designs such as those struck after the death of monarchs, such as Queen Anne in 1714. By the

\(^{55}\) Ibid.
\(^{56}\) Ibid., 31.
\(^{57}\) Ibid.
18th century public mourning for a monarch spread to the middle class. Small lockets were made before and after the death of Charles I. Royalist sympathisers wore them under their clothes, so they could not be seen by others. An important element of a respectable funeral amongst the wealthy included the distribution of tokens to friends and relatives. In 1648 Jasper Despotin M.D. ordered in his will "ten rings of gold to be made of the value of twenty shillings a piece sterling, with the death's head upon them, within one month after my departure, and to be disposed of amongst my friends as my executors shall think meet." John Evelyn, on the death of his child in 1658, distributed rings inscribed Dominus Abslutit [The Lord has taken away]. Samuel Pepys, on his death in 1703, ordered that in his memory forty-six rings at 20 shillings, 62 rings at 15 shillings and 20 rings at 10 shillings, be made and distributed amongst his friends. Mourning jewellery was usually paid for out of the deceased's estate, and the will contained details about who would receive them and what they should cost. Rings were the most common form of mourning jewellery but lockets and bracelets were also made. These rings ranged from plain gold bands with the deceased’s initials, or slightly more elaborate designs, set with black enamel and giving the name of the deceased and the date of death. Seed pearls were often the only precious stone included in memorial jewellery, as they symbolised peaceful eternity, as well as fallen tears for the dearly departed. The symbols and style of mourning jewelry use both literal symbolism, as well as less direct allegorical styles to convey meaning. Mourning jewelry before the second half of the eighteenth century often bordered on the morbid. It was commonly decorated with coffins, skulls, skeletons, scythes, urns, and tombs. Figure 10 shows a memento mori style

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64 Taylor, Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History, 194.
65 Gittings, Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England, 149.
mourning ring. Created in 1714, this gold ring is inscribed with a date of death, and decorated on the outside of the hoop with a skeleton bearing and arrow, a crown, cross-bones, an hourglass, a pair of wings, a star, spade and pick. This ring is in the style of a mourning poesy ring that might have been distributed after a funeral.

![Fig.10 - Gold mourning ring c. 1714. Monogrammed ‘A R’ in gold thread. The British Museum, AF.1506. © Trustees of the British Museum](image)

The death of children was mourned with tokens similar to those of adults. Figure 11 is a mourning ring from 1801. Inscribed on the enamel are the initials of seven children who died within the space of a week, between the 16th and 23rd February 1801. How the children died is unknown, however, contagious illnesses were once common causes of mortality that may have struck all of these children successively. A mourning pendant from 1798 commemorates the death of a ten-month old infant. It is inscribed on the reverse: ‘Henry Halsey Inft. aged 10 Mos. died 12th Jan 1798.’ and “Fond Parents grieve not for thy Infant Son Your God has called him and his Will be done.”

This pendant is gold with an ivory winter scene under glass and surrounded with seed pearls. Just like the mourning ring, it is indistinguishable from jewellery mourning for adults, an indication that the deaths of children triggered the same emotional desire for commemoration that the deaths of adults did.

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Fig. 11 - Gold mourning ring enamelled in black with white border. Inscribed in reserve on front enamel in gold lettering, ‘MB Agd 16 SB Agd 12 WB Agd 10 EB Agd 9 TB Agd 7 RB Agd 5 CB Agd 2’ c. 1801. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Sentimentalism influenced the aesthetic of mourning jewellery. As a result, mourning jewellery became less about *memento mori* and more about possessing a physical representation of the dead to attach to emotional loss, as well as being seen to follow the social and emotional rules of mourning. The images and symbolism of mourning jewellery changed, favouring neo-classical styles featuring images of women learning on urns and tombs, resting under willow trees with drooping heads, weeping, or images of ships preparing to sail away, all symbolic of loss and death. Sentimentalism influenced the aesthetic of mourning jewellery. As a result, mourning jewellery became less about *memento mori* and more about possessing a physical representation of the dead to attach to emotional loss, as well as being seen to follow the social and emotional rules of mourning. 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Names, initials, dates of death and birth and phrases such as “to my dear husband” and “to my sister,” became popular. This all served to personalise and individualise loss and grief, which became the new focus of mourning jewellery over *memento mori* and the shared mortality of humanity. Figure 12 shows a locket that has been designed with the sentimental aesthetic in mind. This locket is probably one of the various readymade designs produced during this period. Despite the standardisation of the neo-classical motifs and emblems of mourning, the emotion expressed by this piece is still unique. The design itself is particularly sentimental: a girl rests against a tomb, chin in hand, and thoughtfully gazing into the distance. The locket is surrounded by seed pearls, which represent tears. The urn on the tomb is inscribed B.E.C., and the style of it

71 Fennetaux, "Fashioning Death/Gendering Sentiment: Mourning Jewelry in Britain in the Eighteenth Century,” 33. “Neo-classical” refers to an artistic style that recalls classical Greek and Roman aesthetics.

72 Ibid.
is such that it could be filled with anyone’s initials. Perhaps the most striking part of the piece
is the inscription along the inside of the miniature, which reads: I mourn for them I loved.
This inscription gives the immediate sense that the bearer of this locket has loved and lost
many. Not only does she mourn BEC, but others before them, as she will others after. It
seems that for the wearer of this locket, as for everyone in eighteenth-century England, Death
was a familiar face. The girl’s meditative posture on the tomb also indicates that she does not
only mourn for those she has lost, but also, and perhaps most importantly, she remembers
them, and will be returning again and again to that tomb in both her mind and body.

Fig. 12 - Mourning locket with miniature watercolour and braided hair. Dated 1775-
1800. Inscribed ‘BEC’ and ‘I Mourn For them I Loved.’ Victoria and Albert Museum,
Claire Gittings argues that the changes in the style of mourning jewellery were due to a ‘rapidly growing unease at the whole process of physical decay, and a desire to swathe the reality of decomposition in a romantic aura, masking and denying the actuality of death.” While this may be partially true, the changes in inscriptions and messages on mourning jewels may also reflect a turning away from the physical [decay and putrefaction of death] in order to more clearly express the emotional components of loss. Mourning jewellery after the turn away from memento mori and vanitas motifs does not necessarily avoid representing the physical aspects of death, images of tombs and urns, which undoubtedly contain decomposing bodies are clearly included in mourning miniatures. Figure 13 shows a locket made between 1775-1800. The locket contains a miniature painting on ivory of a woman handing her heart, pierced by an arrow to a skeletal figure representing death. The contrast between the living, healthy woman and the skeletal figure of death send a clear message about what death will bring to the physical form. Above the figure is an inscription: I ALONE CAN HEAL. This locket offers evidence that despite the diminished popularity of the memento mori aesthetic, the later eighteenth century had not forgotten about the certainty of death. Men and women wanted to be remembered after death, not only through the prayers of the living, but increasingly by objects left behind for this purpose. Mourning rings, with personalized inscriptions, initials and lockets of hair are left with the living so that they cannot forget the dead. For example, mourning jewellery with hair served multiple memorial functions. The hair acted as the media of memory, and as a souvenir of a memory, particularly in the act of cutting the hair, which may have been performed on a living person

73 Gittings, Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England, 149.
in anticipation of a future absence, or on the body after death. The hair, even after being cut and unable to grow any further, would not decay, unlike a human body. The art of creating jewellery from human hair became popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hair served as a reminder of the living and was exchanged between close friends, relatives and lovers. Instructions for creating personalized hair jewellery were provided in several publications, including the popular women’s magazine, Godey’s Lady’s Book (1830-1878). In mourning jewellery, the way the hair was displayed varied, depending on what the customer wanted and could afford. The hair was either disguised or openly displayed, sometimes a single lock braided or knotted in a locket, or a single hair used to decorate a miniature landscape. Sometimes hair was mixed into the sepia of paint used to paint the miniature, therefore allowing the mourner to create an image with what remained of the actual physical existence of the dead person. Deidre Lynch claims that “objects, such as those given in parting, act as surrogates of the lost person.” By including human hair in the materials to make a mourning object, the object was actually infused with a physical part of the lost person. In some jewellery, the hair serves has the focal point of the piece. In one example the ring is simple, gold with the bifurcated shoulders set with a tiny diamond inside a silver flower on either side. It is inscribed: “My. MOTHERS. HAIR. IN. REMEMBRANCE. I. WEAR.” In this particular ring, the decoration is kept to a minimum, with no symbolic images or large gems or latticework on the ring. The inscription emphasizes that the hair is the most important element in this ring. The brooch in Figure 14 also features

76 Holm, “Sentimental Cuts: Eighteenth-Century Mourning Jewelry with Hair,” 140.
78 Holm, "Sentimental Cuts: Eighteenth-Century Mourning Jewelry with Hair," 140.
79 Magulis, "Victorian Mourning Jewelry," 23.
hair as the main focal point. Unlike Figure 13 it is lavishly decorated with a silver openwork bow, rose diamonds and pink sapphires. This jewel looks like a love token on first glance, however, the inscription: ELIZ EYTON OBIT FEB 1754 AET 81 indicates that it is a mourning piece. Amanda’s Vickery’s study of the English gentlewoman, Elizabeth Shackleton (1726-81) reveals that Elizabeth cherished objects that “literally embodied something of the original owner, such as a ring that contained her dead mother’s hair, and a bracelet made from the hair of her sons. Elizabeth herself planned to have a token made of her own hair for distribution after her death. According to Vickery, Elizabeth Shackleton "contemplated the durability of the material contrast to the transience of flesh, hoping her heirlooms would guarantee remembrance."  

84 Ibid.  
85 Ibid., 292.
Helen Sheumaker argues that mourning objects were valuable because they physically represented a past emotional state and they provided the necessary reflection upon that experience. According to Sheumaker: “the immediate grief a young husband felt upon the death of his wife was immaterial in that no matter how much psychic pain he experienced, it wasn’t ‘real’ physical trauma. But his watch chain made of her hair upon her death physically manifested that grief and provided a constant reminder of the validity of the experience.”

Death was an inescapable presence in eighteenth-century England. Most people were born at home and died at home. Often, even the process of giving birth ended in death. People lived with death, not as a distant or future certainty, but as an immediate threat that one needed to prepare for. This familiarity with death did not soothe the pain of loss. Reminders

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87 Ibid.
of the certainty of death as seen in *memento mori* jewellery served to comfort mourners, and
to remind them to prepare for the journey ahead. Eighteenth century mourning tokens
comforted both the mourner and the dying. The individual distributing mourning tokens did
so in order to leave something of themselves behind, out of a desire for love and
remembrance. The individual receiving mourning tokens was comforted by a physical link to
their deceased loved one. Mourning tokens, in particular those that included the human hair,
connected the emotions of grief to a physical reminder of loss and the person lost. Regardless
of the intrinsic value of the token, such a connection was priceless in the emotional economy
of grief.
Chapter 4 - Emotions and Objects: Two Case Studies

The following two case studies of token exchange in eighteenth-century England are demonstrative of the ways in which we can find the connections between people, objects, and emotions amongst the lower orders. The tokens used here are of little to no intrinsic value, yet in the emotional economy in which they existed they were highly valuable, particularly in the case of convict tokens. Examination of the tokens left with children at the London Foundling Hospital proves that parents did not simply dispatch their unwanted children there callously. These parents loved their children, worried for their future, and grieved their separation. Like the foundling tokens, convict coins, created by convicted criminals waiting to be transported to Australia, show a range of emotions. Men and women sentenced to transportation experienced fear, anxiety and grief over separation, regret, and hope that they would see their loved ones again. This chapter analyses these two types of tokens for information about the emotional experiences of the lower orders in eighteenth-century England.

The London Foundling Hospital records are archived at the London Metropolitan Archive (LMA) in billet books. Many of the larger tokens have been removed from the billet books and displayed in the museum. For this research I examined 40 billet books containing roughly 100 entries per book. The convict tokens examined in this chapter are archived at the National Museum of Australia (NMA) and online at the Convict Love Tokens website hosted by the NMA.

The Tokens of the London Foundling Hospital

Evidence of a rising culture of emotional expression through objects can not only be seen in mourning objects, but also through the tokens left by mothers at the London Foundling Hospital between 1741 and 1760.¹ The construction of the Foundling Hospital is evidence of a new concern for the growing numbers of abandoned children left on doorsteps,

in rubbish heaps and wandering the streets of eighteenth-century London. Many historians have argued that this new interest in the welfare of poor children demonstrates that greater changes were taking place within the family. In order to analyse the emotional behaviour of parents who left their children at the Foundling Hospital, it is necessary to look at the emotional culture surrounding children and parenthood.

Historians of the family and childhood, such as Philippe Ariès, Lawrence Stone, and Edward Shorter, claim that a significant change occurred in attitudes and emotional responses to parenting, children, and the state of childhood during the eighteenth century. Lawrence Stone, perhaps the most well known and most divisive of these theorists, argues that a change occurred in England between 1660 and 1800 that affected not only child-rearing practices, but also the emotional relationship between parents and children of the middling sort, changes that spread to all strata of society. Before 1660, argues Stone, the “general psychological atmosphere” of families was one of “distance, manipulation, and deference.” More controversially, Stone has argued that before 1660 poor parents were cruel, even murderous to their children, harbored little affection for them, and did not spend much time grieving their deaths. Philippe Ariès also argues that the modern view of childhood as a state separate from adulthood, wasn’t developed until the 18th century. Many of Ariès and Stone’s claims, particularly those arguing that parents were not emotionally attached to their children until the late seventeenth century, have raised criticism from scholars who do not believe that children were less valued or more poorly treated than their eighteenth century

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4 Ibid., 88.
5 Ibid., 80.
counterparts.\textsuperscript{7} Whether or not it was a critical change in emotional attitudes towards children or the result of other factors, the welfare of children, particularly poor and abandoned children became a prominent issue in eighteenth-century discourse about the family. This study does not take a side in this argument, instead it is concerned with the ways in which parents with limited resources used objects to express emotions about their children. An analysis of the range of emotions parents experienced can be made from examining poetry, fiction, popular magazines and advice books. The main focus of this section is the broader analysis of emotions made through the letters and material tokens left with children in the London Foundling hospital.

The Foundling Hospital, chartered in 1739, was the first of its kind in London and was founded “for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children.”\textsuperscript{8} The Hospital was founded by retired ship captain Thomas Coram, who often walked through the East London slums to reach the city, and was affected by the sight of young children “exposed, sometimes alive, sometimes dead, and sometimes dying.”\textsuperscript{9} After a successful appeal for financial support, driven largely by women, the hospital doors opened in 1741 to infants under two months old.\textsuperscript{10} The Hospital was reliant on private funding, and therefore had to limit admission numbers to 200 children annually between 1741-1756.\textsuperscript{11} In 1756 Parliament decided to fund the Hospital as long as it accepted every child brought in for admission, and the Hospital raised the maximum admission age from two months of age to


\textsuperscript{8} John Brownlow, Memoranda, or, Chronicles of the Foundling Hospital: Including Memoirs of Captain Coram, (London 1847).

\textsuperscript{9} Coram in Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800, 298.

\textsuperscript{10} Styles and Foundling Museum., Threads of Feeling: The London Foundling Hospital’s Textile Tokens, 1740-1770, 11.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
Admissions increased from fewer than 200 annually to 4,000 annually. Before the opening of the Foundling Hospital, each London parish was expected to provide relief for its own poor, which included many single and married mothers with children. Parishes were constantly contesting claims for poor relief and attempting to place the burden of responsibility for the poor on another parish in order to be spared the cost of dependants. Women with no other options abandoned their children on church doorsteps, and over 1,000 infants a year were left in rubbish piles and in the streets. Patricia Crawford notes that mothers “did not relinquish their babies lightly.” In 1741 observers during admissions at the London Foundling Hospital noted the grief of the women surrendering children and recorded that, “a more moving scene can’t well be imagined.” These same observers also noted the grief of mothers whose children were not accepted, mothers who had exhausted their last option. We can only speculate as to what happened to these mothers and their children, but it is possible that they were forced to abandon their infants in the streets.

Historians disagree as to whether or not an increase in illegitimate births led to an increase in children being abandoned during the eighteenth century. Lisa Zunshine claims that “Demographers and historians refer to the eighteenth century as the “century of illegitimacy,” pointing out that “in every city in England and the continent for which data are available, the upsurge of illegitimacy commenced around 1750 or before.” Tanya Evans argues that it is impossible to determine if there was a rise in illegitimacy, due to the lack of a single institution from which to calculate a rise. Alysa Levene estimates that seven percent of London baptisms were of illegitimate children, and this number represents an increase in

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12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., 12.
14 Tanya Evans, Unfortunate Objects: Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 129.
15 Crawford, Parents of Poor Children in England 1580-1800, 62.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
19 Evans, Unfortunate Objects: Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London, 2.
illegitimate births. Whether or not there was an increase in illegitimate births, it is clear that contemporaries perceived this to be the case. The associated stigma with illegitimate birth may have been a cause for some parents to abandon their children. Clearly, parents, or a single mother, admitting a child to the Foundling Hospital, thought it was an important factor.

Figure 15 shows the billet book entry for foundling 2907. Admitted in 1756, this foundling’s mother left a note specifying the child’s name, [Hannah Newman] and indicated that she was ‘legitimate.’ Figure 16 shows the billet entry for foundling 11989, whose date of entry is unclear. For the admitting token the child’s parent fashioned a paper heart, with an attached piece of cloth and a ribbon.

Fig. 15- Detail from London Foundling Hospital admissions document. Foundling 2907. LMA/A/FH/A/9/24.

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21 LMA/A/FH/A/9/1/35. Foundling 2907.
The heart reads, “This child is weaned and Christon’d [sic] named Anne,” and in the far left corner, “I am no bastard.” The parents of both these children wanted to make it clear that their children were legitimate. Since both of these entries were recorded during the general entry period, which was anonymous, it seems unlikely that these mothers were concerned about their own reputations. Perhaps they felt that their children would be better treated or have a better chance if the hospital staff was aware of their legitimacy and therefore possibly superior status amongst the other children. If so, the parent was simply trying to get the best care possible, out of love or at least concern for the child’s welfare. In the roughly 4000 entries I examined, however, these are the only two entries I found where the parents were concerned enough about the legitimacy of their child to mention it. Perhaps this is because many of the children in the London Foundling Hospital were in fact illegitimate, or assumed to be illegitimate, or perhaps because attitudes were changing. Mothers cared for their children regardless of their illegitimacy. In a petition to the London Foundling Hospital,

22 LMA/A/FH/A/9/1/127. Foundling 11989.
Anne Newman wrote that despite her child being illegitimate and “obnoxious to the Laws,” that the “natural affection of a mother is still the same.” Some historians have found that perceptions of the parents of illegitimate offspring, as well as the perception of illegitimate children themselves, changed during the eighteenth century. This can be seen in the popularity of the illegitimate hero/heroine in eighteenth-century novels, such as *Moll Flanders* (1722), *Tom Jones* (1749), *Humphry Clinker* (1771), and *Evelina* (1778). Tanya Evans claims that by the mid-eighteenth century, many recognised that the increasing rates of child-abandonment were due less to illegitimacy than to poverty, and that to abandon a child was “almost always directly related to the experience of poverty.” This indicates a change in emotional norms as even poor mothers with illegitimate children began to be viewed as worthy objects of sympathy and charity by the elite and middling sort. A fictional story from *The Lady’s Magazine* “The Abandoned Infant, A Tale” (1771) criticized those who would judge women who appeared to be mothers of illegitimate children and praised the woman who acts on maternal instincts and cares for her child in spite of damage to her reputation. The story’s heroine, Lucinda, discovers an abandoned child and her attempts to find the child’s parents prove unsuccessful. Lucinda’s own family is described as “living on a small jointure” and “not rich, but satisfied and happy.” Despite her small means, Lucinda convinces her mother to take the child in and raise it. Unfortunately the “mean” and “malignant” found it “incredible that any young lady should maintain a child from mere good nature, tenderness, or generosity” and her good reputation was lost. Lucinda keeps the child regardless, and eventually meets a happy ending when the father of the child reappears, and after initially rejecting her due to her reputation (he hasn’t suffered for fathering an

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 118.
28 Ibid., 119.
illegitimate child), recognizes the child as his own. His observation of Lucinda’s kindness towards his child causes him to make an offer of marriage to Lucinda who in turn “triumphs over every scandalous suggestion.”29 The moral of the story here is that the woman accepts her maternal instincts and nurtures a child in the face of shame and ruin will be eventually be rewarded. Tanya Evans argues that “the stories of fathers, families, employers and parish officers treating unmarried mothers harshly were far outnumbered by those of compassion”.30 This is representative of a change from sixteenth and seventeenth-century ideals about unwed mothers and the ways in which they were treated. However, this change in ideas about single mothers and their worthiness of sympathy may not have come about without a change in ideas about children and childhood first.

In addition to attitudes softening toward single mothers, Alysa Levene identified the eighteenth century as a “watershed in feelings about childhood.”31 Contemporaries, especially parents, could imagine the hardship required to give up a child and expressed their attachments to their children in writing. The English writer John Angell James asked: “who, that has felt them can ever forget the emotions awakened by the first gaze upon the face of his child, by the first embrace of his babe?”32 The Irish poet Eyles Irwin wrote in a 1777 poem titled *Mrs. Irwin*: “Crowned is our union with a smiling boy.”33 Children began to be viewed as a physical representation of marital love. In a 1787 article in *The Female Guardian*, the author explains how she became a comfort to her father when her mother died shortly after giving birth: “My Father has often told me, that in the first transports of his grief he could scarcely bear to see me […] in time he began to view me as a pledge of love, bequeathed to

29 Ibid., 120.
32 John Angell James, The Family Monitor, or, a Help to Domestic Happiness (Birmingham, 1828), 105.
33 Eyles Irwin, “To Mrs. Irwin” in Joseph Friedrich von Baron Retzer, Choice of the Best Poetical Pieces of the Most Eminent English Poets; Published by J. Retzer (Vienna, 1783).
him by the dear woman whose death he could never cease to mourn.”

Joanne Bailey writes that the culture of sensibility seems to have affected the emotional expression of parents “to an almost mystical degree, simply because they were parents.”

In a letter to the editor of the *Lady’s Magazine* in 1790, a woman wrote: “Sir, the endearments of progeny are secrets only known to parents.”

The diarist John Bailey wrote that the death of a child was “a loss that none can sympathetically feel, but those parents who have been in similar circumstance.”

Mothers in particular were expected to express strong emotions and display attachment to and concern over their children. Women were thought to be naturally far more sentimental and therefore emotional, than men, and to therefore to be naturally good mothers with the additional ability to encourage sympathy and kindness in men.

According to Joanne Bailey, in the eighteenth century, the “primary function of motherhood shifted from an emphasis on the biological function of childbearing to an emphasis on the nurturant function of childrearing.”

“Tender” parenting was expected and encouraged, and parental indifference or cruelty was thought to produce an unhappy child.

Tenderness, as defined by Samuel Johnson, involved “kind concern, compassion, anxiety for another’s good, susceptibility to soft passions, care not to hurt, and gentleness.”

The “tender mother” was exalted in popular culture, and women were no longer portrayed as only wives and lovers, but as mothers of their own children, and a voice for the children of the less fortunate.

The *Female Guardian*, a 1787 magazine, describes the sacrifices of a good mother: “she lives only for her children; she renounces dissipation and pleasures, to devote herself entirely to

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36 Ibid., 35.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 35.
40 Ibid., 23.
41 Ibid., 28.
their education; passes the day in giving them lessons, and a part of the night in studying in
order to instruct herself for them; sacrifices with joy, her youth, her time!" An anecdote
from The Lady’s Magazine in 1771 commends “Lady B”, who is distinguished by the author
for her “tenderness as a mother” and her insistence on nursing her dangerously ill and
potentially contagious child, despite the warnings of the doctors. Lady B is held up as the
perfect example of a mother, ignoring the orders of her doctor and even her husband to care
for her sick child: “my life is in the hand of Heaven; I would by no means presumptuously
throw it away, but if it pleases God I should lose it in the discharge of the duty of a mother, I
can cheerfully [sic] submit.”

Fathers were not exempt from these rules of emotional expression. According to
Joanne Bailey, under the discourse of sensibility and domesticity, fatherhood became an
important element of masculine identity, and the ‘sentimental father’ was “protective,
supportive, and affectionate.” However, as Patricia Crawford observes, the social obligation
of fatherhood did not necessarily extend to illegitimate children. Poor laws and bastardy
laws gave individual parishes power to make fathers responsible for the maintenance of their
illegitimate offspring. Paternity was determined by the mother’s testimony, and was often
challenged by the putative father. Many men fled to avoid financial responsibility for their
children, and the petitions to the London Foundling Hospital often tell the story of women
seduced by men and then abandoned once pregnant. Some men elected to volunteer, or were
pressed into military service. Figure 17 is a note left with a Foundling’s recordings, stating

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44 “The Lady's Magazine; or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex, Appropriated Solely to Their Use and Amusement. Vol. 02,” 105.
45 Ibid.
47 Crawford, Parents of Poor Children in England 1580-1800, 75.
48 Ibid., 76.
“My Father’s in her Majesty’s service and my mother being unable to provide for me hope I shall be treated kindly by her whom I fall to.”

This note suggests that the father’s absence made it difficult for the mother to provide for the child, however it’s not clear whether the father was unable to produce a sufficient income or had simply escaped the financial burdens of a child by joining the military. Another note names the absent father as the reason for abandonment: “Child is brought here (illegible) the Benefit of this Charity because its Father is a Villian [sic] and has left the mother in a most forlorn condition.”

Not all fathers lacked concern for their offspring. Joanne Bailey provides evidence through pauper letters requesting parish aid from 1760-1834 that show that both men and women thought of themselves as “thwarted providers for their children.” In 1817 William Bromley wrote to the archdeacon Joseph Cobbett requesting aid as he had been unable to find work to support his five children. Bromley describes his despair at his children’s suffering: ‘my Children Crying Round me for Vitual[sic] and non to give them it

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49 LMA/A/FH/A/9/1/129. Foundling 11594
50 LMA/A/FH/A/9/1/28. Foundling 3536
52 Ibid., 12.
Having children was thought to sensitise both women and men. The letters and tokens of the Foundling Hospital also show that not all poor fathers or mothers were devoid of caring for their children, illegitimate or not. One father’s emotional letter leaves little doubt as to his love for his son:

> My Dear Childe it was with great sorrow and trouble that I parted with you to send you to the Hospital but as it was not in your mothers power nor mine to keep you we thought it best so to Do hoping that the Great God would cast his eye of protection on you which I hope he has Now My Dear Child I would have you when you came to man estate and if in England to look and sarch [sic] narrowy into the Dailey Advertiser for if God pleases to let me Live till the year of 1775 I will advertise to find you out and in the meantime my Dear Child I will tell you your name which is this [Joseph Titus Von Dubank] Born January the 10th 1757 in the Lining Hospital in Duke Street Grouener Square London and Carried to the Foundling Hospital February the 17th 1757 this is your Fathers Writing who prays God to for ever Bles you and Desires you will keep this wrighting tel you Die. My Dear Child Remain your Loveing Father tell Death plans to Cal me hence Joseph Von. DuBank

In addition to this father’s love for his son, we also get a glimpse at some of the circumstances surrounding this abandonment. First, he establishes that it was “not in your mothers power nor mine to keep you”, indicating that this was not a decision that was made lightly, and that it was probably a choice that had to be made for economic reasons. The father’s love for his child is proved by his desire for future contact with him; he gives the child his intended name and a way to communicate with him when he becomes an adult. This father also asks his son to “keep this wrighting tel you Die (sic),” indicating that he, and perhaps other parents leaving tokens at the hospital, thought that the children would receive the tokens at some point. Unfortunately, this wasn’t the case; the tokens were only returned if the child was reclaimed.

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53 Ibid.
55 LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/43. Foundling 3536.
The Hospital’s requirement that a token be given to each child admitted to the hospital was for the practical, not sentimental purpose of identifying the child later, should the parents be able to come claim it. Typically the token was split or cut in half, one half to be stored in the records of the Hospital, the other to stay with the parent admitting the child. After 1760 the General Reception period ended, along with anonymous petitions, and so the tokens were no longer required, as the hospital could use names and personal information as identifiers. Men and women continued to send tokens with their children for the next 40 years, even though it was no longer necessary. This is a testament to the emotional value of this practice for these men and women.

Parents may have continued the practice in the hopes that the tokens would bind their children to them regardless of the period of semi-permanent or as for many, permanent separation. Objects have talismanic powers that can bind the holders and replace the absent body with an object connected to it, acting as a physical representation of what physically lost. The talisman further corporealises an emotion such as grief, giving it a body through a physical object and therefore giving it legitimacy. This existing eighteenth-century practice has been shown in relation to mourning objects analysed in the previous chapter. Some parents had an opportunity to express their emotions about their child and this is revealed at the point of separation from them, and inscribed in their petitions either written by their own hands, or for the many that could not write their own petition, prepared on their behalf by someone else. Any emotional expression conveyed to the scribe may have been genuine, however, Joanne Bailey has identified that people knew that there was a certain language best used to ensure the success of such an important petition for aid. Letters written to the child or to the hospital and then used as tokens may provide more reliable information about the

57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., 17.
59 Bailey, "Think Wot a Mother Must Feel: Parenting in English Pauper Letters C. 1760–1834."
parent’s emotions, as only those applications that were successful required a token until 1760. Free from trying to embody the “deserving poor,” in a letter or petition, a mother or father would have used a written token as an opportunity to express his or her feelings. If the parent was not literate or was not able to write a letter, he or she might choose to leave a split coin, a piece of fabric, part of a ticket, or some other kind of token. Poverty often determined the choice of a token with many women having nothing to give but the clothes on their bodies, and so a piece of fabric was cut from the child’s sleeve by the Hospital staff and placed in the register. Figure 18 shows a common type of fabric token - a heart cut from cloth with a piece of ribbon attached.\(^60\) The cloth would have been something the parent had access to, probably inexpensive, just as the ribbon was. However, whoever created the token took care to cut it into the shape of a heart. Just like the lock of hair cut from the body of someone living, the act of cutting the heart into the fabric anticipated a future absence. The creation of this token not only served the purpose of proving a token according to the hospital’s rules, but also served as a hopeful gesture - that the parent might someday get the child back. It also allowed the parent to create what was a very powerful object - the only physical connection the child might ever have of the parent, if the child and parent never met again, and it is likely that in making the token the parent thought of the objects as a kind of talisman. A letter attached to a billet book entry for a founding left at the hospital in 1751 details not only basic information about the child, but also the request that “it is further Desired that the piece (sic) of coin Which is Tied to his Neck may not be removed.”\(^61\) The parents of this child clearly wanted their token to stay with their child, as a memento for the child to remember his parents.

Coins, often with holes punched into them so they hung from ribbon or string, were also popular tokens.

\(^{60}\) LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/128. Foundling 11490.  
\(^{61}\) LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/11 Foundling 583
Fig. 18 – Heart-shaped paper and cloth token. Foundling 11490. LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/128.

The cheapest and most common of the fabric tokens were ribbons. Ribbons have a long association with departures. In addition to being tokens of love, ribbons were also tied onto loved ones necks or wrists in a “love knot,” onto which one might attach other tokens like coins or rings.\(^{62}\) Some tokens were simply notes either left to the child, or containing information about the child. In the case of Foundling 683, the parent left a note on a piece of heart shaped paper, on which was written: “Mark this if/Ever I be/You shall/Me see.”\(^{63}\) This small poem sounds like a hopeful promise written to the child, that eventually child and parent would someday be reunited. Sadly, this child died at the age of five, in the custody of the Foundling Hospital.

Some of the tokens left with children contain protective symbolism. One child was left with an amulet known as a ‘mano fica’. The ‘mano fica’ is a small charm shaped like a back hand and wrist, the fingers making an obscene gesture that was supposed to ward off the “evil eye”.\(^{64}\) Jewellery made for and to mourn the deaths of children provide evidence of how parents felt about their children - parents recognized the potential of their children.

Children were not “regarded as mere animals, lacking the capacity to reason” as Lawrence Styles and Foundling Museum, *Threads of Feeling: The London Foundling Hospital's Textile Tokens, 1740-1770*, 44.


\(^{64}\) Desmond Morris, *Gestures: Their Origins and Distribution* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 149.
Stone asserts. A seventeenth-century children’s ring inscribed “THIS SPARK WILL GROW” expresses the kinds of ideas parents had about their children. It is clear from this inscription that whoever gave the ring to this child not only saw the future potential of the child. It also indicates that at least in this particular case, childhood was viewed as a separated state of being, and full of potential. In order for a spark to grow, it must be nurtured.

The tokens of the London Foundling Hospital tell us a few things about emotions and objects within the lower orders. Contemporaries (in this case, parents parting with their children), desired to leave their children with a piece of physical remembrance, and they were comforted by this act. The tokens left for the identification of foundlings provided an opportunity for parents to express their feelings about parting with the child, and a chance to leave their children with some physical reminder of them. The tokens, which consisted of embroidered fabrics, protective amulets, broken coins, and letters, were invested with hope that their children would be safe, protected, and that perhaps they would be able to come back for them one day.

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66 Child’s ring, gold set with a diamond c 17th century. Inscribed ‘THIS SPARK WILL GROW.’ Victoria and Albert Museum [908-1871].
Convict Love Tokens

Let us now turn towards another example of token exchange amongst the lower orders.

Convict coins, struck by English men and women facing transportation to Australia in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are often inscribed with details about their sentence, or depict men in shackles and chains. These tokens were given to loved ones before transportation, and while most ask to be remembered, it is not for reasons of civic duties or depiction of godliness, but rather as emotional connections, “true for life,” or statements of fact, “transported seven years.” Convict tokens, like other forms of love tokens and mourning jewellery, are physical representations of emotion. Convicts express love, fear, anger, regret and sadness through the inscriptions used on their coins. Convict tokens also depict familial attachments, romantic love, fear, feelings of exile, enslavement, concern for their reputations, and a desire to be remembered not as criminals, but as their loved ones have known them. Much like the dying, they sought not only to provide a physical reassurance to their loved ones, but also to leave behind a physical representation of themselves in order to ensure memorialization, and to mark the event of their transportation in their personal history.

Convict tokens are first mentioned in parliamentary papers of 1836 by a committee sent to investigate the country’s prisons; “the prisoners amused themselves here by making leaden hearts, and grinding the impressions off penny pieces then pricking figures or words on them, to give to their friends as memorials.”67 These tokens are again described by Sir Arthur Phillips in *The Chronicles of Newgate*:

These Newgate tokens were circular thin pieces of metal of various sizes. The initials or the names of a loving pair were punched upon them, together with a heart of some symbol of affection; sometimes with a motto, such as ‘True for ever’ ‘Love for life.’ The

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greatest value was attached to these tokens by the criminal classes. Those at large constantly wore them round their necks, and treated them as amulets to preserve them from danger and detection.\textsuperscript{68}

The tokens were not only used as talismans by criminals on the run; evidence shows that they held high value in the emotional economy. Some convicts intended them to act as protection for friends and family in general, and not just their criminal consorts. Many convict tokens are pierced at the top and include a silver hoop for easily attaching to string or for use as a button. An 1848 token is engraved with words invoking protection for the wife of the convicted: ‘THE LORD DELIVER YOU SAFE WITH CHILD FOR MY SAKE DEAR WIFE.’\textsuperscript{69} Another token, pierced at the top to be worn as a necklace also asks for protection, and therefore acts as a talisman: ‘from rocks and sand and dangers free God protect my love and Mee.’\textsuperscript{70}

The fragile emotional state of those facing transportation was no doubt amplified by anxiety over families left behind. Figure 19, a token dated 1829, is illustrated with the family of the condemned man.\textsuperscript{71}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{fig19.png}
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\end{figure}

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Stippled onto the surface of what was probably once a George III penny, is an image of a woman, holding the hands of two small children, a girl and a boy. Above each figure a name is etched: M Ann, Ann, and Joseph. Underneath the figures the family name Hickman, is engraved, and a date, possibly the future date of transportation. The image of the family on this token represents an image of the convict’s family at the time of this monumental event. This image acts as a snapshot commemorating the family at this particular time. The use of the names of the family members, in addition to the shared family surname etched across the bottom, serves to represent the family without the soon to be absent member. The front of the token represents the convict himself, as the etching makes his request of his family:

Dear wife
When this you
See Remember
me and bear
me in your
mind let all the
world say what
thay[sic]will don’t
prove to me
Unkind

The convict not only asks for remembrance but for the preservation of his memory as his family knew him, asserting that “let all the world say what thay[sic] may” as long as his family remembers him kindly, his wishes will be fulfilled. This is not simply a request for his family to attempt to ignore his reputation, but to maintain the emotional connections forged between them, and indicates that he believed his family knew him in a way that the world did not. This sentiment is commonly expressed on convict tokens. A token from 1835 entreats “LET. All The World Say What THAY WIL [sic] SPEAK OF ME AS YOU FIND.”\(^\text{72}\)

Another token begs, “don’t Prove to me un kind.” Depictions of families are commonly found on convict tokens, indicating that as they awaited transportation, convicts were conscious of the families they would leave behind. Convicts reflect on the broken dreams of family, and speak their fears that they might be forgotten by even those bound to them by kinship. One such token depicts a man holding the hand of a woman of whom he appears to be taking leave. The woman holds the hand of a small child. The reverse is engraved with the following lines:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tho time} \\
\text{may pass & years} \\
\text{may fly & every} \\
\text{hope} \\
\text{decay&die&every} \\
\text{joyfull dream be set} \\
\text{but thee I never} \\
\text{can forget}
\end{align*}
\]

The convict asserts that regardless of the hopelessness of his situation, the memory of his family will never leave him. He expresses the permanence of his emotions, the strength of his feeling through the physical and undecaying token. The token helps to reassure him that despite his absence from his family, he leaves a physical reminder behind. Some tokens reflect the hope that they will see their loved ones again. “Far[we]ll all but not For ever” was inscribed by 21 year old William Reynolds to his wife, Ann. It is unlikely that he ever saw Ann again, as William died in Tasmania in 1887. In 1831 John Gardiner promised Percilla Stiles that he would return to her:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Farwell} \\
\text{dear girl since} \\
\text{you and i must} \\
\text{Part for 7 years to A} \\
\text{foreign Part if you}
\end{align*}
\]

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will Prove kind i
will Prove true utill
I do return bac
k to you. 78

While many of these men and women knew or at least sensed that they were unlikely to ever see their loved ones again, the tokens clearly reflect hope that they might, or at least the desire to comfort those close to them with hopes of reunion.

Men and women sentenced to transportation also used tokens to express their feelings regarding their sentencing. Common sentiments expressed through the tokens are feelings of loneliness, enslavement, and a desire for liberty. In 1803 Joseph Comporo expresses his lamentations through a token inscribed: HOW HARD IS MY FATE & HOW GALLING IS MY CHAIN [see Figure 20]. This inscription surrounds an engraved image of a man in chains. This man fears his future and bemoans the hardships that await him.Awaiting a journey that will take him far from his friends and his home make him fearful, and the chains he figuratively and literally wears are a heavy burden. Another man expresses a similar sentiment on a token to his wife; “Down in those loansom sels I ly how hard it is my lot.” 79 Feelings of enslavement are often expressed on tokens. Inscriptions such as “Once I was a tender child on my mother’s Knee but Know [sic] i am in Prison bown down in Slavery”, and “YOUR ILL FATED BROTHER BOUND IN SLAVERY” were usually accompanied by images of boats and chained men and reflect the convict’s feelings of injustice. Some convicts express feelings of banishment or exile through tokens. A female convict engraved her token with an image of a small house and the words: “This Was once MY coTAge Of PEACE” [see Figure 21]. 80 The other side of the token is engraved with a ship, a symbolic acknowledgement of his fate. On the back of the token she expresses her feelings of banishment:

This is for My DEAr.
[father]ther from.
[is] unforTagle.
DATEr Who.
Is GOiNG, OUT.
of her COU[nty]
for life.”

This woman identifies England as “her country” and is lamenting her exile from it. She is also expressing sorrow over leaving her abode, a place that gave her peace.

Fig. 21 - Convict Token, not dated. Convict Love Tokens Project, National Museum of Australia 2008.0039.0265. Photo by George Serras, National Museum of Australia.

Many tokens reflect the desire for liberty and anticipation of the day of release. Figure 22 is of an elaborately engraved token, decorated with a bird carrying a sprig of leaves and surrounded by the text LIBERTY IS SWEET. In another token, Henry Parry, 16 years old, expressed his hopes that he would one day be free: “happy is the hour the prisoner is set free. And smell Air of liberty.” An 1835 token also compares the prisoner’s state to slavery and
exalts liberty: HAPPY. IS . THE HOUR PRISONER FRE. AND. BRAK THE. CHANGS
OF SLAVRE.  

Simple declarations of love and affection are the most common type of convict token. These coins tend to be inscribed with a short poem or phrase on one side, and a more personal message or initials on the other. Figure 23 is a token created by Thomas Alsop, a 21 year old brick labourer who was sentenced to transportation for stealing a sheep. Alsop’s token is for his mother. The front of the token is personalised with the inscription “Accept this dear/Mother from your/unfortunate son.” The back of the token is inscribed:

The rose
soon drupes
& dies. the brier
fades away. but
my fond heart
for you I love
shall never
go astray.

This inscription reflects the convict’s future absence, his understanding of natural entropy in the world, and his desire to show that his love can survive decay (or in this case, prolonged absence). Charles Wilkinson, seventeen and transported for life, expresses a similar sentiment of undying love “YOUR/ LOVER/ LIVES FOR YOU/ ONLY./ TIL DEATH.”


Convict tokens provide a rich source of information about a unique group of individuals in an unusual situation. Convicts awaiting transportation were largely from the lower orders, and their emotions might otherwise go unrecorded. Additionally, these tokens give us a glimpse into their feelings about transportation. The tokens they created share sentiments similar to love tokens. They swear unwavering love and devotion, but in return they ask to be remembered, much like mourning tokens. As they prepared to leave everything they knew for a land they knew nothing about, these men and women made their farewells as if they were dying, but given a rare opportunity to express their emotions as parting words made permanent through physical objects.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

This thesis has identified the ways in which material culture, specifically tokens, were used to communicate the emotions individuals experienced in response to love and loss in eighteenth-century England. Through analysis of the emotional meanings attributed to tokens and the culture of their exchange the emotional lives of individuals across the social scale are further revealed. This research has built upon work done by David Cressy, Marcia Pointon, Claire Gittings, Julian Litten, and other historians of love and death by connecting material culture, an often ignored and important element in the culture of love and death, to emotions.

Tokens were necessary in the making of marriage; the gifting and acceptance of tokens marked the progress of courtship. As shown in Chapter Two, the turn toward marriages contracted for love, for the elite and middling sort, made affectionate expression increasingly important. The symbolism used in love tokens is illustrative of the emotions that often came with love, such as: devotion, adoration, and pain. The practice of using tokens in love and courtship spanned the social scale. Although the objects varied in intrinsic value, their primary value lay in the emotional value assigned to them by the giver and the recipient. Chapter Two provided examples of love tokens as used by both the wealthy and the poor.

Similarly, and as discussed in Chapter Three, mourning tokens possessed a value beyond the intrinsic. Initially created for distribution at funerals, these tokens, typically jewellery, became popular during the fifteenth century. Before the mid eighteenth century, the predominant fashion in mourning jewellery was morbid. Often decorated with skulls, scythes, skeletons and coffins, the style was intended to remind the wearer of the inevitability of death. Later in the century the tokens became more sentimental in style, and reflected a greater desire to remember the deceased. Coffins and skulls gave way to names and dates of birth and death, painted miniatures and locks of hair. The giver of a mourning token did so to ensure that their memory was preserved by loved ones through a physical object that would
withstand decay. For the grieving left behind, such objects were a physical and permanent link to the deceased. Mourning tokens legitimised grief, and helped to ease the pain of physical separation.

My analysis of love and mourning tokens in Chapter Three reveals the strong connections between objects and emotions. The two case studies in Chapter Four offer a method of looking at material culture through the lens of emotion. Such objects are particularly useful when studying the lower orders, who often did not, or could not, keep diaries or write detailed letters. Examining the objects they left behind is key to opening their emotional histories. In the case of the London Foundling Hospital, the tokens left for children reveal the emotions parents experienced when relinquishing their children. After 1760 tokens were no longer required for admission yet petitioners continued to send them for the next 40 years. This is a clear indication that petitioners valued the opportunity to express their emotions through this practice.

Convict tokens also provide another glimpse into the ways in which the lower orders used the materials that were available to them to create emotional objects. Both the London Foundling Hospital tokens and convict love tokens provide an example of how emotional objects were created from items with little or no real value. This is further evidence that tokens were not a phenomena restricted to those who could afford expensive metals and precious gems. Most of the tokens left at the foundling hospital were made of the cheapest fabrics, and convict love tokens were created from coins of little to no value. Convict love tokens reveal how men and women sentenced to transportation felt about their punishment, and the ideas they had about their future in Australia.

Analysis of other kinds of material culture can reveal important information about the emotional lives of the eighteenth century English. Future research into the connections between emotions, material culture and love would benefit from the investigation of objects
associated with children such as clothing, jewellery and toys, as well as sentimental gifts passed from parents to their children. Additionally, analysis of the material culture associated with the ‘lying in’ period and subsequent childbirth, and the deathbed and subsequent ‘laying out’ could reveal the emotional experiences of men and women during these two seminal life events. There is much work to do in both the study of eighteenth-century material culture and emotions during this period. If we wish to further our understanding of how people lived we must not ignore the influence of the emotions in motivating behaviour.
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Tokens and Objects

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LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/24. Foundling 2907.
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LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/33. Foundling 2710.
LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/33. Foundling 11694.
LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/128 Foundling 3536.
LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/11 Foundling 583
LMA/A/FH/A/09/1/9 Foundling 683.
Convict Tokens

National Museum of Australia. Canberra, ACT

Convict Love Tokens Project Online.


Powerhouse Museum. Sydney, NSW

87/982. A Cartwheel penny inscribed on one side ‘JOHN / HOWE AGED 14 YRS / LIBERTY IS / SWEET’ above an image of leg irons. The reverse is inscribed ‘WHEN THIS YOU SEE REMEMBER ME’, and ‘AND BERE ME / IN YOUR / MIND’ c. 1797-1810.
87 N21529/982. A silver or copper coin, inscribed ‘SN,’ ‘NEW / SOUTH / WALES’ and ‘F/S.N.’ On one side is an image of a man in French officer's uniform farewelling a woman under a tree beside a sailing ship c. 1790-1802.
2008.0039.0013. A round metal disc, possibly a coin, engraved on both sides. One side is inscribed 'Joseph / Podmore / to / Elizabeth Celley 1796'. The other side is inscribed 'John / Sheperd / to / Ann / Norbury' c. 1796.

Love Tokens


AF.1342. Gold posey ring with stars in relief. Inscribed ‘Many are thee starrs I see yet in my eye no starr like thee’ c. 17-18th century.


374-1908. Posey ring crafted from white quill and stained gut. Inscribed ‘ANN CHILCOTT,’ c. late 18th century.
933-1888. Heart shaped gold locket with crystal compartment for hair, c. 1800.
970-1888. Gold brooch with pearls and hair and inscribed ‘LAMOUR,’ c. 1775-1800.
7003:1, 2-1890. Enamelled gold locket with two miniature portraits of a man and his wife, c. 1600-1650.
M.3-1958. Silver heart shaped locket with incised Cupid and inscribed ‘No Heart More True Then Mine to You,’ c. 1690-1700.
M.22-1960. Gold heart shaped pendant with embroidered birds surrounded by pearls, c. 1700.
M.31-1951. Gold slide, with a cipher and enamelled cherubs on a background of hair, c. 1690.
M.107-1939. Gold ring with a hair monogram and amethysts, c. late 18th century.

Mourning Tokens

**The British Museum. London, England.**

1852,0327.5. Carving of a miniature ivory death’s head measuring 9.4 centimetres. Skull in a state of being eaten by worms c. 17th century.
AF.983. Gold mourning ring with tulips, grinning skull on one side, and a woman’s head on the other c. 17th century.
AF.1602. Gold ring with a skeleton, crown, cross-bones, hourglass, wings, star, spade and pick. Inscribed ‘MEMENTO MORI’ and ‘le 29 Mars 1714’ c 1714.

**Victoria and Albert Museum. London, England.**

920-1888. Gold brooch with hairwork and a painted miniature of a woman by a tomb. A cherub holding a scroll inscribed ‘To bliss’. Inscribed ‘Not lost but gone before’ c. late 18th century.
930-1888. Gold framed locket with garnets, hair, and a miniature painting of a man fishing, c. mid-18th century.
942-1888. Gold framed locket with pearls and a painted miniature of a woman by a tomb with the initials ‘MM’, c. 1775-1800.
950-1888. Gold framed locket with a painted miniature of a woman visiting a tomb at night, c. 1780-1820.
965-1888. Enamelled brooch with hair and a painted miniature of a weeping woman and a cherub pointing to a scroll inscribed ‘Weep not, it falls to rise again’, c. 1800.
972-1888. Gold frame d locket with pearls enclosing hair, c. 1775-1800.
2196&A-1899, Clasps. Enamelled gold clasps with diamonds, hair, and a miniature ivory painting, c. 1775-1800.
M.10-1948. Gold slide, converted into a pendant, with the royal monogram of Mary II, and a skull and bones. Inscribed ‘MEMENTO MARIA REGINA OBIT, 28 DECEMBRIS 94,’ c. 1694.
M.12-1960. Gold slide with a skull on a winged hour-glass, cherubs, an enamelled coffin, the initials EB, and a background of hair. Inscribed ‘MEM. MORI’, c. 1697.
M.50-1967. Glass necklace with painted panels of various symbols representing love or mortality, including skeletons on a tomb, cherubs with a flaming heart, the initials EJ under a coronet, and various others. Inscribed ‘GLORIA’ and ‘VANITAS,’ c. 1650-1675.
M.112-2007. Gold mourning pendant with enameled scene under glass Inscribed 'Henry Halsey Inft. aged 10 Mos. Died 12th Jan 1798,' and 'Fond Parents grieve not for thy Infant Son Your God has called him and his Will be done’ c. 1798.
M.121-1962. Gold brooch shaped like a ribbon and bow, set with diamonds and sapphires surrounding a lock of hair under glass. Inscribed ‘ELIZ EYTON OBIT FEB 1754 AET 81’ c. 1754.
M.124-1962. Gold slide, converted into a brooch, with angels, a crown, and a cipher on a background of hair. Inscribed ‘Sr An: Leake Kil’d by ye French off of Malaga Augt 13th 1704’ c. 1704.

Trials


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http://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGERCM1~6~6~790410~150413:-Bills-of-mortality--1664-12-;lc:FOLGERCM1~6~6,BINDINGS~1~1&mi=3&trs=9

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