

Bryn Mawr College

## Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr College

---

Literatures in English Faculty Research and  
Scholarship

Literatures in English

---

2018

### Fat, Thin, Sad: Victoria, Sissi, Diana and the Fate of Wax Queens

Kate Thomas

*Bryn Mawr College*, [kthomas@brynmawr.edu](mailto:kthomas@brynmawr.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://repository.brynmawr.edu/engl\\_pubs](https://repository.brynmawr.edu/engl_pubs)



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

[Let us know how access to this document benefits you.](#)

---

#### Citation

Thomas, Kate, "Fat, Thin, Sad: Victoria, Sissi, Diana and the Fate of Wax Queens," in *Sissi's World: The Empress Elisabeth in Memory and Myth*, ed. Maura E. Hametz and Heidi Schlipphacke, New York: Bloomsbury, 2018, pp. 323-353.

This paper is posted at Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr College.  
[https://repository.brynmawr.edu/engl\\_pubs/42](https://repository.brynmawr.edu/engl_pubs/42)

For more information, please contact [repository@brynmawr.edu](mailto:repository@brynmawr.edu).

# Thirteen Fat, Thin, Sad: Victoria, Sissi, Diana and the Fate of Wax Queens

Kate Thomas

Elisabeth, Empress of Austria—Sissi—was born in 1837. That same year, Victoria ascended to the English throne. Victoria was just eighteen, and unmarried. To mark the coronation of the young queen, Elizabeth Barrett published a poem called “Victoria’s Tears,” which appeared in *The Athenaeum*. It is aptly titled, for the new queen weeps copiously in every stanza.<sup>1</sup> Barrett, herself only twenty-one when she wrote and published this poem, figures Victoria sorrowing at her transition from a “maiden” who could lean upon her mother’s breast to a monarch who is beset by the clamor of national pageantry, overwhelmed by the weight of a crown.<sup>2</sup> In the final stanza, a “pierced Hand” offers Victoria a heavenly crown, greater than any earthly accolade. The poem proffers a helping hand to the girl-queen; that this hand collapses the young woman’s inauguration as queen into her distant death and that this hand is itself stigmatized, freezes the poem’s frame on the suffering that being a queen will surely entail.

- 
- 1 Writing about Elizabeth Barrett and her poems about the young Queen Victoria, Dorothy Mermin notes, “tears serve a serious function” and are a mark of “savouring sympathy.” *Elizabeth Barrett Browning: The Origins of a New Poetry*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 68.
  - 2 Memorializing a young queen’s coronation so promptly in the national press (and Barrett did the same thing when Victoria married) is itself highly symbolic because it is a poet laureate who marks national occasions in this way. When Barrett’s refrain focuses on the lowering of a crown onto Victoria’s brows, she is practicing what it might feel like to have the laurels of the poet laureateship lowered onto hers. Elizabeth Barrett Browning was briefly considered for the laureateship in 1850, but it was given to Tennyson and it would take over 150 years before a woman—Carol Ann Duffy—would be handed the honor.

In 1854, sixteen-year-old Sissi was thrust into her imperial role when she married Emperor Franz Josef. All the accounts of this young woman's transition strike the same, sorrowing note. She wept the length of the procession to her wedding in Vienna; she wept on her return to the Imperial Palace; and, indeed, the poems she wrote on her honeymoon testify to her acute unhappiness, specifically the loss of her freedom: "Und Freiheit! Du, mir abgewandt!" ("And freedom! You, turned from me!"), she mourned.<sup>3</sup> When she first met her husband-to-be, at the age of fifteen, she was dressed in mourning attire, and it was a costume that set the scene for her married, imperial life; all biographers agree that becoming an Empress unfolded a life of loss and grief. Sissi was reluctant, lonely, depressed, tragic.<sup>4</sup>

Sissi mourned a bad marriage; Victoria mourned a good one. Britain's queen was also famous for her grief, spending the last forty years of her reign in deep, reclusive mourning for her beloved husband Albert, who died in 1861.<sup>5</sup> Her diaries testify to her sexual passion for her husband and though—like Sissi—she abhorred being pregnant, it was because—unlike Sissi—she hated how pregnancy interrupted her erotic life. If their grief was differently allocated, the two queens also had radically different physicalities; biographers tell us that Sissi starved, exercised and tight-laced her waist down to 16 inches, whereas by the 1870s, Victoria's 48-inch waist made her 10 inches less around than she was tall. Sissi's form was anorectic and melancholic whereas Victoria's was *zaftig* and lusty. This article will, however, overlook these seeming physical dissimilarities in order to show instead how their embodiments and their affective lives were ruled by an insatiable cultural desire to see an imperatrix waxing and waning both physically and emotionally. Their bodies' differences were, in fact, an index of their self-sameness.

My method, of seeing both of these women's bodies as essentially the same as each other, or as exchangeable for each other, or as each other's morphic Other, is undergirded by an essay that has acquired foundational status in fat studies and, indeed, set fat studies into immediate and lasting relationship with queer studies. Michael Moon and Eve

Kosofsky Sedgwick's 1993 essay "Divinity" is written as a dialogue, and as it progresses they theorize and enjoy the way in which the fat woman and the gay man see themselves in each other. This delectation of self-sameness across divides of gender, sexuality, and physical lusciousness counterweights the way in which women, looking at women, are taught to triangulate the gaze through an outside observer, and thus turn identification into loathing and thence into self-harm: "When my sister who is deliberately starving herself, under the real or imagined gaze of some man or some other woman, looks in the mirror in the morning and the body that she thinks she sees confronting her is—mine."<sup>6</sup> We are familiar with this story of how female self-loathing is kindled by reflection, if not from our own morning ablutions, then from childhood, when we learn that the rage engendered by reflection is the defining dysmorphia of queenhood. In "Snow White," a jealous queen bids her glass to reveal "the fairest of all,"<sup>7</sup> and the moment the mirror—functioning as the triangulating gaze of the public—produces the face of a younger princess, the old queen is driven to homicidal mania.<sup>8</sup> Sissi and Victoria did see themselves in one another. More, they shared a position "under the real or imagined gaze" of a culture that also saw them, saw their bodies, in a constant morphological transformation into and out of one another. Neither queen wished to kill the other, but they shared, in death, a fate determined by the insatiable public gaze. In the fairy tale, the murdered Snow White spends years in "a transparent coffin of glass made, so that she could be seen from all sides."<sup>9</sup> The stepmother, attending Snow White's wedding, becomes so stiff with

3 Dated May 8, 1854. Brigitte Hamann, *The Reluctant Empress*, trans. Ruth Hein (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 50–1.

4 Brigitte Hamann titles her biography *The Reluctant Empress*; Joan Haslip titles hers *The Lonely Empress: A Biography of Elizabeth of Austria* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1965).

5 Nancy Armstrong argues that when Victoria retreated into mourning, "she turned herself into a sentimental heroine who more than compensated in mass public appeal for what she relinquished in terms of political authority." "Monarchy in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 22, no. 4 (2001): 495.

6 Michael Moon and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Divinity: A Dossier A Performance Piece A Little-Understood Emotion," in *Tendencies*, ed. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993). For another theorization of how the fat and thin body must be seen as ontologically identical, see Jana Evans Braziel: "just like the anorexic or bulimic body, the corpulent body is a desiring machine—a *spatium* in flux through which intensities flow, energies pass." "Sex and Fat Chics: Deterritorializing the Fat Female Body," in *Bodies Out of Bounds*, ed. Jana Evans Braziel and Kathleen LeBesco (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 245. For a more literalist version of this argument, see the foreword to *The Fat Studies Reader*, in which Marilyn Wann argues "People all along the weight spectrum may experience fat oppression. A young woman who weighs eighty-seven pounds because of her anorexia knows something about fat oppression." Wann, foreword to *The Fat Studies Reader*, ed. Esther Rothblum and Sondra Solovay (New York: New York University Press, 2009), xv.

7 Brothers Grimm, "Little Snow-White," in *Grimm's Fairy Tales: Complete Edition*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1944), 249.

8 Eric C. Brown points out that the genre of the fairy tale exploded in Britain in the fifteen years following Victoria's ascension to the throne. "The Influence of Queen Victoria on England's Literary Fairy Tale," *Marvels & Tales* 13, no. 1 (1999): 36.

9 Brothers Grimm, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 256.

jealousy that she freezes in place "and could not stir" and is killed.<sup>10</sup> That Snow White is brought to life from statue form, and that her stepmother is brought to death, shows us not that they are different, but that they are—as the mirror knew all along and loved to watch—the same woman in different moments of change. This paper will ultimately consider the tendency of queenhood to progress through reflection and constant transformation to effigy.

Victoria and Sissi met on several occasions, and—at first, before Victoria was widowed—Victoria felt great sympathy for "the beautiful, fragile young Empress alone."<sup>11</sup> Within just one year of writing this, Victoria would herself be alone, her husband dead. Indeed, the way Victoria expresses her sympathy for the Empress emphasizes her physical receptivity to the Empress's feelings—she "gave one a sad impression"<sup>12</sup>—and even their affective surrogacy for each other: "I feel so for her."<sup>13</sup> Both women, one thin, one fat, would spend most of their reigns sad, and I read both their plastic physicalities and their publicly changeable emotional selves as symptoms of how the imperatrix is required to simulate, to be an effigy for the consolidation and the dissolution of the realm. In his 1921 biography of Victoria, Giles Lytton Strachey characterized the aged queen as having an obsession "for fixity, for solidity."<sup>14</sup> She would organize and review, he claimed, the "multitudinous objects which belonged to her" in which "she saw herself deliciously reflected from a million facets."<sup>15</sup> But mirrors can turn against queens, Strachey warns:

then came the dismaying thought—everything slips away, crumbles, vanishes; Sèvres dinner-services get broken; even golden basins go unaccountably astray; even one's self, with all the recollections and experiences that make up one's being, fluctuates, perishes, dissolves ...<sup>16</sup>

Strachey's vision for the queen begins with her well-fed (she is "deliciously" reflected, surrounded by dinner services and bowls from which she might sup) but ends in ellipses, with her (despite her hoarding and

her implied fatness) "dissolved." "Dissolution" is a word that peppers Queen Victoria's letters and papers because it is the official term used for the end of a seating of Parliament and it was also the thing Victoria feared happening to her Empire.<sup>17</sup> The female imperatrix's fragility and changeability, indeed, her interchangeability with other imperatrices, makes her available as an archive and index of the being and non-being of the "rise, decline and fall," the fatness, thinness, and sadness, of empire itself.

Trumpeted for their beauty when they were crowned as teenaged girls poised between "maiden" and "monarch," Victoria and Sissi came to their thrones when the means of discerning queenly beauty and tracking its changes through mass reproduction of images became possible. The mass taste for representations of their beauty quickly became insatiable. Across their lifetimes rapidly advancing visual cultures and technologies found the female imperial body to be a rich media archive. Victoria was appropriated by one of the publishing phenomena of the 1830s: the Books of Beauty. These literary annuals created, as John Plunkett describes it in *Victoria: First Media Monarch*, a cult of Victoria as "Beauty personified." New methods of steel-engraving were "exploited in order to manufacture a tinselled allure."<sup>18</sup> They provided, in other words, a "close-up" on Victoria's loveliness, an intimacy that was, paradoxically, enabled by the massive circulation of her image.

That a queen could now be made both a more delineated and a more disseminated object of fascination was clearly intriguing to Sissi, whose own beauty was legendary. Not only obsessively occupied by managing and maintaining her looks, in the early 1860s Sissi started collecting photographs, a hobby that formalized into the compilation of "an album of beauties." Sissi dispatched friends, relatives, and ambassadors to collect photographs only of women and only of "pretty faces." That she most particularly sought photographs of "Oriental beauties ... from the world of Turkish harems"<sup>19</sup> expresses the mutually constitutive relationship between the evolution of early photography and an evolving specularization of the bodies of racially Othered women. Sissi's album allowed her—the tables turned—to do the seeing, the objectifying, the categorizing.

10 Brothers Grimm, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 256, 258.

11 Victoria, in a letter to her daughter Vicky, November 17, 1860. She is describing how she loaned the royal yacht to the ailing Empress, so that she might travel to Madeira for her health. Queen Victoria, *Dearest Child: Letters between Queen Victoria and the Princess Royal, 1858–1861* (London: Evans Bros, 1964), 282.

12 Queen Victoria, *Dearest Child*, 289.

13 Queen Victoria, *Dearest Child*, 284.

14 Giles Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1921), 398.

15 Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria*, 398–9.

16 Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria*, 399.

17 For an example of Queen Victoria using the word "dissolution" to apply to the fall of an Empire, see her letter to her uncle, the Belgian King, on March 29 1853. The Emperor of Russia "thinks the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire very imminent." Arthur Christopher Benson, M.A. and Viscount Esher, ed. *The Letters of Queen Victoria: A Selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence Between the Years 1837 and 1861*, vol. 2, 1844–1853 (London: John Murray, 1908), 431.

18 John Plunkett, *Victoria: First Media Monarch* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 80.

19 Hamann, *The Reluctant Empress*, 130.

More than a century on, another reluctant, tragic, anorectic princess might help us understand how fully the physical and emotional work of being a queen in the age of mechanical reproduction is about feeding public hunger *to see*. She can also help us to understand that however much we hunger to see an imperatrix, it is a hunger that is never satiated. We want to see the female imperial in process, but she is therefore never finished, and we are therefore never done viewing what quickly becomes her undoing, her never-ending end. The pierced hand hovers over Victoria's coronation, connecting her queenly beginnings to her death. Sissi meets her husband and her future as an empress while she is clad in mourning clothes. And Britain's Princess Diana, "white, imperial and sacrificial," as Rosi Braidotti describes her,<sup>20</sup> also staged herself and was staged in relationship to death and grief early in her career as Princess. In 1987, thin as a reed and gloveless, she shook hands with an AIDS patient in an act that remains one of her most famous. "HIV does not make people dangerous to know," she said, then went on to dispense divine knowledge, figured through the imagery of hands. "You can shake their hands and give them a hug. Heaven knows they need it." Diana became an icon, an inheritor of the cults and cultures of female imperial iconicity established by Victoria's and Sissi's generation. Diana Taylor theorizes that Diana's physical self was so overwhelmed by mass representational practices as to become "redundant."<sup>21</sup> Becoming an international icon meant she was "disembodied [...] Never 'live.'"<sup>22</sup> Is it any wonder, we might ask, that she suffered an eating disorder—bulimia—whose binge-purge arrhythmia flings the body between excess and deficit? Hyper-objectified, Diana ceased to have an embodied self while her image was repeated, endlessly. But what was it, exactly, that the paparazzi were chasing, year after year until her final, devastating re-embodiment in the Paris tunnel where she crashed into mortality? Diana is a useful figure for Braidotti's theorization of the "nomadic," of a subjectivity that is always in the process of becoming, because Diana "was a woman in full transformation."<sup>23</sup> Anachronistically virginal when she married, the media got to watch as Diana lost that virginity, became a mother, an abandoned wife, an adulteress, a divorcee and—in her final, fatal affair with Dodi Fayed and a rumored pregnancy—even became fused with and productive of non-whiteness. It was a bloodthirsty hunger for the representation of

an imperatrix that seemed, at the time, new. But Diana's relationship to media attention, her resultant ephemeral embodiments that fluctuated between fat, thin, and sad, and her constant "full transformation," was inherited directly from queenly foremothers.

A series of likenesses connect Diana and Sissi: both were famous fashion plates; both suffered from eating disorders; both worked with outcast populations and became known as "the queen of hearts"<sup>24</sup>; both were hounded by the press; both died suddenly and violently. The circumstances of their deaths differed—Diana was fatally injured in a car crash after being chased by paparazzi, and Sissi was stabbed to death by an anarchist in Geneva—but in both cases, their deaths were immediately understood to be consummations of a tragic beauty they had spent their adult years inhabiting, and both struck a world hungry for their image as tragedies of immortal proportions, expanding to occupy monumental time-scapes.<sup>25</sup> Mark Twain said that Sissi's assassination "will still be talked of and described and painted a thousand years from now,"<sup>26</sup> while Elton John claimed, of dead Diana, that "the stars spell out your name" and, echoing Blake's Christ who, in the poem "And did those feet in ancient time," supposedly visited Albion on a tourist trip: "your footsteps will always fall here/along England's greenest hills."<sup>27</sup> And Diana did, quite literally, follow in Sissi's footsteps. Diana was the daughter of the eighth Earl Spencer and grew up at Althorp, an estate

20 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 46.

21 Diana Taylor, "Downloading Grief," in *Mourning Diana: Nation, Culture and the Performance of Grief*, ed. Adrian Kear and Deborah Lynn Steinberg (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 205.

22 Taylor, "Downloading Grief," 205.

23 Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 44.

24 The Diana-Sissi likeness is developed by biographer Andrew Sinclair, whose citations are shaky, but the portrait is nonetheless interesting as part of Sissi's mythology. In *Death By Fame: A Life of Elisabeth, Empress of Austria* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), Sinclair claims that Sissi was known as "the queen of hearts," and he also claims that Earl Spencer called the press that chased her "you scum." Sinclair, *Death By Fame*, 94 and 97, respectively.

25 The specificities of Sissi's murder draw her into uncanny relation to Snow White. It is said that after being stabbed by the anarchist, Sissi's tight-lacing prevented the wound from bleeding freely and the severity of the injury was therefore not realized. In the brothers Grimm version of the fairy tale, the old Queen tries to kill Snow White three times; in the first attempt she laces Snow White's bodice so tight that she cannot breathe, and Snow White falls into a dead faint.

26 Mark Twain, *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain*, ed. Charles Neider (Boston: DaCapo Press, 1991), 563. This description of the Empress's assassination comes from a letter Twain wrote to his friend the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell. The death gives Twain a sense that he is "living in the midst of world-history again" and he yokes Sissi's death with the duration of Victoria's reign: "The Queen's Jubilee last year, the invasion of the Reichsrath by the police, and now this murder," 563. Twain also wrote an essay called "The Memorable Assassination," opining that "The murder of an empress is the largest of all large events" and that "—even the assassination of Caesar himself—could not electrify the world as this murder has electrified it." Twain, *The Complete Essays*, 563 and 537, respectively.

27 Bernie Taupin and Elton John, "Candle in the Wind '97," Metrolyrics. Available at: <http://www.metrolyrics.com/candle-in-the-wind-97-lyrics-elton-john.html> (accessed November 3, 2017).

that Sissi had visited many times to indulge her great pleasure of hunting. Sissi was invited to the estate by Diana's great-great-grandfather, the fifth Earl Spencer, who became her good friend and protector. With the Victorian Earl by her side, Sissi chased foxes at Althorp, and even fended off the nineteenth-century version of the paparazzi. Projected through estate and aristocratic lineage, the tragic twentieth-century English princess seems like a hologram of the tragic nineteenth-century Austrian Empress, or perhaps it is the other way around.

### Barbara Cartland's Sissi

To study the persistent ephemerality of Sissi, I turn first to a peculiarly ephemeral and marginalized literary form: the romance. Sissi has been reanimated in several "bodice-rippers," but none is more interesting than Barbara Cartland's. Cartland is (in)famous for having been both the most prolific author of all time—over 700 novels—and also the step-grandmother of Diana, Princess of Wales. One of Diana's biographers, Tina Brown, quotes Cartland about her fiction's formative, or perhaps deformative, influence on Diana: "The only books Diana ever read were mine, and they weren't awfully good for her." Cartland wrote not only a novel about Sissi, *Stars in My Heart* (1957), but also a lightly fictionalized biography called *The Private Life of Elizabeth Empress of Austria* (1959).

Cartland's biography of Sissi begins with a description of Sissi's mother, Ludovica, who had "gone to the altar weeping."<sup>28</sup> She had good reason to weep, Cartland explains, since her husband Max was unfaithful and irresponsible. But Cartland's description of his carefree ways is imbued with relish and romance. In contrast to his enduring, weeping wife, Max "carouses" and "journeys"<sup>29</sup> and takes up the zither.<sup>30</sup> His adventures produce "a long retinue of generously endowed illegitimate children" who then "romp" about the ducal estates.<sup>31</sup> Of his legitimate offspring, Sissi is depicted as especially beloved. Born at Christmas, with a tooth in her mouth like Napoleon, Cartland makes this the fairy tale birth of a princess; Max has "a strange feeling that this child would mean more to him than any other he had bred."<sup>32</sup>

28 Barbara Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth, Empress of Austria* (London: Muller, 1959), 9.

29 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 10.

30 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 13.

31 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 14.

32 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 14. Max's fairy-tale feelings about his daughter would express themselves in her own later-life self-fashioning as Titania. Biographer Joan Haslip quotes Sissi's verses in which she figures Franz Joseph as Oberon and herself as Titania: "Please let me have my freedom dear / Unto the fullest measure / I love to dance in the moonlight's gleam / Why rob me of that pleasure?" Haslip, *The Lonely Princess*, 274. Establishing the theme

It has become routine to ridicule Cartland, sight unseen, for producing fiction that drives relentlessly towards happy marriages. "I am far too snobbish to have read one," writes Hillary Mantel of Cartland's oeuvre, "but I assume they are stories in which a wedding takes place and they all live happily ever after."<sup>33</sup> But marriage and its etiquettes are subject to stern critique in both Cartland's biography and *Stars in My Heart*. It is the wild and free Sissi that Cartland celebrates; the unmarried Sissi is "unaffected,"<sup>34</sup> but after marriage, "She was a prisoner, a caged bird."<sup>35</sup> In *Stars in My Heart*, Sissi is approving of her father's sexual roving and she reassures her half-sister that illegitimacy is nothing shocking: "Sometimes I cannot help thinking that love matters more than the ugliness and cruelty of a wedding ring forced on by compulsion."<sup>36</sup> Passion—and attractiveness—emerge as Cartland's key values, while forced and even unhappy unions are repeatedly referred to as tragic.

Cartland's depiction of Sissi as a "caged bird" sticks close to Sissi's own avian imagery for her misery; around the time of her marriage she had written a poem envying the swallows their "liberty" and out of all her wedding gifts, it was a talking parrot that pleased her best.<sup>37</sup> If only she could fly with the birds, her poem pleaded, "How soon would I forget all sorrow / Forget the old love and the new / And never fear a sad tomorrow / Nor let the tears my cheeks bedew."<sup>38</sup> This is Sissi's poetic answer to Barrett Browning's coronation elegy for Victoria: the tears of the imperatrix would evaporate were it possible to take flight.

And flight is precisely what Cartland is able, through her novel, to grant Sissi. *Stars in My Heart's* plot centers on a cleverly deployed bed-trick. The Empress runs into the unhappy Gisela, who is being tortured by her evil stepmother, and divines—in part from their likeness to each

of Sissi-as-fairy-princess, Haslip earlier cites a diary entry from Sissi's lady-in-waiting, Marie Festetics: "She seems to me like a child in a fairytale." And this fairytale, Festetics observes, is one in which good fairies give this child everything, but one bad fairy curses it all, ensuring that "your beauty will bring you nothing but sorrow." Haslip, *The Lonely Princess*, 249. When Sissi's daughter Gisela married, *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* was chosen for the gala performance. Sinclair, *Death by Fame*, 73. Victoria, too, was hailed as Titania by Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and others. See Brown, "The Influence of Queen Victoria on England's Literary Fairy Tale."

33 Hilary Mantel, "Royal Bodies," *London Review of Books* 35, no. 4 (February 21, 2013): 3.

34 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 52 and 63.

35 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 68.

36 Barbara Cartland, *Stars in My Heart* (London: Hutchinson & Company, 1957), 134.

37 Haslip, *The Lonely Empress*, 52 and 61.

38 Haslip, *The Lonely Empress*, 52.

other—that they are half-sisters.<sup>39</sup> To spring Gisela free from the dispossession imposed on her by her evil stepmother, and to spring herself free from a tiresome royal duty, Sissi sends Gisela to impersonate her on a courtesy visit to old Lord Quenby. Gisela gets a much needed, if temporary, home, and Sissi's beloved hunting can continue uninterrupted. The mood of the plot fits Sissi's real-life exasperation with royal social duties. Cartland's Gisela-as-Sissi turns up to find that old Lord Quenby is dead, and she is instead the guest of his young and compelling heir. The romance of the novel, then, takes place between two changelings. Cartland can set Sissi free from the lovelessness of her own marriage by giving Sissi a proxy for herself, a half-sister who is also a love-child. The tragedy of Sissi's marriage can be rewritten as romance, but only if Sissi is *not herself* but instead an illegitimate and fairy-tale version of herself, a nearly identical twin.

If Cartland was somewhat rueful that her fiction about happy aristocratic marriages not only could not save her step-granddaughter Diana, but might even have contributed to Diana's romantic misery, Cartland's Sissi books reveal a desire to save the young Empress of Austria from her fate. This desire is manifested in one of the most glaring fictionalizations of the biography. It is well established that Sissi met Franz in a court setting, but in *The Private Life*, Cartland fashions a rustic half-encounter in which Sissi has not only thrown off her royal trappings but has done so in order to save a young animal from the machineries of royalty. Sissi's future husband, Franz Joseph, is traveling in a coach when he spots

a young girl running madly to catch a kid which had wandered away from its dam among a flock of goats browsing on the stubble of a recently cut hayfield. The little animal was gamboling this way and that and was within a few yards of the road. The girl was obviously afraid that it would be run over by the procession of coaches.<sup>40</sup>

Why does Cartland invent this scene?<sup>41</sup> It displays Sissi being careless of her royalty and careful of those oppressed by it. Glimpsed through

39 Cartland's plot device, making Gisela Sissi's half-sister, was perhaps inspired by Marguerite Cunliffe-Owen's sensational, much-publicized "solution" to the mystery of why Rudolph, Sissi's son and only heir, killed himself and his pregnant actress lover, Mary Vetsera. In Marguerite Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899), Cunliffe-Owen claimed that Rudolph had discovered that he and Mary were half-siblings and their affair was thus incestuous.

40 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 28–9.

41 This vignette is, of course, reminiscent of the famous scene in Marischka's 1955 Sissi film in which Sissi dresses as a commoner and goes hunting with the Emperor Franz Joseph, naughtily scaring away a deer so that it will not be killed. Likewise,

the frame of a moving coach window, it is a snapshot of soon-to-be-extinguished naturalness and freedom. On her way to join a regimented court life that would remove her first-born baby from her breast, Sissi is granted by Cartland a last moment of inhabiting a compassionate and animal-self. "An hour later ... the Emperor saw the little goat girl again. She was wearing a fresh, white dress with a blue sash and her long flowing hair had been tied up with a ribbon."<sup>42</sup> Cartland's biographical invention focuses on how Sissi's free-footedness is, like her "long flowing hair," about to be bound. Cartland herself describes the court etiquette training towards which Sissi was headed as a "strict discipline, almost cruel in its intensity,"<sup>43</sup> and this is something Cartland blames for extinguishing the joy of love that the young girl might otherwise have had for Franz; it "nearly banished the natural feelings of excitement."<sup>44</sup> Her term "banish" belongs to the lexicon of the fairy tale, applied to subjects excluded from kingdoms, but here Sissi is being exiled from her own feelings. Ruination of nature is something Cartland will spotlight throughout the biography—noting, for example, that the steamer that conveyed Sissi to her wedding was decked in thousands of roses that wilted and blackened from the soot.<sup>45</sup> As if a rose herself, pageantry and the machinery of mass reproduction will be the death of Sissi. These conveyances—the goat-slaying coaches and the rose-wilting steamship—ferry Sissi from a life of innocence and relative anonymity to one of domineering iconicity; "Her likeness," Cartland notes, "was soon to be found in every hut and home in the whole Empire."<sup>46</sup> No longer a chaser of goats, Sissi is now herself pursued and pinned down.

The idea of a "likeness" is compelling to Cartland. Not only does she invent a lookalike for Sissi in *Stars in My Heart*, which allows Sissi

Sissi is the only person from whom a wounded fawn will accept milk. Marischka's film was based on Marie Blank-Eismann's 2-volume German novel of the same name that appeared in 1952. It is not clear whether Cartland was aware of either the German-language novel or the film when she wrote her biography. Another parallel is to be found in Henri de Weindel's biography of Franz Joseph, in which de Weindel portrays the couple meeting when Elizabeth's puppy bounds out of the woods and charges into Franz Joseph's legs. Henri de Weindel, *The Real Francis-Joseph: The Private Life of the Emperor of Austria* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1909), 17. The identification of Sissi with young animals is also found in the anonymously authored biography *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, in which the biographer—now known to be novelist and newspaper columnist Marguerite Cunliffe-Owen—describes Sissi running about "like a young fawn." Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 7. Cartland almost certainly drew heavily on Cunliffe-Owen's memoir for her own biography.

42 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 29–30.

43 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 41.

44 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 41.

45 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 49.

46 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 37.

herself to effectively walk out of her misery and into happiness, but this plot is most definitely fueled by the idea that being a pin-up girl for Empire is enervating. So many versions of this Empress will be disseminated and framed and pinned to walls, that she will lose her version of herself. This mass of images will weaken her self-sovereignty. It is not only Cartland who perceived the enervating effect of having become a mediated monarch, but Sissi herself was surely aware of the fact. Andrew Sinclair observes that Sissi was "perhaps the first royal woman to be stalked,"<sup>47</sup> and certainly she endured a nineteenth-century version of the paparazzi. Sissi and commercial photography practically shared a birth year and she hated this new medium.<sup>48</sup> She avoided having her photo taken by hiding behind a leather fan and she even refused to have chest x-rays taken, saying, "I greatly dislike being photographed. For every time I have had a photograph taken, it has brought me bad luck."<sup>49</sup> Superstitiously averse to being seen, or seen through, Sissi shielded herself with animal skin, in the form of a leather fan, and a leather corset.<sup>50</sup> Why leather? The fan, at least, did not need to be of this material to do its job of blocking her face from the photographers' view.<sup>51</sup> But leather is the skin of *an other*: another body, another species, another victim.<sup>52</sup> To protect herself from the penetrating rays of visual technologies, which would turn her into yet another image of herself, Sissi instrumentalized another body and made it her defender.

Sissi's fear of having her likeness taken was underpinned not by a naïveté regarding photography and its power, but rather the opposite. Just as Diana would be both hounded by the press, and also savvy about how to manipulate it, Sissi too could wield images in her defense. At the close of the Vienna exhibition of 1873, Sissi was given the "Cairo House" that had been built in the Egyptian section of the Prater by the Khedive, Ismail Pasha. This gift included a young boy named Mahmoud, who had been

47 Sinclair, *Death By Fame*, 169.

48 The year 1839, two years after Sissi was born, is generally accepted to be the birth year of commercial photography.

49 Sinclair, *Death By Fame*, 63 and 171.

50 Photography and x-rays were not the only visual technologies that Sissi apparently feared. In Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 3, Sissi is quoted as feeling "continually under a microscope" like "some extraordinary insect created for the malicious investigations and observations of the public."

51 Leather is a material with qualities of impermeability, and being in the public eye, being female in the public eye, places one in a complex tableaux of being seen and not seen. As Eve Kosofsky Sedwick observes, "What can a celebrity body be if not opaque? And yet what if the whole point of celebrity is the spectacle of people forced to tell transparent lies in public?" Eve Kosofsky Sedwick, *Tendencies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 227.

52 "There is something extremely familiar and almost self-evident about these processes of transformation of the self through an other who triggers processes of metamorphosis of the self." Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 164.

on display with the house. Sissi took the enslaved boy into her household, and was reputedly so fond of him that she nursed him through a long illness and "made him a playmate in the games of the little Archduchess Marie-Valerie."<sup>53</sup> When it was discovered that Sissi allowed Mahmoud to play with her daughter, Sissi was vilified. Sissi responded to the Austrians' outrage by "having the two children—the white and the black, the imperial princess and the slave boy—photographed together, arm in arm."<sup>54</sup> She then "further permitted the photographer to display the picture in his window and to sell copies to the print-dealers in the Austrian capital." The slave who had been on display in an exhibition then had his image put in a shop window and reproduced most spectacularly, to both amplify and mock the offence that his blackness had already given.<sup>55</sup> And what of Marie-Valerie? In the portrait, Sissi places her daughter, a white child who is a princess, in companionship with a black child who is Sissi's slave. On the surface, the portrait stages racial consanguinity as innocence—children who could not be more far apart are made close, made the same, through play. But play is dangerous and, secretly, this was a portrait of princesses in peril. Sissi herself feared the penetrating gaze of the camera. But she offered her daughter (who was, of course, a stand-in for herself) up to its baleful eye. The enslaved boy beside the princess was a yardstick of racial and social difference, to be sure, but he was also in the photograph as a symbol of the fate of princesses in general. He would have made visible their subjection—to the camera, to proliferation, to dissemination, to sale, to the fate of birth. It was a complex gesture, in which Sissi yet again protected her own body through the use of deputies. Both children were of Sissi and other than Sissi—one enslaved to her, one her birth-child, and both were therefore projections of her. And like a portrait with the eyes cut out, it was the hidden Sissi who looked back through this photograph, staring down her critics. The shocking power of this counter-representation and counter-gaze was such that an "'unpleasant caricature' of the photograph appeared, which threw the Emperor into such a rage that he had the parody seized and the original picture withdrawn from shop-windows."<sup>56</sup> It was a suppression that lasts to this day; both the photograph and the caricatures are lost.

That Mahmoud had been part of an Egyptian display, and that he is then photographed alongside Sissi's daughter, is particularly apposite. His story and the production of the photograph with Marie-Valerie was a culmination of what we might call Sissi's instrumentalization of racialized representation to combat the camera's power to dissolve and

53 Weindel, *The Real Francis-Joseph*, 196.

54 Cunliffe-Owen, *Martyrdom*, 100, also reports that Sissi called Mahmoud *mein kleiner schwarzer Käfer* (my little black beetle).

55 Weindel, *The Real Francis-Joseph*, 197.

56 Weindel, *The Real Francis-Joseph*, 197.



disseminate her own (white) self-image. In *Photography's Orientalism*, Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan describe the Middle East as a "crucial site for the early practice of photography."<sup>57</sup> Having geographically situated the formation of photography, Behdad and Gartlan are yet more specific: "No other figure was as frequent a topic in Orientalist photograph as the Oriental woman [...] the most widely collected images by tourists to Algeria and Egypt were those of the *femme arabe*."<sup>58</sup> Harem scenes were most popular. And harem scenes produced for the commercial Orientalist market would commonly show a veiled, but partially naked woman.<sup>59</sup> Sissi's particular object of fascination, then, the Orientalized female body, was *the* ur-scene, the ground zero, for specularizing the female body more generally. It teaches us that *to be seen* is to be poised between complete revelation (nakedness) and incomplete concealment (the veil). Writing on the colonial harem, Malek Alloula theorizes the veil as a rebuff to scopical desire, a disappointment of the photographer and a kind of blindness, a "speck on the eye of the photographer and on his viewfinder."<sup>60</sup> Sissi's photo album of female beauty therefore fulfilled two important fantasy functions for her; it transferred the photographic gaze from her own body to racially othered proxy bodies, and it also catalogued the failure of the medium to fully capture the female body.

If we return to Cartland's made-up goat scene, we see that Sissi, repeatedly referred to as a "girl" and a "young girl," is saving a "kid." The metaphor at work here, and the tautology, point to the same thing: Sissi is trying to save *herself* from the "procession" of royal machinery. The "little goat girl" that turns up in court is a fairy-tale figure that is as a much goat as she is girl. In her childhood, Sissi was a "tomboy,"<sup>61</sup> who rode "not in the usual stilted manner of ladies taking the air on a safe and sleepy old mare, but on skittish ponies accustomed to clambering sure-footed over the rocky ground and galloping full out on the flat."<sup>62</sup> Marriage and induction into royalty would turn Sissi into a caged animal. Sewn into her leather and whalebone corsets, animals—or their remnants—would even become the instruments of her caging. Even her killer had to awkwardly contort himself to peer under the empress' shielding parasol, with its animal physicality of protective ribs, to be sure of her identity before stabbing her. Far from the vitality of romping on skittish ponies, the literary representations of Sissi's adult physicality

became morbid; emaciated, always sick, always sorrowful. Sissi's biographers agree: she died long before she was assassinated.

One such biographer, Marguerite Cunliffe-Owen, frames her biography, *The Martyrdom of an Empress* (1899), as both elegy and revenge. Refuting Austrian press pieces that had appeared under titles like "The Misjudged Empress," "I cannot help feeling," she writes, "the bitterness of these *post-mortem* retractions."<sup>63</sup> She goes on to imagine corpses "lying under the sod of our cemeteries, or beneath the flag-stones of gorgeous mausoleums" listening to hypocritical speeches of those who reviled them in life, at which "they might possibly indulge in a cadaverous grin."<sup>64</sup> Sissi is, for Cunliffe-Owen, a martyr. After death she joined those incarcerated—but grimly sentient—under sod and stone, and in life too she had been tragically trapped: she had been buried alive.

To thrust home this point, Cunliffe-Owen recounts the notorious case of a young nun named Sister Barbara who had been walled up by an evil abbess for the sin of wanting to elope. Cunliffe-Owen claims to have met the rescued, but deranged, young woman and to have brought Sister Barbara's plight to the attention of Sissi. Sissi, she writes, was so affected by the tale that she "frequently sent flowers to the poor, forlorn creature, and also some pretty and valuable singing birds, since birds and flowers alone had retained the power of awakening a ray of feeling in her dimmed soul."<sup>65</sup>

The parallel between Sissi and Sister Barbara is thuddingly clear: both knew what it was to be walled up. And Cunliffe-Owen, who herself was exiled, dispossessed and wrote anonymously, spots the *mise-en-abyme* in the tale: the birds sent to Sister Barbara are "imprisoned songsters."<sup>66</sup> Sissi's likeness to the caged bird is an example of what Kathryn Bond-Stockton has called the "animal interval"; a means through which a queer child can identify with an animal, thus "confounding her parents and her future."<sup>67</sup> Sissi certainly wished to confound if not her parents, then her step-parents, and the future imagined for her by Austria's imperial class. And she also identified powerfully with animals. Cunliffe-Owen draws out the animalism of the goat-girl Sissi imagined by Cartland; she writes of Sissi's "extraordinary, almost hypnotic, influence" over horses<sup>68</sup> and remembers that Sissi "would step out of the path she followed to avoid crushing a beetle or an ugly

57 Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan, eds. *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 1.

58 Behdad and Gartlan, *Photography's Orientalism*, 27–8.

59 Behdad and Gartlan, *Photography's Orientalism*, 94–5.

60 Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 7.

61 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 43.

62 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 15.

63 Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 105–6.

64 Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 106.

65 Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 105.

66 Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 105.

67 Kathryn Bond-Stockton, *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 90.

68 Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 66.

caterpillar crawling on the ground."<sup>69</sup> Once again, Sissi is portrayed as saving the life of poor, lowly creatures, at the same time that her own health and vitality is waning: "The face which the young Empress raised towards her had lost in a few hours all its childish bloom: it was the pale, haggard, drawn countenance of a woman who had left behind her all the careless joys of youth."<sup>70</sup> Cunliffe-Owen's depiction of Sissi's descent into ill health finds a counterpart in an assessment of the effects of marriage on women that was made by—surprisingly—Queen Victoria. Writing to her daughter Vicky in May 1858, Queen Victoria observed, "I think people really marry far too much; it is such a lottery after all, and for a poor woman a very doubtful happiness." She expands on her theme: "the poor woman is bodily and morally the husband's slave. That always sticks in my throat. When I think of a merry, happy, free young girl—and look at the ailing, aching state a young wife is generally doomed to—which you can't deny is the penalty of marriage."<sup>71</sup> Victoria's "ailing" and "aching" match Cunliffe-Owen's "pale, haggard and drawn": both depict marriage as sickness. Victoria's lines are particularly striking given not only that she was herself famously happy in her marriage, but that the daughter to whom she is writing was a newly wed. We might remember, however, that Victoria had expressed compassion for Sissi's suffering and had sent "the beautiful, fragile young Empress"<sup>72</sup> her royal yacht for recuperation—and perhaps even rescue from death. "May it not be too late," Victoria fervently hoped.<sup>73</sup> Victoria and Sissi were, in some regards, very unlike. But the spectacle of the imperial female body imperiled by marriage produced, for Victoria, a way of reaching out across national and political divides, to touch and be touched by Sissi's condition.

### Thomas Hardy's Sissi

Another British Victorian was moved by a sense of closeness to Sissi-in-death. In his largely self-authored and posthumously published biography, Thomas Hardy recalled being ill in Geneva, lying in bed in the Hôtel de la Paix. It was the summer of 1897. He could hear a fountain outside his window, and "It was the fountain beside which the Austrian Empress was murdered shortly after."<sup>74</sup> The passage then continues by recalling that he had nursed a youthful passion for Sissi, and she had been something of an early literary muse for him:

His accidental nearness in time and place to the spot of her doom moved him much when he heard of it, since thereby hung a tale. She was a woman whose beauty, as shown in her portraits, had attracted him greatly in his youthful years, and had inspired some of his early verses, the same romantic passion having also produced the outline of a novel upon her, which he never developed.<sup>75</sup>

The phrase "thereby hung a tale" seems out of proportion. The tale would, it seems, simply be that of a young man of no means or social standing who fell in love with the image of a beautiful Empress he would never meet. If it is a tale, there is no real punchline; the paths of this downtown boy and an uptown girl would cross only in that he slept somewhere near the place where she would die. But of course this is the tale that Hardy would write out again and again across the course of his literary career; impossible or ephemeral love for an out-of-reach woman, glimpsed only in passing, or better still, seen not in person but through portraiture. In *Jude the Obscure* (1894/5), Hardy showcases a photograph that functions as a proxy for a beloved. "How he wished he had that pretty portrait of her!"; and so Jude sends for the photograph of Sue Bridehead.<sup>76</sup> Set upon his mantel, Jude kisses the photographic image of Sue before he ever meets the woman herself. Hardy's erotic imagination is ignited by visual representation. He falls in love not with women, but with, to use his own title from his "*Poetical Matter*" Notebook, "Women seen."<sup>77</sup>

Many images of Sissi were in circulation during Hardy's youth. He could have seen any number of them printed in the periodical press, but he would certainly have seen a portrait of Sissi at the 1862 International Exhibition at South Kensington.<sup>78</sup> It was Hardy's first summer in London and he spent much time at the Exhibition, particularly with the paintings.<sup>79</sup> Franz Schrotzberg's highly romantic portrait of a soft-focused, lacy-mantled Sissi was displayed in the Exhibition, and one periodical, *John Bull*, observed: "The portrait of the Empress of Austria will

69 Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 73.

70 Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 33.

71 Hibbert, *Queen Victoria in Her Letters and Journals*, 105.

72 Sinclair, *Death by Fame*, 27.

73 Sinclair, *Death by Fame*, 27.

74 Florence Emily Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy 1892–1928* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 70. First published in 1930.

75 Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy 1892–1928*, 70.

76 Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 69.

77 "Women seen" refers either to a poem never written or (more likely) to a sequence of poems. Michael Millgate notes Hardy's "romantic readiness to fall immediately, if temporarily, in love with women glimpsed in the street, in railway carriages, on the tops of omnibuses, or indeed in any public place" and quotes the "Women seen" suggestion for a poem from his "*Poetical Matter*" Notebook. Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 104.

78 This exhibition was a successor to the Great Exhibition of 1851, and one that laid the ground for the establishment of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

79 Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 76.

excite attention for her beauty."<sup>80</sup> *Blackwood's* went yet further, "With Schrotzberg's portrait of the Empress of Austria all the world's in love."<sup>81</sup>

What is the strange number game, the demographics of passion in such a formulation? All the world loves one woman. A beautiful imperatrix can be *the one* for *the many*. For Hardy, Sissi plays this role, but only temporarily. She soon joins the stream of young women with whom he fell in love, and what comes of Hardy's infatuations is the production of poetry and fiction; these romantic fixations stimulated him to write. His (auto)biographical account of his passion for Sissi is as much about a young man becoming an author as it is about Sissi, or all the other out-of-reach women for whom she stands.

Sissi was not only the woman Hardy never met, she was the subject of a novel he never wrote; let us recall that he "produced the outline of a novel upon her, which he never developed." When Hardy refers to a *tale that hangs*, it is a tale that never quite comes to be. Hardy had used the same exact phrase, "thereby hung a tale," in his short story "An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress," which he wrote in the spring of 1878. The schoolmaster protagonist Egbert studies and strives in pursuit of fame and the Squire's daughter Geraldine. Cultivating opinions about painters, Egbert holds that "Romney was greater than Reynolds because Lady Hamilton had been his model, and thereby hung a tale."<sup>82</sup> Once again the phrase is attached to infatuation with a beautiful muse; Lady Hamilton was Romney's muse and infatuation, just as Sissi had been Hardy's. Portraiture provides an intimacy with a woman who can never be attained, and this out-of-reachness of the woman is, for Hardy, a way of talking about how stories can also slip from one's grasp. Hardy wrote "An Indiscretion" in an attempt to reconstruct a novel that he had lost. This lost novel was Hardy's first. Written in 1867, it was titled "The Poor Man and the Lady," and it was rejected by publishers for being, as Hardy puts it, too "socialistic."<sup>83</sup> It never went to print and somehow Hardy lost—perhaps destroyed—the manuscript. In his later years, he regretted the loss, and "An Indiscretion" was an attempt to reconstruct

the story. As Hardy himself describes it, "An Indiscretion" was "a sort of patchwork of the remains of 'The Poor Man & the Lady,' a "pale shadow" of that lost manuscript.<sup>84</sup>

If Hardy attempted to rewrite "The Poor Man," did he ever attempt to rewrite his early novel about Sissi? Although his "outline" has not survived, I believe the traces of Sissi can be found in Hardy's 1881 novel *A Laodicean*. A lesser-known novel, its plot is animated by the clash of modernity and antiquity. The heroine Paula Power lives in a medieval castle, which she has tricked out with two very modern amenities: a telegraph and a gymnasium. Something of a new woman, her daily workouts are inspired by "the physical training of the Greeks, whom she adores."<sup>85</sup> The novel opens with a very striking scene, underpinned by Hardy's early training as an architect, of the spectacle of a castle with telegraph wires disappearing through an arrow slit.

Sissi was powerful and lonely, she was an athlete, and she could not live without a telegraph. It is Paula Power's modernized regal dwelling that carries a trace of Hardy's obsession with Sissi. Sissi, in her twin quests for foreign travel and excellent hunting, rented two castles in the British Isles that she equipped with both a gymnasium and a telegraph. In February of 1879, and then again the following year, Sissi traveled to Ireland, staying at Summerhill House in County Meath. Built in 1731 in the Palladian style, Summerhill was equipped with a new chapel, gym, and telegraph in preparation for Sissi's visit.<sup>86</sup> And in 1882, after a new alliance between the Habsburgs and the Coburgs meant that it was no longer diplomatic for her to hunt in Ireland,<sup>87</sup> Sissi rented Combermere Abbey in Cheshire, a "huge pile that was installed with a Catholic chapel and a telegraph and a gymnasium and even live turtles for her game soup."<sup>88</sup> Could Hardy have known of these living arrangements for his one-time crush object? He could. Sissi's fashion and travel arrangements were considered glamorous news items and the periodical press reported details of her various stays in England and Ireland. In *The Manchester Times* we find a representative account of Sissi's 1881 visit to Combermere:

80 "The Great Exhibition—No. VII," *John Bull* (London, England) 2, no. 167 (Saturday, June 21, 1862): 394.

81 "Pictures British and Foreign: International Exhibition," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 92 (September 1862): 357.

82 "An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress," 81. Hardy also mentions Sir Joshua Reynolds in his "Poetical Matter" *Notebook* and again in his "Schools of Painting" *Notebook*. *Notebook* editors Michael Millgate and Pamela Dalziel point out that Hardy would have been very familiar with the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds from the 1862 International Exhibition and from Old Masters exhibitions mounted annually in London. "Notebook", n.9.9, 87.

83 Florence Emily Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy 1840–1891* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 81.

84 Hardy, "An Indiscretion," xvi.

85 Thomas Hardy, *A Laodicean* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991), 170.

86 "Summerhill, Meath, Ireland," 1879 and 1880 Empress of Austria: Her British Journeys (website). Available at: <http://www.mkheritage.co.uk/eoa/docs/Summerhill.html> (accessed November 3, 2017).

87 Sissi's trips to Ireland, and the great favor that the beautiful Catholic Empress found there, had displeased Queen Victoria. Victoria was opposed to Irish Home Rule and the issue was a great cause of friction between her and Prime Minister Gladstone. She was delighted when, in 1886, Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was defeated. See Christopher Hibbert, *Queen Victoria: A Personal History* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), 374.

88 Sinclair, *Death By Fame*, 106.

covered with a profusion of ivy, and looking, as it is, the beau ideal of an English nobleman's seat ... The Abbey has undergone a thorough renovation ... the pointed Gothic windows in Her Majesty's rooms have been doubled, and the doors heightened. There is a splendidly-carved fireplace in the bedroom, while the oak tracery of the windows is beautiful ... The Empress has had one of her dressing rooms fitted up as a gymnasium. It is intended that the library shall be used as a chapel.<sup>89</sup>

Readers are invited to run their fingertips over the customized luxury of Sissi's domestic spaces. The Empress is absent but imminent, and the reader tours the building in advance of her, poking a head into the rooms in which she will conduct her physical and spiritual exercises. Everything is fitted to her needs, and we see the shape of Sissi emerge, as a negative space, from these fitments. The architectural details dwelt upon are all about scooped-out spaces; enlarged openings of doors and windows, the hollows and dips of tracery and carving. This focus on what is missing is a way of tracing Sissi's missing outline.

### Wax Queens

If Sissi is missing from this interior, is there only as an implicit body, she would appear a few years later most explicitly, for public viewing as a waxwork in Madame Tussaud's museum.<sup>90</sup> In November of 1854, *The Lady's Newspaper* excitedly announced that "a portrait-model of the young Empress of Austria &c., is nearly ready."<sup>91</sup> Soon after, weekly advertisements for the museum ran in a wide range of periodicals, headlining the arrival of this new statue of Sissi. Sissi was popular

89 "The Empress of Austria's Visit to Combermere," *The Manchester Times* (Manchester, England), Saturday, February 19, 1881, 1209. *British Library Newspapers, Part I: 1800-1900* (website). Available at: <http://www.gale.com/c/british-library-newspapers-part-i> (accessed November 3, 2017).

90 Marie Tussaud opened her first permanent museum in Baker Street in 1835, and it was in this space that the statue of Sissi was first exhibited. Her grandson Joseph Randall moved the museum in 1884 to a specially commissioned building on Marylebone Road. Thomas Hardy enjoyed an after-hours visit to this gallery in 1903, when Marie's great-grandson John Tussaud allowed Hardy hands-on access to the Napoleonic relics on display. Clement Shorter's *The Sphere* noted that this was Hardy's first visit to the waxworks, and Shorter himself recalled "prancing about Tussauds' by night, Hardy wearing the Waterloo cocked hat!" See *The Sphere: An Illustrated Newspaper for the Home* 13 (June 20) and Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, 391. Thomas Hardy writes about the immobilized but watchful wax figures in "At Madame Tussaud's in Victorian Years," published in *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses* in 1917.

91 "Exhibitions," *The Lady's Newspaper* (London, England) 413 (Saturday, November 25, 1854): 327.

enough to be the sole focus of such advertisements, and her statue kept company with the statue of Victoria that, since her coronation, had been one of the most popular displays.<sup>92</sup> Some 127 years later, in 1981, Diana Princess of Wales joined the collection.<sup>93</sup>

What does it mean to become a wax queen?<sup>94</sup> One answer would be that to become a queen is to be made a living waxwork. The process of coalescence and dissolution, the "being in full transformation" for the purpose of being given to be seen, the displacement of self into endless refractions, defines modern queenhood and waxworks equally. As Marina Warner puts it, "Waxworks exude the spirit of death and life equally [...] both morbidity and the promise of immortality coexist."<sup>95</sup> Writing about memorializations of Lady Diana, Diana Taylor says the shrine housing her remains is a guarantor of "the materiality of the global phenomenon that is 'Diana', the massive reappearance of the *revenant*."<sup>96</sup> Taylor's interest is the way that Diana's iconicity leaves a trace of herself that exceeds the "live" Diana. The Princess is, she suggests, present in her memorializations as much as she "was absent from her life."<sup>97</sup> Although Taylor does not theorize wax as a medium of immortalization, she recalls that another iconic woman's body—that of Evita Peron—was cast three times in wax to confound would-be body-snatchers,<sup>98</sup> and Taylor is clearly interested in what Judith Roof has called the "lure" of wax and the ability to "rivet the look" and "provoke desire through displacement."<sup>99</sup> Wax, as a representational

92 The original coronation tableau of Victoria was updated with a marriage tableau in 1840 and "changed thereafter as events dictated." Plunkett, *Victoria*, 105.

93 Diana joined the Madame Tussaud's display before the Royal Wedding. She donated the dress worn by the model, one that she had worn previously to a dinner in Althorp in 1980. Like Victoria's, her statue was repeatedly updated by Tussaud's.

94 It should also be noted that the prominent waxwork artists of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—Mrs. Goldsmith, Mrs. Mills, Mrs. Salmon, Madame Tussaud—were women, and that wax art was a way for these women to acquire great fame. Marjan Sterckx notes that "Women's involvement in the modeling of wax effigies commissioned for Westminster Abbey between 1686 and 1806 is impressive. Of the original fourteen figures, at least six were made by women—a testament to their fame and recognition of their expertise." Marjan Sterckx "Pride and Prejudice: Eighteenth-century Women Sculptors and their Material Practices," in *Women and Material Culture, 1660-1830*, ed. Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 96.

95 Marina Warner "Waxworks and Wonderlands," in *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances*, ed. Lynne Cook and Peter Wollen (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 186.

96 Taylor, "Downloading Grief," 194.

97 Taylor, "Downloading Grief," 194.

98 Taylor, "Downloading Grief," 195.

99 Judith Roof, "Display Cases," in *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*, ed. John Kucich and Dianne F. Sadoff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 110.

medium, has a there-but-not-there quality that differs from mimetic forms like photography and cinema. In *Waxworks: A Cultural Obsession*, Michelle Bloom explores wax's peculiar ability or liability to "metamorphic events"—it can melt, it can re-solidify—suggesting that it is therefore a medium with the capacity to provoke a discourse of "aesthetic dissolution."<sup>100</sup> The ultimate dissolution promised by wax, Bloom argues, is the "postmodern dissolution of subjectivity,"<sup>101</sup> but wax has always been associated with some very pre-modern dissolutions too: of the fetish, of forgetting, and of death.<sup>102</sup>

The history of wax sculpture finds its roots in death—in death masks and votives, and Madame Tussaud herself claimed she perfected her art by body-snatching victims of the French Revolution, specifically and most famously, a queen; a wax sculpture of Marie Antoinette is rumored to have been made from a death mask taken by Tussaud of the queen's bodiless head. Wax limns the threshold between life and death. A wax figure compels because it is *life-like*, but not alive. And wax is, of course, a medium that can take on representational capacity by manipulating its threshold between liquid and solid states. Georges Didi-Huberman observes how wax forms a hiatus between permanence and impermanence: "It is a fragile and temporary material, but is most often used for objects destined to endure."<sup>103</sup> There is a paradox inherent to the immortalization of someone through wax; it is a material that threatens to return to the state of dissolution that allowed it to conform to the sculptor's hand in the first place, and indeed, Madame Tussaud's melts down the statues of those no longer famous, to use the wax anew in the making of effigies of the newly important.<sup>104</sup>

100 Michelle E. Bloom, *Waxworks: A Cultural Obsession* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xiii.

101 Bloom, *Waxworks*, 212.

102 The receptive and memorializing capacities of wax have caused it to stand as simile for the brain. Both Plato and Sigmund Freud turn to wax to think about consciousness and memory. "Let me ask you to suppose," writes Plato, "that there's an imprint-receiving piece of wax in our minds." What is imprinted remains, but what is "smudged out" we have "forgotten." Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. John McDowell (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 191b. When Freud becomes diverted by the "Wunderblock," a writing tablet with wax slab underneath a plastic sheet, upon which you can write with a stylus, he is most compelled by the idea that the wax retains "lasting traces of the notations" even after "erasure." Sigmund Freud, "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing Pad,'" (1925), in *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology* (New York: Collier Books, 1963), 212.

103 Georges Didi-Huberman, "Wax Flesh, Vicious Circles," in *Encyclopaedia Anatomica, Museo La Specola Florence: A Complete Collection of Anatomical Waxes* (Germany: Taschen, 1999), 64.

104 Vanessa R. Schwartz quotes a French nineteenth-century journalist hailing a wax museum as a "Pantheon of the day," and she observes that the wax museum as a

Unsurprisingly, Charles Dickens explored the fascinations of the wax-work. As editor of *Household Words*, he published an article on the subject called "History in Wax," and in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, he produces a fictional version of Madame Tussaud in the form of Mrs Jarley, proprietor of a waxworks in which Little Nell briefly resides.<sup>105</sup> Mrs Jarley's wax figures are "waxen satellites." Wax works might be life-like and life-size, but they are also orbiting around an absence. And when it is a queen who is cast in wax, the "satellite" quality of this waxen double opens up perils. A king might uphold his power by having "two bodies," but when Margaret Homans explores Queen Victoria's multiple bodies, she observes "that Victoria was monarch only because of 'failure of issue male' means that, whatever else she may represent, she always represents lack."<sup>106</sup>

Wax holds the place between form and formlessness and casting a queen in wax thus emphasizes her always-immanence and always-dissolution. Queen Victoria was patron to a wax modeler, Emma Peachey, who was in residence at Kensington Palace to teach the art of making wax flowers to the Princess Royal.<sup>107</sup> Peachey published a book on the craft, and in the preface, her editor emphasizes the medium's ability to immortalize: "short-lived beauties die away," he writes, but wax "perpetuates the transient glories."<sup>108</sup> Princesses especially dramatize such transience in their very being; that they are trained in the art of suspended animation makes perfect sense. After all, the oldest statue in Madame Tussaud's is a statue of a princess, and more specifically, a statue of a princess suspended, awaiting transformation: Sleeping

form "mimicked the newspaper in its commitment to rapid reporting and constant change." Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 110.

105 Dudley Costello, "History in Wax," *Household Words* 9 (February 18, 1854): 17–20.

106 Margaret Homans, *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837–1876* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), xxix.

107 Elizabeth Barrett Browning's heroine Aurora Leigh models wax flowers as a girlish "accomplishment" that she undertakes to please the aunt who is raising her. But it is Aurora's natural self that ends up fixed and mounted, a result of being moulded to womanhood: the aunt seeks, "To prick me to a pattern with her pin, / Fibre from fibre, delicate leaf from leaf." The wax modeling of flowers and other natural forms was a prominent Victorian craft for women. In *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), Talia Schaffer titles her Introduction "How to Read Wax Coral, and Why." Several how-to books were published on the craft. See, for example, John Mintorn, *Lessons in Flower and Fruit Modelling in Wax* (1870), or *The Book of Fruits and Flowers in Wax-Work* (1850). Thad Logan's, *The Victorian Parlor: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) also has excellent material on domestic wax arts.

108 *The Royal Guide to Wax Flower Modelling by Mrs Peachey Artiste to Her Majesty* (London: Published and Sold by Mrs Peachey, Artiste to Her Majesty: 1851), x.

Beauty. This waxwork, dating back to 1763, is the work not of Tussaud but of her mentor, Philippe Curtius. Beauty sleeps indecorously on a chaise longue, one arm thrown up and half covering the face, the tender neck exposed, the body twisted in a rich silk gown, the hair tumbling free. A mechanism makes the breast rise and fall, simulating breathing. This seems to be the sleep of only a few moments, not of a hundred years (or 250 years and counting, for this venerable waxwork). She is waiting, and we watch her wait. We wait, too. We watch princesses not for what they are doing, but for what they are going to do next. If we remember back to the newspaper articles that made readers privy to the renovations of Sissi's English homes, what were being shown were the processes of making and re-making that surround a royal female body. These scenes of formation express the condition of the emperatrix-turned-royal-celebrity; when we look for a queen, we see instead a queen-in-the-making, an intimate staging. We might learn, in fact, to hear a different cadence to the term used for attendants of a queen—the “lady-in-waiting” does not merely “wait” in the sense of “serves,” but she waits because a queen can only ever be radically imminent, poised on the verge.

The connection I am drawing between imperial female bodies in flux and waxen representations of them must come to rest on an understanding that fat is ontologically related to wax. When the world was lit by candles, a beeswax candle was the luxury version of the tallow light: in other words, most candles were made from animal fat. Beeswax was fragrant, luminous, aesthetically pleasing, and mythically suggestive (Matthew Arnold's nineteenth-century dictum, “sweetness and light” refers to the two scented and literarily resonant products of the hive). Tallow, on the other hand, guttered and smoked, stank of flesh, and was less white. Since tallow was the cheaper option, it was burned in homes where body fat was in short supply, eroded by poverty, or in some fictions, was excessive and threatening, due to phobias about bodies, usually female, usually mobile. As Michael Moon points out, Charles Dickens “is close to the modern nerve with his authentic loathing for the fat, female body,” writing fictions in which “the gibbous flesh [of precariously middle-class fat women] might be carved directly from the narrow shanks of the smaller bodies—bodies of children, of the poor—in which Dickens saw himself.”<sup>109</sup> Dickens was, commensurately, past master at turning humans into candles: Samuel Pickwick's surname suggests a cheap and common kind of light—a floating wick in tallow that you would have to pick at to keep it lit; in *Edwin Drood*, six short-lived brothers “went out, one by one, as they were born, like six little rushlights”; in *Bleak House*, Krook's spontaneous combustion turns

him into greasy residue, a “stagnant, sickening oil”; in *Great Expectations* Estella refers to herself as a candle, and Miss Havershaw burns like one. The collusions between the waxwork and the living subject were not delimited to the uncanny lifelikeness of the representation, the genuine articles of clothing, nor the human hair stitched into wax scalps; if in looking for what we might call the *melting point*, that is to say, the material similarity between fat and wax, the ability of us all to become our representations, to become different versions of ourselves, and to become each other, we find the closest kinship between the effigy and the subject. Fat in the Western metaphysical tradition is seen, as Jana Evans Braziel writes, as “intrinsically devoid of form,” a lack of fixity that easily turns literally into abject flux—to become “manifest in an oozing liquidity.”<sup>110</sup> The fat of the fat woman shimmers with “disfiguring liquidity” and threatens—she theorizes, via the work of Deleuze and Guattari—the “immutability of Being in a transcendent realm.”<sup>111</sup>

To be a wax queen, then, frozen seemingly in time, is to dramatize through the mutability of wax, the stuff of representation, and fat, the stuff of flesh, exactly the mutability of any “realm,” transcendent or otherwise. Wax queens are always on the verge of melting, like Snow White into life or like her stepmother into death, or more importantly perhaps, melting into one another, becoming the adipose, formless stuff of the next incarnation, the next princess, the next England, the next Austria. The first princess in Madame Tussaud's, the fictional Sleeping Beauty, will presumably, if Madame Tussaud's lasts another three centuries, also be the last princess. Sissi is no longer on display—the thousand years of notoriety predicted by Mark Twain did not last a century outside of the German-speaking world. Perhaps someday Victoria and Diana will also be melted down and made into their next incarnations; in this way, waxen queens and princesses become mere ladies-in-waiting to each other.

### *Princess Au Revoir*

The most sensational nineteenth-century biography of Sissi, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, was indeed written by a lady-in-waiting. Although she wrote anonymously, Marguerite Cunliffe-Owen's biography offered readers domestic intimacy with the recently assassinated Sissi. After her own death Cunliffe-Owen also became herself the subject of a biography written by the American friend who lived with Marguerite and her husband on Staten Island. This biography sought to put a name, a face, and a life to the woman who had written *Martyrdom* anonymously, and who subsequently published only as “Author of *The Martyrdom of*

109 Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, 233.

110 Braziel, “Sex and Fat Chics,” 239.

111 Braziel, “Sex and Fat Chics,” 243 and 244.

an Empress." Ironically, this biography of the biographer was never published, in large part because of worries that other persons connected to Cunliffe-Owen's life story might sue. The biographer, Edward Forrester Sutton, was a doctor, a poet, and a Princeton alumnus. The manuscript of his 1929 biography, along with some of Marguerite's own papers and memorabilia, are lodged in the Princeton Rare Books Collection, where I was the first to cut the cord on the manuscript since it was first tied up many decades ago.<sup>112</sup> "The Princess Au Revoir" is a riveting read, and its details convince me that Marguerite was indeed a once-beloved lady-in-waiting to Sissi.

Sutton describes a young Marguerite as—like Sissi—a tomboy. (This gendering was so foundational to Marguerite that Sutton writes the first chapter using the male pronoun and a male name, "Pierrot.") Also like Sissi, Marguerite was a fearless horsewoman, went to her wedding night virginal and ignorant, and had a head of cascading chestnut hair. Brought to the attention of the Empress by her "reckless" riding, "the Horse was the original bond between them,"<sup>113</sup> and the Empress's sympathy for Marguerite's miserable marriage led to Marguerite living at court. Sutton observes that although Sissi began as the protector, Marguerite's "common-sense" and "masterful spirit" meant that in time the "mutual position was somewhat reversed."<sup>114</sup> Sutton quotes Marguerite directly, describing how much Sissi was unsuited to the duties of imperial life. This is how Marguerite illustrates her point: "For instance, it was her duty to be stared at—part of the game. She disliked it and wouldn't be stared at, especially when she began to show her age."<sup>115</sup> Marguerite, it turns out, was something of a solution to Sissi's aversion to being specularized. Sutton recalls:

She said she often substituted for the Empress. Their hair and coloring were much the same [... Marguerite] was a charming avatar of the Empress, while the latter followed behind in another carriage untroubled by the gaze of the populace and the necessity of returning salutes.<sup>116</sup>

112 Edward Forrester, "The Princess Au Revoir," 1940, Sutton and Cunliffe-Owen Collection, Box 1 Folder 2; Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey. The opening pages of Chapter 1 have a lengthy handwritten note (on verso), in which Forrester describes his brother's disapproval of the book and fears that it might be libelous to publish. He says he will leave it to his Alma Mater to decide the matter.

113 Forrester, "The Princess Au Revoir," 65.

114 Forrester, "The Princess Au Revoir," 66.

115 Forrester, "The Princess Au Revoir," 68.

116 Forrester, "The Princess Au Revoir," 72.

Barbara Cartland saved Sissi from the exhaustions of imperial duty via a novelistic bed trick. In this passage, we learn that Sissi had, in actual fact, performed the bed trick to the same effect.<sup>117</sup> In Forrester's account, Marguerite and Sissi change places with each other, just as they had switched roles of protector and protected. This arrangement allowed the Empress not only relief from being looked at, but the opportunity to look at her "charming avatar," herself, being looked at.<sup>118</sup> "Avatar" is originally a Sanskrit word, which might suggest that Marguerite was put in a similar position to the "Oriental beauties" in Sissi's photo album. Once again, Sissi is using the body of another to both shield herself and also provide her with the specular perspective required to examine the process of specularization.

This *mise-en-abyme* quality of the scenario is echoed in another chapter of "Princess Au Revoir." Forrester recalls: "In London [Marguerite] had once gone to Madame Tussaud's to see a wax-work of the Empress and some of her Court Ladies, including herself. Now in Central Park she dropped in at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to be confronted by her own portrait."<sup>119</sup> The painting to which Forrester is referring is Hungarian artist Hans Makart's enormous "Diana's Hunting Party" (1880).<sup>120</sup> Forrester, whose whole biographical project is about filling in the blank of "anonymous," explains that these mythic nymphs and goddesses had real life counterparts: "Leaders of the Viennese great world were models for some of the draped figures, queens of the stage for the undraped."<sup>121</sup> Forrester's gentle wit is incisive: queens mix with queens of the stage, as models, because all these kinds of women live in worlds in which they are always on display. When Marguerite encounters life-size representations of herself and Sissi at the Metropolitan and at Madame Tussaud's, the "revoir" of Forrester's title, "Princess Au Revoir," resonates. These encounters are a *seeing again*; they bear witness to *being seen, again and again*, by a public.

117 Similarly, Andrew Sinclair recounts that when Sissi visited Britain and went bathing in the sea (an activity popularized by Queen Victoria), "crowds watched her from cliffs with field-glasses, so Marie Festetics and another decoy had to put on flannel bathing-gowns and come into the water to deceive the viewers." Sinclair, *Death By Fame*, 81.

118 Forrester, "The Princess Au Revoir," 72.

119 Forrester, "The Princess Au Revoir," 114.

120 Forrester, "The Princess Au Revoir," 144, emphasizes the scale of the piece: "The name of the Austrian artist escapes recollection, but the canvas is still there, though said to be no longer hung for want of space, for it is a huge thing that used to cover almost the entire south end of the main hall in the old building." This image was therefore on par with the life-size representations at Madame Tussaud's.

121 Forrester, "The Princess Au Revoir," 144.

### Returning to Tears

Wax that portends dissolution invites us to review the malleable bodies of Victoria, Sissi, and Diana: Victoria's increasing girth, Sissi's disciplined emaciation, and Diana's bulimic vacillation. In spite of media-driven insistence that we parse these bodies, unendingly, it is clear that these states are one and the same with each other. These bodies are all defined by the space they occupy, and they are all simultaneously specularized and spectralized, at once material and immaterial. Perhaps this is why Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poems on the inauguration of Victoria dissolve so readily into tears. Tears, like wax, memorialize. They express the transitional body. And Barrett Browning's lines have a prophetic cast to them: Victoria would, across her lifetime, become the embodiment of mourning. Her black garbed stoutness evidenced stubborn sorrow. Sissi, too, wore mourning so complete that her strings of pearls were black.<sup>122</sup> And Diana famously saved a specific little black dress to wear on the day the world learned that her husband had been unfaithful to her. Garbed in skimpy silk mourning she turned away from her miserable marriage, trying on defiance and revenge for size, but still looking like "melancholia incarnate."<sup>123</sup> This term, though, might undo itself; for these imperatrices, melancholia dissolved their bodies, made them not incarnate, but un-carnate. Turned into icons, these women lost their singular selves in service of imperial multitudes. They "dried the tears of countless wretches"<sup>124</sup> but were lost, dissolved away in their own.

### Bibliography

- Alloula, Malek. *The Colonial Harem*. Translated by Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987.
- Armstrong, Nancy. "Monarchy in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 22, no. 4 (2001): 495–536.
- Behdad, Ali and Luke Gartlan, eds. *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013.
- Benson, Arthur Christopher, M.A. and Viscount Esher, eds. *The Letters of Queen Victoria: A Selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence Between the Years 1837 and 1861*. Vol. 2, 1844–1853. London: John Murray, 1908.
- Bloom, Michelle E. *Waxworks: A Cultural Obsession*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

122 Cartland, *The Private Life of Elizabeth*, 264, cites Hungarian novelist Kálmán Mikszáth: "Everything about her was sombre ... Black were the ornaments in her hair, black her pearls, everything black, only her face was marble white and ineffably sad ... a *Mater Dolorosa*."

123 Adrian Kear, "Diana Between Two Deaths: Spectral Ethics and the Time of Mourning," in *Mourning Diana: Nation, Culture and the Performance of Grief*, ed. Adrian Kear and Deborah Lynn Steinberg (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 173.

124 Cunliffe-Owen, *The Martyrdom of an Empress*, 127.

- Bond-Stockton, Kathryn. *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Brazier, Jana Evans. "Sex and Fat Chics: Deterritorializing the Fat Female Body." In *Bodies Out of Bounds*, edited by Jana Evans Brazier and Kathleen LeBesco, 231–54. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Brown, Eric C. "The Influence of Queen Victoria on England's Literary Fairy Tale." *Marvels & Tales* 13, no. 1 (1999): 31–51.
- Cartland, Barbara. *The Private Life of Elizabeth, Empress of Austria*. London: Muller, 1959.
- Cartland, Barbara. *Stars in My Heart*. London: Hutchinson & Company, 1957.
- Costello, Dudley. "History in Wax." *Household Words* 9 (February 18, 1854): 17–20.
- Cunliffe-Owen, Marguerite. *The Martyrdom of an Empress*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899.
- Didi-Huberman, Georges. "Wax Flesh, Vicious Circles." In *Encyclopaedia Anatomica, Musee La Specola Florence: A Complete Collection of Anatomical Waxes*, 67–74. Germany: Taschen, 1999.
- "Exhibitions," *The Lady's Newspaper* (London, England) 413 (Saturday, November 25, 1854): 327.
- Forrester, Edward. "The Princess Au Revoir," 1940. Sutton and Cunliffe-Owen Collection, Box 1 Folder 2; Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Princeton, NJ.
- Freud, Sigmund. "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing Pad'" (1925). In *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology*, 212. New York: Collier Books, 1963.
- "The Great Exhibition—No. VII." *John Bull* (London, England) 2, no. 167 (Saturday, June 21, 1862): 394.
- Grimm, Brothers. "Little Snow-White." In *Grimm's Fairy Tales: Complete Edition*, 249–58. New York: Pantheon Books, 1944.
- Hamann, Brigitte. *The Reluctant Empress*. Translated by Ruth Hein. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986.
- Hardy, Florence Emily. *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy 1840–1891*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Hardy, Florence Emily. *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy 1892–1928*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Hardy, Thomas. *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress and Other Stories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Hardy, Thomas. *Jude the Obscure*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- Hardy, Thomas. *A Laodicean*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Haslip, Joan. *The Lonely Empress: A Biography of Elizabeth of Austria*. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1965.
- Hibbert, Christopher. *Queen Victoria: A Personal History*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001.
- Homans, Margaret. *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837–1876*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Kear, Adrian. "Diana Between Two Deaths: Spectral Ethics and the Time of Mourning." In *Mourning Diana: Nation, Culture and the Performance of Grief*, edited by Adrian Kear and Deborah Lynn Steinberg, 169–86. London: Routledge, 1999.



- Logan, Thad. *The Victorian Parlor: A Cultural Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Lytton Strachey, Giles. *Queen Victoria*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1921.
- Mantel, Hilary. "Royal Bodies." *London Review of Books* 35, no. 4 (February 21, 2013): 3-7.
- Mermin, Dorothy. *Elizabeth Barrett Browning: The Origins of a New Poetry*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Millgate, Michael. *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Moon, Michael and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Divinity: A Dossier A Performance Piece A Little-Understood Emotion," in *Tendencies*, ed. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 215-51. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Peachey, Mrs. *The Royal Guide to Wax Flower Modelling by Mrs Peachey Artiste to Her Majesty*. London: Published and Sold by Mrs Peachey, Artiste to Her Majesty, 1851.
- "Pictures British and Foreign: International Exhibition." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 92 (September 1862): 357.
- Plato. *Theaetetus*. Translated by John McDowell. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Plunkett, John. *Victoria: First Media Monarch*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Queen Victoria. *Dearest Child: Letters between Queen Victoria and the Princess Royal, 1858-1861*. London: Evans Bros., 1964.
- Queen Victoria. *Queen Victoria in Her Letters and Journals*. Edited by Christopher Hibbert. New York: Viking, 1985.
- Roof, Judith. "Display Cases." In *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*, edited by John Kucich and Dianne F. Sadoff, 101-21. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Schaffer, Talia. "How to Read Wax Coral, and Why." In *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 3-26. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Schwarz, Vanessa R. *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Tendencies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Sinclair, Andrew. *Death By Fame: A Life of Elisabeth, Empress of Austria*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1998.
- Sterckx, Marjan. "Pride and Prejudice: Eighteenth-century Women Sculptors and their Material Practices." In *Women and Material Culture, 1660-1830*, edited by Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan, 86-102. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Taupin, Bernie and Elton John. "Candle in the Wind '97." Metrolyrics. Available at: <http://www.metrolyrics.com/candle-in-the-wind-97-lyrics-elton-john.html> (accessed November 3, 2007).
- Taylor, Diana. "Downloading Grief." In *Mourning Diana: Nation, Culture and the Performance of Grief*, edited by Adrian Kear and Deborah Lynn Steinberg, 187-210. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Twain, Mark. *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain*. Edited by Charles Neider. Boston: DaCapo Press, 1991.
- Wann, Marilyn. Foreword to *The Fat Studies Reader*, edited by Esther Rothblum and Sondra Solovay, xi-xvi. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

- Warner, Marina. "Waxworks and Wonderlands." In *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances*, edited by Lynne Cook and Peter Wollen, 178-201. Seattle: Bay Press, 1995.
- Weindel, Henri de. *The Real Francis-Joseph: The Private Life of the Emperor of Austria*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1909.