

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert: Constructing a Sustainable Monarchy and Negotiating Gender and Foreignness Under Conditions of Precarity

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Abstract

Although many writers have commented on Queen Victoria's role as a female monarch and the anxieties associated with female rule – authors such as Thompson (2001), Munich (1987) and Homans (1993) provide an in-depth account of Queen Victoria as a powerful female figure – there has been little discussion of Queen Victoria's and Prince Albert's reception as *German* figures of monarchical power. This dissertation examines the extent to which Queen Victoria's and Prince Albert's German heritage affected their public reception, particularly against the backdrop of political precarity. I argue that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert utilised royal iconography and portraiture in order to gain the approval of their subjects and to demonstrate that they were capable of sustaining the monarchy at a politically precarious time. To set the scene, the dissertation first discusses how far Britain/the British political system can be perceived as precarious in an age defined by revolutionary thought and reformatory action, before moving on to present the development of the nineteenth-century feminine ideal and its portrayal in English and German literature. My discussion of nineteenth-century gender ideals represented in royal portraiture demonstrates how such iconography was used by Victoria to construct an image of herself as the maternal monarch with a chivalrous German husband. In Chapter Three, I consider the royal couple's split identities: Queen Victoria was a female figure of power with a German heritage linked in marriage to a German husband and male consort Prince Albert. The intersectionality associated with Victoria's and Albert's foreignness will be analysed in relation to Victoria's and Albert's seemingly "upside-down" or unconventional gender roles. I argue that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert used royal iconography, photography, and portraiture to manage their public reception and deflect public anxieties relating both to their foreignness and their gender unconventionality. Finally, I will reflect on the extent to which Victoria and Albert succeeded in constructing a sustainable monarchy under conditions of precarity.

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Introduction

In this dissertation, I investigate the relationship between political precarity, foreignness and gender unconventionality. More specifically, I examine the theme of split identities: Queen Victoria's role as a female ruler with a German heritage and how her marriage to Prince Albert (both a German and male consort) could have been considered problematic in a time of great political precarity. In addition, I explore how Victoria and Albert managed their public representation through royal iconography and portraiture to navigate the negative press response to their unconventional gender roles and Germanic aspects of their identities. One might expect that both the foreign and gender role reversal aspects to Victoria's and Albert's identities could have been troublesome in a politically precarious period, however Victoria and Albert cleverly navigated the negative public response by constructing an image that reflected the nineteenth-century ideals of femininity, motherhood, and chivalry. To succeed as a symbolic ruler in an age defined by revolutionary thought and reformatory action, Victoria required a "coping strategy" that would enable her to manifest an image of herself as a politically, morally, and culturally "good" monarch. Likewise, to deflect the negative press response to Albert's Germanness in a public sphere that was increasingly dominated by Germanophobia, the royal couple constructed an image of Albert as a British Knight with bourgeois qualities.

Politically, both Victoria and Albert deployed aspects of the feminine and masculine ideals: Victoria as the maternal monarch and Albert as the chivalrous, bourgeois knight. Their public display of adherence to notions of masculinity and femininity was emphasised in royal photography and iconography; artistic representations of the royal couple were essential to the formation of a sustainable monarchy that functioned for the public. The feminine strand of Victoria's identity as a female and – to an extent - foreign woman in a position of power will be explored in Chapter Two of this dissertation. I investigate how far Victoria adhered to ideals of motherhood and domesticity to construct an image of herself as a relatable, maternal monarch. One of Adrienne Munich's key arguments is that Victoria should be situated in her

role as the figure of a "maternal monarchy" (1987, p. 265). In this sense, Munich argues that Victoria ruled as a woman, mother, and wife, hence the term "maternal" monarch. Victoria's elevation on the throne presented her simultaneously as an idealised woman as well as the figurehead of the British Empire. Munich (1987) further argues that the notion of a "maternal monarch" was considered confusing since Victoria's monarchical position suggested that something appeared to be "wrong at the top of the pyramid of authority" (1987, p. 265), particularly against the backdrop of a monarchical system which, although it did not explicitly exclude women from monarchical power, favoured male rulers as opposed to females. In Chapter Two I discuss the concept of Victoria as a maternal monarch and the extent to which Victoria deployed her motherliness and domesticity as a political strategy in relation to the nineteenth-century feminine ideal and nineteenth-century expectations imposed upon women.

Chapter Three examines the image of Albert as a German consort and how Victoria's German heritage was, perhaps counter to expectation, somewhat de-emphasised in the shadow of Albert's identity as fully German. Satirical propaganda is considered in relation to the development of Germanophobia in nineteenth-century Britain to understand, firstly, how both the German and gender aspects of Albert's and Victoria's identities were initially problematic and secondly, how Victoria and Albert dealt with these two strands of their identities to maintain the sustainability of the monarchy at a politically precarious time. A further focus of the dissertation is the way in which Victoria and Albert navigated an initially negative press response, via their ability to use royal iconography to frame themselves as the idealised maternal monarch and the chivalrous British knight. Their decision to use royal iconography and photography to construct a "relatable", "good" image of themselves, contributed successfully to the construction of a sustainable monarchy.

Victoria had always aspired to become a "good" Queen: ten-year-old Victoria's anecdotal phrase "I will be good!" (Cited in Oliphant, 1880, p. 5), repeated by countless historians represents what the young Princess Victoria (or Drina, as was her nickname)

aspired to become upon her accession to the throne in the year 1837. Numerous narratives have circulated concerning how and when the young Victoria learned that she would one day succeed King William IV. The most probable narrative, as documented by Victoria's governess and later companion Lehzen, states that upon receiving this knowledge, Victoria is reported to have said: "Now many a child would boast, but they don't know the difficulty. There is much splendour, but there is much responsibility. (…) I will be good" (cited in Oliphant, 1880, p. 5). Although there is much controversy surrounding the historical validity of young Victoria's statement, the famous four words "I will be good!" have been quoted repeatedly, indeed almost obsessively, by historians of the period (Worsley (201951), Matthew and Reynolds (2007, p. 6), the Holborn Series (1897, p. 16) and could be linked to Victoria's objective to act politically, morally, and culturally "good" as future Queen. From a moral point of view, as a child, Victoria was known to have reflected daily in her childhood diary on the morality of her behaviour, stating whether she had been "bad" or "good", and so as a ten-year-old child receiving news of her future accession, Victoria may have been describing her future reign as "good" in reference to her future morally "good" behaviour. Although the phrase "I will be good!" (Oliphant, 1880, p. 5) should be treated with a certain degree of ambiguity, one thing that rings clear is Victoria's decision to present herself as morally, culturally, and politically good to gain the approval of her subjects. Both the political and cultural strands of Victoria's public reception will be examined throughout the dissertation.

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Chapter One
Victoria: A Female Monarch in Precarious Times

The role of Victoria as a paradoxical figure will be discussed in relation to the nineteenth-century bourgeois feminine ideal to understand to what extent Victoria used her "motherliness" and femininity to appeal to the people of Britain and reduce the risk of revolution in a seemingly precarious time. This chapter examines Victoria's role as a royal figure reflecting cultural and gender values and her influence on the position of the British monarchy against the particular backdrop of the threat of revolution. A further objective of this chapter is to outline some of the historical events which signalled the possibility of revolution in Britain, and thereby highlighted the precarity of the British monarchical system in the Age of Revolution, which was clear even though Britain did not experience overt revolution, but rather *reform*.

In recent years, the historical narrative of the precarity associated with the British monarchy has seemingly faded from public view; though that is not to say that Britain's monarchical situation during the Age of Revolution should not be defined as *precarious*. The term "precarious" in relation to the Age of Revolution might be most associated with France and the French Revolutions, rather than Britain and the British monarchy. One possible reason for this is that historiography has largely downplayed the precarity of the British monarchy in the Age of Revolution (historians such as Thomis (1977) prefer to describe nineteenth-century Britain as reformatory as opposed to revolutionary), since Britain did not experience a distinct revolution. By contrast, revolutionary action occurred in France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italian Peninsula, the Russian Empire, Belgium, Switzerland, and some German states (Ferrillo, 2019).

Although it did not come to revolution in Britain, revolution was considered likely. Before the 1850s the general sentiment was that Britain was somehow different from Europe; in the words of historian Edward Royle "Revolutions were how 'foreigners' conducted their political affairs. In Britain things were managed better" (Royle, 2000, p. 1).

The assumption that Britain was self-consciously different in its management of political unrest presented Britain as politically superior in its treatment of revolutionary action. Britain did not experience a precise revolutionary movement, however there was an *idea* of revolution, which tended to focus on the issue of parliamentary reform (Thomis, 1977, p. 1). This *idea* of revolution drew inspiration from the American, French and European revolutions (Thomis, 1977, p. 1). It was the influence of the French and American revolutions which encouraged a wave of political unrest throughout Britain - a wave of political unrest that has often been defined by liberal contemporaries as either "reform" or "amendment" (Royle, 2000, p. 1) and by conservative contemporaries as actions of revolutionary threat. The terms "reform" and "amendment" (Royle, 2000, p. 1) downplay the significance of revolutionary thought in Britain during the Age of Revolution, allowing the historical narrative of the political precarity of the British monarchy to slowly fade from public memory. Examples of social unrest and reform in nineteenth-century Britain, such as the Peterloo Massacre, the Newport Rising, Chartism and bourgeois enfranchisement, function as a reminder that although Britain avoided revolution, political uprising coupled with the fear of revolution placed the British monarchy in a precarious situation, albeit for a short while.

The early stages of reform in nineteenth-century Britain were largely influenced by class-related struggles and can therefore be categorised as either working class or bourgeois movements; although both the working and bourgeois classes shared a common goal in that they both demanded reform, the reform which both groups demanded was quite different. Bourgeois classes sought greater political representation and ultimately greater political power; this has been evidenced by their demand for bourgeois enfranchisement (Royle, 2000, pp. 67 – 79,). By contrast, the main reformatory objective of the working classes was centred on economic issues: the working classes wanted economic power and improved living conditions. Working class communities were hardest hit by the industrial revolution; the creation of machine manufacturing, and the use of new energy sources such as coal and the steam engine enabled industrial expansion and allowed for the development of large

industrial factories (Royle, 2000, p. 94). Industrial expansion was not advantageous for everyone involved, though. Working class people were often forced to live in overcrowded housing with poor sanitation. Terrible working conditions, coupled with a lack of political power, angered working class communities. As resentment intensified, the *idea* of revolution and reform became ever more prominent amongst people of the working classes.

Unrest clearly signalled strong discontentment coupled with the hope of realising demands which focused on the workers' economic situation and on reducing their political disenfranchisement. The year 1819 was marked by the Peterloo Massacre in England: a largely working-class display of unrest in which working class individuals took to the streets to show that they sought a remedy for their economic discontent. Workers were primarily driven by economic hardship. (Thomis, 1977, p. 65). In addition to the economic discontent, one of the key demands of the Peterloo demonstrators focused on enfranchisement. In response to the bloody massacre at Peterloo the repression increased: the Six Acts, introduced in December 1819, made every meeting for radical reform an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against the king and his government (Burke, 1819, pp. 128 – 129). Despite the implementation of the Six Acts, reformatory action continued. Economic disparity became even more of an issue in the 1830s for the working classes as earning power fell and bread prices rose. Ensuing economic unrest, coupled with an influx of immigration from Ireland during the Irish famine years, renewed a sense of bitterness amongst the working classes (Royle, 2000, pp. 95 - 96). Employment for many proletariat workers was uncertain in the 1830s; rates of pay were fixed by the price of producing a piece of cloth on the power loom, rather than any consideration of how long it took the workers to produce the piece (Royle, 2000, p. 96). As a result, a number of workers began to campaign for shorter working hours. Many workers were also angered by their lack of political representation and in the year 1831, the anger felt by many workers fuelled the Bristol Riots.

The Bristol riots were significant in their contribution to the consideration that nineteenth-century Britain was in a politically precarious situation. Occurring directly after

the rejection of the Reform Act, the main objective of the Bristol Riots was to demonstrate the extent of the working classes' discontent regarding their lack of political representation. Across three consecutive days in October, those involved released prisoners from the Bristol gaols, looted and burned down houses and shops (Thompson, 2001, p. 81). Several were killed, and many were wounded in the terrible turn of events (Thompson, 2001, p. 81). The death and destruction at Bristol introduced widespread apprehension into political life, as the unrest was evidence of the power that the people might wield (Thomis, 1977, pp. 87 - 88). The power demonstrated by the people in the Bristol Riots and as a result of the Peterloo massacre illustrated the fear of the established classes regarding the threat of revolution. In an attempt to counteract such fear, the response of the government was to send in the army, an act of repression. Arguably, it was the resentment stemming from the political repression of the established classes which turned reformatory action into revolutionary threat; a display of action and unrest which exposed the potentially precarious situation of the British monarchy.

Although much of the reformatory unrest that placed the British monarchy in a precarious situation in the nineteenth century was wielded by the working classes, reformatory action was in no way limited to that class: bourgeois enfranchisement is a clear example of this. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, most bourgeois men were unable to vote in the early nineteenth century, and sought to manifest their discontent, publicly, through riot and protest. The public unrest demonstrated by both the bourgeois and working classes placed the British monarchy in a precarious position. Countless historians such as Kostantaras (2013), have sought to argue that the popularisation of reformatory thought in nineteenth-century Britain was inspired by revolutionary action in France, America, and Europe, and it was this revolutionary thought that made reformatory action possible in Britain.

The diffusion of revolutionary thought, and its ability to transcend national borders such as France, America and Europe can be approached from the perspective of the "*Histoire*

croisée" – a theory of historiography that foregrounds the interrelational entanglement of comparative and national histories to explain how ideas and national movements "cross" international borders (Kostantaras, 2013, p. 382). The *Histoire croisée* as a concept is useful to consider in relation to the British experience of the strong risk of revolution 1794 – 1850, since it assumes a history of interdependence accessible through an investigation of "process". Kostantaras (2013) discusses the conceptualisation of the *Histoire croisée* and its importance in the rise and spread of national movements during the Age of Revolutions, and explores how *Histoire croisée*, when extended to the field of nationalism studies, helps to illuminate a nation's character as a "relational construct" (Kostantaras, 2013, p. 386) which allows for the global and technical diffusion of people and ideas across different cultures.

The concept of the *Histoire croisée* offers an important explanation of how thought is capable of transcending cultural barriers; the interdependence of different countries is particularly important in that it enables the diffusion of revolutionary thought, and ideas and therefore has the potential to ignite the onset of revolutionary action, as was the case in Britain during the Age of Revolution. The French revolutions of 1789 and 1848 were particularly influential in that they encouraged reformatory action to occur in Britain. Resulting in the overthrow of King Louis-Philippe in February, the French revolution of 1848 unleashed a torrent of political backlash which swept across Europe and Latin America (Weyland, 2009, p. 392). *Histoire croisée* allows for a deeper understanding of the extent to which fear of revolutionary action was evidence in nineteenth-century British society, intensifying alongside increasing forms of social and political unrest emerging around the globe. King Louis-Philippe's particular situation, along with the violent protest and institutional changes that took place in many small states in Central and Eastern Europe, signalled that revolution posed an imminent and very serious threat to Britain and the constitutional monarchy (Weyland, 2009, p. 392). The fact that there was no overt revolution against the British constitutional monarchy should not therefore be read as suggesting that Britain did not experience social and political unrest. There was, indeed, a strong risk of revolution in Britain; the threat of revolution coupled with the idea of a weak

female monarch could indeed have threatened the sustainability of the British monarchy. In order to minimise the risk of revolution in Britain, Victoria and Albert used royal iconography to adhere to cultural ideals of femininity and masculinity, as will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

Histoire croisée can also be extended to the ways in which cultural values and practices can be transferred through national identity. Bourgeois ideas of femininity and masculinity are constructed social ideals also capable of transcending physical borders of space and time. Thus, the nineteenth-century bourgeois feminine ideal and notions of British chivalry should be considered as social constructs; capable of both change and cultural transference. As a female monarch, Victoria became a paradoxical figure of national, cultural and gender values, choosing to adhere to the cultural values of the time in order to dispel some of the backlash associated with public anxieties against her portrayal as a female and foreign monarch in a precarious time. At the same time, key differences associated with German notions of chivalry and British chivalry will be explored in greater detail in relation to Prince Albert's portrayal as a British Knight, especially with regard to the intersectionality of Albert's Germanness and chivalrous values played a role in his public reception.

The intersectionality associated with Victoria's public reception as a female and foreign ruler with a German husband could have contributed to her identity as an *outsider* and inspired public anxieties against female and foreign rule. An important story illustrating how Victoria's reign both inspired and alarmed the British public due to the intersectionality of her gender and foreignness can be found in an extract taken from novelist H.G. Wells' description of his mother's early years at a small private school. On the one hand, Wells's extract exemplifies the anti-matriarch sentiment in nineteenth-century Britain. Wells expresses how a movement emerged against Victoria on account of her being a woman: "There was a movement against the young lady based on her sex and this had provoked in reaction a wave of feminine partisanship throughout the country" (cited in Thompson, 2001, p. 27). On the other hand, Wells's description of Victoria's accession to the throne indicates

that “among schoolmistresses and such like women there was a stir of emancipation associated with the claim, ultimately successful of the princess Victoria to succeed King William IV.” (cited in Thompson, 2001, p. 27) In addition to the “stir of emancipation”, Wells references the “strong flavour of early feminism” (cited in Thompson, 2001, p. 27) which he believes had been provoked by the certainty that Princess Victoria would succeed King William IV as a female, constitutional monarch.

Wells’s assumption that a “wave of feminine partisanship” had manifested itself as a reaction to the movement against Victoria on the basis of her sex points to the public anxieties associated with the perceived threat of a female, constitutional monarch in nineteenth-century Britain. Although the narrative of a movement against Victoria based on her sex has not been widely discussed it is clear from Wells’s description of his mother’s early education that the image of Victoria as a female ruler of a constitutional monarchical system, a system which had arguably been designed for a male monarch and female consort, inspired a sentiment of early emancipation to arise amongst women of the bourgeois classes. Wells outlines how specifically among “schoolmistresses and such like women” (cited in Thompson, 2001, p. 27) a strong flavour of early feminism had coloured the minds of young, bourgeois women, perhaps encouraging them to regard Victoria as a role model of sorts. Victoria’s public reception as a figure of national and cultural values and the ways in which she framed her own public image according to such cultural values were designed to influence the attitudes of her subjects and contributed to the shaping of her public image.

Wells’s description of the early feminism which he feels Victoria’s accession to the throne planted in his mother’s mind, presents the female monarch as a positive, emancipating, symbol of nineteenth-century society. Contrastingly, a popular, anonymous street ballad from the year 1841 illustrates the anxieties attached to female rule in Britain. Wells’s text suggests that Victoria’s accession to the throne caused a sense of emancipation to arise amongst bourgeois women, therefore confirming the anxieties expressed in the 1841 ballad. It demonstrates that the prospect of a female, constitutional monarch was indeed

problematic in nineteenth-century Britain, since it represented an upside-down world; a world in which women can become powerful, influential figures. There was an assumption that a female figure in a position of constitutional power could threaten nineteenth-century feminine ideals.

> "Since the Queen did herself for a husband 'propose,'
> The ladies will all do the same, I suppose,
> Their days of subservience now will be past,
> For all will 'speak first' as they always did last!
> Since the Queen has no equal, 'obey' none she need,
> So of course at the alter from such vow she's freed;
> And the women will all follow suit, so they say –
> 'Love, honour' they'll promise, but never – 'obey,"
> (Street ballad (1841) cited in Homans)

Victoria has been presented yet again as an influential figure to bourgeois women yet threatening to men and patriarchy. In comparison with Wells's description, however, the street ballad presents Victoria's emancipating influence in a negative light. The tone of the ballad mocks the subject of emancipated women and their decision to "never obey"; the idea that women are actively disobeying their husbands provides a direct contrast to the expectations associated with the nineteenth-century feminine ideal according to which women were expected to remain subservient and subordinate. The ballad exemplifies the wrongness of women "speaking first" and choosing not to "obey", implying it was unnatural for women to want to disobey their husbands. Upon further analysis of this street ballad the innate fear of the wider social issues associated with female emancipation become apparent. If bourgeois women were to "follow suit" and perceive Victoria as a seemingly "emancipated" woman, this could have threatened the bourgeois family structure, which would have negatively impacted bourgeois enfranchisement and more specifically bourgeois men's claim for greater power. As Chapter Two will outline, bourgeois women's acceptance of their social

position in nineteenth-century Britain and Germany was necessary to ensure that bourgeois men could thrive in the increasingly capitalistic, competitive nineteenth-century bourgeois society. If women were given a seemingly "emancipated" role model to aspire to, such as that of Victoria, this could have led to calls for greater enfranchisement and further social unrest amongst women, which would have been highly problematic for the ruler of a constitutional monarchy at a time when women had no political representation. Like many female monarchs attempting to prove themselves worthy in a system which had been designed, predominantly, for a male king and queen consort, Victoria required a coping strategy which would allow her to present herself as the ideal mother, woman, and wife, whilst also appearing as a successful constitutional monarch. The use of photography and royal portraiture enabled Victoria to construct an image of herself as the maternal monarch and thereby gain the approval of her bourgeois subjects and prove herself to be a capable leader in a period of precarity.

Although Salic Law was non-existent in Britain, the constitutional monarchy had for the most part been designed for a male king and queen consort; the way in which succession occurred exemplifies how male rulers were favoured by the system. Dube (2020) explores the extent to which states experience more peace and less war under female leadership. In her discussion Dube (2020) outlines how the order of succession in Britain favoured male rulers, since older male children of reigning monarchs were given priority (Dube, p. 2581). Since male monarchs were seemingly preferable to the system, the idea of a female monarch posed a certain degree of anxiety. Dube's research (2020, p. 2629) concludes that although the common perspective suggests that women are less violent than men, this does not necessarily mean that states experience less war and more peace under female leadership. Differences could be seen among married and unmarried female monarchs in the context of war; unmarried queens were attacked more than kings, whereas married female monarchs were more likely to become attackers themselves. Dube (2020, p. 2629) concludes that unmarried queens were more generally perceived as weaker and so an attack on an unmarried queen was more likely than an attack on a married queen who had a spouse to

help her rule. Dube's (2020) argument is useful in that it explores how unmarried queens were perceived as politically "weaker" than married queens, though it is not unproblematic - there would have been many other relevant historical factors, not necessarily gender-related, which would have contributed to whether war was experienced in a specific time frame. The idea that there was a distinct difference between the public reception of a married monarch and an unmarried monarch, however, is useful in analysing Victoria's situation. Victoria had many roles to fulfil as mother, wife, woman, and monarch; if unmarried queens were perceived as weaker than married queens, it is no surprise that Victoria utilised her public perception as mother of the nation, and maternal monarch to construct a sustainable monarchy in nineteenth-century Britain. In a period of political precarity, it was essential that Victoria appeared as an enduring and capable ruler.

In addition to the anxieties associated with a female monarch's weaknesses, the gendered power of the English language was particularly influential in that it barred the way for understanding female rule in the context of kingship (Beem, 2004, p. 460). The terms "king" and "queen" have been considered as gender specific; "queen" is often associated with the female gender while the term "king" symbolises a male ruler. Etymologically "queen" derives from Norse "kvaena" meaning wife and woman; still in modern Swedish "kvinna" means woman.[1] Each gender-specific role is also assigned a distinct set of social and political functions (Beem, 2004, p. 460). The idea that the role of "king" and "queen" suggested different social and political functions appeared disadvantageous towards women. Women were considered to have been socially inferior; for much of the nineteenth century, women lacked political and educational rights, in this way a female monarch posed a challenge to the pre-defined feminine ideal in addition to the pre-regulated gender-specific functions of a male and female monarch.

[1] See: *queen | Origin and meaning of queen by Online Etymology Dictionary (etymonline.com)* For etymology of Sweidh "kvinna" see: *Kvinna etymology in Swedish | Etymologeek.com*

The anti-matriarch sentiment against female rulers, founded upon the assumption of separate roles for men and women, can be traced back to the anxieties associated with Mary Tudor's accession to the throne of England in 1553. John Knox, the Protestant Reformer is reported to have stated that women were incapable of effective rule since "nature…doth paint them forth to be weak, frail, impatient, feeble, and foolish" (cited in Dube, 2020, p. 2586). The image of women as "weak, frail…foolish" reinforces the influence of the feminine ideal and the essentialist suggestion that men and women were made for different roles. Gender-imposed differences assumed that the divine feminine was "weak" and "frail" and thus lacking the strength required to become a constitutional monarch, especially when compared with the divine masculine which was stereotypically strong, and capable of leading. Queen Elizabeth I deliberately played on ideas of femininity and masculinity in a speech that she delivered to her troops (shortly before the defeat of the Spanish Armada in July 1588) in order to defend her strength as a female leader: "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too"(Elizabeth I, 1588). Elizabeth I's speech clearly epitomizes the public anxieties and differing expectations for a female ruler.

The extent to which such gender expectations could be perceived as limiting factors in the successful accession of female monarchs has been further demonstrated by the fact that male monarchs were typically also trained as military commanders; female monarchs, however, were excluded from this role (Dube, 2020, p. 2586). A female monarch's exclusion from military command (even though Victoria was still nominally in command) suggested that female monarchs were unequipped to lead their armies into battle which could have been problematic in times of war. Thus, the idealistic image of the divine feminine as "weak, frail, impatient, feeble and foolish" as suggested by Protestant reformer John Knox, highlights how the gender-specific functions of male and female monarchs, founded upon essentialist differences, influenced the monarchical system which assumed a male king and queen consort. The notion that a female monarch lacked strength and leadership was a particularly sharp anxiety relating to female rule in a period of political precarity. Revolution

in Europe signalled revolution in Britain and so Britain required a strong, capable leader to navigate this political precarity. Reverting to Victoria's controversial phrase "I will be good" (cited in Oliphant, 1880, p. 5), upon recollection of this memory, Victoria had written "I cried much on hearing it", in the margin of this narrative many years later. Young Victoria's dedication and commitment to lead England as a future "good" queen suggests that she believed she had the required strength to lead Britain as a capable, female leader, thus implying that she was strong enough to lead the British monarchy during a time of great uncertainty and precariousness.

The threat of revolution and reform posed a threat to Victoria's public persona as a "good" and well-respected queen. The extent to which revolution in Britain could be perceived as one of Victoria's greatest challenges as a monarch becomes apparent upon analysis of Victoria's letter correspondence with her uncle (in many ways a father figure), Leopold, King of the Belgians. King Leopold was the second ruler of the people after Napoleon, Emperor of the French. His role as king of the Belgian "people" as opposed to king of the country highlights in many ways his suitability to advise on royal matters from the perspective of a king who does not necessarily believe in the divine right of the monarch, and illustrates how he represented, to some extent, a post-revolutionary monarch. As a constitutional monarch, Leopold was able to advise Victoria on how to show impartiality as a monarch. Victoria internalised Leopold's attitude to party politics and learned to become separate from and above such politics.

A common theme in Leopold's letters to Victoria is the threat of revolution both on the European continent and in Britain. In their early correspondence, King Leopold outlines how important it is for Victoria to learn about what eventually prepared the ground for the French Revolution of 1789 to prevent the same from happening in Britain in the future. "What I most should recommend is the period before the accession of Henry IV of France to the throne, then the events after his death till the end of the minority of Louis XVI."(Laeken 21st May (1833). Murray, 1907, vol. 1, pp. 37 – 38)

Leopold emphasises that the failure on Victoria's part to acknowledge the historical problems of revolutionary France could signify her lack of preparedness for her role as monarch and could thus cause her to become the victim of "wicked and designing people" (Murray, 1907, vol. 1, p. 38). Leopold's analysis that Louis XVI's case could be applicable to the "present times" (Murray, 1907, vol. 1, p. 38) highlights that in a period of political unrest, Victoria should do her utmost to gain the approval of her people, so as not to become the victim of "wicked and designing people" and to ensure the sustainability of the British monarchy.

Four years after King Leopold's initial letter regarding revolutionary threat, he wrote to Victoria to warn her of the threat of revolution resulting from the affairs of Spain and Portugal. Verbal violence had been occurring in parliament between Joseph Hume (leader of the Radical Wing and M.P. for Middlesex) and Sir Robert Peel and the Tories. Leopold's description of the crown as "more or less the loser in all this" (Murray, 1907, vol. 2, pp. 60 – 61) is particularly striking. The expression that the crown was somehow losing metaphorically suggests that political problems in the House of Parliament, coupled with the onset of revolution in Europe in 1830 - particularly in France, Spain and Portugal - signalled that revolution in Europe posed a serious threat to the British crown and constitutional monarchy. As Queen, it was Victoria's responsibility to ensure that it did not come to revolutionary victory in Britain.

Upon Victoria's accession to the throne, her Uncle Leopold sent her a letter to congratulate and advise her on her role as constitutional monarch. Many of the letters between Victoria and Leopold highlight their admiration for one another. Leopold seems to have been a father figure for Victoria, since her own father died during her early infancy. Leopold states that Victoria's "spirit in all these trying proceedings" makes him "happy beyond expression" (Murray, 1907, vol. 1, p. 87). Not only does his letter to Victoria illustrate his immense sense of pride as a caring uncle but it also outlines the extent to which Leopold attempted to advise his niece on political and regal matters. The most important

characteristics of a Queen regnant, in his view, are "courage", "honesty" and "discretion" (Murray, 1907, vol. 1, p. 87). It is interesting that the qualities of courage, honesty and discretion do not directly contradict the expectations associated of the feminine ideal. "Honesty" and "discretion" – though not courage, as I discuss below - are characteristics that could easily be associated with the feminine ideal, since nineteenth-century women were expected to be good, "honest" and almost celestial by nature, but not courageous.

> (Laeken, 24th July, 1837, The King of the Belgians to Queen Victoria) (…) Believe me with *courage* and *honesty,* you will get on beautifully and successfully. The firmness you displayed at the beginning of your reign will be for your quiet of the utmost importance. People must come to the opinion *it is of no use intriguing, because when her mind is once made up, and she thinks a thing right,* no earthly power will make her change. (Murray, 1907, vol. 1, p. 87)

The suggestion that Victoria must remain firm in all her endeavours contrasts with Victoria's role as a female figure. Particularly the phrase: "when her mind is made up, and she thinks a thing right, no earthly power will make her change" may be perceived as contradictory or paradoxical. The nineteenth-century bourgeois feminine ideal presented women as subordinate and submissive. Leopold's suggestion that as a Queen regnant, Victoria must remain firm and courageous contrasts with the expectations associated with the nineteenth-century feminine ideal. It was not expected that the nineteenth-century woman should remain stubborn and decisive. As a female constitutional monarch in a system that favoured male monarchs, Victoria required a strategy to cope with her public representation as a living paradox. In this way, Victoria used her motherhood and femininity to present herself as Mother of the Nation – similar to King Leopold's self-representation as King of the Belgians / King of the people – in order to present herself as a *relatable*, and to a certain extent maternal monarch. Though, a monarch still capable of making informed,

stubborn decisions – this was essential to the sustainability of monarchy in a precarious time.

In her self-representation as a maternal, honest and "good" female monarch, Victoria was partly responsible for disseminating the nineteenth-century feminine ideal and influential in reflecting it. Adrienne Munich (1987) discusses the idea that Victoria's perception of rule was "backwards" in the sense that Victoria ruled her nation as a "mother" and her household as a "monarch." Power relations in Victoria's household were "backwards", as a woman and wife, Victoria was inferior to Albert, yet as a ruling monarch first and foremost, she would always be Albert's superior. Victoria was caught up in a paradox of contradictions associated with the functions of a "mother" and a "monarch", and so Victoria crafted her public image in a way that represented her as the figure of a "maternal monarchy" (Munich, 1987, p. 265). There were, however, problems associated with the idea of the "maternal monarchy": Munich (1987, p. 265) describes the image of the "maternal monarchy" as "absurd" and "confusing" and suggests that a boundary in the cultural imagination is transgressed once the Queen's maternal role has been linked to the monarchical role. This "boundary of cultural imagination" described by Munich (1987, p. 265) focuses on the idea that the Queen's "maternal role" and "maternal body" belonged to the private sphere, while her "monarchical role" and "sovereign body" belonged to the public sphere. In this sense it would have been "absurd" and "confusing" for Victoria to have presented her "maternal body" and "maternal image" to the public sphere as opposed to the private (Munich, 1987, p. 265). On the other hand, the maternal image of Victoria could be perceived as a shrewd move on Victoria's part. It may have been that Victoria, herself, decided to construct her public image to highlight the maternal aspect of her personality. If she had adopted a more authoritarian approach to her role as monarch this would have contrasted greatly with the nineteenth-century expectations associated with her role as wife, mother and woman. This may be one of the reasons why her Uncle Leopold, advised her to remain "discreet" in her political endeavours. A nineteenth-century woman was not expected to be politically active in any way, yet Victoria had been faced with the task of ruling a

constitutional monarchy which would have required a certain degree of political activity. Her representation as “maternal monarch” (Munich, 1987, p. 265) helped to define her image and assuage anxieties surrounding female rule; the basis upon which said anxieties were founded will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two
The Nineteenth-Century Feminine Ideal in Britain and Germany

While Chapter One outlined the extent to which the political period in nineteenth-century Britain can be considered as precarious, this chapter will deal with the strand of Victoria's identity which encouraged her reception as a "maternal monarch", a strategy deployed to deflect the negative public response to her reception as a female ruler in a period of precarity. Since Victoria was both German and British, it is useful to consider both the British and German nineteenth-century ideas of femininity to determine the extent to which the conceptualisation of a cultural ideal differs according to the cultural environment in which it was constructed (although for the most part, British and German ideas of femininity share many similarities). Many aspects of the feminine ideal have been presented in comparable terms in both German and English romantic literary representations, such as the idealised representation of woman as nature, and woman as spiritually superior. In addition to the idealisation of the spiritually superior woman, the romanticisation of woman's domestic work has been both conveyed and internalised in *The Angel in the House* by Coventry Patmore, Goethe's *Faust II* and *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*.

The essentialist notions associated with the representation of woman as both "other" and "natural" became ever more prominent during the nineteenth-century call for bourgeois enfranchisement. Parallel to the bourgeois classes' increasing social influence and claim for power, the ideal of the woman as "other" and tied to a domestic sphere developed as a de facto solution to an emerging culture of bourgeois professional employment; if women were assigned a specific essential role, within a specific sphere separate from that of their husbands, women could support and aid the rise of the bourgeoisie. After the Industrial Revolution in Britain the idea of two separate spheres; the domestic and the public became ever more prominent, as both bourgeois professionals such as lawyers and civil servants and bourgeois entrepreneurs such as businessmen and industrialists worked outside of their

homes in offices and factories. The domestic sphere and the public sphere became increasingly separate, and the separation understood as gendered. Before the Industrial Revolution, work was combined with family life; most of the work took place in the domestic sphere and would have been carried out by all members of the family. The change from an agrarian handicraft economy to an economy dominated by industry and machine manufacturing resulted in changes to social ideals such as the feminine ideal. Women's work had existed alongside men's work (a joiner's wife keeping her husband's books, for example, or in rural contexts, the work of spinning, brewing, looking after animals and growing vegetables while men cultivated the fields), but it was erased as the bourgeois public sphere of commerce and work became separated from the domestic sphere (Frevert, 1989, p. 83). The delegation of separate spheres for men and women was not without its issues, though; nineteenth-century society in both Britain and Germany was increasingly capitalist and competitive, particularly for bourgeois men.[2] The domestic sphere as sanctuary became increasingly important in supporting men's rise in the bourgeois public sphere, and thus the bourgeoisie needed women to play their part in creating a nurturing domestic sphere as well as in training the next generation. As women's role became separate to that of a man, separate roles solidified into an increasingly polarized set of essentialized gender values (Frevert, 1989, p. 67). Since a woman's role was centred on domestic work and motherhood, the domestic investment provided by bourgeois women was a practical investment in raising patriotic sons and thereby assisting bourgeois men in their claim for greater enfranchisement and political power. For these reasons, women's essentialist role as home maker and caregiver was influential in the bourgeois classes rise to power. If women were assigned the responsibility of creating the perfect sanctuary for their male-counter parts they were simultaneously helping their husbands thrive in nineteenth-century society. It was

[2] The term Germany will be used throughout this thesis to refer to the collection of German speaking lands before German unification in 1871 and the politically integrated nation state of Germany thereafter. I acknowledge that it may be problematic to use the term "Germany" when speaking about *the* whole of the nineteenth century. However, since my work does not focus specifically on the German speaking lands such as Austria and Prussia the term "Germany" appears to be the best fit.

therefore necessary that women accepted the social position which had been bestowed upon them. Any kind of female uprising, or backlash could have damaged the social structure in question which arguably could have made bourgeois enfranchisement (a bourgeois reform movement) and Chartism (a largely working-class reform movement), in particular, ever more difficult. Women's active (and in some cases, radical) support for the Chartist movement demonstrates that women were, for the most part, accepting of their position in society, and the way that it had been drawn out based on the essentialist values of femininity (Chase, 2007, p. 28).

The fact that women were actively supportive of a movement which had previously sought to actively exclude them illustrates that women were arguably in favour of bourgeois male enfranchisement, despite having little to no political rights themselves. One possible reason for this may have been that there was suggestion that female suffrage would follow later, but only once bourgeois enfranchisement had been tackled and implemented. On the other hand, women's radical support for bourgeois enfranchisement can be perceived as evidence of women's acceptance of their social position; rather than staking their claim at greater political rights amongst the backdrop of Chartism and claims for bourgeois enfranchisement; many bourgeois women stood with their husbands, fathers and brothers and fought actively on their behalf. The question of political rights was not only affecting working class males (Chartism) and bourgeois males (bourgeois enfranchisement), but it had also begun to affect women. A radical example of women's support for the development of Chartism has been exemplified by the Elland Female Radical Association (FRA). The FRA was initially founded by Elizabeth Hanson, wife to the active Chartist leader Abram Hanson. Elizabeth initially became known for her active opposition to the passing of the Poor law Amendment Act in 1834; a legislation which appeared to cast women in the role of dependants on their husbands (Chase, 2007, p. 27). On 25th March, 1838 the FRA stated:

> It is our duty, both as wives and mothers, to form a Female Association, in order to give and receive instruction in political

> knowledge, and to co-operate with our husbands and sons in their great work of re-generation, (Ibid, 24th March 1838, cited in Chase, 2007, p.28).

The practical investment, offered exclusively by wives and mothers was one of the main focuses of the FRA's objectives. The fact that the speaker of the FRA emphasises their specific duty "as wives and mothers…" (Ibid, 24th March 1838, cited in Chase, 2007, p.28) illustrates the extent to which the feminine ideal was used as political strategy in women's early claim for rights and also reinforces the idea that women of the FRA, considered it their "duty" to co-operate with their husbands and sons. Although women were not actively seeking female suffrage during the Chartist movement, it was assumed that once male suffrage was won female suffrage would later follow (Chase, 2007). Analysis of her private correspondence shows that Victoria had expressed her disapproval of the women's rights movement, something which will be discussed in greater detail throughout this chapter in the context of essentialist notions of gender and particularly the nineteenth-century feminine ideal.

Essentialist masculine and feminine differences were philosophically underpinned in Aristotelian theories which were still in circulation in nineteenth-century Britain (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 25). Scientific assumptions founded on Aristotelian thought suggested that in the process of reproduction women provided passive material, whilst men provided the active form (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 25). Theories of reproduction did not recognise the ovum as an active principle until the year 1883; this discovery redefined a woman's importance in relation to procreation (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 25). Despite the discovery of woman's increased importance in relation to procreation, notions of a woman's essentialist difference positioned her and her existence in a different physical sphere to that of a man. As is to be examined later in this chapter, nineteenth-century English and German literature appears to present women as spiritually superior and thus capable of transcendent moral mobility, in this sense woman and her existence is often elevated spiritually to a higher sphere than that of her male

counterpart. Contrastingly, according to nineteenth-century bourgeois social structures, women were perceived to be unsuited to public life whether in politics, business or the professions and were therefore positioned in the private domestic sphere.

The idea that there were two separate social spheres for men and women in nineteenth-century Britain and Germany can be linked to nineteenth-century political changes such as bourgeois enfranchisement, Chartism and the enactment of the Reform Act in England. Politically speaking, the enactment of the Reform Act in England, 1832 defined a voter as a male person and thereby actively excluded women from electoral representation, as well as the physical, masculine political sphere. The Revolution of 1848 in Germany (started initially by the male bourgeoisie, in their appropriation of human rights) inspired women in their early claim for status and political rights to claim that they had the right to be considered as "human" in such rights (Sheehan, 1991, p. 658). The fact that women had previously been denied political acknowledgment such as this, combined with women's inability to vote in nineteenth-century Britain and Germany further evidences the extent to which women were systematically excluded from political rights. Similarly, the Reform Act in nineteenth-century England mirrors and highlights the entrenched patriarchal and essentialist values of nineteenth-century Britain through its active exclusion of women from electoral representation. Bourgeois social structures in both Britain and Germany had patriarchal roots and were built upon essentialist gender values. Bourgeois gender values placed a large amount of emphasis on patriarchy and the idea that men and women had separate, essentialist roles to fulfil. The delegation of two separate gender-specific spheres facilitated the rise of the bourgeoisie in both nineteenth-century Britain and Germany. If women were given the same rights as men, bourgeois enfranchisement and bourgeois males' claim for power may not have been possible. A woman's essentialist role as separate and different to that of her husband became a practical "solution" which enabled bourgeois males to stake a claim at greater rights, and greater political power in the increasingly capitalist British and German societies. Essentialism suggested that woman should operate primarily in the household, raising their sons to be patriots of the nation and providing a sanctuary for

men. In this way, a woman's essential role set the foundations of bourgeois society and allowed for greater political developments such as bourgeois enfranchisement.

Educational parallels should also be made here; women had been actively excluded from the political sphere by the Reform Act in England, but additionally, for centuries women had been denied access to education. It was not until the 1840s that the first schools for women and girls were founded in England and the 1850s in Germany.[3] Although some schools were founded in the 1850s, not all of them survived; examples of such schools include the *Hochschule für das Weibliche Geschlecht* which was originally founded by Emilie Wüstenfeld and forced to close in 1852 due to funding-related issues (Weedon, 2006, p. 47). Possible reasons for the failings of such schools could be that girls' education did not fulfil the specifications of what constituted as the "ideal woman" according to the nineteenth-century feminine ideal. Similar observations can be made regarding the early stages of higher education for women. Universities in Britain and Germany did not start to allow female students until the late nineteenth-century, early twentieth century. In Britain, London University became the first to allow female students in the year 1878; by the year 1895 30% of London University graduates were women and in 1889 the first female doctor Mary Scharlieb graduated from London University with an M.D (The Graphic, 1 June 1889). Scharlieb's case is interesting as she had previously obtained other qualifications from Madras Medical College (India) 1875 – 1878, but since female graduates were still unheard of in Britain in the year 1875 (when Scharlieb first started attending Madras medical College in India), she was forced to wait until 1889 to qualify with an MD in England (The Graphic, 1 June 1889). Meanwhile, Baden became the first German state to officially allow female

[3] See: *A History of Women's Education in the UK - Oxford Royale Academy (oxford-royale.com).* Prussia had already introduced eight years of elementary education for all boys and girls in the late eighteenth-century, which became widespread by 1820 and was fully established in 1830. This eight-year course of primary education was often referred to as the Volksschule and was not exclusively targeted at the upper and middle classes. The Volksschule only offered limited education. Meanwhile, the secondary schools which were founded in the 1840s in England and the 1850s in Germany offered more comprehensive schooling.

higher education; Freiburg and Heidelberg in Baden were therefore the first two universities to accept female students (T.K. and St. Pauli, 2020).

The reluctance of both the British and German governments to provide women with an adequate academic education in the nineteenth century was connected with the notion that woman's essentialist role was in the domestic sphere. A woman's essential role as wife, mother and domestic servant enabled men to succeed in the increasingly capitalist world of work. Indeed, if women had been given the same educational opportunities as men, women might have served as greater competition for men in the world of work and might not have been able to provide the perfect sanctuary for their husbands. The importance of woman's domestic role as a practical investment in the rise of bourgeois society has been reiterated in Fanny Lewald's journals. Fanny Lewald, a nineteenth-century German-Jewish novelist and early advocate for women's rights, illustrates how woman's essentialist, allotted role as a domesticated housewife was reproduced in nineteenth-century Germany. Writing in her journal, Lewald compares her life to that of her brother's, outlining that she feels as though her brother leads a much more respectable and purposeful life than her. "Ihr ganzes Dasein erschien mir vornehmer als das meine"(Moehrmann, 1978, p. 16) her journal entry, Lewald expresses her envy of her brothers who are receiving the very education that she covets "meine Brüder, welche ruhig in ihr Gymnasium gingen, ruhig ihrer Lektionen machten…" (Moehrmann, 1978, p. 16). Lewald highlights that her brother can go to school "in peace" and take his lessons "in peace" where she is left with last year's elementary textbooks and activities such as sewing and piano practice. The contrasts expressed by Fanny Lewald in her journal provide an insight into the ways in which masculine and feminine education differed in nineteenth-century Germany; even from an educational perspective, women were perceived as having essentialist differences.

The different strands of exclusion (educational and political) experienced by women did not, however, affect all women equally. The nineteenth-century feminine ideal in Britain and Germany was largely influenced by bourgeois ideology; according to which bourgeois

women were expected to transform the household into a “perfect sanctuary” for their male counterparts to help them cope with the competitiveness of the increasingly capitalistic society (Frevert, 1989, p. 65). The nineteenth-century feminine ideal can be perceived as a reflection of bourgeois gender values, which centred largely on domesticity and motherhood and linked to the development of bourgeois enfranchisement and Chartism. Defending the domestic aspects of the feminine ideal helped to justify women mobilising for Chartism; arguably this demonstrates that the feminine ideal both influenced and was influenced by the development of the Chartist movement and bourgeois enfranchisement (Chase, 2007, p. 44).

The nineteenth-century feminine ideal as a concept is shaped by bourgeois values; influenced by the Industrial Revolution, the domestic sphere and the public sphere became increasingly separate; leaving a domestic sphere which was disconnected from the realm of paid work. The distinct separation of the public and the private: paid work from domestic work placed bourgeois women at the centre of the household, but not at the head and men as the main breadwinners. In addition to the regulation of gender-specific spheres for men and women, bourgeois ideology suggested that women’s allotted role was to provide a safe-haven or sanctuary for their husbands or male-counterparts ensuring that their husbands were able to thrive in the competitive, capitalist public sphere (Frevert, 1989, p. 67). German historian, Frevert’s discussion of the Biedermeier period in Germany outlines the ways in which women were expected to create a perfect sanctuary for their husbands and children: “Middle class wives and daughters really were almost exclusively immersed in the household, making the family into what it was supposed to be: a site of well-ordered intimacy, where one could sit in contemplative peace and relax in complete comfort.” (Frevert, 1989, p. 67). In her discussion, Frevert refers specifically to “middle class wives and daughters” (Frevert, 1989, p. 67) and assigns them the role of creating a perfect sanctuary for their family members. The fact that Frevert has referred specifically to “middle class wives and daughters” reinforces the idea that the nineteenth-century feminine ideal in Britain and Germany was largely influenced by bourgeois ideology and the essentialist differences between man and woman.

Similar expectations can be said for the nineteenth-century feminine ideal in Victorian Britain. The ideal woman was emotional, dependant, and gentle. She was a born follower, while the ideal mother was expected to be strong, self-reliant, protective, and an efficient caretaker of home and husband (Decker, p. 11). An interesting point to make is that the "mother" and the "woman" are given different treatments; woman is expected to be dependant, gentle and emotional, whereas mother is expected to be strong, self-reliant, and protective (Decker, p. 11). Regarding the feminine ideal in Britain and Germany, the idea that the terms "mother" and "woman" encompassed different roles suggests a contrast that is not there in Germany; many German women's conduct books depict women and mothers as having similar roles. The characteristics associated with the 'ideal woman' and 'ideal mother' are distinctly different according to the nineteenth-century feminine ideal in Britain. The contrasting characteristics depicted by the terms "mother" and "woman" could be applied to Victoria and her role as mother, Queen, wife and woman. Each role carried a specific set of duties and expectations as Queen, it was expected that Victoria would be self-reliant and independent; as a mother Victoria was expected to be self-resilient and protective and as a wife she was to be submissive and gentle. The suggestion that mothers were expected to become "strong, self-reliant and protective" (Decker, p. 11) is a tension in the gender discourse. Women with such personality traits were deemed as "improper." Countless women's conduct books were created in nineteenth-century Britain and Germany detailing how women should behave to become good women, mothers and wives. An example of such a conduct book is *Woman as She Should Be* (*Die Frau comme il faut*), written by Natalie Bruck-Auffenberg, a nineteenth-century writer of German conservative conduct books for women. Bruck-Auffenberg accuses women of betraying the ideal of "true femininity". During late nineteenth-century Germany, the traditional notion of what constituted as "true femininity" was under threat by the discourses of the "new woman" and the "femme fatale". With this in mind, Bruck-Auffenberg's decision to use the bilingual title "Die Frau comme il faut" subtly references her identification of female emancipation as one of the main threats

to traditional notions of femininity, and one emerging from French culture, with her pointed decision to word: “as she should be” in French: “comme il faut”

> Doch wehe ihr, wenn sie den Schutzkreis von Milde, Ruhe, Korrektheit und Sanftmut selbst zerstört! Sie steht dann sofort, von natürlichen Feinden umgeben, schutzlos da. Der Mann wird sie verachten oder ihre Hilfslosigkeit ausnützen, die Tadellosen ihres Geschlechtes , nachsichtslos unbarmherzig im Ausschließen, werden jede kleinste Blöße bemerken und nicht wieder verzeihen. Die andern werden sie mit Schadenfreude zu sich herabschritten! Ein Wort, ein Hauch, und der Zauber ist zerstört wie ein Märchen. (Bruck-Auffenberg, 1912, p. 2)

Bruck-Auffenberg’s accusations regarding the betrayal of “true femininity” claim that women, who refuse to fulfil the expectations associated with the feminine ideal by destroying the “Schutzkreis von Milde, Ruhe, Korrektheit und Sanftmut” (Bruck-Auffenberg, 1912, p. 2), are capable of distorting the image of the “ideal woman”. Those that did not wish to adhere to the feminine ideals were often regarded as feminine failures or even outcasts. If we were to apply this ideology to Victoria’s particular situation as Queen, mother, wife and woman, the controversy regarding the differing gender expectations for women and mothers sheds light upon Victoria’s inner tensions as both a woman and a monarch. On the one hand, Victoria was a ruling monarch displaying traits of independence, decisiveness, and strength. On the other hand, she was responsible for disseminating the nineteenth-century feminine ideal through her public representation as a “middle class mother” and to a certain extent “mother of the nation” in nineteenth-century newspapers and portraiture. The tensions associated with her role as a monarch first and foremost and then a woman, mother, wife are evident in Victoria’s outward opposition to the Suffragette movement. As we learn from Victoria’s correspondence with her Uncle Leopold, Victoria as a ruling monarch wanted to preserve the constitutional monarchy. At a time when Europe was facing great political

unrest and numerous revolutions, the threat of revolution in Britain proved significant; Victoria's public response to the women's rights movement should be seen in the context of the revolutionary threat which flavoured Victoria's reign.

The Suffragist movement gained momentum in the 1830s and formed an important context for Victoria's reign. The year 1831 witnessed an increasing number of riots in England; these riots were initially fuelled by the discontent which arose among working class communities and industrial cities in Britain. Those involved in the 1831 riots sought to exploit the corruptness of the British electoral system, in the hope that industrial cities and towns would be given better electoral representation. These riots paved the way for the Representation of the People Act (1832) (also known as The Reform Act, 1832). Although the Representation of the People Act (1832) granted more electoral representation to citizens in industrial cities, small landowners, shopkeepers, and men who paid an annual rent of ten pounds or more, it explicitly excluded women from voting by defining a *voter* as a male person; for the most part poor, working class men were also excluded. The suffragist movement emerged in the face of such official exclusion of women from electoral representation and the first women's suffrage petition was presented on 3 August 1832 by Mary Smith, a spinster from Yorkshire. The movement for women's suffrage continued to gain momentum in England from the 1840s onwards and became recognised as a national movement in 1872. Victoria, however, strongly resisted the women's suffrage movement. Despite being a strong female ruler herself she openly revealed her anti-feminist standpoint in a letter depicting feminists as "the most hateful, heathen and disgusting beings." (Martin 1908: 69, as cited in Lassiter, p. 32)

> 1870: I am most anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of 'Women's Rights', with all its attendant horrors on which her poor, feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feelings and propriety, Feminists ought to get a good whipping. Were women to 'unsex' themselves by claiming equality with men, they would become the most hateful, heathen and

> disgusting of beings and would surely perish without protection.
>
> (Martin 1908: 69, as cited in Lassiter, p. 32)

It is quite clear from her letter that Victoria considered the mere idea that women were attempting to gain social equality highly offensive. Her depiction of women's rights as a "mad, wicked folly" emphasises Victoria's disgust for the movement and implies that the "Women's Rights" movement, according to Victoria, is comparable to an evil sin which requires great punishment, namely (to) "perish without protection." Victoria's comments here define her personal viewpoint regarding the women's suffrage movement; her viewpoint on this matter may have been affected by the fact that Victoria was a ruling monarch first and foremost. The paradoxical image of Victoria as Queen, wife and mother demonstrates how on the one hand she was the monarch of an institution she regarded as sacred and timeless and a symbol of national, cultural values (Hackett, 2001, p. 811). On the other hand, Victoria was a woman with a life story (Hackett, 2001, p. 811). Elevated on the throne, Victoria was positioned as a figure symbolic of both the human and the divine; a woman and a ruler. The paradoxical figure of Victoria as ruler first and foremost undoubtedly affected her outward political opinions. It is unsurprising that she was not keen on a new call for enfranchisement. Revolution in Europe signalled revolution in Britain; Leopold often comments on the threat of revolution in Britain and the ways in which Victoria should prevent revolution in his private correspondence with her. Victoria's public resistance to the "mad, wicked folly of 'Women's Rights" reflects her responsibility as a monarch to maintain and protect the constitutional monarchy, since any kind of political unrest such as female suffrage could have endangered the constitutional monarchy. In addition to the political unrest and uprisings, which a new call for enfranchisement might have caused, female suffrage, in particular, would have entailed the restructuring of the Houses of Parliament in order to include women. Similarly, the model of the constitutional monarchy, although it permitted women to rule, was designed for a male monarch and a Queen consort. As a paradoxical figure: monarch first and foremost and then wife, mother, woman, Victoria embodied national cultural values; it was her duty therefore to remain "discreet" in her political endeavours to gain the trust of her people.

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The use of photography and royal portraiture enabled Victoria to construct an image of herself as the maternal monarch and thereby gain the approval of her bourgeois subjects and prove herself to be a capable leader in a period of precarity. As a female monarch in a particularly precarious period, Victoria used portraiture and the emerging medium of photography to her advantage to frame her representation to appeal to the bourgeois classes. The deployment of royal iconography enabled Victoria to construct an identity for herself as a relatable Queen of the people. Great emphasis was placed on her role as mother and wife, therefore also alluding to her role as maternal monarch. The series of photographs below (Sources A, B, and C) emphasise how the gender roles of Victoria and Prince Albert reflect the nineteenth-century ideals of femininity and masculinity.

Source A[4]



Source B[5]



Source C[6]



Although the idea of a female monarch and male consort could be considered unconventional, Prince Albert and Victoria have been photographed in a way that highlights their traditional gender values. Sources A and B depict Victoria, standing behind her husband, whilst her husband appears to be reading a book. The image of Albert reading and thereby presumably consuming knowledge, could be a symbolic reference to the nineteenth-century, bourgeois, feminine ideal which suggested that knowledge and education were

[4] Source A: *Victoria and Albert, (1854)* accessed via: BBC - *Berkshire - History - Photos: Victoria and Albert*
[5] Source B: *Prince Albert reading as Queen Victoria stands with her husband,* (1859 – 1863), accessed via: *Queen Victoria photo album reveals enduring love for Prince Albert in his final days | Daily Mail Online*
[6] Source C: *Queen Victoria with her husband Prince Albert,* (circa. 1855), accessed via: *BBC - Berkshire - History - Photos: Victoria and Albert*

masculine enterprises. Sources A and B have therefore been staged to highlight how Victoria and Albert embodied masculine and feminine ideals and essentialist values. With a strong focus on masculinity and femininity, it is significant that despite being a strong, female ruler, Victoria remains in the background in sources A and B. Instead, we see Albert in the foreground reading a book, looking as though he is fulfilling a role of great importance. Victoria has only been brought to the forefront in the third photo (Source C), in which she is practicing needlework – a stereotypically feminine activity, according to the nineteenth-century feminine ideal. Using photography, Victoria was able to successfully manipulate her public image and present herself as a maternal monarch, capable of ruling at a precarious time whilst simultaneously presenting herself as a domesticated, wife and mother. Victoria's use of photography was successful because it helped build approval among her subjects who recognised her as similar to them, thus she appears as a dependable and relatable figure.

In addition to photographs highlighting Victoria's role as a bourgeois wife, various portraits were produced depicting her as a mother, thereby alluding to the constructed image of Victoria as maternal monarch. Source D (*The Royal Family in 1846* by Winterhalter), was initially criticised upon exhibition in 1847 as it was thought that Victoria had been illustrated to be lacking exuberance and showing too much flesh (Queen Victoria in her own words: A Queen's letters revealed). Another initial criticism of the painting was that Albert is centre stage in the portrait (Queen Victoria in her own words: A Queen's letters revealed). Once again, Albert is in the foreground of the painting. Victoria is wearing a white dress, symbolic of purity, innocence, and faith. Surrounded by her children, who are also clothed in white, Victoria's constructed image illustrates a Victoria that is maternal, angelic, and pure.

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Source D[7]



The constructed image of Victoria exudes femininity and motherliness. It is also significant that Victoria is clothed in a similar dress to her children. One possible reason for this could be to demonstrate the difference in social position of men and women in the nineteenth century. Women were socially perceived as having similar social status to their children, meanwhile men were considered as the superior sex. The soft white colour of the dresses worn by Victoria and her daughters contrasts starkly with the red robe worn by Victoria's first-born son, Prince Albert Edward, and Prince Albert's black outfit, the white provides a neutral background to the black and red, thereby foregrounding Albert and Albert Edward in the composition. Contrasting black and white colours (black for Albert and white for Victoria) highlight their masculine and feminine differences. The nineteenth-century feminine ideal suggested that essentialist masculine and feminine differences were important in the marital union of man and woman, since the union of the two "opposite" genders was crucial in achieving happiness and perfection. The notion that the masculine and the feminine complete each other and compensate for each other's weaknesses echoes nineteenth-century essentialist values.

Although Victoria was both affected by the feminine ideal and to a certain extent responsible for reproducing it in nineteenth-century Britain, since she was first and foremost a symbol of national values; the nineteenth-century feminine ideal has also been conveyed in

[7] Source D: Franz Xaver Winterhalter*: The Royal Family in 1846* (after Winterhalter) 1861. See: *Enrico Belli (active 1861-84) - The Royal Family in 1846 (after Winterhalter) (rct.uk)*

English and German literature. Although numerous illustrations of the nineteenth-century feminine ideal can be found in a range of English and German literary texts, this dissertation focuses on the portrayal of the feminine ideal by literary icons such as Coventry Patmore, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Lord Alfred Tennyson and John Ruskin. These four literary sources have their differences, yet they each present different aspects of the nineteenth-century feminine ideal in contrasting but complementary ways. In the long narrative poem, *The Angel in the House,* Patmore focuses on the celestial aspect of the "ideal woman" comparing her to an angel. Similarly, Goethe presents the concept of "das ewig Weibliche" (Goethe, 2020, p. 219) (the eternal feminine) and thereby positions woman in the supernatural, eternal place. The natural, eternal woman is elevated to a spiritual place, transcending the physical realm; her supernatural persona positions her outside of the physical realm. Goethe's suggestion that femininity is both eternal and divine can be applied to Victoria's public reception as symbolic of both human and the divine. Victoria's physically elevated position on the throne reproduces and reflects her divine qualities. Meanwhile, Ruskin's literary depiction of the feminine ideal offers a more practical approach to femininity. In his discussion of masculine and feminine differences, Ruskin explores how the masculine and the feminine are different yet complementary.

The long narrative poem *the Angel in the House* by Coventry Patmore was first published in 1854 and was written from the perspective of a Victorian husband. Couched in celestial imagery, the main focus of *the Angel in the House* is based on woman's role as spiritually superior to man; the nineteenth-century "ideal woman" was expected to be inferior in the public sphere, yet spiritually superior. The title *the Angel in the House* is being used here as a metaphor to depict the woman as a supernatural, celestial being. This would suggest that women in Victorian Britain were expected to be pure and angelic beings. In addition, the role of an angel in Christianity is to bring one closer to God, since Christian angels are messengers of God. In this way it appears as though Coventry Patmore is highlighting women's spirituality to emphasise that one of her roles in Victorian Britain was to bring her husband closer to God. Woman's angelic depiction is evident in the following verse: "Anne lived so truly

from above, she was so gentle and so good." (Patmore, 1891, p. 27). This extract of the poem was called: "Love and Duty", thus it is evident that the persona believed that the duty of the woman was to be "gentle", "good", and angelic. Each of these stereotypically feminine characteristics helped reproduce the image of the woman as spiritually divine, existing in a spiritually superior sphere. Parallels can be drawn here with the advice given by Victoria's Uncle Leopold, Leopold guided Victoria to her separateness as a monarch – suggesting that Victoria was not only elevated and set apart from party politics but also elevated and set apart from her people.

The representation of woman as spiritually superior has also been conveyed in German literature: an example of this is the representation of "das ewig Weibliche" in Goethe's *Faust II* (2020, p. 219). The nineteenth-century feminine ideal expected women to be wives, mothers and moral guardians of men (Oppel, 2005, p. 17). Such an expectation is reiterated in the depiction of das "ewig Weibliche" in Goethe's *Faust II*: "Das ewig Weibliche zieht uns hinan." (2020, p. 219) Goethe suggests that the "ewig Weibliche" (eternal woman) draws us upward, upward to a spiritual place such as heaven; thus giving the character the ideal of transcendent mobility (Grundlehrer, p. 152. As cited in Oppel, 2005, p. 17). The idea that woman functions as moral inspiration and redeemer was founded on the assumption that in Christianity woman was taken from the rib of God's creation Adam, thus woman is spiritually closer to God than man. Woman is therefore capable of offering man salvation and redemption since she is spiritually closer to God. In relation to Eve and original sin in Genesis 3, Eve, tempted by the serpent, ate the forbidden fruit in her pursuit for greater wisdom:

> And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat. (King James, 2000, p. 3, Genesis 3)

Eve's decision to eat the forbidden fruit in exchange for greater wisdom has been the centre of religious debate surrounding masculine and female inequalities according to

Christianity. After eating the fruit God orders that as punishment woman will be controlled by man: “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” (King James, 2000, p.3, Genesis 3). Woman’s subordination to male domination, as depicted by Eve in Genesis 3, offers a counterargument to the consideration that woman is spiritually superior to man. As recounted in Genesis 3, man is expected to rule over woman as woman is fundamentally more sinful than man due to her decision to eat the forbidden fruit first. From this analysis one can infer that man and woman are spiritually different, Genesis 3 suggests that woman is spiritually more immoral than man, whilst literary representations such as Goethe’s Faust present woman as spiritually superior to man; woman was made from the rib of God and is therefore capable of offering male salvation (Oppel, 2005, p. 17). Both representations point to the conflicted understanding of the feminine: on the one hand woman is elevated to a spiritually superior position, on the other hand woman is degraded as a threat of sin.

Coventry Patmore emphasises the pre-conceived idea in nineteenth-century Britain of separate spheres for men and women in his poem *The Angel in the House*. Patmore’s literary representation of the bourgeois feminine ideal both reflects and reproduces the feminine ideal. Literary analysis of the feminine ideal allows one to comprehend the ways in which an ideal was perceived, culturally, according to the author of the literary piece. On the other hand, popular literary works such as *The Angel in the House* demonstrate how the image of the feminine ideal in popular literature came to influence the representation of the feminine ideal in society, as evidenced by the adoption of the phrase “the Angel in the House” meaning the “perfect housewife” in nineteenth-century Britain (Kühl, n.d, p. 171). Patmore’s poem is therefore accountable for both reflecting and reproducing the nineteenth-century bourgeois feminine ideal.

> Yet it is now my chosen task to sing her worth as maid and wife; nor
> happier post than this I ask, to live her laureate all my life. On wings of

> love uplifted free, and by her gentleness made great, I'll teach how noble man should be, to match with such a lovely mate, (…) (Patmore, 1891, p. 25)

Domesticity takes precedence here, as the main sphere in which women were expected to exist; the widely held belief that women were to remain confined to the household is reiterated in the verse: "it is now my task to sing her worth as maid and wife." Here, the persona is outlining that it is his role as *husband* to set the domestic boundaries for his wife. A further example of this transformation of women's domestic work as something idealised and spiritually superior can be found in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*:

> Mit der rechten Hand dreht sie die Scheibe und langt aus, so weit und so hoch sie nur reichen kann, wodurch schöne Bewegungen entstehen und eine schlanke Gestalt sich durch zierliche Wendung des Körpers und runde Fülle der Arme gar vorteilhaft auszeichnet; die Richtung besonders der letzten Spinnweise gewährt einen sehr malerischen Kontrast, so daß unsere schönsten Damen an wahrem Reiz und Anmut zu verlieren nicht fürchten dürften, wenn sie einmal anstatt der Gitarre des Spinnrad handhaben wollten. (Goethe, 1982, p. 347) (Goethe, Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre, 1982)

Goethe clearly highlights the ways in which a woman's domestic work was idealised and made to seem graceful, beautiful, and natural. Woman as nature is a recurrent theme in nineteenth-century British and German literature. For the most part the feminine ideal reproduces the idea that the balance of the masculine and the feminine is essential, in the same way that the balance of the two separate spheres; the domestic, feminine sphere and the public, masculine sphere was crucial to the success of nineteenth-century society. It was a woman's

duty to provide a place of refuge for her husband, away from the tough, competitive, increasingly capitalist society.

Although woman was limited to the domestic sphere, and excluded from the social and political sphere, her domestic work was idealised. In such a way, the nineteenth-century woman, who reflected the feminine ideal was uplifted as a superior, celestial being. Only women who displayed characteristics of subservience, submissiveness and gentleness fulfilled the feminine norms and values associated with the concept of "true femininity" (Cocalis and Goodman, 1982). Very similar viewpoints have also been expressed in Goethe's *Willhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795). The character, Lothario, suggests that women and men belong in two opposing spheres:

> Dass man es dem Manne verargt, der eine frau an die höchste Stelle setzen will, die sie einzunehmen fähig ist; und welche ist höher als das Regiment des Hauses? Wenn der Mann sich mit äußern Verhältnissen quält, [...] überall von Umständen abhängt, und ich möchte sagen, nichts regiert, indem er zu regieren glaubt. (Cited in Oergel, 2006, p. 210)

Lothario's discussion of masculine and feminine roles explores how man centres woman in her domestic role, since domesticity is the "höchste Stelle..., die sie einzunehmen fähig ist." (Cited in Oergel, 2006, p. 210). Domesticity and woman's role within the domestic sphere are idealised here – but the domestic sphere is also the limit of a woman's potential.

The idea that women and men exist in separate, yet complementary spheres has been reiterated in a similar way by John Ruskin in *Sesame and Lillies*... 1865. "Of Queen's Gardens" was originally given as a lecture before it was published as two essays in *Sesame and Lillies*.

Ruskin epitomises the nineteenth-century feminine ideal in his narration of the innate differences between man and woman.

> We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the 'superiority' of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give. (Ruskin, 1865, p. 146)

Ruskin's comment reflects the widely held belief in Victorian Britain that men and women were different, but complementary – very far from being perceived as equal. Man and woman's distinct differences were on the one hand considered the source of gender inequality in the way that essentialist notions of masculinity and femininity confined men and women to different spheres. On the other hand, essentialist differences between man and woman also formed the basis of women's early claims for greater rights in Britain and Germany. Essentialist differences associated with what was considered traditionally "masculine" and what was stereotypically "feminine" were here viewed in a positive light, underpinning a claim for women's greater participation in society as mothers – and teachers – of the next generation. It was thought that the blending of man and woman was essential in achieving "happiness and perfection". The idea that men and women were physically separated by two existing spheres: the domestic and the public could have been perceived by Ruskin as a way of focusing on their male and female strengths; thereby complementing one another's strengths and compensating for one another's weaknesses.

Similar observations can be made upon analysis of the "Coming of Arthur" and "Guinevere" in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. In *the Coming of Arthur,* Arthur's voice exemplifies the consideration that the union between man and woman allows for the integration of two complementary aspects of human nature: the masculine and the feminine.

The monologue below allows the reader to engage with Arthur's thoughts on an emotional level; quite in line with nineteenth-century essentialist ideals, Arthur perceives marriage to represent the blending of not only two bodies but also two souls.

> "What happiness to reign a lonely king,
> Vext – O ye stars that shudder over me,
> O earth that soundest hollow under me,
> Vext with waste dreams? For saving I be join'd
> To her that is the fairest under heaven,
> I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
> And cannot will my will, nor work my work
> Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm
> Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,
> Then might we live together as one life,
> And reigning with one will in everything
> Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
> And power on this dead world to make it live (…)" (Tennyson, (1859)
> "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996)

Symbolic natural themes are introduced by Arthur's voice as complementary forces; the symbolism of the shuddering stars above contrasts with the hollowness of the earth below. Stars arguably represent the supernatural, out of reach, unexplored aspects of nature (to a certain extent, stars embody the heavenly, celestial space). Earth on the other hand symbolises grounding and growth; the idea that Arthur perceives the earth as "hollow" (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996) reflects Arthur's anxieties about his future role as a "lonely king". Arthur feels as though he has no identity as a "lonely king" (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996) as he describes himself as "nothing in the mighty world" (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996) his self-representation as "nothing" suggests that it is almost as if Arthur has no identity, his "true" identity can only be

sought through marriage and spiritual union with Guinevere. The extract ends with a focus on nature once more; contrasting themes of dark and light, death and life exemplify the masculine and the feminine as two opposing, yet complementary forces. The spiritual enlightenment which the blending of opposing forces (the masculine and the feminine, dark and light, death and life) could give Arthur, has been encapsulated by the phrase: "Have power on this dark land to lighten it, // And power on this dead world to make it live." (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996). Feminine qualities have been epitomised by the symbolic references to "light" and "life" here, thus positioning the woman and her essentialist feminine values in the supernatural, celestial sphere, and thereby presenting her as capable of offering male salvation. Parallels with "das ewig Weibliche" in Goethe's *Faust II* (2020) can be made here; Arthur's voice expresses how "as one life" he and Guinevere can use their complementary forces to "lighten" the "dark lands" and make the "dead world" "live" (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996). As with "das ewig Weibliche" in Goethe's *Faust II* (2020) the eternal, divine aspect of the feminine is elevated as spiritually superior to the masculine, since man seeks salvation through the feminine. Similar observations can be applied to Ruskin's argument that masculine and feminine differences complement one another.

Ruskin and Tennyson's analogy that men and women complete one another, since one sex has what the other does not has some echoes in Simone de Beauvoir's writing on the Platonic myth. The Platonic myth is more generally consumed as an explanation regarding love and soul mates. However, in Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* Beauvoir seeks to explain how the Platonic myth can be understood in the context of equality of the sexes. According to the Hebrew myth told of Genesis I Androgynes were mythological creatures consisting of half male, half female bodies: the female half was called Gune (Greek for woman) and the male half was called Andros (Greek for man). Each individual was made up of two 'beings' consisting of two heads, four arms, four legs and two bodies. These two bodies would one day be split in two and would spend the remainder of their days attempting to find their "other half". What remains unclear, however, is the time period in which the two beings become physically split. According to Greek mythologies of creation it is essential that male

must be distinguished from female before life can begin. This is reminiscent of Ruskin's argument that happiness and perfection is dependent upon the acknowledgment that men and women are different, yet complementary. As with the Androgynes, men and women are two, different, physical beings, but if they learn to accept that their differences ultimately translate as complementary strengths, they would one day achieve perfection.

In an attempt to conceptualise the term femininity, historians and sociologists alike have often sought to define it as a social construct. In the words of Simone de Beauvoir: "science considers characteristics as secondary reactions to a situation. If there is no such thing today as femininity, it is because there never was. Does the word woman then have no content?" (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 4), [8] In such a way, one could argue that the word femininity is in fact a kind of empty signifier, or one that encompasses a wide range of historically contingent gender norms and values. In relation to the nineteenth-century feminine ideal, certain cultural differences between Britain and Germany are evident; in the person of Victoria, British monarch with German heritage, these cultural nuances in gender discourse come to influence gender ideals in nineteenth-century Britain.

Poetry such as *The Angel in the House* by Coventry Patmore reflected public opinion regarding the nineteenth-century feminine ideal in Britain. On the other hand, the poem also participates in the construction and propagation of such an ideal with the term "the Angel in the House" in popular currency in Victorian Britain to describe a woman who allegedly adhered to the social expectations and ideals. Similar public viewpoints have been expressed in Goethe's *Willhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* and Goethe's *Faust II*, suggesting that German and British nineteenth-century feminine ideals had much in common. Both placed a great amount of emphasis on woman's domesticity and both British and German literary representations of the nineteenth-century feminine ideals are couched in celestial, supernatural, divine imagery. One small difference, however, can be seen in the gender expectations for women and mothers in nineteenth-century Britain. Mothers were expected to be self-reliant, independent, and

[8] Beauvoir, p.4

strong; yet such characteristics were more generally perceived as unfeminine. These somewhat conflicted expectations for mothers, wives and women were not as prominent for the German feminine ideal.

In relation to her role as wife, mother, and monarch, Victoria has been illustrated in nineteenth-century paintings and photographs as emblematic of the nineteenth-century feminine ideal. was able to construct an image of herself that adhered to the nineteenth-century feminine ideal and suited her need to present herself to the public as relatable and dependable. The idea suggested by Leopold that as Queen, Victoria should remain "discrete" and above party politics can be linked to the *Angel in the House* which suggested that women should be angelic and even celestial by nature. Winterhalter's depiction of Victoria clothed in white (symbolic of purity and innocence) alludes to the representation of Victoria as a supernaturally superior woman – this image enabled Victoria to dispel some of the anxieties associated with the gender strand of her reception as a female foreign figure of monarchical power in a system governed by males. The way in which the Germanic aspect of Victoria's and Albert's public reception contributed to their label as unconventional "outsiders" will be examined in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

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Chapter Three
Victoria, Albert and their Germanness

In this chapter I explore the extent to which Victoria and Albert were received publicly as "German" and how the German aspect of their identity was navigated in the public sphere, particularly in a period of political precarity and reformatory action. A further theme of this chapter is the idea of intersectional identities, specifically Victoria as both female ruler of Britain who is half-German and linked to a husband who is Albert, a German and *male* consort. As the daughter of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathearn and Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, Victoria was the last of the Hanoverian line in Britain. Her husband, Prince Albert, born and raised in Rosenau, Germany, was the son of Princess Louise of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, and Ernest I, Duke of Saxe-Coburg, and Gotha. Although Victoria was not born in Germany, the German strand of her private identity remained strong throughout her entire reign, though, in comparison to Albert, Victoria appeared British. Many biographers have failed to acknowledge or have downplayed Victoria's Germanness. Authors such as Richard Hough, Helen Rappaport, and Christopher Hibbet fail to address the German aspect of Victoria's identity. In this chapter I outline how the Germanic aspect of both their identities affected their public representation and contributed to their reception as unconventional royal figures; Albert was in an unusual position in that he was a male consort in a monarchical system that favoured male rulers. In addition, he was German, and Germany was considered a political and economic rival. Victoria can be considered as unconventional and "other" in that she was first and foremost a female monarch in a patriarchal society balancing her rule with roles as a mother and wife but was also half-German and thus had an outsider element to her national identity as well as her gender. I argue that Victoria and Albert negotiated the challenges of their intersectional identities with striking attention to their public image, something that helped them stabilize the British monarchy during an age of unrest and revolution across Europe. Albert was a male consort, and his main role was to support Victoria in her role as Queen, thus undermining his gender role within patriarchy; Victoria on the other hand was a ruler

first and foremost, and therefore had less time to invest in the stereotypically feminine roles of domesticity and childrearing. Both the Germanic and gender aspects of Victoria's and Albert's identities are fundamental to Victoria's and Albert's public reception as unconventional royal figures. This chapter also deals with the public perception that Victoria's and Albert's gender roles were "inverted" or unconventional, as evidenced by their representation in contemporary satirical propaganda. Royal iconography was at pains to counter such criticism and craft a public image of the royal couple as relatable, bourgeois mother and wife and chivalrous, British knight.

Parallel to the political precarity outlined in Chapter One, Germanophobia had already begun to manifest in nineteenth-century British society and therefore had the potential to pose a problem to Victoria's and Albert's public reception. British attitudes towards Germany in the nineteenth century were complex and competitive (Waddington, 2013, p. 1017 - 1042). The rise of industrialisation in eighteenth-century Europe had accelerated economic growth in both Britain and Germany (Neuburger and Stokes, 1979, p. 187). Although Britain maintained a strong and dominating export industry; particularly in the exportation of wool and cotton in the 1850s – 1870s, Germany soon became a clear competitor for the British trading industry in terms of the amount they were exporting in the final two decades of the nineteenth century (Neuburger and Stokes, 1979, p. 187 - 188). The use of steam, electrical and rail power enabled Germany to grow economically at much faster rates than the British economy from the mid-nineteenth century (Kennedy, 1980, p. 292). Fears arose concerning the threat that Germany could potentially overtake Britain in the exported goods industry, which consequently led to Anglo-German rivalry (Neuburger and Stokes, 1979, p. 187). Other contributing factors which intensified Anglo-German antagonism include the onset of the Great Depression of 1873; economic hardship gave rise to fears of economic uncertainty in both Britain and Germany which in turn led to greater competitiveness regarding trade (Neuburger and Stokes, 1979, p. 187). As a result, Germanophobia and Anglophobia began to manifest in British and German society

respectively, and Victoria and Albert were seeking to strengthen the monarchy within the context of an increasingly Germanophobic Britain.

The roots of such Germanophobic sentiment could be traced back to fundamental differences between Britain and Germany which corroded their ability to understand one another. Although both were recognised as powerful economic powers in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the internal workings of each country were vastly different. In the words of Paul M. Kennedy:

> In the convenient historical shorthand, 'London' and 'Berlin' may be allowed to exist as similar entities, as equal-ranking pieces on the diplomatic chessboard; in actual fact they were very different from each other in so many spheres of life, and without an appreciation of this it is impossible to understand why the two peoples viewed each other in the 1860s as they did.
> (Kennedy, 1980, p. 3).

Political and geographical differences were at the very heart of Germanophobic Britain; geographically speaking, before German Unification in the year 1871 Germany as we know it today could be defined as a "geographical expression" of German-speaking states sharing little more than a common language (Kennedy, p. 4). With no natural borders, the people of Germany lived in close proximity to other nationalities such as the Polish, Swiss, Belgians, Dutch and Italians. Britain, by contrast, was a single political unit (Kennedy, p. 4) and was somewhat protected from invasion due to its harsh sea border (Kennedy, p. 4). As an island nation - though not without tensions with Scotland, Ireland and Wales - Britain had distinctive cultural traditions and heritage; the German lands, on the other hand, were a patchwork of states, cultures, and traditions (Green, 2004, p.22).). Before the unification of 1871, each German state was distinct; as well as the differences in government administration, cultural, religious, and political traditions, every state exhibited its own unique colours on buildings, streets and signposts – black and white for the Swabia of the

1830s whereas Saxony used green and white handrails (Green, 2004, p. 22). The regional diversity expressed by each German state was further reinforced by the state's official dress: Prussian officials wore blue and orange, meanwhile official Saxon dress was a yellow coat and hat (Green, 2004, p. 22). Liberal aspirations for a modern, unified national state were briefly realized in the 1848/49 revolution and the short-lived Frankfurt Parliament, but it proved impossible to sustain a national parliament under the pressure of counter-revolutionary forces and the German lands remained separate states until the 1871 unification in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War. (Fulbrook, 1991, p. 127 - 128)

Britain's inability to understand Germany as a patchwork confederation of states fed into the formation of competitive and to a certain extent hostile relations between Germany and Britain. It is well documented that British attitudes towards Germany became increasingly hostile during the final two decades of the nineteenth century, namely succeeding German unification of 1871 and leading up to the outbreak of World War One in 1914 (Waddington, 2013). Much earlier, however, a wave of xenophobic attitudes flooded Britain in the 1850s in response to an influx of German immigrants. Between 1841 and 1900 4,853,253 Germans left their homeland for reasons of economic hardship and political repression (Panayi, 1993, p. 50). The majority emigrated to the US, but large numbers of Germans remained in the UK (Panayi, 1993, p. 50). About half of the German population of England and Wales lived in London; between the years 1861 and 1911 the German population increased from 16,082 to an estimated 27,000 (Panayi, 1993, p. 50). According to an anonymous author:

> [Germans in London] … permeate every district. There is no German 'quarter', but they are more numerous in some localities than others, and form something like settlements in certain neighbourhoods. The parts most affected by them are St. Pancras, Islington, Whitechapel, Marylebone, St Georges-in-the-East, and Hackney. These all represent working class communities. The Germans of superior social

> standings live in all directions but there is a fairly distinct colony at Sydenham. (cited in Panayi, 1993, p. 50)

Analysis of the statistical record shows that large numbers of Germans emigrated to the UK in the nineteenth century. A partial explanation for the resettlement of Germans in the UK can be linked to the transatlantic trade: one route involved travelling from Bremen to Hamburg to Hull and Liverpool before setting sail across the Atlantic. Other factors which led to the mass emigration of Germans were largely economic, such as the 'push' factor of a series of catastrophic harvests which began in the year 1845 in Germany (Panayi, 1993, p. 49). At the time, Britain offered attractive business prospects. Another factor in the mass emigration of Germans in the latter part of the nineteenth century was the German wars of 1866 – 1867, also known as the Seven Weeks War, which ended with the exclusion of Austria from Germany (Panayi, 1993, p. 49). The large influx of German immigration coincided with increasing health scares associated with the German sausage industry, which encouraged anti-German attitudes in Britain. Victoria's marriage to Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha must therefore be examined within the context of Britain's nineteenth-century view of Germany.

Victoria's role as a female figure in power already placed her at a disadvantage in a system which for the most part favoured male rulers. The German aspect of her identity in an increasingly Germanophobic Britain may have become problematic; had it not been actively suppressed. As a female monarch at a precarious time, Victoria needed to project an image of authority and competence. Her uncle Leopold actively advises Victoria on the suppression of her Germanness shortly before her accession to the throne. In their correspondence, Leopold emphasises that Victoria must highlight her Englishness as much as possible; emphasising her English roots would be advantageous to her reign, as it would set her apart from her relatives who were not born in England.

> (Laeken, 23rd June 1837, the King of the Belgians to Queen Victoria)
> The Declaration in the newspapers I find simple and appropriate. The translation in the papers says, "J'ai été élevé en Angleterre." I should

> advise to say as often as possible that you are born in England. George III gloried in this, and as none of your cousins are born in England, it is your interest de faire reporter cela fortement. 2. You never can say too much in praise of your country and its inhabitants. Two nations in Europe are really almost ridiculous in their own exaggerated praises of themselves; these are the English and the French. Your being very national is highly important, and as you happen to be born in England and have never left it a moment, it would be odd enough if people tried to make out the contrary (…) (cited in Murray, vol.1, pp. 78 – 79)

King Leopold also argues that England is a very nationalistic country, and Victoria must thus take pride in her English roots to gain the approval of her people. The way in which a monarch manifested their public image was very important, particularly in such contested times and so it was essential that Victoria actively suppressed her German roots in favour of her British identity. The marriage of Victoria and Albert was convenient in that in a counter-intuitive manner it enabled Victoria to further supress her German heritage. In the shadow of Albert's dominant German identity, Victoria's German roots seemed de-emphasised. The accentuation of Albert's Germanness appeared, paradoxically, to diminish Victoria's Germanness and therefore encouraged her contrasting perception as British first and foremost, especially since she had been born in England, whilst Albert had been born in Germany.

Although Victoria's Germanness was to a certain extent forcibly hidden there is some evidence to suggest that Victoria cherished her German roots. Writing in 1840, diarist Charles Greville noted: "It shocks the people of England that the Queen takes no notice of her paternal relations, treats English ones as alien and seems to consider her German uncles and cousins as her only kith and kin." (Wilson, 2014, p. 15). Greville's statement suggests that Victoria felt more connected to her German ancestry and heritage than her English

roots, since she appeared to have greater respect for her "German uncles and cousins" (Wilson, 2014, p. 15) and disregarded her English relations as "alien". All of Victoria's maternal ancestors were also German (Wilson, 2014, p. 15). Her Grandfather, George III, was the first Hanoverian monarch to have been born in England, and Elizabeth of Bohemia (1596 – 1662) was her only non-German ancestor on her father's side, being half Scots and half Danish (Wilson, 2014, p. 15). In addition to Greville's argument, various other accounts such as the recollection given by George Davys, Victoria's early tutor, suggest that the young Victoria was more in touch with her German roots than her British roots. According to Davys's recollection, the young Victoria "confused the sound of the 'v' with that of 'w' and pronounced 'much' as 'muts' – a typical example of German language interference (Worsley, 2019, p. 57). One reason for young Victoria's strong German accent was that her mother, Victoria-Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, spoke limited English and so taught Victoria German as her first language. In addition to the German influence from her mother, many of Victoria's early advisors and confidents were also German; her uncle Leopold was Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, her Baroness and later companion Louise Lehzen was Hanoverian, and her trusted advisor Baron Stockmar was Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Victoria was thus undoubtedly influenced by German culture and customs from a very young age.

German influence, however, was not merely limited to her childhood years. To a certain extent, Victoria's view of Germany and her own, private, affiliation with the culture became increasingly evident through her marriage to Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; Doppler outlines how their marriage promoted a closer association of Great Britain with voices in Germany calling for a united and liberal Germany (1997, p. 67). Arguably, the union of the royal family of Great Britain and Prussia was solidified through the christening of Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) in 1842: Victoria and Albert had been advised by Stockmar that they should invite King Frederick William IV, who had in the previous year succeeded to the Prussian throne, to attend the christening as godfather toto the prince (Doppler, 1997, p. 74). King Frederick William IV did not immediately accept the proposal but instead pondered the idea for three weeks before finally replying to Albert's

request via letter (Doppler, 1997, p. 75). King Frederick William IV's indecisive attitude resulted in an important letter from Lord Ashley, in which Lord Ashley urged the Prussian Ambassador in Britain to persuade King Frederick William IV to accept Albert's proposal.

> This act of Prince Albert will sink deep (…) into the hearts of this kingdom; let the Sovereign of Prussia aid our course and his won by seizing the occasion that God has given him, of rooting immoveably a political and religious confederacy (…) let him come; in God's name pray him to come – he must not, he dares not throw away such an opportunity. (Geheimes Presussisches Staatsarchiv, III, HA I (England), cited in Doppler, 1997, p. 75)

King Frederick William IV's role as godfather to the Prince of Wales was significant as a symbol of improved relations between Great Britain and Prussia to develop trade opportunities. Protestant Prussia proved to be a particularly favourable trading partner and the protestant link between the two countries has been clearly highlighted in Lord Ashley's letter (Doppler, 1997, p. 75). Even the British press hoped for a diplomatic success - the *Times*, for example, suggested that "one result of the approaching visit of the King of Prussia in London may be a better understanding with the German powers on commercial matters." (The Times, 3rd January 1842, cited in Doppler, 1997, p. 75)

Despite the formation of a close bond between the royal families of Great Britain and Prussia, the dominance of Victoria's German heritage, and the German influence of her close advisors, the narrative of Victoria's Germanness appears to have been neglected by history and historiography; a large amount of literature has been produced focusing on Victoria's role as a female monarch but not so much commenting on her German heritage. Many biographers have downplayed or not discussed Victoria's Germanness: authors such as Richard Hough, Helen Rappaport, and Christopher Hibbet fail to address the German aspect of Victoria's identity. As a counter example, Dorothy Thompson does discuss Victoria's Germanness. Thompson makes reference to Victoria's early connection with the German

language and speculates that her mother may have taken her back to Germany to be educated, had she not been so close in the line of succession (2001, p. 1). However, the rest of Thompson's discussion focuses on Victoria's reception as a female regnant. A.N. Wilson, touches on Victoria's German nationality and explains that "Victoria and Albert came out of Europe, and they can only be understood in a European context." (Wilson, 2014, p. 16). Although Victoria was not born in Germany like her mother, A.N. Wilson argues that Victoria's mother filled her with "immigrant uncertainties" (Wilson, 2014, p. 16) from a very young age and so Victoria "grew up as an immigrant in London." (Wilson, 2014, p. 16) Parallels can be drawn here with Leopold's suggestion that attempts should made to conceal Victoria's German heritage and highlight her Britishness to address such uncertainties, since a German "immigrant" Queen could have been vulnerable in a Germanophobic Britain.

One possible reason for the lack of attention paid to Victoria's Germanness could be that Victoria was born at Kensington Palace in England and so was perceived as less German than her husband Albert. In some ways the marriage between Victoria and Albert assisted Victoria on this point, since the public awareness and discussion of Albert's German identity enabled Victoria to appear the more British of the two. She was able to cherish her German roots privately, whilst upholding her public image as British monarch. Albert's German identity was to a certain extent utilised to stabilise Victoria as a British Queen; the German aspect of Albert's identity was much more obvious than Victoria's, so when the pair were considered together, Victoria's Germanness was scarcely considered. *Albert* embodied the German aspect of both of their identities and so, it was Albert, not Victoria, who soaked up much of the nineteenth-century Germanophobic public reaction. Victoria's marriage to Albert thus enabled Victoria to construct an image of herself that the public wished to see: a *British*, maternal monarch. In comparison to Albert, the German Prince Consort, Victoria appeared straightforwardly British.

In a politically precarious time, it is unsurprising that Victoria's Britishness was emphasised and her Germanness concealed. The spread of revolutionary thought and

reformatory action placed the British monarchy in a precarious situation. Within this precarious situation, a female monarch with a German husband inspired a certain degree of anxiety to emerge in the British royal courts; such anxiety is evident in the negotiations surrounding Albert's allowance. Although the government suggested that Albert would receive an allowance of £50,000 a year (the same sum that had been granted to Prince Leopold upon his marriage to Princess Charlotte), philosophical radical, Joseph Hume suggested a lower annual allowance of £21,000 (Thompson, 2001, p. 36). Joseph Hume's proposal was rejected in parliament and an amendment was made by Colonel Sibthorp, British Ultra-Tory politician, proposing an annual allowance of £30,000 (Thompson, 2001, p. 36). In addition to negotiations surrounding Albert's allowance, his title and status were also thoroughly disputed; it was not until the year 1857 that Albert became official Prince Consort (Thompson, 2001, p. 38).

In response to the confusion surrounding Albert's official status various satirical cartoons were created highlighting Albert's unconventionality as both a German and a male consort. The following satirical cartoon entitled "The Queen's Consort or the Queen Consort, - which?" was published in *Cleave's*[9] shortly before the royal wedding took place on 10th February 1840. The cartoon addresses various themes associated with the royal marriage, one of them being the unconventionality associated with Victoria and Albert's gender roles; visually the image depicts Victoria and Albert sat with their backs to one another. Albert has been illustrated with a disgruntled look in his eye as he glances back at Victoria who appears to be seated with her nose high in the air. Although both chairs appear to be the same height, Victoria's height has clearly been exaggerated and she has been depicted as taller than Albert – the reality has been distorted here; Victoria was much shorter than Albert (many writers of the period suggest that her height did not exceed 5ft (Ward, 2006, p. 286). The overexaggerated height difference alludes to the disparity of power in Victoria's and Albert's

[9] *Cleave's London Satirist and Gazette of Variety* was established in October 1837 by John Cleave, it was a radical, unstamped newspaper which later changed its name to: Cleave's Penny Gazette of Variety, December 1837 – 1839, *then Cleave's Gazette of Variety & Amusement*, 1839 – 1844. (see: *Cleave's Penny Gazette of Variety and Amusement.* (jarndyce.co.uk))

relationship. Victoria as Queen regnant was expected to rule over Albert as one of her people, yet respect and obey him as a husband. Her reluctance to look at Albert, and the image of her with her nose raised in the air reinforces the power disparity. Increasing Victoria's height elevates her to a spiritually and morally superior position. Parallels can be drawn here between Victoria's elevation as morally superior to Albert and the ideals of chivalry and femininity.

Source E[10]



The commentary directly below the image brings into question Albert's status as both a royal and a husband: "Pray, Madam, am I not your lawful husband?" / "Well, sir – then am I not your lord and *master*?" (Cited in Thompson, 2001, p. 37). On the one hand, Albert is emphasising that as Victoria's husband it is his "lawful" duty to define the domestic boundaries for his wife. In her response, Victoria foregrounds that as Queen she is "Lord and *master"*, and therefore must rule over her husband as a Queen. The satirical cartoon is successful in that it demonstrates the power struggle faced by both Victoria and Albert; Albert had been born and raised in Germany, a country in which women were barred from inheriting the throne due to the Salic Law, so it may have been difficult for Albert to accept

[10] Source E*: The Queen's Consort or the Queen Consort, - Which?* (originally published in *Cleave's* shortly before the royal wedding), cited in Dorothy Thompson, (2001), p. 37

his status as the Queen's husband in the early days of their marriage. Although seemingly happy with his home life, Albert was frustrated with his lack of status as a husband. He wrote to his Bonn contemporary Prince von Löwenstein: "In my home life I am very happy and contented; but the difficulty in filling my place with the proper dignity is that I am only the husband, and not the master in the house." (Martin, vol. 1, cited in Wilson, 2019, p. 71). The sentiments projected by the satirical cartoon in *Cleave's* clearly reflect Albert's confession to the Prince von Löwenstein regarding his frustrations caused by his lack of status in the domestic sphere. This can also be linked to Munich's argument that Victoria ruled her household as a monarch and so her gender roles with Albert were reversed or "upside-down". Although Albert's subordination was socially dangerous in so far as it threatened patriarchy and ideals of masculinity, his subordination would have been welcomed by British subjects in the context of a Germanophobic Britain.

The public's reaction to Albert, as a German Prince Consort reflects Germanophobic sentiment and highlights how Victoria could have been received if she had celebrated her German roots publicly as opposed to privately. Correspondence between Leopold, Victoria and Albert draws attention to discussion over the proposal that Albert should become a British peer, further exemplifying Britain's xenophobic reaction to Albert on account of his German heritage. Clearly, Victoria's Germanness could have been problematic, had she been more open about it in public. Victoria wrote in her correspondence with Leopold: (Windsor Castle, 26th November, 1839) "The *whole cabinet* agree with me in being *strongly* of opinion that Albert should *not* be a Peer; Indeed, I see everything against it and *nothing* for it; the English are very jealous at the idea of Albert's having any political power, or meddling with affairs here – which I know from himself he will *not* do. (…)" (Victoria's emphasis, Murray, 1907, vol. 1, p. 198). Victoria reiterates the notion that the English would be concerned if Albert were to receive the title of Peer in her correspondence with Albert.

> (Windsor Castle, 27th November 1839) "The English are very jealous of any foreigner interfering in the government of this country, and

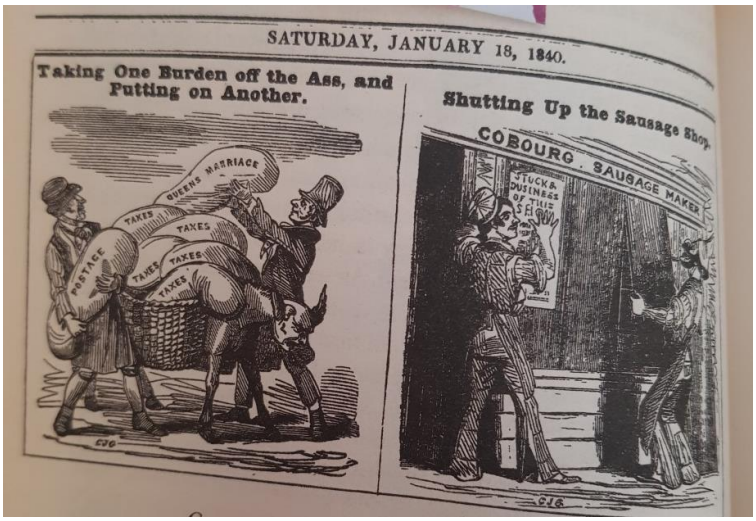
> have already in some of the papers (which are friendly to me and you) expressed a hope that you would not interfere. (…)" (Murray, 1907, vol. 1, p. 199)

Issues associated with German meat produce gave rise to further examples of Germanophobia in Britain. International concerns were raised regarding the safety of German foodstuffs and the German sausage became not only a popular metaphor for Germany, but also the focus point of international criticism due to its association with disease and ill-health (Waddington, 2013). Newspapers, reports and medical journals signalled that German sausages were renowned for spreading more disease than any other meat product (Waddington, 2013). Concerns regarding health threats linked to the German sausage reflected a strand of anti-German sentiment and as a result the German sausage soon became an emblem for the manifestation of Germanophobia in nineteenth-century Britain. The literary and scientific journal *Once a Week* warned its readers to "beware of German sausages, polonies, and things of the same kind, as they would beware of an assassin." (Dallas, 1866, p. 386). The fact that *Once a Week* draws comparisons between German sausages and assassins demonstrates the anti-German sentiment bound up with the symbol of the German sausage in nineteenth-century Britain. This anti-German mentality led to outbreaks of violence against German butchers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. (Waddington, 2013). Albert, as a German first and foremost, was used in xenophobic propaganda by radical newspapers and cartoonists alike. Various cartoons commenting on the royal wedding were created in which Albert's German identity was highlighted and satirised.

The following cartoon entitled "Shutting Up the Sausage Shop" was published in January 1840 just under a month before the royal wedding and depicts Albert as a Coburg sausage maker "shutting up" his Coburg sausage shop in Germany. He is wearing a typical German butcher's outfit and preparing to leave his putative Coburg sausage shop in

Germany in favour of a better life in England; parallels can be drawn here between Albert and the nineteenth-century German immigrant.

Source F[11]:



The image of Albert as a Coburg sausage maker and the symbolic reference to a well-founded fear of diseased German meat produce alludes to the xenophobic reaction to the influx of German immigrants in nineteenth-century Britain. In addition, the depiction of Albert as a butcher rather than a prince suggests a lack of prestige – he is unworthy of his role as Prince Consort to the Queen Victoria. Such satirical cartoons contrast starkly with the more chivalrous representations of Albert as the "British Knight" in royal portraiture, as will be shown below.

The initial xenophobic reaction of the British public to Albert was reiterated in the following verse, a verse which populated radical British newspapers shortly before the royal wedding took place in February 1840. For the most part, Albert was perceived by both radical and conservative members of British society as an "outsider". As such he became victim to vicious anti-immigrant propaganda. The idea suggested by the common street ballad below reflects the uncertainties and distrust associated with Albert's representation as a German immigrant.

[11] Source F: *Shutting up the Sausage Shop,* (1840), reproduced in Thompson, (2001), p. 34

> He comes to take, 'for better or for worse'
>
> England's fat queen and England's fatter purse. (cited in Thompson, 2001, p. 34)

The choice of the verb "take" coupled with the repetition of the possessive "England's" reiterates that in comparison to Albert, Victoria was to a certain extent perceived as the property of England - she was "England's fat Queen". The adjective "fat" links with the negative image of meat produce, and Victoria is here being presented misogynistically as meat-like. As a sovereign the general consensus was that she belonged to the public sphere for she was the *people's Queen* and Albert as an outsider had come to "take" her rather as one would "take" a "fat" piece of meat or "fat" farm animal. Parallels can once again be drawn here between Albert and the nineteenth-century German immigrant. It is also important to note that the choice of the verb "take" here could be relating to the unconventionality associated with Albert's role as a male consort to a woman monarch. The nineteenth-century feminine ideal suggested that a woman was her husband's property, and so the verb "take" reinforces the idea that as a husband, Albert would have been the dominating figure in the household responsible for setting the boundaries for his wife. Victoria's role as a monarch first and foremost meant that her domestic boundaries with her husband were to a certain extent blurred. She was expected to act as a strong female leader and rule both her country and her husband as Queen, yet at the same time obey her husband's wishes as a wife. It was this sense of gender unclarity which presented the royal pair as unconventional.

To emphasize Albert's masculinity and suitability as Prince Consort in a seemingly unconventional relationship, an attempt was made to present Albert as a chivalrous British knight. Various portraits and photographs were commissioned in which great emphasis was placed on Albert's chivalric nature and masculinity. One possible reason for the commission of such portraits was to navigate the negative press response to Albert's Germanness; if

Albert were to be presented as both British and chivalrous this may have helped curb the Germanophobic societal reaction to a German male Consort.

One striking illustration of Albert as a British Knight is Robert Thorburn's portrait Prince Albert (1819 – 1862). Painted on 6th May 1844 and presented to Victoria on her birthday, 24th May, source G depicts Prince Albert as a British knight in armour, as commissioned by Victoria herself:

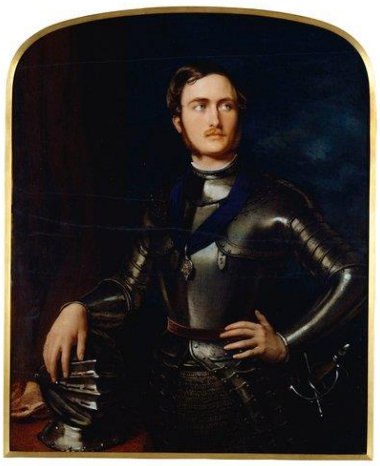
> "My 25th Birthday…[Prince Albert] has again loaded me with such beautiful things, amongst them, his miniature, a large one, painted by Thorburn – a "chef d'oeuvre", & so like. My beloved Albert is painted in armour, which I so much wished, - with a very dark blue background, I cannot say how beautiful it is, nor how it exactly portrays the dear original."[12]

The fact that Victoria had specifically requested for Prince Albert to be painted in armour amongst a dark blue background alludes to the revival of interest in medievalism in nineteenth-century Britain. Similarities can be drawn between the representation of Albert as a chivalrous knight in Thorburn's painting and the dedication to Albert the Great in Alfred Lord Tennyson's Idylls of the King in 1862. Both Thorburn and Tennyson contributed to the idealisation of Albert as a British knight. What is particularly interesting to consider is how and why Albert's public representation changed after his premature death. As we have seen with the xenophobic propaganda depicting Albert as a Coburg sausage maker, Albert's public reception was not particularly positive during his time as Prince Consort. After his death, however, the public representation of Albert underwent great changes: he was described as "Albert the Good" and illustrated as a chivalrous British knight (Mancoff, 1992).

[12] See: RA QVJ: 24th May 1844, cited from: *Robert Thorburn (1818-85) - Prince Albert (1819-1862) (rct.uk)*

Tia Caswell
10085739

Source G[13]



By comparison with the satirical image of Albert the Coburg sausage maker, Thorburn's Albert reflects prestige and grandeur. As a British Knight, Albert has been depicted as a powerful and commanding figure and although the image conveys prestige, there is not too much adornment; unlike other nineteenth-century royals, Albert has been presented as pure and natural, lacking jewels, feathers, and furs. In a way, Albert has been depicted as a "working" knight rather than a ceremonial knight. Presenting Albert in such a way emphasised his bourgeois ideals and values. Unlike a ceremonial knight, he lived like a "bourgeois" knight in that he was intellectual and artistic with a strong attachment to his own morality. Albert embodied the antithesis of English aristocracy (Mancoff, 1992, p. 147). He was marginalised in the English royal court, partly because of the xenophobic reaction to a German male consort, but also because the German sense of chivalry was different to that in England. English chivalry was largely ceremonial and highlighted the importance of attending balls and tournaments (otherwise known as constructing a chivalrous façade) (Mancoff, 1992, p. 147). Albert, on the other hand, had been encouraged from a young age to follow a strict code of right and wrong (this may have been partly due to his strict protestant background). He did not appear to enjoy typical aristocratic indulgences such as attending balls and celebrations. When he arrived in England, he was often too tired to stay awake past 9pm. His bourgeois values, strong sense of morality and strict daily routines did not sit well

[13] Source G: Robert Thorburn (1818-85) - *Prince Albert (1819-1862) (rct.uk)*

with a luxurious, aristocratic lifestyle; it did however, make him the perfect embodiment of what might be termed the "bourgeois" British knight.

As Mancoff (1992) outlines, the *bourgeois* knight was not only a reflection of medieval chivalry but also of high moral ideals. The *bourgeois* knight was perhaps less aristocratic than the British knight since hard work was central to the bourgeois knight's value system. Whereas the aristocratic British knight's ideals were less about earning one's position through hard work and more about inherited wealth and status, Albert embodied certain aspects of the bourgeois knight especially in his devotion to his work and to the British nation.

Regarding the unconventionality associated with Albert's role as male Consort to Queen Victoria, the chivalrous image of Albert as a knight consort and a polite gentleman was successful in that it enabled Victoria to become a strong and dominant ruler. The influence of chivalry elevated the feminine to a superior position. As Maike Oergel puts it "the influence of chivalry contributed to a superior morality." (1998, p. 111) Within the chivalric code, women were positioned in a spiritually superior sphere, and so Victoria as the metaphoric *Angel in the House* was metaphorically above her subjects and spiritually superior to Albert. The balance of the bourgeois chivalrous knight as masculine ideal and the motherly, even domesticated queen as feminine ideal worked well together. Albert was able to construct an image of himself that reflected masculine aspects of chivalry. Gallantry, courtesy and politeness were central themes associated with the image of the British, medieval knight and love was central to the chivalric system. In the words of Gibbon, the chivalrous knight was "champion of the God and the ladies" and being in love was therefore "one of the necessary qualifications of the knight." (Oergel, 1998, p. 106). Although the polite and chivalrous gentleman to a certain extent endangered traditional notions of masculine power, the image of the medieval, chivalrous knight was less domineering and perhaps less threatening than traditional notions of masculinity. As such, when paired with Victoria as a figure of monarchical power, Albert's representation as a chivalrous, British Knight helped to

navigate concerns that Albert as a male consort, may have wished to interfere in the British monarchical system. To a certain extent, nostalgia for medieval notions of chivalry enabled a re-assessment of their gender roles. The chivalrous image of the male caused a change in the perception of the female: an image which reflected notions of woman as spiritually superior to man.

Victoria's request that Albert should be painted as a British knight highlighted Albert's identity as a British Prince Consort and thereby downplayed his Germanic roots. Similarly, in Tennyson's dedication to Albert in 'Idylls of the King', Albert has been idealised as a great, British knight. The verse: "And indeed he seems to me / Scarce other than my own ideal knight" (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996) reinforces Albert's public reception as an "ideal knight" and further alludes to contemporary medievalism. In the words of Cobbett "medievalism was not only actuated by a desire for the ideal, it was also rooted in a nostalgia for the ordinary." (Chandler, 1971, p. 52). Such nostalgia for the ordinary could also be described as the yearning for a return to the nation's ordered and agricultural past. The nineteenth century brought about development and change: agricultural society became industrial, democracy replaced aristocracy and religious belief left itself open to doubt (Chandler, 1971, pp. 52 – 61). A generation of individuals who had lived through both the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century were nostalgic for a past that was very different from the nineteenth century present. An agricultural, aristocratic, Christian past was their "ordinary" (Chandler, 1971, p. 52).

Accordingly, the idea that the desire for an ideal is often rooted in nostalgia can be considered in relation to the memory of Albert – throughout his lifetime he was judged and satirised for his German roots, yet after his early death an overwhelming sense of nostalgia for the medieval ideal prevailed and the constructed image of Albert after his death became an idealised embodiment of medieval chivalry. After his death the public chose to adhere to the idealised image of Albert as British Knight, which was rooted in nostalgia for medieval times. It was through this sense of nostalgia for events of the past and due to Albert's early

death that his name lived on in public memory as "scarce other than [one's] own ideal knight" (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996). The chivalrous ideal which we have come to associate with Albert's posthumous image, or the constructed *memory* of Albert has been shaped by Albert's representation in both portraiture and poetry. What is particularly interesting about Tennyson's poetic dedication to Albert is that it allows one to contemplate the revelations that encouraged the development of the image of Albert as the chivalrous, British knight. In Oergel's words: "History becomes the modern revelation and poetry the means through which it is to be expressed. But which part of history should the poet-historian choose for his revelation? Which part of history is the most revelatory?" (1998, p. 97). As we have seen in assessing Albert's anomalous national and gender position as German Prince Consort, firstly, Albert was initially disliked according to his German roots, secondly this negative image was navigated through portraiture and poetry to improve his public image, and thirdly, his public image changed significantly as a result of his early death. In *A Magnificent Obsession: Victoria, Albert, and the Death that Changed the Monarchy*, Rappaport discusses the lasting influence of Albert's death. Although Albert had been previously mocked and satirised by nineteenth-century newspapers, his death altered his public image for the better. As Rappaport recounts: the Queen had turned as they both looked down at Albert's dead face and asked plaintively, 'Will they do him justice now?" (Rappaport, 2011, p. 117). Albert's early death allows the previous negative, xenophobic image to be swept away in a tide of sympathetic emotion, and so representations of him in portraiture and poetry as a gallant knight consort dominate. One possible reason for this is that the xenophobic response to Albert was largely fear-induced, but Albert's death rendered him much less threatening.

The juxtaposition of Albert as idealised British knight and Victoria as maternal queen references the values of medieval chivalry, according to which great emphasis was placed on honour, purity in love, Germanic nature and Christianity combined (Oergel, 1998, p. 106). Such values are presented in Tennyson's dedication to Albert; his verse "who loved one only and who clave to her – " (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996) explores

the chivalric notion of purity in love. Here Tennyson describes Albert's relationship with Victoria, suggesting that Albert remained true to Victoria throughout their marriage as part of his chivalric code of purity in love. Another aspect of medieval chivalry highlighted in Tennyson's dedication is the representation of woman as nature, and therefore spiritually superior (similar to the viewpoints expressed by Goethe in *Faust II*). In the following stanza, one could interpret the "star which shone so close beside thee" (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996) as a metaphor for Victoria, who, like a star, shone brightly beside Albert as a monarch first and foremost. As Prince Consort it was Albert's responsibility to enable Victoria to "shine" as Queen, as she was both spiritually and royally superior.

> Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;
> Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,
> Remembering all the beauty of that star
> Which shone so close beside Thee, That ye made
> One light together, but has passed and left
> The Crown of lonely splendor.
> (Tennyson, (1859) "The Coming of Arthur", Widger (1996)

Emphasis on woman as spiritually superior was a key aspect of medieval chivalry, in the words of Hurd: "The system of chivalry, when completely formed, proceeded on a marvellous respect and veneration to the fair sex." (Hurd, cited in Cohen, 2005, p. 319). It is not surprising, then, that Victoria sought to present Albert as a chivalric, British knight: in doing so Victoria was not only reducing the risk of backlash associated with Albert's German identity but she was also able to navigate the press response associated with her unconventionality as a female ruler. If the chivalric notions of gender roles suggested that women were spiritually superior to males and that a chivalric knight's role was to guide and

aid her, presenting Albert as a chivalric knight and guide enabled Victoria to present herself as a strong and superior female monarch.

Conclusion

This dissertation has addressed the following research questions: to what extent did Victoria's and Albert's German heritage and unconventional gender roles negatively affect their public reception in an increasingly Germanophobic, precarious political period? Secondly, I examined Queen Victoria's successful deployment of royal iconography and photography to construct a monarchical image that would navigate the negative press response and construct a sustainable monarchy under conditions of precarity.

As outlined in Chapter One of this dissertation, nineteenth-century Britain was affected by revolutionary thought and campaigns for reform. Although Britain did not experience a precise revolutionary movement, both the bourgeois and the working classes sought political reform in the nineteenth century. Increasing revolutionary thought and action for reform coupled with new calls for enfranchisement would have been troublesome for a constitutional monarch. As a constitutional monarch, first and foremost, Victoria required a strategy that would enable her to gain the support of her subjects and thereby reduce the chances of revolution or political unrest. This strategic approach can be split into various strands. On the one hand, Victoria required a façade that would enable her to present herself in accordance with the expectations of the nineteenth-century feminine ideal. The feminine ideal was crucial to consolidate Victoria's position, since her public adherence to the feminine ideal in royal portraiture would enable her to navigate the negative press response associated with a female in a position of power, and thereby gain the approval of her subjects. Victoria thus constructed an image of herself that embodied aspects of the feminine ideal: she performed the roles of idealised mother, wife, and woman. The image of Victoria as the maternal monarch has been recreated in various portraits and photographs as a deliberate ploy, enabling her to appear as a caring and domesticated wife and mother, alongside her role as competent and capable constitutional monarch. Her representation as maternal monarch allowed her to deflect public anxieties related to her role as a female figure in a position of monarchical power, thus positioning her in her role as a relatable

figure of national and cultural values. Meanwhile, her representation as a politically capable leader ensured that she was received as competent to rule and maintain a sustainable monarchy under conditions of increasing precarity.

Chapter Two of this dissertation focused on the analysis of the nineteenth-century feminine ideal and its portrayal in English and German literature as well as royal photography, portraiture and iconography. Although Victoria's accession to the throne can be considered in some respects as an emancipating influence for some women in nineteenth-century Britain, Victoria was equally perceived in popular literature and portraiture as the embodiment of the nineteenth-century feminine ideal. Portraits and photographs of Victoria exuding femininity and motherliness illustrate the extent to which she wished to be perceived as a maternal monarch. The representation of Victoria as mother, wife, and woman was successful in that it enabled her to appear as a relatable Queen of the people. In this sense, Victoria's decision to construct a public image of herself as a maternal monarch was a shrewd move that contributed to the sustainability of the monarchy despite conditions of political precarity. As a figurehead of national and cultural values, Victoria needed to conform to nineteenth-century ideals of femininity.

In Chapter Three, I discussed the second strand of Victoria's and Albert's split identity, their Germanness. In addition to the anxieties surrounding female rule, the German aspect to Victoria's and Albert's identity could have been equally troublesome in a politically precarious time. Increasing Germanophobia in Britain signalled that the German heritage of both Victoria and Albert could have posed difficulties in the royal courts and the public eye, with the confusion surrounding Albert's title, status and income exemplifying the issues faced by the royal couple in a Germanophobic Britain. In an attempt to navigate the negative press response associated with Albert's German identity, Victoria and Albert began to construct images of themselves as "British Knight" and "maternal monarch". Such royal constructions allowed for the reinvention of the monarchy in a way that worked for the public, because they could to some extent relate to the royal couple. as well as admiring the

chivalric construction of their marriage. Similarly, Victoria's and Albert's marriage highlighted Albert's German roots and de-emphasised Victoria's Germanness, paradoxically helping Victoria to appear British, by comparison.

To conclude, Victoria's and Albert's public display of bourgeois masculinity and bourgeois femininity incorporated bourgeois gender values alongside a nineteenth-century revival of chivalry. In addition, they performed a particular style of British national identity, as emphasised in carefully commissioned artistic representations to counter potentially damaging satirical Germanophobia. Their innovative and strategic approach to gender discourse and national identity was essential to the formation of a sustainable monarchy that functioned under conditions of increasing precarity. Their adherence to *bourgeois* notions worked well with their nineteenth-century subjects, many of whom belonged to the middle classes.

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