

Representations of Queen Victoria's Agency in Films and Miniseries

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The purpose of this thesis is to examine Queen Victoria's agency through films and miniseries from 1937 to 2016. Through this work added scholarship on Queen Victoria's life and legacy can contribute to the understanding of nineteenth-century British history, film and media, and the continuing popularity of the British monarchy today. This thesis has five chapters to give information on Queen Victoria's life and agency and descriptions on films and miniseries to ensure that adequate knowledge may be obtained. Secondary sources used throughout this thesis were obtained through Joyner Library at East Carolina University to add to the historical accuracy of Queen Victoria's reign. This is a study of one of the longest reigning monarchs in British history who rule during most of the nineteenth-century. In examining Queen Victoria's agency in films and miniseries there can be a greater understanding to not only history but the way it is perceived by filmmakers and audiences alike.

Representations of Queen Victoria's Agency in Films and Miniseries

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Chapter I: Introduction

For many individuals, learning about a historical figure like Queen Victoria will be through viewing visual medias like film and television miniseries. With the general public using films and television miniseries to acquire historical knowledge the means to analyze and assess this form of study is impertinent. Even after her death, Queen Victoria remains a popular figure often depicted in films and television miniseries due to her long life and her paradoxical role as sovereign. Part of this film analysis is to evaluate Queen Victoria's agency and her intentions to make a particular effect on her family and the monarchy. Queen Victoria's agency is analyzed through films and television miniseries because of the visual representations of how filmmakers interpret Victoria's life and how she approaches events during her reign. By using the representations of Queen Victoria in films and television miniseries, I apply historical and film analysis to examine how filmmakers have communicated a specific interpretation of Queen Victoria and her agency. Films and television miniseries also depict Queen Victoria's relationship with her family members, politicians and subjects, which can be interpreted and analyzed to understand her agency in a boarder context. The films and television miniseries have an added historical value by depicting a wider cultural, social and political context of Queen Victoria's life and how filmmakers interpret her agency.

In this thesis, agency refers to Victoria's actions and interventions to the social, political and cultural factors that are viewed in the films and miniseries. How Victoria asserted herself throughout her life is viewed in the films and miniseries selected for this thesis. In order to understand the analysis on Victoria's agency, a survey on Victoria's reign and how historians have assessed her performance on power and gender are part of this thesis. For Queen Victoria, her power was not solely hers to control because of her gender. In the nineteenth-century, women

were deemed the inferior sex and were meant to stay in the private sphere of home and family. Women were thought to be too emotional to have any position of power and men were thought to be the more logical of the two sexes. Victoria was the sole ruler of England yet, for her advisors and subjects, she could never truly rule their country alone. Even Victoria herself felt that her position, as Queen of England, was too much to handle given her inferior sex.¹ Victoria's actions were also influenced by her subjects and the continued survival of the monarchy because of her predecessors. As a young and unmarried woman, Victoria had to be feminine and moral to have the support of the people. In the first two years of her reign, Victoria would face scandals like the Bedchamber Crisis of 1839 that would threaten her power, her reputation, and her image. To improve Victoria's image and stop further criticism of the monarchy, eligible men were selected for the queen for marriage. A suitable husband by Victoria's side was important for the continuation of the monarchy and the queen's first cousin, Prince Albert, was a preferable choice. Albert was a smart and moral man who wanted to influence the British government and society through his wife, who happily gave her power to him. Her marriage to Prince Albert curbed fears of a woman who had sole power because of the perception that men were more equipped to handle the pressure of ruling a country.

This thesis is organized into chapters on biographical survey, an overview to the films and miniseries, an analysis of the films and miniseries, and a conclusion. Historiography is the subject of the second chapter of the thesis because it describes the various historians who have written about Victoria's life. This will also give more detail about Victoria's life and the events that were pivotal in her life. The third chapter introduces the films and miniseries that were used in this study on Victoria's agency. The films and television miniseries examined in this thesis

¹ Lassiter Pamela S, "Exploring Power and Gender-Role Expectations: A Historical Interpretive Analysis of Queen Victoria" (PhD diss., Georgia State University, 2004).

were produced between 1937 and 2016. Historical accuracy was not a factor in the choosing of the films and miniseries but instead films were chosen base on the varying interpretations of Queen Victoria's representation and her agency. During the eighty-year time period in which these films and television miniseries were made gender and societal norms were changing in the United Kingdom and thus reflects the various ways Queen Victoria is represented over time. All these films and television miniseries have some basis with historical content and are mainstream production and not experimental. Some of these films focus on the early years of Victoria's reign and others focus on her life after the death of husband Albert. Each of the films and miniseries goes into detail of the plot and the critical reception it received. The fourth chapter analyzes what the films and miniseries reveal about Victoria's agency. The final chapter is on the conclusion of the films and miniseries and how Victoria's agency was represented.

For the thesis, Victoria's agency is analyzed through films and miniseries on the queen's life. The nine films and miniseries were chosen from the 1930's to the present day, focusing largely on Victoria's life as queen and her marriage with Prince Albert. Through the analysis of these films and miniseries on Victoria's life, five common themes were examined: morality, gender roles, assassination, intruders and seclusion. For Queen Victoria the person, morality played a big part in how she wanted be represented to the public. In films such as *Victoria and Albert (2001)*, Victoria's is apathetic to the immorality with the royal court until her marriage to Prince Albert. He takes charge of the household and wants to improve the image of the royal family. Victoria's agency is then expressed by emulating her husband, who greatly influences her and the need to improve the monarchy's reputation. This also plays into the next theme of gender roles in which Queen Victoria was in a masculine position, yet she had to remain strictly feminine in a male dominant society. Films like *Edward the Seventh (1975)*, *Victoria and Albert*

(2001), and *The Young Victoria* (2009) characterize Victoria as enjoying her role as queen, especially when she is with Lord Melbourne. However, her devotion to Lord Melbourne and her immaturity threaten the monarchy and a marriage is arranged for the young queen. Victoria's actions transform with her marriage to Prince Albert, who wants to influence his wife but also wants to influence the British government. Queen Victoria begins to relinquish her power to Prince Albert, who performs royal duty in the absence of his wife due to multiple pregnancies. Albert wants to assert his dominance not only on Victoria, but also on her servants, changing the way the palaces are run and making them run more efficiently. Her subjects approved of Albert asserting his male superiority over his wife who was acting as a many of her ordinary counterparts throughout Britain. Victoria was acting as a passive, middle class wife and making her more relatable to her middle class subjects. Victoria's people did not want a queen to have too much freedom or power and having a husband allows the public to believe that their female monarch was being guided by a capable Prince Albert. Victoria's agency is no longer that of a woman in control, but instead giving away her power to her husband. Albert's death in 1861 is a major turning point for the queen who must take on the sole task of performing royal duties.

Assassination attempts and intruders were both common themes in the films and miniseries on Victoria's life. There were seven assassination attempts on Victoria's life and two are portrayed on film. The first assassination attempt and the sixth assassination attempt are portrayed on film and analyzed because it displays Victoria's reactions to nearly being killed and her affection for the men at different time in her reign. In the first assassination attempt, Victoria is a young newlywed and is riding in a carriage, along with Prince Albert, when a young man named Edward Oxford shoots at the royal couple. Oxford is apprehend by a bystander and is taken into custody where he is declared insane. In *Victoria and Albert*, and *Victoria*, the young

queen's reacts to the assassination attempt in two distinct ways. In *Victoria and Albert*, Victoria is unfazed by the attempt on her life and willing rides in her carriage through the crowds to show her trust in her people. By doing this action, Victoria's people know that their queen will not let one assassin's bullet deter her from public life. In *Victoria*, Victoria is portrayed as disturbed by the possibility that Oxford could go free and she would be unable to leave her palace out of fear. When Oxford is found not guilty, Victoria accepts her people's verdict and returns to public life. In *The Young Victoria*, Victoria is hysterical when Albert is struck by the assassin's bullet and fearful that he may die. In the film, Victoria displays her love and devotion for Albert who saved her from the assassin's bullet. The sixth assassination attempt occurs when the queen is a widowed woman and her servant, John Brown, saves her after leaving a church service. The assassination attempt is portrayed in *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown (1997)* a film about the widowed queen's relationship with John Brown. In *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, Victoria rewards Brown with a medal displaying her gratitude and appreciation for her servant who saved her life. Before the assassination attempt, Victoria and Brown had a bitter fight and the traumatic moment brings the two back together. In Victoria's early years as queen, she faced intruders who trespassed into her palaces. In the film *The Mudlark (1950)*, a young street urchin named Wheeler breaks into Victoria's palace during her period of seclusion after the death of Albert. Initially, Victoria is angered by the trespassing of the young boy but decides to meet Wheeler after being persuaded by her Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. The young boy convinces Queen Victoria to return to royal duties after her long absence from public life. In *Victoria and Albert (2001)*, a young boy breaks into the palace not long after Victoria has given birth to her first child. The intrusion upsets Prince Albert more than the queen because he feels the royal household is not run properly. Vic-

toria is perplexed by Albert's anger because the woman who runs the royal household is her former governess, Baroness Lehzen. Victoria is torn between her husband's happiness and her lifelong friendship with Lehzen but ultimately forces her former governess into retirement. The assassination attempt and intruders portray how Victoria's actions were shaped by the people around her and how little control she had over her own life. Both the assassination attempts and the intruder show the dark side of Victoria's life, but the queen's lowest point of her life was the death of Prince Albert and subsequent seclusion.

Prince Albert died in 1861 from typhoid fever, which caused Victoria to go into seclusion for over a decade. However, this was not the first time in Victoria's life that she went into seclusion. As a child, Victoria was kept away from the royal family by her mother, as depicted in both *Victoria and Albert* and *The Young Victoria*. In both films, Victoria is hardly left alone as part of the Kensington system which was developed by her mother and Sir John Conroy. In *The Young Victoria*, the future queen gives details about her unhappy childhood and Conroy's control over her mother. At times, Victoria is at odds with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, whose actions are driven by the idea that she can become regent if Victoria ascends to the throne before she reaches eighteen. The relationship between Victoria and her mother is tense because the young princess feels that the Duchess is not looking out for her best interest, instead trying to gain power with Conroy's help. Both *Victoria and Albert* and *The Young Victoria*, view Victoria's accession as queen as her moment to break away from her mother and Conroy. The idea of the young Victoria being freed by her destiny of becoming queen is similar to that of the Cinderella story. Cinderella is freed from her wicked step family by marrying the handsome prince and living in a beautiful castle. When Victoria marries Prince Albert, she has a faithful partner who will help her in her role as queen.

In the process of analyzing the various films and television miniseries on Victoria's agency, it was important to evaluate the queen's interactions within her court and her subjects. The films and miniseries highlight the tumultuous predicament that the monarchy is at, during the being of Victoria's reign and the need to reform. Victoria's uncles were known for their loose and immoral ways and this caused a discord between them and their subjects. In all the films that portray Victoria's accession to the throne, it is a happy time period for her and her people, who are thrilled to have a new, young monarch. Victoria is happy in her role, yet she does not understand how to run a country and is in need of guidance. Her Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne provides not only guidance but friendship to Victoria who has lived in isolation during her childhood. However, when she chooses politics over her people in an attempt to keep Lord Melbourne as her prime minister, the monarchy's reputation is tainted by Victoria's actions. Many of her subjects believe that in order for Victoria to restore the monarchy she must marry, or the crisis for the crown could occur. In the films and miniseries representing Victoria's life, the young queen is happy with her marriage to Prince Albert who guides her in her role as queen and takes on many of these roles when she becomes pregnant. Her marriage to Albert and the nine children they have together brings stability to the monarchy and transforms the image of the royal family to one of morality. Victoria acts by following the guidance of Albert in representing the royal family as middle class and makes the family more relatable to the public. When Victoria's heir Bertie becomes involved in affairs with various women, she and Albert work together to change their son's behavior in an effort to persevere the monarchy. Albert's untimely death causes the queen to retreat from London and not participate in any state functions. With the queen absent from state events her subjects believe that they no longer need a monarchy and some even call for a republic to replace the monarchy. However, when Victoria is put under immense pressure

to return to her public life, she acts by returning to London and participating in state functions.

Victoria is under the control of her people and she acts in accordance with their needs, otherwise the monarchy and herself would not exist.

Chapter II: Biographical survey

Queen Victoria was in a unique position given her sex and her role as a sovereign which was generally reserved for royal males. Although Victoria was in a masculine position, she needed to maintain her power in mid-century England, by being viewed as completely feminine in her role as Queen. The first several years of reign for Victoria were tumultuous and her marriage to Prince Albert brought a masculine figure next to the queen's side along. Victoria wanted to be seen as an exemplary wife and by actively allowing Prince Albert to take over her royal duties, this allowed for her to, "stabilize her image her image as Queen of a middle-class nation."¹ Prince Albert was instrumental in transforming the way Victoria's subjects viewed the monarchy from immoral to an institution of morality.² However, Albert died twenty years into their marriage and the Queen was alone for the rest of her life. By becoming a recluse, a new image of Victoria no longer wanting to act as sovereign caused a decline in the monarchy's popularity. Her ability to refuse to abdicate in favor of her son and return to perform ceremonial roles, demonstrated her commitment to the monarchy. Although, the Queen was a widow and was in seclusion for over decade, her image was still central to Victorian society. By the time of her death in 1901, Victoria had become a symbol of matronly dignity and humility across the British Empire. Her passing was marked with astonishment by her subjects who had not known a time without her.

The historical accounts of Victoria's public image and its gendered aspects discuss how Queen Victoria's sex and gender role were represented to her subjects. William Kuhn's

¹ Homans, Margaret. *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837-1876*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952. *passim*,

² Thompson, Dorothy. *Queen Victoria: The Woman, the Monarchy, and the People*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1990. *passim*.

Democratic Royalism, focuses on the transformation of the modern monarchy to the study of Victoria's influence on leading British figures during her reign: Walter Bagehot, William Ewart Gladstone, Lord Esher, Randall Davidson, and the Duke of Norfolk. In Dorothy Thompson's work, Victoria's agency is portrayed as constantly active and changing over the course of her life. In Lacy Fidler's dissertation, Victoria's agency as represented in the press is analyzed during the Lady Flora Hastings scandal and the Bedchamber Crisis of 1839. Pamela Lassister's dissertation, *Exploring Power Role and Gender Expectations: A Historical Interpretative Analysis of Queen Victoria*, studies the contradictions of gender roles and power through an analysis of Queen Victoria's letters to her daughter Vicky. Walter Arnstein's article *The Warrior Queen*, explores Victoria's complex role as a military leader and monarch. F.K. Prochasaka's monograph *Royal Bounty; the Making of the Welfare Monarchy*, is about the charity work Queen Victoria did during her marriage to Prince Albert during the period in which they represented themselves as an exemplary moral family. In Adrienne Munich's work, the gender roles that Victoria faced during her time as queen are explored. William Murphy's work focuses on Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's public image and the ways they use charitable acts as means to appeal to their subjects. Margaret Homans's work analyzes the representations during the Queen's lifetime in British culture, while Victoria Smith's *Constructing Victoria* explores her image through the ways she was represented throughout England, Canada, and India, in the last years of her reign. In James Plunkett's monograph, he examines how the royal family became part of the medium of photography in the nineteenth-century, which made them more relatable to the middle-class. Overall, Victoria was represented as moral and middle-class woman for most of her life. Although Queen Victoria was the ruler of the most powerful empire on Earth, her image was out of

her control and was shaped by the need to improve the monarchy. If that representation was distorted they could easily rise up and end the monarchy. In order to placate her people Victoria made sure her actions and representations were most suited for her subjects.

Gender Roles

1817 was a cataclysmic year for the British monarchy as Princess Charlotte, the heir to the throne, died in childbirth.³ As the only child of the Prince of Wales, her child was destined to be sovereign and continue the line of Hanover.⁴ Charlotte's grandparents, King George III and Queen Charlotte had fifteen children but few of their children had legitimate heirs.⁵ After the death of Charlotte her uncles began to marry eligible princesses and have legitimate offspring.⁶ Kuhn's analyzes this period as the feminization process of the monarchy.⁷ The feminization process brought forth fascination and exaltation of female royals who connect with the roles of average women which were underrated in the patriarchal society.⁸ The feminization of the monarchy meant that the monarchy was part of the female sphere, which increased the dignity of mothers and wives.⁹ Through feminization the monarchy became less threatening and political responsibility were taken away from the Crown thus making it a constitutional monarchy.¹⁰

Even though female rulers were in an elevated position after 1817, it did not mean that a female sovereign would have the complete trust and security of the people. "Nineteenth century

³ Wilson A.N, *Victoria: A Life* (Penguin Press: New York, 2014), *passim*.

⁴ Wilson, *Victoria*, 23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 23

⁷ Kuhn William M, *Democratic Royalism: The Transformation of the British Monarchy, 1861-1914*. (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1996), *passim*.

⁸ Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 29.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

ideas about the social roles of men and women were more rigid and patriarchal than those of either the century preceding or following.”¹¹ Men were meant to be in the tough world of business and politics, while women were confined to the home which was meant to be a comforting place for their husbands to come to after a hard day at work.¹² Men were thought to be the more logical and reasonable of the two sexes.¹³ Women were viewed as emotional and instead of using reason, they relied on instinct.¹⁴ As Queen, Victoria would have to contend with nineteenth-century notions on gender and at times be willing to play both the roles of man and woman. Her femininity could be her strength and her weakness, and she would need a husband by her side in order to pacify her critics.¹⁵ For the survival of the British monarchy, Victoria would have to be viewed as a role model for femininity, yet have a male to guide her without overpowering her.

Victoria’s family, the Hanoverians, were originally from Germany and Victoria’s grandfather, King George III, was at the time the longest reigning monarch of England.¹⁶ His sons, the future King George IV and King William IV, were known for extramarital affairs and both were vastly unpopular and the public was ready for a drastic transformation in the monarchy. The Duke of Kent, Victoria’s father, left his longtime mistress in order to have a legitimate heir to the British throne, by marrying Victoria’s mother, Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld.¹⁷ To distance herself from these immoral uncles, Victoria and her future husband Prince Albert would represent the monarchy as the center of morality for their subjects. It was their hope that their children would continue to uphold moral standards. They especially hoped this for their

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹² *Ibid.*, 29.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁶ Wilson, *Victoria*, 14.

¹⁷ Wilson, *Victoria*, 28.

son and heir the Prince of Wales, who would in the end fall short in upholding such standards. Both Victoria and Albert understood that for the monarchy to continue the royal family must be represented as a champion of morality instead of the immorality for which her uncle King George IV was known. In order to maintain a stable monarchy, Victoria had to be the opposite of her uncles by having a faithful marriage and stable family life.

Dorothy Thompson's monograph *Queen Victoria: The Woman, the Monarchy, and the People*, explores the contradiction that although a woman was on the British throne, women were still increasingly discouraged from taking part in public life.¹⁸ Queen Victoria would deal with this contradiction for the rest of her life. Due to Victoria's youth and sex, she appeared less threatening and more malleable to politicians when compared to her predecessors.¹⁹ To the public, she was represented as less vicious and more decorative than her elderly uncles.²⁰ According to Plunkett because Victoria "the young, attractive, politically innocent, yet with decidedly Whiggish sympathies, the new Queen seemed far removed from the immorality of her aged Hanoverian uncles."²¹ Her youth and femininity were seen as far from the oppressive powers of her predecessor and the monarchy.²² In the months before Victoria's coronation, her public appearances were designed to emphasize her distance from her uncles. When she rode in the park it was between two Whig ministers and never with male family members. Her Englishness was highlighted, and she appeared in dress made from London manufacturers on public occasions and which would later be mentioned in newspaper reports.²³ Her coronation was modest by modern

¹⁸ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 144.

¹⁹ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

²¹ Plunkett John, *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), *passim*.

²² Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 19.

²³ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 29.

standards and even considered casual. (Victoria's coronation was actually more expensive compared to her predecessor William IV which was considered the "half-coronation.") The coronation of George IV in 1821 was more expensive than Victoria's and continued celebrations during her reign would be considerably modest.²⁴ In her early years as a sovereign, Victoria would keep her uncles' memory at a distance and display an aura of austerity in order that the monarchy would continue.²⁵

Margaret Homans explores Queen Victoria's representation between 1837 and 1876 in a variety of media such as newspapers, literature, and the arts. Homans argues that by the time of her coronation in 1838 popular representations of Victoria portrayed anxieties about female rule.²⁶ A broadsheet from the period, *Petticoats for Ever*, dramatizes the apprehensions about female sovereigns and the need for Victoria to find a husband.²⁷ In it two characters, Kitty and Joan, discuss how the new Queen will do many great things for women such as calling a Parliament exclusively for them.²⁸ Another strategy for relieving anxiety about female rule was to deny that Victoria would rule at all.²⁹ There was a real fear that "a female ruler due to excess would be linked to tyranny and political unruly."³⁰ Another broadsheet *The Coronation* depicts Victoria as a simple woman, celebrating her coronation as a dutiful daughter firmly in the female sphere.³¹ The queen is just a consort uncrowned and unthreatening, a role England would prefer her in while her king wears a crown.³² However, there was anxiety that a married queen would

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁶ Homans, *Royal Representations*, 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

³² *Ibid.*, 8.

lose her power to her consort. These concerns never fully materialized, yet during Victoria's reign various men would take on the royal duties of the Queen when she was unable to do so.³³

Homans states that her work "starts with the double proposition that for being Queen Victoria being is a form of doing but that being Queen never involves a stable identification between the office and the person."³⁴ As a monarch Victoria's personal and private lives were under scrutiny by the entire nation.³⁵ Homans argues that the queen could never separate herself from the throne:

Victoria remembered exquisitely well how to seem, even if it is not always clear whether that remembering and seeming are voluntary; at others, her apparent failure to do so constituted a different way of seeming from what was expected -a different royal representation that was, nonetheless, part of the script for Britain's nineteenth-century monarch.³⁶

As a woman, Queen Victoria's royal identity was in tied together with her gender. The ruling line was patrilineal and women were never meant to be British monarchs, despite exceptions like Queen Elizabeth I.³⁷ Homans states that the characteristics required of a nineteenth-century British monarch in a parliamentary democracy were the same as these required of middle-class wives. Like a middle-class wife, "the monarch was obliged (since the seventeenth century but increasingly so) not to intervene in politics, and was to spend the wealth of the nation in a manner that displayed both its economic prowess and her dependency."³⁸ In the nineteenth-century, there were "separate spheres" for women and men due to their sexual differences.³⁹ "Due to the industrial revolution, there was a rise in middle-class families who were wealthy

³³ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, xix.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, xx.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, xx.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

enough to have wives who could stay home and this meant that sex differences became reified, hypostasized, and consequently hierarchized.”⁴⁰ In an effort to continue the monarchy, both Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert, publicly represented themselves as members of the middle-class. Victoria not only functioned publicly as the nation’s wife, but in private she was a wife who enjoyed being a domesticated woman.⁴¹ Victoria looked to her husband for advice and guidance. In this way he took the place of her first prime minister, Lord Melbourne, who had taught her the basics of her new role as queen. Even with her power, Victoria was more than happy to conform to the standards of the day because the Queen generally felt that was how any woman should act. Women of any class in the nineteenth-century were dutiful to their husbands and the Queen was adherent to the gender standards of the time period.

When Victoria became queen, she had a limited understanding of government and this would show in the early years of her reign.⁴² During this time, Queen Victoria would face criticism over her actions with her royal household. Lady Flora Hastings was the lady-in-waiting to the Queen’s mother, the Duchess of Kent, and came from a family of Tories.⁴³ She was also acquainted with Sir John Conroy, the Duchess of Kent’s advisor, and Victoria’s most hated enemy. When Lady Hastings appeared in court with a swollen figure, vicious rumors spread that the young woman was pregnant due to her close relationship with Conroy.⁴⁴ The young woman was not only forced to have a medical examination to determine if she was a virgin or not but also had to deal with the resulting rude innuendos and gossip.⁴⁵ It was concluded that Hastings was a

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴² Fidler, Lacy. "Newspaper Representations of Queen Victoria's Agency during the Hastings Scandal and Bedchamber Crisis of 1839" (MA thesis., University of Victoria, Canada, 2013). *passim*.

⁴³ Wilson, *Victoria*, 92.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴⁵ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 29.

virgin and was suffering from liver cancer. After learning of Lady Flora's condition Victoria, "was both relieved and deeply upset," at how the situation had turned out.⁴⁶ In an attempt to smooth over the situation, Victoria sent Hastings a message asking to meet so that she could personally apologize. On February 23, of 1839, Victoria visited Lady Flora who expressed her wish for the matter to be forgotten and that for the sake of the Duchess of Kent "she would suppress the wounded feeling." However, the wounded feeling was not forgotten by Lady Flora who informed her uncle Hamilton Fitzgerald and her brother Lord Hastings about the events at Buckingham palace. Lady Flora complained that "her honor had been most basely assailed," and her Lord Hastings believed that "the false allegations were a plot to insult the whole family." On July 5th 1839 Lady Flora Hastings died from liver cancer and the criticism of Victoria's character only became louder.⁴⁷ Using the *Morning Post* as an outlet for their anger, the Hastings family released posthumously letters that Lady Flora had written about the Queen and Baroness Lehzen and the anger she felt towards them.⁴⁸ Victoria was also attacked using pamphlets but did not directly attack the Queen but rather depicted her as "the victim of an uncleaned court." A pamphlet titled *Warning Letters to Baroness Lehzen* described Victoria's longtime governess and friend "as a certain foreign lady who pulled the wires of a diabolical conspiracy of which Lady Flora was to be the first victim." Her hatred for John Conroy led her to "not behave with the discretion and wisdom that she would later acquire."⁴⁹ Her accession to "the throne had added arrogance and disdain to her character," even though she was just twenty years old.⁵⁰ This proved to many that the young Queen was inept to rule and immoral to the situations of a dying woman.

⁴⁶Hough Richard, *Victoria and Albert* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), *passim*.

⁴⁷ Hough, *Victoria and Albert*, 48.

⁴⁸ Wilson, *Victoria*, 93.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

Her close relationship with Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, who was Whig, pushed the situation even further for many who believed that Victoria's immoral behavior had its origin in political spite.⁵¹ This incident did not reflect well on Queen Victoria and led many to question her judgement. She was seen by some as inept and by others as lacking sympathy. Her close relationship with Prime Minister Lord Melbourne (who was a Whig) pushed the situation even further for many who believed that Victoria's insensitivity could be attributed to political spite.

The press was unforgiving about the queen's careless behavior concerning Lady Flora Hastings.⁵² Newspapers pounced when the Queen refused to publicly apologize to the dying woman.⁵³ Many found this to show a lack of appropriate concern for domestic harmony. The *Morning Post*, while subtly undermining Victoria's authority by constantly referring to her youth and femininity, actually tried to empower Lady Flora Hastings by playing up her virtue.⁵⁴ Virtue was one part of the many characteristics that were tied with gender roles; a woman without virtue had nothing, and the fact that Victoria kept company with women who would slander a dying Lady Hastings did not bode well for her in the press.⁵⁵ While Lady Hastings seemed pure and sympathetic, Victoria's respectability was threatened and, therefore, also her authority.⁵⁶ Victoria believed that her actions toward Flora Hastings were proper and she was acting on moral authority. However Victoria was immature and resented Flora Hastings due to her allegiance with the Duchess of Kent and Sir James Conroy. The *Morning Post* and the *Standard* reduced Victoria's authority and blamed it on the presumed fact that the queen had been contaminated by Whigs.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁵² Fidler, *Newspaper Representations of Queen Victoria's Agency*, 31.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

This became a matter of national importance to the press that the queen should be “shielded from contamination.”⁵⁷ While the *Morning Post* and the *Standard* merely claimed to protect her reputation, instead they made the queen appear weak, foolish, and the captive of the wrong people, specifically Lord Melbourne and his relationship with Victoria.⁵⁸ It was the Queen’s lack of agency and assumed dependence on men that threatened the monarchy altogether.⁵⁹ The British public wanted a stable sovereign, who could be a pillar of morality.⁶⁰ Victoria had to be the perfect queen to save the reputation of the monarchy which her uncles had soiled. Corrupting the sovereign had led to a loss of dignity in the court, which would result in the destabilization of the monarchy itself and the country.⁶¹ The monarchy had recently been rejuvenated thanks in part to Victoria’s youth and supposed morality. Initially, it was thought that Victoria’s reign would end the immorality of the Hanoverians, but it seemed like it was only continuing. Victoria’s mistakes would only be continued with the Bedchamber Crisis of 1839.

Although, she was supposed to be politically neutral Victoria was sympathetic to the Whig party also known as the Liberals.⁶² There were two types of Liberals: “the economic who wanted to abolish the Corn Laws and Free Trade and the more radical who wanted to expand franchisement and reform Parliament.”⁶³ The Tory party was also divided into two parties: “the diehards from the landed class who wish to protect their incomes from arable lands by imposing tariffs on imported corn and driving up the price of bread.”⁶⁴ When Victoria came to the throne,

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶² Wilson, *Victoria*, 88.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

Lord Melbourne was the Whig prime minister at her side guiding her in her new role.⁶⁵ In his late fifties, Melbourne was a widower deeply in love with the memory of his late wife Caroline (who had an extramarital affair with Lord Byron.)⁶⁶ Melbourne became a father figure to Victoria, like her uncle King Leopold of Belgium.⁶⁷ Victoria hero-worshipped Melbourne, yet as much as she cared for her Prime Minister their platonic relationship could not last.⁶⁸ In 1839, Lord Melbourne resigned as Prime Minister when his majority in the House of Commons fell to just five.⁶⁹ He advised the Queen to send for the Tory leader, the Duke of Wellington, to form a government, but the aging military hero was in poor health.⁷⁰ The Duke advised the Queen to send for Sir Robert Peel, a rising Tory leader, to form a government.⁷¹ When the two met, Peel told the Queen that she would have to release some of her Whig ladies and have them replaced with ladies affiliated with the Tories.⁷² The Queen refused because she had many ladies who had Tory connections and the appointment was of her own personal choice.⁷³ These women were not viewed by the Queen as political advisors, but as personal attendants and confidants.⁷⁴ Victoria did not think that her household was part of the public or political sphere, and she felt that her new Prime Minister was intruding into her private life.⁷⁵ Peel felt that he could not form a government without the certainty of the majority of the House of Commons and the confrontation with the Queen would have been viewed as inconclusive and confusing. Peel withdrew from the

⁶⁵ Weintraub Stanley, *Victoria* (New York: Truman Talley Books, 1987), *passim*.

⁶⁶ Wilson, *Victoria*, 94.

⁶⁷ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 105.

⁶⁸ Wilson, *Victoria*, 89.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 94.

⁷³ Thompson., *Queen Victoria*, 30.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁷⁵ Fidler, *Newspaper Representations of Queen Victoria's Agency*, 15.

office and Lord Melbourne returned as Prime Minister.⁷⁶ Although Victoria may have been upset about losing her ladies she had knowledge of the political system and was using to her advantage to have her friend Melbourne return to his former position.⁷⁷ In this event in her life, Victoria is actively trying to intervene on the behalf of herself, so she can have her trusted mentor back in office. Although this may be viewed as selfish, Victoria may have been acting on the behalf of the monarchy because Melbourne had taught the naive, queen how to conduct affairs of state.

In representations of the queen's agency during the Bedchamber Crisis, the Tory newspapers were merciless to Victoria, but from the beginning the Bedchamber Crisis was never solely blamed on her. "There were several views on who was to blame for the constitutional problem: (1) a mistake or misunderstanding by Peel, (2) Tory press believed the Peel was trying to do his job, (3) Whig papers felt that Peel was trying to bully the queen."⁷⁸ In the Tory papers, the Queen was depicted as overreacting at the prospect of losing some of her ladies.⁷⁹ The feminine tendency to become overemotional was played up, while the men claimed the rational position.⁸⁰ The Tory papers could not separate the queen from her private emotions and scoffed at the idea that she was friends with her ladies.⁸¹ The failings of the Queen during the Bedchamber Crisis were not simply moral, but political and more consequential than in Lady Flora Hastings scandal

⁷⁶Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 30.

⁷⁷Fidler, *Newspaper Representations of Queen Victoria's Agency*, 10.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 54.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 55.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 55.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 57.

because it could lead to a constitutional crisis.⁸² The Tory papers felt they were the only guardians of Victoria's true concern: her feminine purity.⁸³ The Tory papers continued to blame Melbourne as "irresponsible for not teaching his child, Victoria, how to rule, causing mayhem within the government."⁸⁴ Both Whig and Tory papers denied the Queen's agency but in different ways.⁸⁵ For the Whig press, Victoria was reactive to the situation instead of active, while the Tory paper viewed her as taking bad advice from the Whigs.⁸⁶ Both papers agree that the queen need male guidance and her marriage to Prince Albert would help her personally and politically.⁸⁷ Fortunately for the queen, the average British subject did not care about the Bedchamber Crisis and the monarchy was safe for the time being.⁸⁸ With her marriage to Prince Albert the following year, the monarchy was more secure now that a man was by the queen's side advising her.

Yet despite the scandals in the early years of Victoria's reign, her early years are represented as "a period of stability."⁸⁹ Mandy Merck's work *British Monarchy on Screen*, argues that movies like *Victoria the Great* and the sequel *Sixty Glorious Years*, represented the Queen's early years "as preoccupied with the security and prosperity of her subjects."⁹⁰ In *Victoria the Great*, the Queen becomes aware of her people's suffering and makes her Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel work to repeal the Corn Laws. Victoria learns about the suffering of the poor

⁸² *Ibid.*, 58.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁹ Merck, Mandy, "*British Monarchy on Screen*," (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2007), accessed February 17, 2017, <https://www.doabooks.org/doab?func=search&query=au%22Merck%20,Mandy%22&uiLanguage=en>.

⁹⁰ Merck. *British Monarchy on Screen*, 73.

through reading *Oliver Twist* and later through protesters outside Buckingham Palace wanting to end the Corn Laws.⁹¹ However in *The Young Victoria*, Victoria wants to make a positive impact on her people yet Lord Melbourne sways her from improving their lives.⁹² These film suggest that Victoria's early years were a time when she was trying to establish her agency and using the monarchy to make a positive impact on the lives of her subjects.

In the nineteenth-century, women were viewed as the “weaker sex,” who were supposed to have the behavioral attributes of duty, domesticity, and modesty.⁹³ The ideal woman was thought to be emotional, dependent, and gentle.⁹⁴ 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.⁹⁵ The male medical profession viewed women as naturally sickly due to the treatment of “female hysteria,” which included symptoms of nervousness, anxiety and a disposition to cry.⁹⁶ This complemented the idea that men were robust, aggressive, healthy and ready for the harsh lifestyle of politics and work.⁹⁷ Although the nation was thrilled to have a new young monarch, her gender made it ever more difficult for people to accept her true authority figure.⁹⁸ These were the standard representations of gender roles during Victoria's reign, yet due to her many contradictions, the Queen did not always follow these gender roles.

In February of 1840, Queen Victoria married her first cousin, Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, at St. James's Chapel. Before the marriage, there were worries about the Queen's potential

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 75.

⁹³ Lassister, *Exploring Power and Gender Roles*, 11.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹⁸ Fidler, *Newspaper Representations of Queen Victoria's Agency*, 8.

marriage because it posed the problem that any prince would have to accept the role as prince consort to the sovereign and there were few precedents to follow.⁹⁹ For a husband, Victoria had chosen well in Albert, who was intelligent and was serious about the career he was about to undertake.¹⁰⁰ He cared deeply for his wife and family- the image of the nuclear family was due in part not only to the Queen but also to Albert himself.¹⁰¹ Yet even with all of Albert's affable qualities, many subjects were concerned that Albert would try to take his wife's throne and that a foreigner would then be King.

Albert's title became an issue, with the young couple and Parliament squaring off. Victoria wanted her husband to have the title of "king consort" with the understanding that they would share the throne equally.¹⁰² However, Thompson believes that the Queen would have not actually gone along with the equal share of the throne, but the idea was up for grabs.¹⁰³ There were real fears that Albert could seize the Crown for himself, as depicted in a political cartoon where he is trying on a crown, while a screaming Victoria orders him not to touch it.¹⁰⁴ It was later settled that Prince Albert would be known as the Prince Consort, much to the dismay of the Queen. Even though Albert was unable to acquire the title of King Consort, it is no surprise that Victoria wanted to share her power. Victoria believed that her husband was better at dealing with politics than she was. Albert was an intelligent man who wanted to bring his sense of liberalism to British politics. While Albert wanted to influence British policy, Victoria did not like politics and felt that women should not be involved in them.¹⁰⁵ In the nineteenth-century, it would have been

⁹⁹ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 31.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

difficult for Victoria to alter societies perceptions on gender and power, by solely taking on a political while married.¹⁰⁶ It was in Victoria's best interest to have Albert take on the political challenges of the day, while she focused on their ever-growing family and supported her husband.¹⁰⁷

In the years following their marriage, Victoria would have nine children, and Albert's guidance and support became absolutely essential to her.¹⁰⁸ Victoria would no longer play the leading political role in the royal family and would leave her husband to make political transactions. Albert was better at dealing with Peel, who became Prime Minister again in 1841, and the Queen found little difficulty in accepting the new political reality.¹⁰⁹ At first, it was difficult for Albert to find a role being that, in the traditional sense, he would have been the sovereign, yet he was reduced to being known as her majesty's husband. Even worse was that his authority in his own house was questioned, in part due the Queen's governess, Baroness Lehzen, who managed the household and royal nursery. Lehzen was an essential part of Victoria's life before she married Prince Albert. Lehzen had been a constant companion and loyal friend to Victoria as a child and as an adult. Baroness Lehzen was eventually forced into retirement and Albert gained more control in his position in the Queen's household. Although his arrival into the British royal family was contentious, Albert improved not only the running of the royal household but also the popularity of the monarchy.¹¹⁰

For the female sovereign, giving birth to an heir was a public duty and there was little privacy involved as royal officials in attended of a royal births. By giving birth to nine children, Queen Victoria's private body had produced public figureheads for years to come, unlike that of

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰⁹ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 41.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

her immoral uncles. With the arrival of their children, the royal family worked hard to portray themselves as a middle-class family in an ever growing middle-class society. In a book of *British Song*, the Queen and her family are illustrated as a close knit family spending time together, much like the average middle-class family would.¹¹¹ Before their marriage, Victoria had adopted the moral code of Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, which was less strict compared to Albert's. Albert wanted to project the royal family as an image of morality in contrast to both the disastrous reigns of Victoria's uncles who were known to live immoral lives and the Prince Consort's own family history of adultery.

In Walter Bagehot's *English Constitution*, Bagehot wrote that morality was a force that the monarchy should use. The crown appealed to not only the lowest people of society but also to the middle-class. For Bagehot the Queen possessed the domestic virtues that allowed middle-class families to relate to the royal family.¹¹² As part of the royal family's middle-class image, Queen Victoria became represented as a motherly figure, caring for her people.¹¹³ As a mother, wife, and philanthropist, she was associated with the traditionally feminine characteristics of the nineteenth-century.¹¹⁴ This was a change from her early, unmarried years when Victoria wanted to be represented as a strong, unyielding monarch -a traditional king- but after her marriage she wanted to be represented as a traditional mother and wife.¹¹⁵

Adrienne Munich's article, *Queen Victoria, Empire and Excess*, states that "it was a Victorian commonplace to observe that the Queen ruled her nation as a mother but her household as

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹¹² Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 21.

¹¹³ Murphy James H, *Abject Loyalty: Nationalism and Monarchy In Ireland During the Reign of Queen Victoria* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), *passim*.

¹¹⁴ Fidler, *Newspaper Representations of Queen Victoria's Agency*, 11.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

a monarch.”¹¹⁶ This way of ruling is mixed up, Victoria’s rule is “backwards.” Munich argues that the saying “demonstrates a confusion that lies at the heart of Victorian culture that conceptualized the Queen when linking her maternal role to her monarchical role, a boundary in the cultural imagination was transgressed.”¹¹⁷ For Victoria’s nineteenth-century subjects, it was hard for them to make sense of a female ruler and how she should behave in a patriarchal society. Men were meant to be at top of the pyramid of authority and women were reserved for the bottom.¹¹⁸ “The problem so the saying suggest, is that Victoria as mother and monarch leads to confusion: something appears to be wrong at the top of the pyramid of authority.”¹¹⁹ Children or subjects, looked to the authority of the father or king, not to a mother or queen who was second in the line of hierarchy.¹²⁰ Victoria’s maternal body was meant for the private sphere, while her sovereign body belonged to the public sphere.¹²¹ Although, being a mother and a wife was the standard for an ordinary nineteenth-century woman, it was not the same for a female monarch. In Victoria’s situation because she was a woman and therefore part of the “weaker” sex how could she be a strong leader in a position that was meant to be for a man? In the nineteenth-century, Victoria could not take on the characteristics of a man such as authority, also known as emmanlinancy, because that would be uncharacteristic of a good woman to posse such qualities.¹²² Could having a husband by her side fix the “backwards,” situation within the British monarchy? When Prince

¹¹⁶ Munich, Adrienne Auslander. "Queen Victoria, Empire, and Excess." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 6, no. 2 (1987): 265-78. accessed January 28, 2017, doi:10.2307/464272. See also Homans, Margaret, and Adrienne Munich. *Remaking Queen Victoria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). See also Munich, Adrienne, *Queen Victoria's Secret* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1998).

¹¹⁷ Munich, *Queen Victoria, Empire and Excess*, 265.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 266.

Albert married Queen Victoria in 1840 there was an issue over the title he should be given as the queen's husband.¹²³ It was decided that Albert would have no official title, which "avoid Parliamentary recognition Victoria's anomalous position as sovereign."¹²⁴ Even though, Albert was superior to Victoria biologically, he was inferior to her given his foreign birth and royal status compared to the queen.¹²⁵ Victoria herself wished for her husband to be given the title "King Consort," and was resentful about Albert's predicament.¹²⁶ Munich makes a strong argument that even with Victoria was in a "backwards" position as sovereign and even her marriage to Albert could not diminish Victoria's governmental authority. Victoria could not act as masculine in her role as queen but she could not be too feminine because she could be viewed as weak ruler. Yet the most basic function of womanhood; giving birth and being a mother, would help create an image of Victoria even if the queen despised the very nature of it.

Queen Victoria and her nine children defied the odds of the nineteenth-century by their survival and longevity.¹²⁷ Victoria was not passionate about pregnancy or motherhood, yet her maternal body would be used "to exploit her authority as a mother."¹²⁸ However, viewing the queen as a maternal figure could be seen both as effeminate and infantile which could be an embarrassment on representation of the nation.¹²⁹ By showing the queen's representation in excess both in abundance of Victoria's body and her financial wealth, this counteracts the image of an effeminate and infantile monarchical figure.¹³⁰ Munich states that these images of the queen as a

¹²³ *Ibid.* 267.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 267.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 270.

large maternal figure was also viewed as an absurdity because an woman who was a mother, grandmother, widow and not a virgin was seen as a contradiction.¹³¹ Even Victoria herself was a contradiction, a ruler in her own right, yet she refused to wear a crown, Victorian representations of female monarchs were generally presented as excessively passionate figures incapable of carrying the weight of the Crown.¹³² After fifteen years of rule, Victoria wrote in her journal “I am everyday more convinced that we women, if we are good women, feminine and amiable and domestic, are not fitted to reign.”¹³³ The Queen agrees with her critics that women were not capable of ruling due to their biological nature and a good women would rather be in the home than in a position of higher authority. Munich states that these images of the queen as a large maternal figure was also viewed as an absurdity because an woman who was a mother, grandmother, widow and not a virgin was seen as a contradiction.¹³⁴ Women who were mother, wives, or widows were not meant to be represented in such powerful position, yet as absurd as it was for a monarch to be viewed as a mother it worked for Victoria who was able to create a stable monarchy unlike those of her male predecessors.

Victoria’s image was known to be shown in excess because her expanding waistline and many children but it was also meant to be seen as charitable.¹³⁵ During the Industrial Revolution the misery of the poor became a visible reminder to faithful Victorians that they had an obligation to start philanthropies and charitable donations to ensure the welfare of their needy countrymen. Prochaska states that the British government had little interest in social welfare policies and

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 278.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 266.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 267.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 278.

¹³⁵ Prochaska F. K, *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), *passim*.

citizens banded together to improve conditions and lives of the less fortunate.¹³⁶ Middle-class women especially looked to philanthropic work as a way of having a public role during a time when women were refused entry into the public sphere of male politics.¹³⁷ By the reign of Queen Victoria the monarchy had a keen interest in supporting the middle-class. The royal couple wanted to represent themselves as middle-class and have a closer bond with their middle-class subjects. The best way to do this was to be involved in the same charities as their middle-class subjects in order to gain trust and popularity. Victoria was well prepared for philanthropic work and her religious training made her sympathetic to the plight of her less fortunate subjects.¹³⁸ In emulating the charitable works of her female family members like her aunt Queen Adelaide “she had absorbed the charitable culture as applied to women.”¹³⁹ Victoria was taught not only by her mother the Duchess of Kent but also by her German advisor Baron Stockmar who believed that she must identify with a high moral standard unlike those of her predecessors. A clergyman delivered a sermon on the Queen’s coronation encouraging the Queen to seek advice from the wise and just, reminding her of her sacred duties. For clergymen they viewed the Queen’s agency as “the nursing mother of a Christian population,” yet it is uncertain whether Victoria viewed herself in the same regard.¹⁴⁰ With no time to recover from her coronation Victoria began to take on extra charitable duties that were required for her station.¹⁴¹ The Queen took on philanthropic and charities like financially supporting a child orphaned by a shipwreck, brought sewing machines

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

for widows, and had artificial limbs constructed for amputees.¹⁴² The separate spheres of men and women in the nineteenth-century sheltered the Queen from criticism and placed her in a unique political realm, allowing her to perform philanthropic role more so than if she had been a male ruler.¹⁴³

Victoria wanted her image to be represented as middle-class mother yet she also represented herself “the Soldier’s Queen.”¹⁴⁴ Victoria never forgot that she was the daughter of a soldier and dedicated monuments to her father.¹⁴⁵ She would emulate the great Queen Elizabeth I by riding on horseback during military reviews.¹⁴⁶ Victoria was far from a “warmonger” but she did have interest in military matters.¹⁴⁷ During the Crimean War Victoria was devoted to the cause and if she could would have fought in the war.¹⁴⁸ The war lasted a year and a half in which Queen Victoria wrote numerous condolence letters to war widows. “The Queen had a talent for writing condolence letters and in one such case she brought the Admiral Sir E. Lyons out of despondency when his son died.”¹⁴⁹ Queen Victoria’s beautiful letter to the Admiral that helped him recover and he continue to fight in the war.¹⁵⁰ The army and navy played a vital role in Victoria’s role as queen.¹⁵¹ The Queen had a deep compassion for British soldiers and demonstrated

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁴⁴ Arnstein, Walter L. *The Warrior Queen: Reflections on Victoria and Her World*. *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 30, no. 1 (1998): 1-28.

¹⁴⁵ Arnstein, *The Warrior Queen: Reflections on Victoria and Her World*, 4.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

this by visiting war hospitals with her family. She had great admiration for Florence Nightingale who became famous during the war for her nursing skills.¹⁵²

Queen Victoria's reign was not the first time a female monarch ruled England but it was the beginning of the transformation in which the monarchy became more involved in their social role.¹⁵³ In Walter Bagehot's *English Constitution* he describes the transformation of the British monarchy from a "awkward vestige of the old regime into a popular symbol of the modern state."¹⁵⁴ Victoria was young and innocent, far removed from the excesses of her Hanoverian uncles, and her accession was a revitalization of interest of the British monarchy by the public.¹⁵⁵ For the new form of monarchy to survive Victoria and her successors would have to "use her ability to perform the occasional ceremony rather than everyday business."¹⁵⁶ With their marriage Queen Victoria and Prince Albert spent the next twenty years traveling on numerous tours and traveling throughout the British Isle and parts of Europe. This constant public exposure was "recognition of Victoria's reliance on the approval of her subjects, a celebration of the inclusivity of the Empire, and participation of the people."¹⁵⁷ There was a great pressure on Victoria to perform a "worthwhile role," for the monarchy now that she held no political affiliation.¹⁵⁸ During the years of tours Victoria gave birth to nine children thus, transforming the image of the royal family from the immoral Hanoverians to a "wholesome mixture to which the press gave full attention."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁵³ Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 17.

¹⁵⁴ Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 29.

¹⁵⁵ Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 18-19.

¹⁵⁶ Kuhn. *Democratic Royalism*, 31.

¹⁵⁷ Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 17.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

The wholesome image of the royal family gave way to multiple tours and increased interest by the press. Both the Queen and her consort made an impact with their civic publicness and this was shown by their visits that “helped to forge a local consensus around the Crown.”¹⁶⁰ The roles that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert played during these royal tours and public engagements were far from “decorative.”¹⁶¹ Rather the royal couple was paying homage to middle-class England. Albert’s involvement with the Great Exhibition in 1851 and the Queen’s opening of the event was viewed as the realization of the royal couple’s constitutional role, involving as it did, various dinners, meetings, and civic engagements. Prince Albert now had the defined and accepted role he had hoped for at the outset of marriage. In 1843 the newspaper the *Penny Satirist* wrote that Prince Albert should have a greater public role and by the time of the Great Exhibition he had made a transition from unknown role to the right hand of the Queen.¹⁶² However in the late 1850s as the Queen and her husband grew older, their elder children gained more authority of the press and were taking on larger public roles.¹⁶³

After Albert’s unexpected death in December of 1861, the Queen went through a deep depression causing her to retreat from public life. With Albert no longer by her side, Victoria was constantly overwhelmed by self-doubt concerning her role as Queen. The male role that Albert provide was no longer there and Victoria was an emotional wreck, writing to her eldest daughter, Vicky, in February of 1866, of feelings of anxiety and a sense of isolation.¹⁶⁴ Victoria felt a sense of helplessness and powerlessness, and when referencing her loss of Albert, the

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁶³ Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 55.

¹⁶⁴ Lassiter, *Exploring Power and Gender-Role Expectations*, 29.

Queen felt like a “sheep without a Shepherd.”¹⁶⁵ Ignoring the demands of the British people and her prime ministers, Victoria refused to return to the public and perform royal duties. Victoria wrote to her daughter that she was being “driven by desperation,” and was “in complete breakdown of her nervous system.”¹⁶⁶ As she grew older and more confident in her independent role, Victoria believed that sovereign needed to be role models for their people.¹⁶⁷ Like their parents before them Victoria’s children were preparing to take on the constitutional role of the monarchy that would carry it into the future.

Victoria’s seclusion and widowhood

Much of Victoria’s life was lived in seclusion, far from the gaze of the public in her royal palaces. From the time she was born, Victoria lived most of her early years in Kensington Palace with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, her advisor Sir John Conroy, and her governess, Baroness Lehzen. In order to make sure when the time came and an heir was needed, Conroy created the Kensington system that made sure that Victoria would never be left alone, so much so that she had to hold the hand of a guardian to go down the stairs. There were very few times that Victoria went out in public and when she did, it was mostly on tour to see the nation she would one day rule. As a queen and with her marriage to Prince Albert, Victoria became a public figure and embarked on many royal tours. With Albert’s death in 1861, Victoria not only lost her husband but her willingness to go out in public. Albert was a source of comfort for the Queen when she had to make speeches due to her unsettled nerves. In the years after Albert’s death Victoria went to Westminster only seven times to open Parliament and never spoke again.¹⁶⁸ Her departure from

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁶⁸ Arnstein, *The Warrior Queen: Reflections on Victoria and Her World*, 18.

public life would set a new form of representing the Queen's agency for much of the 1860s and 1870s.

The death of Albert was not only a loss of a companion for the Queen but a loss of a private secretary, her political advisor, and co-director of her family and household. He died at the height of his political power and influence, and left an essential part out of Victoria's life. "During their political partnership, the Queen's opinion could be easily persuaded by Albert's influence, due to his own serious and knowledgeable approach, to an extent which would have been unlikely and unacceptable of her political advisors or statesmen to act upon."¹⁶⁹ During Albert's lifetime, the monarchy had gained in popularity, most likely due to the image of a stable royal family.¹⁷⁰ When Victoria went into seclusion for a decade, she was criticized for not fulfilling her public duties or entertaining foreign dignitaries. Many of her critics believe that she was taking money from the civil list income, while, in reality, she returned a portion of it back every year.¹⁷¹

When Queen Victoria was married to Prince Albert, "the popularity of the monarchy depended on the authenticity of Victoria's performance as a middle-class wife," but in widowhood, she became invisible to her subjects.¹⁷² "The first two years of the Queen's seclusion was appropriate for Victorian mourning customs, but when time extended, the paradox of her reign was put to the test."¹⁷³ Although she was expected to mourn as a wife, she was also meant to perform her duties as Queen.¹⁷⁴ One of Victoria's first public appearances after Albert's death is depicted in

¹⁶⁹ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 50.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁷² Homans, *The Royal Representations*, 58.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

the painting *The Marriage of the Prince of Wales*, by William Powell Frith. The Queen is depicted in the upper right corner, watching the ceremony from Catherine of Aragon's closet in St. George's Chapel. She wears her white veil and widow's black, standing in the shadows, in contrast to a painting of 1855, when Queen Victoria met the French emperor, and her white dress was the focal point.¹⁷⁵ In Firth's painting, "Victoria's placement in a "box," next to the stage where her son performs his vows, suggests at once that she is not quite the monarch and to the contrary that she is the royal cynosure- the spectacle that gains authority from the spectacle on stage."¹⁷⁶ In the political magazine *Punch*, Queen Victoria's agency during her absence is represented with Queen Hermione expressing a wish that Victoria would return to performing her royal duties in her own person.¹⁷⁷

Homans explores how several literary texts in the first ten years of the Queen's widowhood produced the imagery of multiple queens created in a vacuum due to her absence.¹⁷⁸ Victoria's people were aware of her absence and took note of this through various texts to represent their frustrations with their absent queen. Ruskin's *Of Queen Garden*, and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* represent "the difficult process of making queens."¹⁷⁹ In Ruskin's work, he aims to explain "how to turn all middle-class British girls into queens."¹⁸⁰ Ruskin constantly "repeats the word "queen" to construct the Queen in the image of an ordinary woman and to spread her influence across her realm." With *Of Queen's Garden* "multiplication of queens, the work echoes and attempts to compensate for Queen Victoria's absence by locating queens everywhere."

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

Homans states that in contrast to Ruskin's essay, Lewis Carroll's books *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, makes light of Ruskin's logic.¹⁸¹ In Carroll's work, *Alice in Wonderland* the main character, Alice, is trying to master her growth. Throughout the story Alice struggles with her unpredictable growth and shrinkage, unable to explain who she is to the caterpillar. Never growing into a queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice is able to control her growth when she meets the Queen of Hearts.¹⁸² Through her interactions, Alice "learns to rival and reject," the Queen of Hearts authority. Carroll's character learns through her growth that queens are "nothing but a pack of cards."¹⁸³ Later in the story Alice meets the White Queen and understands that having multiple queens lessens their value.¹⁸⁴ Carroll mocks Ruskin's work such as his views on women and his poor attempt "to turn girls into queens."¹⁸⁵ Both works are an attempt by nineteenth-century authors to make "new queens" replacing Queen Victoria because she has disappeared from public view. These works show that when the Queen refuses to perform her royal duties she ceased to exist, thus refusing to embody her representation.¹⁸⁶

While Victoria could not make royal appearances for mundane matters of state she was however, willing to make several public appearance for the unveiling of memorials to her beloved Albert. In the 1860s Victoria made a rare appearance for the opening of the Royal Albert Hall and she even traveled to Albert's native Coburg to unveil a statue in his memory.¹⁸⁷ These

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 157.

were just a few of the many times the Queen made a public appearance to commemorate her husband's life, yet she could not fathom opening Parliament. Though the Queen preferred grieving in private she turned it into a national mourning project by her public display of pain when she appeared to commemorate memorials for Prince Albert. Although these public appearances were to draw attention to the late Prince Consort, instead they drew attention to the Queen herself and her control over royal representation.¹⁸⁸ Even before his death Albert had requested that if any monuments were to be built in his memory it should instead be an institution dedicated to arts and sciences and no marble. "But on the evidence of the choices she made, Victoria is representing not Albert himself - his wishes or even his likeness-but instead his death and her grief."¹⁸⁹ Homans argues that in bringing attention to Albert's death she was bringing attention to her own. After Albert's death Victoria embraced her role as symbolic monarch, thus, acting as if she was already in the grave.¹⁹⁰

Through her companionship with John Brown, Victoria was represented as a monarch who had allowed her Scottish gillie the role of advisor and senior advisor. John Brown had been a gillie for the royal family before the death of Prince Albert, and he knew the Prince Consort before his untimely death.¹⁹¹ Throughout her life Victoria was attracted to masculinity and good looks and John Brown was no exception.¹⁹² Queen Victoria felt a strong need for male support, admiration and a sympathetic male presence.¹⁹³ She viewed Highlanders differently from the rest of her subjects, and no one found it surprising that Victoria would bring one of her servants from

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.

¹⁹¹ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 66.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 65.

Balmoral to her estate at Osbourne to take care of her horses.¹⁹⁴ Their friendship would cause a stir in British society, as many viewed it as an improper relationship.

Thompson states that in the early decades of the nineteenth-century, sexual immorality was somewhat more acceptable than it would be as the century went on. Sexual behavior became disguised in attitudes and codes which not only concealed much of the reality of what went on, but restricted and punished certain members of society out of all proportion to any misbehavior of which they may have been guilty.¹⁹⁵ Those in lower stations of society were bullied, black-mailed or trapped by the social or legal controls imposed in the name of an ideal code of behavior. If it could be proven that the middle aged, widow and queen, was having a sexual liaison with her servant, her social inferior, many cherished taboos and judgments would have been challenged. Republicans and anti-monarchist could misconstrued the Queen's relationship with John Brown to discredit her. By doing this the Queen's morality would be in question causing conflict with the teachings of the church and state which dominated the lives of her subjects.¹⁹⁶

Due to the Queen's close relationship with Brown, there were various ways the pair were represented in different media formats of the day. Speculation and gossip about Queen Victoria and John Brown was found in many newspapers around Europe. A Swiss newspaper, the *Gazette de Lausanne*, reported that the Queen had secretly married John Brown and was carrying his child. The British minister in Berne, Switzerland, lodged a complaint, but the story did not die.¹⁹⁷ The intense gossip was not helped by a painting by Sir Edwin Landseer of the queen and John Brown together, displayed in the Royal Academy. In the painting, the queen is depicted as sitting

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

side saddle upon an elegant horse, reading a dispatch of papers, while John Brown stands near the head, gazing at her with deep respect. “The queen, it appears, was delighted with the picture and had herself suggested minor amendments before its completion.”¹⁹⁸ Victoria continued to request her engravings of her beloved servant and commission more depictions of her and Brown, like a bust of her faithful servant.¹⁹⁹

Brown’s own behavior, by some, could be represented as more like that of a husband than as a servant. At certain times, he would bluntly address the queen but his fidelity and constant attention was hardly ever questioned. He was present at the most private moments with the queen and her children, which caused a rift with her eldest son Bertie. The lack of respect that Bertie gave to Brown caused the queen to rarely visit her son at his Sandringham estate. In Thompson’s view, “the Queen’s relationship with Brown was one of infatuation and strong sexual attraction, gradually becoming into an affectionate partnership, which strongly resembled a stable marriage.”²⁰⁰ When Brown died in 1883, Victoria kept his room as he left it, preserving his gifts and commissioning memorials much like she did with her late husband’s memorials.²⁰¹

While the Queen would not openly attend public events she became visible in another avenue through the new technology of photography. Photography during the period of Victoria’s seclusion was a substitute for her lack of public appearances and “the photographic profession owed much to her.”²⁰² After the death of Albert a photographer took photos of Victoria in full mourning, gazing sadly at a bust of her deceased husband. Known as *cartes*, Victoria used these as a public demonstration of her grief which was also “used paradoxically to justify why she

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

²⁰² Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 195.

could not perform any state engagements.”²⁰³ The *cartes* were sold to Victoria’s subjects and they could now visually see their Queen’s suffering and gain an insight to her life. The *London Review* found the Queen’s mourning photographs to be “uncomfortable because of their intimacy.” In the opinion of the *London Review*, the photos were “distasteful because of the depiction of the Queen’s innermost feelings which should not have been published.”²⁰⁴ For the public the *cartes*, initially fascinating, but over time the photos lost their “novelty.” Photography during Victoria’s seclusion was a substitute for her lack of public appearances and the photographic profession owed much to her.²⁰⁵ Although the Queen’s photographs of her deep grief were found to be disturbing other personal works of Victoria’s would be successful in the coming years.

While in seclusion, the Queen published several works including, *The Early Years of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort (1867)*, *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands (1868)*, and *More Leaves from the Journal of a Life in the Highlands (1884)*. These books were published not only to substitute for the Queen’s lack of presence but to memorialize her husband.²⁰⁶ Victoria’s journals were a way of answering her critics who said she did not show herself in public often enough; books were to perform her royal duties for her.²⁰⁷ This suggests that readers were hungry for some alternative to the public appearances the Queen no longer made.²⁰⁸ The journals detailed the royal couple’s life far away from the public gaze of London.²⁰⁹ The

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 179.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 181.

²⁰⁶ Homans, *Royal Representations*, 116.

²⁰⁷ Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 86.

²⁰⁸ Homans, *Royal Representations*, 116.

²⁰⁹ Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 86.

books were universally praised and very popular.²¹⁰ However, not all her works were well received, *More Leaves from the Journal of a Life in the Highlands* concerned many because it revived rumors of the Queen having a love affair with John Brown.²¹¹ When a courtier advised the Queen to remove descriptions of Brown's legs from her work and stop collecting material for her journal, Victoria became angry with him. The courtier threatened to resign but the Queen eventually heeded his advice.²¹² Davidson saved the monarchy from mockery during a turbulent time when a matronly queen with a companion servant would have been inexcusable.²¹³ Yet initially Victoria was more than willing to show the public her true self even if it meant the unraveling of the monarchy. Although these works were for the representation of her dearly departed husband, reviewers downplayed this instead focusing on the representations of the Queen herself.²¹⁴

During the Queen's seclusion, a republican movement began, which gained support partly due to Victoria's absence. The 1870's saw the revolution in Paris and the establishment of a new republican government in France, which coincided with a small controversy of the Queen's civil income list. In an average year, Parliament approved annual allowances for the Queen's children and theirs were generally not controversial. However, in the political context of the 1870's loyal politicians began to question why the Queen's civil list was insufficient. The queen's continuing seclusion was harming her popularity and limiting the effectiveness of the throne as a barrier against disorder.²¹⁵ Her unpopularity was causing damage to the constitutional monarchy, something that Prince Albert had worked diligently to preserve.²¹⁶ Queen Victoria's

²¹⁰ Homans, *Royal Representations*, 116.

²¹¹ Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 87.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 87.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 88.

²¹⁴ Homans, *Royal Representations*, 157.

²¹⁵ Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 36.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

public role severely suffered during her time in seclusion. There was growing dissent during the decade of the Queen's seclusion. Her prime ministers "Disraeli and Gladstone both emphasized the importance of monarchy continuing to have a public face." Gladstone tried desperately to have the Prince of Wales become the Viceroy of Ireland but Victoria refused to allow her son the position. Gladstone had hoped that he could strengthen the Crown by putting a young royal in a visible position of public duty but the Queen shelved the idea.²¹⁷ Gladstone thought that if the Queen was not visible maybe her children could be garner interest from the press and people. It was imperative that the Queen return to public life and provide visible support of strength and stability in unstable times, especially with upcoming parliamentary reforms.²¹⁸

While there were those who believed that the Queen's seclusion was damaging the monarchy, writers like Walter Bagehot viewed Victoria's retirement differently. In referencing the queen and her son the Prince of Wales, Bagehot described "the actions of a retired widowed and an unemployed youth," as being important for the constitution.²¹⁹ Bagehot later retracted from his statements about the Queen in the 1870's stating that Victoria was taking her retirement to an extreme and Albert would never allow it.²²⁰ Others like Lord Robert Cecil disagreed and stated that the "loyalty to the throne when stimulated by external display, was an important barrier to disorder."²²¹ Another critic of the Queen, Lord Stanley thought that "she was being selfish and irresponsible in refusing to resume her public duties."²²²

²¹⁷Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 55.

²¹⁸Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 28.

²¹⁹*Ibid.*, 27.

²²⁰*Ibid.*, 28.

²²¹*Ibid.*, 27.

²²²*Ibid.*, 28.

The Queen could have abdicated in favor of her son Bertie, Prince of Wales, but her son had a gambling habit and was caught up in multiple extra marital affairs. The Queen viewed her son as lazy and incompetent and would never contemplate leaving the throne for him.²²³ “Had the queen’s or the prince’s behavior been associated with political, rather than with moral or familial failings, or had there been in the country generally a strong movement of hostility to the established political rulers that might have gained strength from the unpopularity of the monarchy, this could have been the time when a British republic emerged.”²²⁴ The major change occurred in 1871 when the Prince of Wales fell ill with typhoid fever, the same disease that killed his father exactly ten years before. There was popular interest with the Prince of Wales illness and a general sense of relief when he recovered. The prince’s illness and the subsequent thanksgiving defeated republicanism in Britain until around the time of the First World War.²²⁵ The thanksgiving service and procession in St. Paul’s not only demoralized the radicals, but it also caught the attention of politicians who caught a taste for royal ceremonies.²²⁶ The need for royal ceremony would be part of Victoria’s later life and would add to her prestige, making her a popular figure in the British Empire.²²⁷

The Queen’s final years

In 1876 Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli successfully lobbied Parliament to pass the Royal Titles Act, which gave Queen Victoria the title of Empress of India.²²⁸ The reason Queen Victoria wanted the new title was to ensure her precedence over the Emperors of Germany or the

²²³ Wilson, *Victoria*, 132.

²²⁴ Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 39.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

²²⁸ Homans, *Royal Representations*, 231.

Tsar of Russia or even her daughter, who would be the future German Empress. Even though she had become Empress, Victoria had made the title seem like a natural expression of her state of being rather than object of her desire.²²⁹

During her later years, Victoria was depicted as a regal and dignified figure, contrary to the fact that she refused to wear royal robes.²³⁰ Yet the representation of Victoria that late nineteenth-century Britons desired to see in their queen and their nation was glorious and triumphant. Her subjects believed Victoria to be a compassionate, loving mother to both her children and to all her people in her empire. Queen Victoria was thought to rule by love rather than force, even if she sat on a regal throne. There were many times that Victoria was portrayed not in a palace but in humble settings, such as caring for sick soldier or visiting children. For writers of biography and poetry alike, Queen Victoria was depicted as humble, with a love of home and hearth, and a boundless sympathy, born out of the suffering with all her subjects.²³¹ The Queen's Indian subjects also viewed her as a mother especially nationalist who "constructed her as a symbolic ally, whose goodness contracted with those of imperialist policy."²³² The motherly aspect of Victoria was part of her symbolic potency and bonded her people together.²³³ Victoria's imperial subjects also used the queen symbolically as they wrestled with issues of national self-determination and imperial power.²³⁴ By the end of her reign, Queen Victoria was known as the Great White Empress, the symbolic hub of the British Empire.²³⁵ During the last few years of Victoria's reign

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 232.

²³⁰ Smith Victoria Ruth. "Constructing Victoria: The Representation of Queen Victoria in England, India, and Canada, 1897-1914." (PhD diss., Rutgers The State University of New Jersey - New Brunswick, 1998).

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

²³² *Ibid.*, 8.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 7.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

²³⁵ Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 240.

celebrations for her Diamond Jubilee were held to honor her historic time as Queen. The Diamond Jubilee of 1897 was held in London and thousands came to watch the Queen and her procession. Subjects from all over the British Empire came to attend the event and one observer Samuel Clemens wrote that when the Queen passes “all the world was on its feet and uncovered.”²³⁶

By the end of Victoria’s reign her subjects all over the world viewed the Queen as a humble woman who adhered to duty, and seen as a stance against national decadence and moral decline. At the time of Queen Victoria’s death many of her subjects could not comprehend their lives without her given her long reign. While much of the world was changing around them Victoria’s subjects saw their Queen as a representation of continuity. Victoria had overseen history but yet had never been truly a part of it and was seen as timeless.²³⁷

Conclusion

Queen Victoria’s long life was full of contradictions. For this reason, Victoria had to cognizant of how she would act as queen. She had to act as virtuous and feminine in order for her subjects to view her as a distant figure from that of her Hanoverian uncles and stabilize the monarchy. Victoria’s political leanings would cause events like the Flora Hastings scandal and the Bedchamber Crisis of 1839, prompting her to marry her cousin Prince Albert to resume the public that she was a capable queen. With Albert, the image of the royal family was changed to one of a moral, middle class family that her subjects could relate to and emulate. Albert’s early was not only the loss of a man she loved, but an individual who helped shape and stabilize the monar-

²³⁶ Smith, *Constructing Victoria*, 18.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

chy. While in seclusion, Victoria refuses to perform the most basic royal duties and which threatened the Crown's existence. Her actions has caused an outcry for republicanism but Victoria returned to public life in her old age.²³⁸ After the death of Albert, Victoria's image changed from middle-class mother to conservative grandmother to the British Empire. Even with Queen Victoria's contradictions throughout her reign, she accomplished what her uncles could not; improve its image and transform it into a symbolic monarchy.

Over time, historians have argued Victoria's agency in relation to her image and how it was projected on to her people. Kuhn argued that Victoria's appeal to the masses was her ability to conduct occasional public ceremonies and thus transforming the monarchy into a symbolic symbol.²³⁹ Fidler argues that Victoria's youth, gender, inexperience, and lack of guidance from a male figure caused unease among British newspapers during the Flora Hastings scandal and the Bedchamber Crisis of 1839.²⁴⁰ Prochaska argues the representation of the Victoria's family as middle-class further completed the transformation of the monarchy from a scandalous entity to institution of virtues and morals through charitable acts. Focusing on the first two decades of Victoria's reign Plunkett argues that the royal family was transformed from a political entity to one of a national figurehead.²⁴¹ Murphy's work discusses the royal couple and their relationship with the public to transform the monarchy. Prince Albert's death brought her into seclusion and away from her public duties. With the Queen no longer a public figure she represented herself through various written works or when she made rare public appearances to commemorate memorial for Prince Albert. Homans' works argues that her subjects took note of her agency

²³⁸ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 115.

²³⁹ Kuhn, *Democratic Royalism*, 31.

²⁴⁰ Fidler, *Newspaper Representations of Queen Victoria*, iii.

²⁴¹ Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 6.

throughout her life and addressed it through cultural works.²⁴² Lassiter work's examines how Queen Victoria dealt with the contradiction of gender-role expectations and power after the death of Prince Albert by creating her own²⁴³ The final years of Victoria's life centered on the celebrations for her Golden and Diamond Jubilees would make her more popular than ever. In Arnstein's work Queen Victoria's image was central to the British military and her image was used in ceremonial occasions. The Queen's representation was never static constantly changing with the various roles she portrayed over her lifetime.²⁴⁴ Munich argues "the cultural paradox of Queen Victoria's specific kind of monarchy- the apparent contradiction of a devoted wife, prolific mother, and extravagant widow who was also the Queen of an empire."²⁴⁵ Thompson argues that because Victoria was a woman she stabilized the monarchy and prevented a more rational republic in Britain."²⁴⁶ Thompson also argues that at the beginning of Victoria's reign she symbolized a more liberal approach to government but by the time of her death she represented ultra-conservatism, and not just in a political sense.²⁴⁷ Smith continues this argument by stating that at the time of her death Victoria was represented as ultra-conservative and the monarchy was associated with the Conservative party, although this was unintentional.²⁴⁸ Throughout her life and beyond Victoria's representation as queen, she has been portrayed in different ways: from young virginal teenager to middle-class wife to lonely widow and finally, a motherly figure of an Empress in the historiography of her image. Victoria was a paradox and she help create at by "con-

²⁴² Homans, *Royal Representations*, xxxv.

²⁴³ Lassister, *Exploring power and gender-role expectation*, 61.

²⁴⁴ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 144.

²⁴⁵ Munich, *Queen Victoria*, 265.

²⁴⁶ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 145.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 144.

²⁴⁸ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 144.

structuring effective patterns of royal and self-representation would hold sway by using her willingness to give power away.”²⁴⁹ The various approaches of the Queen’s representation have been analyzed to portray the many contradictions that were part of her role as a female ruler in a male position, in a patriarchal society.

Over her sixty three year reign Victoria’s agency transformed in order for the monarchy to be secure. In her early years the young Queen represented herself as a feminine and moral ruler, separating herself from her Hanoverian forbearers. The new queen revived and popularized the monarchy until misfortunes like the Flora Hastings scandal and the Bedchamber affair brought disgrace to Victoria’s court. When the queen’s reputation was damaged a change in representation took place from young, virginal queen to one who could be easily misguided. Fearing that the Queen was not receiving adequate guidance from Lord Melbourne, critics and subjects believed that a husband would stabilize Victoria’s behavior. Victoria’s intent in her early years was to keep the monarchy afloat with an image of morality that her uncles could not maintain. With her marriage to Prince Albert the monarchy was stable again and the Prince Consort placed his own moral code on his wife. Victoria was no longer the solitary ruler but a wife and she wanted to emulate a middle-class woman to gain affection of the middle-class. The couple realized that they need public support for the monarchy and a stable royal family would create popularity among their subjects. Albert and Victoria planned for their son Edward Albert to take up the moral torch but he failed to live up to their standards with multiple sexual liaisons. The death of Albert caused Victoria to go through a deep depression after the loss of her companion and advisor. The monarchy was in disarray when Albert died because of his involvement in politics on behalf of his wife. Victoria need her husband by her side and she was unable to perform royal

²⁴⁹ Homans, *Royal Representations*, xiv.

duties. In her seclusion the monarchy declined in popularity and British subjects began to question whether having a queen was necessary. Victoria found solace with her servant John Brown who comforted and protected her. After Edward Albert's recovery from typhoid fever, Victoria returns to public duties with a constant male servant by her side until her death. Victoria was the most powerful woman on earth, yet she constantly needed a man to give her strength and support. Queen Victoria was the sovereign and leader of England yet she was being controlled by either her prime minister, her husband or male servant.

Chapter III: Films and Miniseries on Queen Victoria.

This thesis explores five films that portray the life of the revered British monarch. The films were chosen for this thesis because Queen Victoria was a central figure and because of the recurrence of the five themes; gender, morality, intrusion, assassination and seclusion. None of the films span the entire eighty one years of the Queen's life but various aspects of her life are portrayed in every film. All but one of the seven films either depict or mention the death of the Queen's husband Prince Albert and the intense grief she went through for over a decade. The first film *Victoria the Great* (1937) portrays Victoria as a young girl on the verge of being Queen. Through the film Victoria transforms from a lively monarch to a grateful queen at her Diamond Jubilee. The sequel to *Victoria the Great*, *Sixty Glorious Years* (1938), explores the deeper relationship between Victoria and Albert. The film depicts Victoria from her wedding and on to her ultimate death in 1901. *The Mudlark* (1950) is the fictional story of a young orphan named Wheeler who finds a coin with Queen Victoria's likeness. He trespasses into the Queen's palace thinking that she could be his new mother and later brings her out of her seclusion after the death of Prince Albert. *The Young Victoria* (2009) is a film that depicts the early years of Victoria's reign and ends with the birth of their first child Vicky in 1840. The final film, *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown* (1997) tells the story of Victoria and her servant John Brown who some believe became her romantic partner in the years after Albert's death in 1861.

Victoria the Great is a film that was released in 1937 in Great Britain and directed by Herbert Wilcox. Originally a play titled *Victoria Regina*, it was a Broadway success which prompted King Edward VIII to have it made into a movie. The film depicts Victoria's early reign, marriage to Prince Albert, and her reign after his death. The film stars Anna Neagle as Queen Victoria and Anton Walbrook as Prince Albert. *Variety* magazine wrote

“the film wisely puts its prime focus on the private life of Victoria, her romance, her marriage and personal characteristics. Backgrounded is her public life, and her gradual rise to such high estimation of her people.”¹

The movie was followed by a sequel, *Sixty Glorious Years*, with Anna Neagle reprising her role as Queen Victoria. The movie was based on actual events and historical facts. In this film, Queen Victoria is reserved and easily manipulated by the men around her.

The film starts with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Cunningham in a carriage on their way to Kensington Palace to meet the new Queen. Victoria is now Queen, but they are worried about both her age and the influence of her uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, and Baron Stockmar. Victoria is awakened by her governess, Baroness Louise Lehzen, in the same room that she shares with her mother, the Duchess of Kent. The Duchess of Kent tells the Lords that they cannot see her daughter because she needs her rest. The Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Cunningham need to speak to Victoria immediately and alone. Victoria comes down the stairs in only her nightgown and is told that her uncle, the King, is dead.

A year later on June 28th, 1838, the Queen awakens to the sounds of cannons in her room at Buckingham Palace. She goes to the window and with her cocker spaniel and waves to the crowd. At Westminster Abbey, she is crowned Queen in an opulent and ritual affair. She bows at the altar for several ladies-in-waiting and is given the oath by the archbishop of Canterbury. After a long process, Victoria is finally crowned queen by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Victoria is presented on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to an adoring crowd. On her coronation day, she is more concerned about giving her dog its bath than going out on the balcony again for the second time.

¹ <https://variety.com/1936/film/reviews/victoria-the-great-1117796105/>, accessed June 20, 2018.

Baron Stockmar informs both Ernest and Albert that they have been invited to England to meet the Queen. Albert does not want to meet the Queen and thinks she will choose his brother Ernest because he is older. The princes meet Lord Melbourne after a long journey from Germany near Dover, England. Victoria is forced to wait on her cousins because they have fallen asleep and she is not a patient young woman. Victoria feels that she is too young to marry but she has been forced to meet her cousins. She seems fascinated by Albert who says nothing to her and lets his brother do all the talking.

Queen Victoria holds a dinner party at Windsor Castle in honor of her two cousins and Albert is out of his element. Lord Melbourne sits with Victoria and she tells him that she wants to marry Albert. Victoria discusses how she will propose to Albert. The Queen meets with Albert in the library where she proposes to him. Victoria wants to spend the rest of her life with him and Albert tells her he will do everything in his power to make her happy. They are married and spend their honeymoon at Windsor Castle. The two only have three days to spend together before heading back to London to attend political affairs.

At home at Buckingham Palace, Albert tells Baron Stockman that he feels isolated and bored. Sir Robert Peel tells the Queen that she should share her work burden with her husband. Victoria walks from her study to find Albert playing the piano and they sing together. Albert informs Victoria that the palace is very cold and that she has to go through many obstacles to get a fire going. Victoria wants Albert to be in charge of the household duties and staff.

The couple rides through Constitutional Hill in their carriage. An assassin shoots at the Queen, but Albert steps in front of the Queen. Both are unharmed, and Albert tells Victoria that there is nothing to be afraid of. However, Victoria is still shaken by the incident, and Albert comforts her. They share a loving embrace and go out on the balcony.

In 1861 Albert negotiates with other politicians about the U.S. Civil War. The strain of years of work are beginning to show on the Prince Consort. At Windsor Castle, Victoria discusses Prince Albert's condition with the royal physician, Sir James. Victoria is upset that he has been unpopular and misunderstood and that he has done so much for her. Victoria speaks with her daughter, most likely Alice, about her Albert's condition. Victoria goes to Albert, who is sitting in a wheelchair, in the same room as where they got engaged. Albert dies with his wife by his side leaving Victoria in deep mourning. The Prime Minister comes to visit the Queen who is discontented and unhappy. He tells her that she must make sacrifices and return to royal life. The Prime Minister advises her that it would not be Albert's wish that she draw away from public service.

The film moves forward to 1877 and the Queen's return to public life. Disraeli informs the Queen of all the things that have changed and progressed in Great Britain. She becomes Empress of India and is gracious about her new title. In 1897, June 21st is the day of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee at St. Paul's Cathedral. The movie ends with Victoria is wearing black in a carriage and is emotional about the crowd singing to her.²

Produced in the late 1930's, *Victoria the Great*, represents Queen Victoria's agency as willingly giving away her power to the men around her especially Prince Albert. When Prince Albert dies, the Queen grieves greatly for him and must be convinced to return to public life because her departed husband would want her to. *Victoria the Great*, greatly reflects the gender norms of the 1930's, with Queen Victoria acting in a reserve manner and being devoted to her husband. Victoria allows Albert to deal with political matters, while she is otherwise occupied with having children. In the 1930's women were expected to stay at home and raise families,

² *Victoria the Great*. Directed by Herbert Wilcox. 1937. New York NY. RKO Pictures. 2015. DVD.

while men had jobs outside the home. The royal couple in *Victoria the Great*, reflects the gender standards of the 1930's making the film appealing to an audience of the time period.

Released initially in Great Britain, *Sixty Glorious Years* (1938) is the sequel to *Victoria the Great* (1937) with Anna Neagle and Anton Walbrook reprising their respective roles of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The film was withheld from release for two years in the United States, to establish actress Anna Neagle's popularity for the American audience.³ In the United States the film was renamed *Queen of Destiney* (1940).⁴The sequel explores the relationship between Victoria and Albert than the previous movie and features excerpts from the Queen's diary. The film depicts Victoria's life from the time of her marriage to Albert and until her death in 1901. Unlike *Victoria the Great*, which is produced in black and white *Sixty Glorious Years*, was filmed in technicolor. *TV Guide* stated that the film was "an unnecessary, but worthwhile, sequel to the epic screen biography *Victoria the Great* (1937)."⁵ Although not as well received as *Victoria the Great*, Americans had a great interest in Queen Victoria, prompting director Herbert Wilcox to film the movie *Nurse Edith Carroll* (1939) in Hollywood.⁶

The film begins with a title card informing viewers that *Sixty Glorious Years* examines the relationship between the Queen and the Prince Consort using Victoria's diaries as references. At the opening of Parliament, Victoria is depicted as a young woman at the height of her beauty, wearing a crown and beautiful jewels. In a speech to Victoria is happy to announce to Parliament that she is engaged to Prince Albert. At Windsor Castle Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington discuss the impending marriage of the Queen to Prince Albert. Although they like Albert

³ <https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/moviedetails/8602> accessed June 20, 2018.

⁴ <https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/moviedetails/8602> accessed June 20, 2018.

⁵ <http://www.tvguide.com/movies/sixty-glorious-years/review/117946/> accessed June 20, 2018.

⁶ <https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/moviedetails/8602> accessed June 20, 2018.

they feel he does not deserve a high royal ranking because he is foreigner. Later on Albert discovers that he is a disappointment to Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel and causes a rift with the Queen.

Both are devoted to each other after the birth of their daughter Vicky. Albert mentions to Victoria about reform for the poor after reading Charles Dickens. Albert goes to Parliament to listen to members of Parliament speak yet many feel that he is interfering in politics. Victoria knows how hurt Prince Albert was by these remarks and speaks to Sir Peel about the unjust attacks. Sir Peel and Albert have always supported each other. Yet nothing can be done now that Sir Peel has resigned from his position as prime minister.

Since Albert is not welcomed in Parliament he spends his time working on the Great Exhibition planned for 1851. At first Victoria is not happy with Albert planning the Great Exhibition but changes her mind sees how much time and handwork he puts into the planning. The Great Exhibition occurs in May of 1851 and Victoria gives a speech about how great a day the event will be in history. This is a great triumph of her husband and they are surrounded by their children. Albert finally gets the recognition that he has craved for since coming to England, especially from the Duke of Wellington.

Albert becomes ill shortly not long after the wedding of their eldest daughter Vicky. Victoria goes to visit him in the library where Albert is sitting in a wheelchair. Victoria tries to talk to Albert but he is despondent to his wife. When Albert dies the Queen screams causing everyone in the palace to run to her aid.

Two years have passed since Albert's death and Victoria is withdrawn. The Queen appears older and has gained weight. She writes in her diary that her life is without joy and the yearning is torture. John Brown is in Victoria's study and they have an argument about a servant

who was conversing with Brown. They continue to argue about how Albert would not like to see her like this and she should take care of herself. In 1897 Victoria's Diamond Jubilee occurs and the people happy about queen's achievements. The Queen attends a service at St. Paul's Cathedral and is happy to see her subjects enjoying one of her proudest moments. She arrives back at Buckingham palace and is told by a butler that a friend could not attend the service due to illness. Victoria visits her ill friend and describe the events of the day and how she never knew how much the people loved her.

Four years later in 1901 at Osbourne House a doctor informs Lord Salisbury and the Prince of Wales that the Queen is in no condition to sign documents. Subjects are waiting all over the country to hear of her death, and many are unable to imagine life without her. Victoria reminisces on her life and dies with her son at her side. The film ends with final shot of Victoria's coffin lying-in state.⁷

Sixty Glorious Years, further depicts the relationship between Victoria and Albert, in which the Queen supports her husband over her own needs. When Albert wants to be more altruistic by helping the poor, or planning the Great Exhibition, Victoria gladly supports him in his endeavor. They both are happy in their marriage and Victoria relies on her husband to conduct affairs of state. The death of Albert greatly affects Victoria's emotional well-being, and her servant John Brown convinces the Queen to return to her public duties. Made just a year after *Victoria the Great*, *Sixty Glorious Years*, reflects the same gender standards of the 1930's in which women were submissive to the men in their lives and allow them to handle political matters.

The Mudlark was made by American film country 20th Century Fox and filmed in Great Britain.⁸ The film was released in 1950 and was directed by Jean Negulesco. The film is about

⁷ *Sixty Glorious Years*. Directed by Herbert Wilcox. 1938. New York NY. RKO Pictures. 2015. DVD.

⁸ <http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/84107/The-Mudlark/> accessed June 20, 2018.

the fictional story of a young orphan boy (Andrew Ray) bringing widowed Queen Victoria (Irene Dunne) out of seclusion to resume her public duties. Set in 1875, the young boy finds a coin with the head of Queen Victoria and hears her being referred to as the “mother of all England.” Hoping that she could be a mother to him, the orphan breaks into Buckingham Palace. In the film, Victoria is portrayed as a middle aged woman wearing her typical black dress and white veil. Not straying from historical fact, Queen Victoria is depressed after the death of her husband and is stubborn to return to public life. Dunne’s portrayal of Queen Victoria is sympathetic and much more relatable than compared to the actual queen who was viewed as shy and harsh. The term mudlark refers to street children who roamed the streets of London and survived by scavenging and selling whatever they could find on the banks of the Thames.

The film begins with a young boy named Wheeler is scavenging at the bank of the Thames when he finds a coin with Victoria’s depiction on it. Later Wheeler meets an old sea captain who tells him that she is an old woman and that she is the “mother of England,” giving him the idea to go see her. The boy does not know who she is and does not know who Victoria is. The captain tells the boy that he can find the Queen at Windsor Castle and he travels to see her.

At Windsor the Queen is sitting at her desk signing state papers. She is wearing her typical black dress and white veil. Disraeli enters the Queen’s study along with John Brown Victoria’s servant and companion. The Queen is happy to see Disraeli who compliments and charms the lonely widow. Disraeli discusses her absence from London and the fact that there was a disturbance at Buckingham Palace because they thought she had moved out. Disraeli is sympathetic to the Queen but warns her that she is needed in London. She approves of these matters,

but Disraeli suggest that she needs to be present and her people feel that she is inconsistent. Disraeli explains to the Queen that the British people miss her and the pageantry around her. Her Prime Minister warns her that there is talk of her abdication and it is argued in the House of Commons. The Queen discusses the memory of Prince Albert, whom she sees everywhere at Windsor. She is afraid to go out again in public but will try again for Disraeli.

Wheeler travel to Windsor and falls down a coal chute in order to enter the palace. The boy creeps around the palace trying find the queen and hides when he hears a guard coming. Wheeler makes his way to the grand dining room and eats the food he finds. A maid walks into the dining rooms and begins to clean the floor. She finds the boy hiding under the table and tells him to stay quiet so he is not found by the guards. Queen Victoria, her family, and guests walk into the dining room to have dinner and have no idea about the orphan boy hiding. While entertain guest the Queen she hears the boy snoring again but she feels that it is impossible for this to occur. The boy is discovered and is taken by the groomsmen out of the room.

John Brown thinks the boy is part of an assassination plot due to the many the Queen has already faced. The Queen asks if Disraeli finds her actions neglectful, which he does not, thus not altering her way of life. Disraeli tries to convince the Queen that she should remember her people and come back to London, but she stubbornly refuses. Brown interrogates the boy and tells him if he does not tell the truth the he could be hanged. The boy is frightened and Brown takes Wheeler on an impromptu tour of the castle. When the servants discover that Wheeler has disappeared they begin to search for him. The boy is taken to the throne room by John Brown, where the servants find them. Disraeli tells Brown that he must hand over the boy because he could be part of an assassination attempt.

The Queen learns that the boy has been moved to the Tower of London and she asks to meet with Disraeli who believes she is taking the situation too seriously. The Queen wants the whole scandal over and done with. Disraeli tries to convince the Queen to return to London but she is adamant that she wants to stay at Windsor Castle. Disraeli makes a speech in Parliament about Wheeler and how it is amazing that he has lived for ten years in poverty. He has the character of a true Englishman even though his country has done nothing to improve his standard of living. After Disraeli is finished with his speech he is given a round of applause for his defense of the young orphan. Later Wheeler meets with Disraeli in his office at 10 Downing Street where he is told that he will be sent to boarding school. Their meeting is interrupted by a butler who delivers a message to Disraeli that Queen Victoria wants to see him at Windsor.

Disraeli arrives at Windsor to meet with the Queen who is angry with him because he rebuked her orders in public. Disraeli reminds her that she was in favor of public reform. Victoria dreads giving public statements but Brown tries to sway her. Wheeler is hiding in the room and has been listening the whole time. At first, the Queen wants the boy to leave but is convinced by Disraeli to see him. He brings out the coin that he found on the banks of the Thames which led him to find the Queen. Wheeler informs the Queen that he broke into the castle just to see her because he views her as the “mother of England.” Driven by his honesty, the Queen softens and thanks Wheeler for visiting her. The Queen returns to public life by riding in a parade, all because an orphan boy wanted to see his monarch.⁹

Made in the post-war years of the 1950's *The Mudlark*, continues to reflect the gender stereotypes of the decade with women taking care of the home while, men worked to provide for their family. In *The Mudlark*, Queen Victoria lives in seclusion in the years after Prince Albert's

⁹ *The Mudlark*. Directed by Jean Negulesco. 1950. Los Angeles, CA: 20th Century Fox. 2013.DVD.

death, displaying her devotion to her deceased husband by wearing black and rarely being seen in public. For the contemporary audience of the 1950's, the representation of Victoria's behavior would be extreme but her love for her husband would be part of the societal norms of the post-war years. In her conversations with Disraeli, Victoria is initially combative and hesitant to act on the behalf of the young intruder Wheeler. After some convincing the Queen meets the boy and treating him with motherly affection. This representation of Queen Victoria's agency is more willful compared to *Victoria the Great* and *Sixty Glorious Year*, yet she is still very much under the control of the men around her and acts within the societal norms of a mature woman towards Wheeler.

Filmed in Great Britain and distributed by Sony Pictures, *The Young Victoria* (2009) focuses on the early years of the Queen Victoria's reign.¹⁰ Directed by Jean-Marc Valle, the film begins right before Victoria (Emily Blunt) becomes of age and her uncle King William IV (Jim Broadbent) dies just days after. Her mother, the Duchess of Kent (Miranda Richardson), and her confidant, Sir James Conroy (Mark Strong), try to control the young queen, causing her to become willful and stubborn. Her marriage to Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (Rupert Friend), a man who she is desperately in love with, brings a man into her life who will support her and help her play the game. She struggles in her first few years as Queen, dealing with the loss of her father like Prime Minister Lord Melbourne (Paul Bettany), the Bedchamber Crisis, and an attempted assassination. At the competition of the film, Victoria has given birth to her first child Vicky and has a better understanding of her duties as Queen.

At the beginning of the film a voice over of Victoria (Emily Blunt) discuss the nature of her childhood. She states that her childhood was lonely and that she was a prisoner in her own

¹⁰ <https://www.the-numbers.com/movie/Young-Victoria-The#tab=news> accessed June 20, 2018.

household at Kensington Palace. She discovered that she would be next in line to the British throne when her family tree was shown to the young princess at age eleven. In order for her mother, the Duchess of Kent, to keep her daughter and heir apparent safe, Victoria is forced to obey the rules of the Kensington System created by Sir James Conroy. What is seen of the Kensington system in the film is Victoria as a child being led down the stairs by her governess Lezhen and being kept from the court. Even as a teenager, Victoria is forced to sleep in the same bedroom as her mother. The young princess hopes that when she is queen she will finally be free of the controls of Conroy and her mother. In a flashback, Victoria is ill in bed and Sir John Conroy tries to force her to sign a document that will allow her mother to be regent. However, Victoria refuses enraging both her mother and Conroy. The film is true to the historical accounts of Victoria's dislike for Conroy and that she often felt betrayed by her mother for siding with him. Her stubbornness and willfulness towards Conroy and her mother will continue as long as they try to control her.

Victoria and her mother, the Duchess of Kent, attend the birthday party for King William IV (Jim Broadbent) at Windsor Castle. The relationship between Victoria, the King, and his wife Queen Adelaide (Harriet Walter) is one of respect and admiration. King William is delighted to see his niece, and does not acknowledge her mother, the Duchess of Kent. King William accuses the Duchess of Kent of stealing seventeen of his rooms in Kensington Palace and scheming with Sir James Conroy.

At the birthday dinner for the King, Victoria sits next to Lord Melbourne (Paul Bettany), who speaks to her about her late father, the Duke of Kent. Victoria is delighted to hear about her father, a man who died when she was very young. As the dinner continues, King William gives a speech in which he accuses the Duchess of Kent of keeping Victoria away from his court. The

King is worried that the Duchess of Kent is being surrounded by evil advisors and he hopes that he can pass the crown to Victoria when she is of age to avoid a regency. The Duchess of Kent leaves the dinner table in total embarrassment and Victoria sits quietly at the table.

After the events at Windsor Castle, King William sends his niece a letter wanting to increase her income. Sir Conroy sees it as a way of controlling and she has no experience handling money. Victoria is willful to Sir Conroy saying she will do as she wants. Conroy tells her that she will write to the king asking him to not increase her income and make her mother regent. Victoria is upset when Conroy manhandles her and her mother does nothing to stop it. The young princess tells her mother that she will never forget as her mother stood by and did nothing. King William sends Lord Melbourne to help Victoria after she writes a letter that he knows is influenced by Conroy.

Victoria reaches her eighteenth birthday before the King's death and a regency is avoided. The King dies a month later and Victoria is told in the middle of the night wearing her white nightgown. Now asserting herself as queen, Victoria requests that her bed be moved out of her mother's room and is taking steps towards separating herself from her mother and Conroy. For the first time in her life, Victoria has the freedom to make her own decisions. In her first Privy Council meeting, Victoria demonstrates a demur and confident demeanor. She takes her role and duty as queen seriously, showing a great deal of maturity for her age. Yet, when she leaves the council, she is seen skipping off in happiness at how well she was received. Even though she has a great responsibility that very few full grown women could fully comprehend or handle, Victoria is still a child in many respects.

Before her coronation, Victoria moves from Kensington to Buckingham Palace and banishes Conroy from her household and coronation. King William's widow, Queen Adelaide, becomes somewhat of an advisor to the young queen and instructs her to not rely on Lord Melbourne as much. At a meeting with Lord Melbourne, Victoria tries to assert her authority on her Prime Minister but he quickly charms her. The Queen wants to improve the living conditions of the poor yet Lord Melbourne steers her away from such reforms. Albert comes to visit her after receiving multiple letters about how great Lord Melbourne is. The first year of Victoria's reign is filled with men jockeying for position to control and influence her. Victoria is crowned in Westminster Abbey with Prince Albert watching from the gallery. Sir James Conroy is forbidden to attend Victoria's coronation. Although Victoria is now queen she is not ready to marry Prince Albert wants to be of use to Victoria but continues to write to him. At a dinner party, the Duke of Wellington tells the Queen that Lord Melbourne will no longer be prime minister as he is about to lose the a vote in parliament. Victoria takes the news very hard, crying alone in her room.

The new Prime Minister, Robert Peel, wants to install new ladies-in-waiting from his own party to the Queen's household, causing Victoria to refuse his proposal. Known as The Bed Chamber Crisis, the actions of the Queen in this affair caused her popularity to be damaged. Subsequently demonstrations are held outside the palace. Crowds even hurl insults at the Queen for her immature mistake. The Bedchamber crisis badly damages the Queen's image and reputation. The overall film has a positive view of Queen Victoria early years leaving out anything that would negatively affect it.

During this period, Victoria's relationship with Albert becomes closer through letters and she invites him to visit her in Britain. Since Albert is not allowed to propose marriage because of protocol, Victoria proposes to him and they marry. Although the two have a good relationship,

Albert becomes involved in political matters such as assuring Peel that another Bedchamber crisis will not happen again. Hearing that Albert has gone behind her back, Victoria confronts him in their bedroom. Instead of confronting him as his wife, Victoria confronts him as his Queen, which causes Albert to leave.

While out in their carriage one day, a madman attempts to assassinate Victoria, but Albert lunges in front of his wife causing him to be grazed by a bullet. The injured Albert is taken back to the palace and Victoria is racked with worry. After several hours, Victoria is finally able to see her husband whom she warmly embraces him. The assassination scene is largely inaccurate because Prince Albert was never hurt by an assassin's bullet during the several times that his wife was targeted. The scene is used for dramatic effect which would be needed in any film about Victoria's life given the lack of drama in her early years.

They welcome their first child, Vicky, and Victoria's relationship with her mother begins to mend. During the Bedchamber scandal, the Duchess of Kent wrote to her daughter in support of her decision, healing the breach between them. Albert becomes Victoria's cardinal advisor and is asserting his authority in the household with the firing of Lehzen, the Queen's childhood governess. In the film, Albert is agitated about how inefficiently the household is run and feels that his wife is heavily influenced by Lehzen. The film ends with a title card entailing the success of Albert and Victoria's marriage in which they have nine children and work together for a better Britain.¹¹

The Young Victoria was released nearly sixty years after *The Mudlark* and represents a different Victoria from previous films. In *The Young Victoria*, Victoria is a teenager living with

¹¹ *The Young Victoria*. Directed by Jean Marc-Vallee. 2009. London, England: Momentum Pictures.2010. DVD.

both her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and Sir James Conroy who she has a contentious relationship with. Victoria wants to be independent of her mother and Conroy, who she feels is controlling her. The film reflects the societal changes that have occurred since the 1950's, with young women wanting more independence and rebelling against family members. When Victoria becomes queen, she asserts her power and independence, by removing Conroy from her court. Victoria continues to assert her authority, when her mentor Lord Melbourne is forced to leave the office of prime minister and she must meet the new Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel. During the meeting Victoria refuses to relieve any of her lady-in-waiting who had political affiliations with Lord Melbourne's Whig party. Causing a constitutional crisis, Victoria stands her ground against Sir Robert Peel and eventually Lord Melbourne returns to his former position. This representation of Victoria is in contrast to *Victoria the Great* and *Sixty Glorious Years*, in which the young woman is combative to authority figures and asserts herself towards members of politicians, who are against her politically. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, women were living independently from their families and pursuing careers outside of the home. *The Young Victoria*, reflects young, independent women of the decade who are willing to stand-up for themselves and fight for what they want. If *The Young Victoria*, represented Queen Victoria as a complacent sovereign, willing to bend to the opinions of political leaders, she would not be relatable to the modern day women who can assert their authority and opinions.

The film *Mrs. Brown*, also known as *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown* is about the relationship between Queen Victoria (Judi Dench) and her servant John Brown (Billy Connolly). Filmed in Great Britain and produced by the BBC, the American film company Miramar acquired the rights to distribute the film in the United States.¹² It has been several years since the death of

¹² <https://www.allmovie.com/movie/mrs-brown-v155021/releases> accessed June 20, 2018.

Prince Albert and Victoria is still deeply depressed. Scottish servant John Brown is brought to Balmoral as the Queen's gillie, yet Victoria is indifferent about his arrival. Brown is a rough and tumble man who irks the Queen when he decides to stand outside her window with a horse ready for her to ride. The two form a close bond and Brown is given more authority in the household, exasperating servants and Victoria's children. Brown comes down with pneumonia and dies leaving Victoria grief stricken but capable of moving forward with her life.

In the first scene of the film a bust is thrown from a palace crashing to the ground. It is unclear what individual is portrayed on the bust and why is it being thrown out. The next scene shows a heavily depressed Queen surrounded by her servants preparing her for the day at Balmoral. The year is 1864, and it has been nearly three years since the death of Prince Albert. A voice over of her private secretary, Henry Ponsonby, states that everyone in the Queen's household is in the prison of the Queen's grief and her family hopes that John Brown can help her.

When Brown arrives, he is told that the court is still in mourning more than two years after the Prince Consort's death and is not allowed to leave the grounds without permission. The Queen first meets Brown in her study and they exchange greetings with each and she inquires about his family. Victoria tells Brown that her late husband was complimentary of him. Brown tells her that he thought he would never see her in such a state. The Queen is offended by the remark and tells him to leave.

The arrival of Brown at Osborne House means little to the unhappy Queen until she notices him standing outside her window with a horse. This angers the Queen, who is still unable to let her deceased husband go. When the Queen finally has an interaction with Brown, she becomes hysterical when discussing her husband and combative when he suggests that she should

enjoy her life again. Unlike many courtiers, servants and family members, John Brown tells Victoria that she is wrong to not allow him to stand outside in the courtyard. After the altercation, Victoria agrees to go riding with Brown. Through his close relationship with Queen Victoria, Brown begins to have more responsibility and leadership in the household. Even though the Queen has a close bond with Brown, she is still in grief and resents the fact that her husband was not allowed to have the title king. Her private secretary, Henry Ponsonby, and son, Prince of Wales, are desperate to have her return to public life and perform her royal duties yet she flatly refuses. In the next scene, the Queen places her resentment on her son Bertie, the Prince of Wales, whom she blames for her husband's death and is still unable to deal with her husband's death.

In an unexpected scene the Queen visits John Brown's family at the home in the Scottish Highland. During the visit, Victoria is humble and seems happy to be with a group of people in a lower social class than her own. The Queen seems happier with John Brown's family than her own. The Prince of Wales is jealous of the Queen's relationship with Brown and also dismayed about his mother's unwillingness to allow him to perform royal duties. The Queen's Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli come to Balmoral after he receives a newspaper with a political cartoon asking where Britain's monarch is. He believes that he can convince the Queen to return to public life. Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and her advisors urge the Queen to leave her seclusion at Balmoral in Scotland and return to London but she refuses, her decision protected by John Brown. In 1867 Parliament votes to disestablish the Irish church. When the vote has been won, a member of parliament wants to disestablish the monarchy. Disraeli wants to have the Queen return to public life because she is still a very popular figure as her Highland Journals are selling

out. Disraeli feels that a return to public life would dissuade the motion to disestablish the monarchy.

In 1868, Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli traveled to Scotland to visit the Queen. While playing the piano and signing with her servants at Balmoral, Victoria meets with Disraeli to discuss current issues going on in Britain. When the topic of Irish Home Rule is brought up, the Queen abruptly stops playing the piano and protests the idea of allowing the Irish to have autonomy. Disraeli pesters the Queen about returning to London, but she wants to remain at Balmoral because she is happy there. Disraeli believes that Brown needs to convince the Queen to return to her royal duties. Brown is reluctant to do this because Victoria may take his words as a personal betrayal. When Brown decides to discuss the matter with the Queen, she becomes enraged and an argument ensues. During the heated argument, Brown calls Victoria “woman” angering her even more. She leaves the room requesting to her Private Secretary Henry Ponsonby and Jenner that they serve her needs, reducing Brown’s contact and influence over her. The relationship between the two is never the same again.

The Queen eventually relents to her advisors and Disraeli and returns to London to perform her royal duties, leading to a revitalization of the monarchy’s popularity and public support. Brown is still part of the Queen’s household where he is mocked by the servants for his aggressive behavior. The Prince of Wales becomes ill with typhoid and the Queen leaves Balmoral to be at his bedside at Windsor. For the first time in the film, the Queen displays genuine concern for her son and she prays at his bedside that his health will improve. The Prince of Wales recovers and the Queen decides to have a thanksgiving service for her son held at St. George’s Chapel.

At the thanksgiving service the Queen is almost assassinated but luckily Brown stops the assassin. Even though he has less influence and access to the Queen, Brown is none the less devoted to her, thwarting a possible assassination attempt at a public appearance. The next evening at dinner the Prince of Wales brags that it was he who told Brown to stop the assassin. Hearing this, the Queen decides to award a special medal to Brown, seeing through her deceitful son. Years later during a storm in the woods near Balmoral, Brown is out searching for a possible intruder. The venture into the woods has caused Brown to become ill and the Queen visits him at his sickbed. Victoria apologizes to Brown for not being a good friend in recent years and he accepts her apology. Shortly afterwards, Brown succumbs to pneumonia and passes away.

During his years of service, John Brown kept a diary which falls into the hands of Ponsonby and Dr. Jenner after his death. The two men discuss the contents of the diary and agree that it must not be seen by anyone. Ponsonby walks off with the diary and it is implied that Brown's personal work was destroyed or disappeared. In a voice over Dr. Jenner states that the Prince of Wales hurled the Queen's favorite bust of Brown over a palace wall, referencing the first scene of the movie.¹³

Her Majesty Mrs. Brown was released at the end of the 1990's in which society was more accepting of women in power. During the 1990's, the current Queen Elizabeth II had been in power for over forty years, and the representation of the Queen Victoria in *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, as a female ruler would have been part of everyday life for modern Britain.¹⁴ *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, represents Queen Victoria as a hostile and bitter woman who finds fault with her family members, servants, and politicians. When Victoria initially meets John Brown she is

¹³ *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*. Directed by John Madden. 1997. Santa Monica, CA: Miramar Films. 1998. DVD.

¹⁴ Marr, Andrew. *The Real Elizabeth: An Intimate Portrait of Queen Elizabeth*. (London, UK:Henry Holt and Company LLC: 2012), pg.320.

resentful towards him and refuses his offers to go on horseback rides. Victoria has a combative relationship with Disraeli who wants her to return to London and perform public duties, yet she refuses. The representation of Queen Victoria refusing to listen to her prime minister is what many moviegoers would expect of a powerful female to do in her position. This Victoria is interpreted as openly critically of those around her and opinionated about political events. This Victoria is not shy and freely speaks her mind without the threat of being rebuked. A republican movement starts in Parliament and criticizes the Queen and her seclusion. The only person who speak freely to the Queen is John Brown, who convinces her to return to public life. Unlike films such as *Victoria the Great* and *Sixty Glorious Years, Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, portrayed how the Queen was criticized by her government and her people for her lack of responsibility towards her position. In the 1990's and beyond it is common for people to criticize politicians and world leaders which is in contrast to that of the 1930's in which audience would not have been use to viewing a sovereign being criticized .

Miniseries on Queen Victoria

Seven miniseries were used to explore Queen Victoria's image. The first miniseries *Edward the Seventh* portrays the life of the Queen's eldest son and heir Bertie. In the thirteen episodes Queen Victoria is featured in the first ten episodes which viewed the tense relationship between Bertie and her. The second miniseries *Victoria and Albert* is about the marriage of the Queen and her Prince Consort. The miniseries is divided into two parts and focuses solely on Queen Victoria's personal life. The miniseries *Disraeli* is about the life of the Queen's Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and briefly features their working relationship. *Fallen Eagles* is a

British miniseries that examines the royal families of Europe that were part of World War I. Victoria is featured several times throughout the miniseries as a young and older woman. The miniseries *Lillie* is about Edward the Seventh's mistress and Queen Victoria has a brief appearance.

Edward the Seventh (1975) was a televised miniseries produced by British producing company Association Television and released in the United States in 1979.¹⁵ The miniseries is about the life of Queen Victoria's eldest son, who became king after his mother's sixty-three year reign. Based on Philip Magnus's work *King Edward the Seventh*, the thirteen episode miniseries explores the King's life from a young boy who was at the constant disapproval of his parents to an old adulterous monarch who was popular among his people. The miniseries stars Annette Crosbie as Queen Victoria, Timothy West as the elder King Edward VII, and Robert Hardy as Prince Albert. Queen Victoria is in the first ten episodes and Prince Albert is featured in the first four episodes.

Episode one, *The Boy*, Victoria is only in her early twenties but seems older and more uptight than compared to other women of the same age. The young queen is nervous and has found out on her birthday that she is pregnant again. The Queen has yet to inform Albert about her condition and becomes upset when she is told by Lehzen that she must. Leaving the room and entering another, Victoria meets up with Albert who tells her that their guests are waiting on her. In a harsh tone of voice, the Queen informs him that they can wait. As ever, the loving husband Albert embraces his wife, asking her what is wrong. She states that everything is wrong, including her dress. Albert tells Victoria that she looks lovely, thus changing her mood into a happy one. Victoria is swayed by her husband's compliment and decides to attend her birthday party.

¹⁵ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0072925/> accessed June 20, 2018.

Victoria tells her husband that she is pregnant again and Albert is happy to hear the wonderful news. However Victoria is upset that she is going to be in pain and humiliated during childbirth. She is also mad that she will be taken away from her duties and Lord Melbourne. Alone in his study with Baron Stockmar Albert is dumbfounded by his wife's bad temperament and thinks she should be ecstatic that she is having another child. Baron Stockmar warns Albert that Victoria's grandfather went mad and this could happen with his wife.

The next scene shows Albert sitting at the piano when Victoria walks into the room. Albert did not come to bed the night before, after the two had a horrible fight. Victoria apologizes profusely and her husband forgives her. Victoria really wants to make Albert happy and he wants her to rely on him more. Albert wants to join Victoria's meeting with Lord Melbourne but she refuses to allow him to do so. She instructs him to play the piano and kisses him goodbye, much to his annoyance and frustration. When she leaves the room, Albert bangs his fingers on the keys.

Lord Melbourne has just been voted out of office and Sir Robert Peel is the new Prime Minister. Victoria makes it known to her new Prime Minister that she will still be corresponding with her old Prime Minister and Sir Robert Peel has no objections. He only wants her to hire new ladies-in-waiting, which her husband has taken care of. Not long after the Queen gives birth to Prince Albert Edward giving an heir to the monarchy. During this time the relationship between Baroness Lehzen and Albert worsens, much to the dismay of Victoria. The Queen wants them to get along but they both think they know what is best for Victoria and her daughter Vicky. However, Lehzen views this as the minister becoming servants to Albert instead of being servants to their Queen.

The strain between Albert and Lehzen grows worse when Vicky becomes ill. Albert is concerned because his daughter is being starved and believes this is the Baroness fault. Albert insults Lehzen, calling her a fool and accuses her of trying to kill his daughter. Victoria demands that Albert apologize to Lehzen and he refuses, thus leaving the nursery. Albert informs her that he is not going to apologize to Lehzen and he will not apologize to the Queen when she supports her former governess. Baroness Lehzen leaves for Germany while Victoria and Albert are in Scotland as she could not bear to say goodbye in person.

Episode two, *An Experiment in Education*, the Prince of Wales is having an awful childhood due to the education set up by his father and Baron Stockmar. Known as Bertie, he is having difficulty concentrating in class and is behind his younger brother Alfred. Victoria defends her son because he is exhausted all the time and knows he does well when he is interested in a subject. Bertie is told by his tutor that he is going to be king much to the young boy's dismay. Bertie thought his older sister Vicky would become queen like his mother. Victoria goes to comfort Bertie, who is now beginning to feel the burdens of his future responsibility.

Episode three, *A New World*, Bertie goes on a successful tour of pre-Civil War America. Bertie's parents are surprised to hear that the tour was a success, but for them this is a success for the monarchy and not their son. Victoria not only criticizes her son but also her married daughter Vicky, who she feels does not write her enough. Still jealous of the relationship between her daughter and Albert, Victoria lashes out at her husband. Albert tells his wife that she is envious and she mistrusts people too much. The Queen apologizes to Albert and tells him she will do better.

In the next scene, Victoria is wearing black in mourning for her mother who has recently passed away. The Queen is inconsolable and Albert desperately tries to comfort his heartbroken

wife. She cries to her husband that her mother was noble and she never told her how much she truly loved her. Oddly, the Queen does not want to see or be in the presence of Bertie because she does not feel that he mourned for his grandmother. Albert explains to his wife that everyone grieves differently, but Victoria wanted her son to shed a tear for her departed mother.

Episode four, *Alix*, the Queen is trying to find a suitable wife for Bertie. Out of the many princesses, Victoria believes that Alix of Denmark, the daughter of the future king, will be the best of Bertie. Alix is Protestant, pretty, and is not an intellectual, which perfect for the Prince of Wales as he has always been a poor student. While Bertie is at Oxford he makes new friends who introduce him to dance halls, where he meets available young women. In the previous episode, Bertie was training with the military in Ireland where he had an affair with a young actress, Nellie Clifton. This indiscretion will haunt the young prince later on.

In a letter from Baron Stockmar, Albert learns about Bertie's affair and travels to see him at Cambridge University. Bertie apologizes to his father and heads back to Windsor for Christmas. The scene does not depict the two walking in the rain but it does portray Albert as being unwell. While at Windsor, Albert's illness worsens and doctors diagnose him with typhoid fever. Victoria is resentful of Bertie because she believes the stress of his affair caused her husband's ill health. When Albert succumbs to typhoid fever, Victoria becomes hysterical with grief.

At the beginning of episode five, *A Hundred Thousand Welcomes*, the Queen is in deep depression and grief over the death of her beloved husband. She is wearing a black dress and will continue to be in the mourning for the rest of the miniseries. Victoria is unable to stand the sight of her son Bertie and has sent him on a goodwill trip to Egypt. The Queen's animosity towards Bertie will continue throughout the rest of her life, making their relationship difficult and tense.

In a meeting with several political leaders, including Prime Minister Palmerston, the men discuss how the Queen has been in mourning for six months and needs to attend to her duties in London. Palmerston's cabinet thinks that the Queen should resign in favor of her son. For the time being, Victoria will have to teach herself how to rule again since Albert took on many of her roles as queen due to her multiple pregnancies. However, when Palmerston suggests that the Prince of Wales take on some of the Queen's public duties, she refuses. The Queen believes that Albert would want her to carry out royal duties and does not feel that Bertie can handle them.

When Bertie returns from his successful trip to Egypt, the Queen orders him to marry Alix. While discussing the wedding preparations with Palmerston, Victoria wants the ceremony to be a solemn occasion, but she will allow guest to wear certain colors, while she continues to wear her widow's black. Victoria sits near the bust of her dead husband during her conversation with Palmerston. It has been over a year since the Prince Consort died yet Victoria is still in deep mourning. Palmerston tells the Prince of Wales that his mother's absence has caused her people to believe that she no longer cares for them. Again the Queen refuses, and believes that Alix is influencing the Prince of Wales. However, Palmerston tells the Queen that she underestimates her son's popularity. Over the next several months, Victoria grows to dislike the lifestyle of her son and his wife, who she views as frivolous. Not only are they living a lifestyle that the Queen hates, but they are taking on her royal duties, much to Her Majesty's chagrin. Victoria complains that her nerves keep her from public duties and she will not have her son stand next to her like his father did.

Episode six, *The Invisible Queen*, the tug of war between Queen Victoria and her son Bertie over royal duties continues. The Prince of Wales is worried because of his lack of knowledge of political affairs which could impact his future role as King of England. However,

the Queen is more worried about his wife Alix, who has already had several premature births which she believes are caused by her long nights of partying. The Queen's new Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli needs her to attend a military review but she refuses to go. Disraeli discusses the idea of Queen going into retirement and her son taking on royal duties. To no one's surprise, the Queen will not allow her son to perform any royal duties, feeling that he is lazy and inept to do the job.

The good times end for Bertie when he is ordered to appear in court for writing letters to a married woman and the Queen is angered by her son's actions. The Queen believes that her son is innocent but is worried that he will be known for this, bringing disgrace to the monarchy. After this, Bertie becomes ill with typhoid fever and almost dies on the ten year anniversary of his father's death. Out of fear and concern, the Queen goes to her son's bedside in hopes that Bertie will pull through. Bertie recovers and the Queen is delighted that her heir will be spared but refuses to allow him to perform royal duties.

Episode seven, *Dearest Prince*, the Queen is older and continuing her good relationship with Prime Minister Disraeli. Bertie convinces his mother to allow him to go on a tour of India by telling her that he wants to be more like his father. While on his tour of India, the Prince of Wales learns from a newspaper that his mother has been given the title Empress of India. The Prince of Wales feels that he is the last person to know about his mother's new title and wishes he had been informed sooner. From this episode, the Queen is depicted as older, but with age she is more willing to allow Bertie to perform duties for her in foreign countries.

Episode eight, *Royal Quadrille*, the Queen is not as robust as she has previously been and is walks with the cane with John Brown at her side. She is met by her son Bertie and Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone. Bertie wants to go with the household cavalry to Egypt, but she will not

allow it. Victoria thinks that she will die soon and wants her son to be in the country if this were to happen. Gladstone does not believe that she will die anytime soon and the Queen becomes offended.

In the next scene, Victoria is greeted by her family and she worries about John Brown's health because he recently went out on a stormy night at Balmoral searching for an intruder. Unfortunately for the Queen, John Brown dies from pneumonia, leaving Victoria heartbroken. In sadness, the Queen tells Gladstone that Bertie pretends that John Brown was never there and she wants a statue built for him at Balmoral. The last scene portrays Victoria in high spirits for her Golden Jubilee, and she is happy to see her many grandchildren. She still maintains her idiosyncrasies such as chiding her adult children and trying to avoid her most hated politicians like Prime Minister Gladstone.

Episode nine, *Scandal*, Bertie is caught in a card game scandal and is called to court. The Queen views the act of going to court as humiliating and is unsatisfied that her son has caused another scandal for the royal family. The court case against Bertie falls apart much to the Queen's delight. After the scandal, Victoria wants Bertie to write a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury to condemn gambling but he is unwilling to do so.

Episode ten, *The Years of Waiting*, Queen Victoria is depicted for the last time. The Queen is very excited about her upcoming Diamond Jubilee and it is all she can talk about. Her daughter-in-law, Alix, visits the Queen hoping that she can help her brother, the King of Greece, against invading Turks but unfortunately, Victoria is distracted by her Diamond Jubilee.

The Queen becomes ill in January of 1901 and is lying on her death bed at Osborne House. Her doctors send a letter to the Prince of Wales informing him about his mother's condition, and he immediately goes to her. Other family members are there also, including Vicky's

son Willy, who is devoted to his ailing grandmother. As the Queen lays dying, she calls out to see Bertie one more time, gazing upon him. The monarch passes away at eighty-one with her family surrounding her and Bertie is finally king.¹⁶

Released in the mid-nineteen seventies, *Edward the Seventh*, represents Queen Victoria's agency as pleasing her husband both in his life and his death. Victoria is portrayed as temperamental and becomes upset when she discovers she is pregnant for the second time. While Albert is happy with the news, Victoria feels that by having another baby she will be kept away from Albert. In the 1970's, women were expanding their lives, by working outside the home and divorce was becoming more common. During this time period, it is becoming more acceptable for women to choose not to have children and seek fulfillment in different pursuits. The representation of Victoria in *Edward the Seventh*, is of a woman who is unhappy to be a mother but accepts what she is unable to change. Victoria is not a devoted mother but she is a devoted wife and willing to allow Albert to perform government duties on her behalf. Overtime, Victoria relies on Albert because of her multiple pregnancies and is jealous of her daughter Vicky when Albert begins to spend more time with her. Albert's death pushes Victoria into seclusion and refuses to allow her son Bertie to perform royal duties because she feels that he will not live up to Albert's expectations. The interpretation of Victoria in *Edward the Seventh*, is of a critical mother who resents her children and demands attention from her husband. She is combative and irritable and when her children do not behave exactly like Albert. This is in contrast to the societal standards of the 1970's in which many mothers cared deeply for their children and husband. While there are those who would be unable to relate to Victoria's parenting skills, there are others who can understand the immense stress she was under as queen.

¹⁶ *Edward the Seventh*. Directed by John Gorrie. 1975. Midlands, UK. ATV. DVD.

Victoria and Albert (2001) was a television miniseries that focused on the marriage between Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Filmed in Great Britain the miniseries was produced by American television company A&E and the British Broadcasting Company (BBC).¹⁷ The miniseries covers Victoria's early years as Queen up to the death of her husband Albert. Unlike other films and miniseries that focus on the Queen, *Victoria and Albert* solely focuses on the twenty-one year marriage and not the political events that surround the royal couple. The film stars Victoria Hamilton as Queen Victoria, Jonathan Firth as Prince Albert, Peter Ustinov as King William the Fourth, and Penelope Wilton as the Duchess of Kent.

In part one of the miniseries, Victoria is portrayed as an old woman being wheeled into a room where Albert's personal items are being cleaned. She is critical of the work of her servants, instructing them to make sure they do not procrastinate on cleaning the Prince's valuables. The Queen is presented as grandmotherly and has a small dog on her lap. She closes her eyes and flashes back to the days before she was queen.

In the flashback, Victoria is depicted as a young, innocent teenager and her cousins, Ernest and Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, are visiting her at Kensington Palace. They are playing croquet out in the garden, where Victoria complains to Ernest about Albert's lack of social graces. Victoria is depicted as sweet natured young lady who loves parties and dancing. On the other hand, Albert is serious and does not enjoy fancy balls. When the princes leave to return to Germany, Victoria is not yet in love with Albert, feeling that they share little in common. She confides in the Baroness Lehzen that she does not like Albert because he is stuffy and serious.

¹⁷ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0262995/> accessed June 20, 2018.

Later that year, the Duchess of Kent and Victoria attend King William IV's birthday party at Windsor castle. Similar to the events that took place in *The Young Victoria*, King William is pleased to see his niece, but feels that her mother has prevented her from visiting the court. At dinner, the King unleashes a tirade on the Duchess of Kent who stays in the dining room unlike the depiction in *The Young Victoria* where she leaves. The King is worried about a possible regency when Victoria becomes queen and Conroy will be unofficial king. King William knows that he does not have much time to live and hopes to live long enough to see Victoria become of age before he dies. However, the Duchess of Kent wants to leave Windsor Castle after the King's vicious tirade but is convinced that she must stay. She decided to stay but chides Victoria for not being loyal to her and wanting to stay at Windsor. The portrayal of Victoria at the birthday party is of an innocent girl thrown into the lion's den of her family's bickering. Victoria wants be loyal to both her mother and the king but the constant fighting is wreaking havoc on the young girl who feels alone at both court and at Kensington palace.

Not long after the King's birthday party, a letter arrives for Victoria. The messenger hands the letter over to Victoria in the presence of her mother and Conroy, who grabs the message from the princess once the King's messenger leaves. Victoria's mother, the Duchess of Kent, does not stop Conroy from taking the letter further angering the princess, who feels she is not in control of her own life. Victoria screams at her mother that she will never forget how her mother stood by and did nothing, causing further strain on the relationship. Conroy reads the letter that states the king wants to increased Victoria's income and allow her to have her own household when she becomes of age. Victoria is forced by the Duchess of Kent to write a letter refusing the kings increasing her income and the establishment of her own household. In a bit of

rebellion, Victoria writes a second letter to King William informing him that the first letter was under the influence of Conroy.

In June of 1837, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham arrive at Kensington Palace to announce to the now Queen Victoria that her uncle, the king, has died. It is early in the morning and the Duchess of Kent, at first, will not allow for the men to meet her daughter. She agrees when she finds out how that Victoria is now queen. Victoria meets the Archbishop and Lord Conyngham in her long white nightgown and is notified of her new status and responsibility. She tells the men that she will do her duty as a queen and to her country. This depiction of Victoria portrays her as responsible and ready for the job as Queen.

When the Queen meets Prime Minister Lord Melbourne for the first time, she asks to see him by herself. Her mother is reluctant to allow this but Baron Stockmar agrees with the young queen. Victoria forms a close bond with Lord Melbourne, discussing the tragic past of his family and taking his advice on political matters. When Victoria wants to make Baron Stockmar her private secretary, Lord Melbourne advises her not to because he is a foreigner. Instead, Lord Melbourne makes himself the Queen's private secretary.

Once Victoria becomes queen, she has confidence and stands up for herself when it comes to her mother and Conroy. When they enter Victoria's study late one night, Conroy badgers the young queen into doing his will, but she refuses. Victoria screams at them to leave and her mother moves to another palace. When she visits her uncle, King Leopold of the Belgians, he instructs the Queen to give her mother more respect and to think about the prospect of marriage. King Leopold suggests that Victoria should meet with her cousin Albert again for she might find him a suitable husband for this is part of her duty as queen. Victoria discusses the prospect of

marrying Albert to Lord Melbourne, but she is scared of the idea of eloping. However, Victoria is devoted to her country and will do what is required of her.

Later in the evening, the two play the piano together and Victoria is falling in love with Albert. Not long after, Victoria proposes to Albert and he accepts. At the beginning of their marriage, Victoria is weary of having Albert involved in politics because he is a foreigner. Albert grows frustrated with how he is treated at the English court and by being beneath his wife in position. The Prince Consort is also annoyed by how Lehen runs the household, which he views as inefficient. Part one ends with the couple fighting over his lack of involvement with politics.

Part two of *Victoria and Albert* begins with a mentally ill man, Edward Oxford, in a dark room rubbing red paint on a picture of Queen Victoria. The next scene starts with the young couple leaving to visit the Queen's mother. Victoria is in a foul disposition because she was sick earlier in the morning and she is not thrilled at the prospect of being pregnant. Albert thinks that it is best that Victoria becomes friends with her mother, much to the chagrin of the Queen. The two ride in an open carriage and the mentally ill man appears, shooting at the Queen. Albert jumps in front of Victoria and both are unharmed. Oxford is taken down by guards and no one is injured. While at the Duchess of Kent's residence, Albert is concerned about taking an open carriage back to their home. However, Victoria insists because it will show the people her mental strength.

The Queen gives birth to her first child, a girl named Vicky but is displeased that she did not give birth to a male heir. Albert is happy to have a daughter and is not concerned with having a son. Not long after Vicky's birth, a boy enters the palace, which demonstrates a breach of security in the household. Guards run throughout the palace trying to catch the boy, who opens a bedroom door to find a married courtier having an affair. Albert is horrified by both the breach

and the affair. He goes to Victoria to discuss the matter further only to discover that his wife knew about the affair all along. This saddens Albert, whose father and mother had illicit affairs that caused the family to be separated. Victoria sees how hurt Albert is and apologizes for her actions.

After the birth of Bertie, Victoria starts a relationship again with her mother, the Duchess of Kent. Albert is still at odds with Lehzen, who is still part of the household and in charge of the nursery. When Vicky becomes ill, the two parents fight over Lehzen's actions, causing Victoria to claim that she wished she never married Albert. The two reconcile and Lehzen is removed from the royal household. At first, Victoria is saddened by Lehzen's departure but rebukes her when she brings up how she was never good enough for Albert. At this point in their marriage, Victoria and Albert are dedicated to each other and the harsh words of others seems to deepen their resolve.

The miniseries speeds up to the year 1861. Queen Victoria is by her mother's bedside as she lays dying. The two have a final deep conversation about their love for one another. After the death of the Duchess of Kent, Victoria and Albert are increasingly annoyed by the antics of the Prince of Wales. It has recently been discovered that Bertie had a brief liaison with Irish actress Nellie Clifton and his parents wanted him to be man of upstanding morals. They want their son to be a good King and hope that his behavior improves. During this time, Albert is becoming ill and exhausted, due in part to all the work that he has been doing on the behalf of his wife. Albert visits his elder son at university to discuss Bertie's obstreperous behavior and leaves traveling to Windsor for Christmas. It becomes evident that Albert is ill and his bed is moved to the blue room. Surrounded by Victoria, Bertie, and daughter Alice, Albert dies from typhoid fever. At first, Victoria is shocked that her husband has died but then forces everyone out of the room

to be alone with Albert. Alone, she cries hysterically for the man that did everything for her. The last scene of the miniseries portrays the old Victoria pondering her life and love for her dear Albert.¹⁸

Victoria and Albert is a recent miniseries on Queen Victoria's life and demonstrates a shift in how she is represented. As a young woman, Victoria's personality and interest are displayed and even though she is not on the best terms with her mother she try respects her wishes. This interpretation of Victoria is that of a typical teenager of her time period and this is relatable to any young woman in the twenty-first century. However, Victoria has a tumultuous relationship with Sir James Conroy who she feels is controlling her and rebels against at every opportunity. Initially, with her marriage to Albert, Victoria tries to keep her husband out of political affairs but realizes how helpful he is. Victoria even begins to follow the moral code of Albert and removes her governess from her household when she begins to challenge Albert's authority. Yet, Victoria still makes her own decisions in the case of an assassination attempt on her life, and decides in open carriage amongst the crowd just hours after the event. When Albert dies at the end of the miniseries, Victoria allows her grief to control her and blames the death of her husband on her son Bertie. In *Victoria and Albert*, the representation of Victoria is a dichotomy of a happy young woman in love with her husband who makes her own decision, against a sad widow who allows her husband's death to control her.

An Evening at Osborne was originally a play that was turned into a television program and release by Thames Television in the United Kingdom and Home Box Office in the United States.¹⁹ Based on journal entries from the monarch, the television show focuses on an elderly

¹⁸ *Victoria and Albert*. Directed by John Erman. 2001. New York, NY: A&E, 2001. DVD.

¹⁹ <http://www.worldcat.org/title/evening-at-osborne-a-portrait-of-queen-victoria-in-her-own-words/oclc/43703005> accessed on June 20, 2018.

Queen Victoria reminiscing on her younger years. The scenes constantly shift from present time to the past of a young Queen Victoria transforming over time, especially after the death of Albert. Victoria is portrayed by actress Prunella Scales, a British actress best known for playing the character Sybil in *Fawlty Towers*.

In the first scene, the Queen is wheeled down a hallway by an Indian servant. She is wheeled into her drawing room with a large desk and fireplace that is decorated for Christmas. The year is most likely 1900, as in her monologue the Queen states that she has been feeling unwell and she actually died in January of 1901. She discusses her daily activities in which her daughter Beatrice who helps her read papers and write letters due to her poor eyesight. From her wheelchair, she walks over to her desk stating that, for a queen, she is short and that she had an unhappy childhood due to loneliness. Victoria states that she was fatherless and was unhappy with how her mother isolated her from others.

The next scene is a flashback of a younger Queen Victoria before Albert died. She is wearing a yellow dress and her hair is dark brown. Victoria describes how beautiful Osborne house is in the summertime and how much fun she had swimming in the ocean for the first time. She describes her husband as being handsome and explains that Albert greatly influenced her. Queen Victoria happily remembers when she was told she was sovereign by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham. On the day of her coronation, June 28th 1838, she awoke at 4 am due to excitement and the firing of cannons. Victoria was proud to be Queen of England because her people were enthusiastic about her coronation.

Another flashback scene occurs portraying the Queen outside of Osborne House. She is at a desk working on presumed state business with her loyal Indian servant at her side. She is wearing black and is older than the previous flashbacks. The Queen does not enjoy work, yet does it

out of duty. The Queen is troubled by her depiction on recently minted royal coins. Victoria feels that she does not need to be reminded of the honor of England.

Back to the present, Queen Victoria discusses her relationship with her late gillie, John Brown. The Queen stresses her love for Albert mitigated any kind of romantic interest with Brown. There is another flashback to a younger Queen Victoria before Albert's death, where she is expressing her love for the highlands in the summer.

In the present day, Victoria remembers the time when she refused to leave Balmoral and go back to London after the death of Albert. Her Prime Minister is desperate for her to return but she is in mourning for Albert. She explains that she had a good relationship with Prime Minister Disraeli and was pleased that he wrote to her on her fifty-six birthday. Victoria did not have a good relationship with Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone because of his liberal policies.

The Queen changes subjects to discuss her eldest son, Bertie, the future King of England. She states that over the years her son's behavior has improved, but he has "an empty brain." Even in her final days, the Queen still holds resentment towards the Prince of Wales. She reads proudly from her diary on the day she surpassed her grandfather, George III, as the longest reigning monarch in British history. Although the Queen is joyful about her accomplishment, she wonders if her people truly knew her, and would they still love their sovereign? At the end of the scene, the Queen looks forward to the New Year and reminisces about the previous Christmas.²⁰

Originally produced in 1991 and released on DVD in 2001, *An Evening at Osborne*, interprets Queen Victoria as an elderly women reliving the best years of her life.²¹ This is a rare representation of Queen Victoria at the end of her life and discussing her private thoughts and

²⁰ *Queen Victoria: Evening at Osborne*. Directed by 1991. New York, NY. HBO Home Video. 2000. DVD.

²¹ <http://www.worldcat.org/title/evening-at-osborne-a-portrait-of-queen-victoria-in-her-own-words/oclc/43703005> accessed on June 20, 2018

feelings. Like many elderly people, Victoria is a relatable figure who is trying to both enjoy the remaining year of her life and discussing the events of the past. Although gender and societal norms have changed since the nineteenth-century, the interpretation of the Queen Victoria who devoted her later years to the memory of her husband and is critical of her children and grandchildren.

Victoria is a 2016 miniseries chronicling the early years of Queen Victoria's rule similar to *Victoria and Albert* (2001), and the movie *The Young Victoria* (2009). Filmed in the United Kingdom and produced by Mammoth Screen the film was released in 2016 in the United Kingdom.²² It was later released in the United States in 2017. The first season depicts in eight episodes Victoria's life from the time her uncle King William IV dies through her marriage to Albert to the birth of her first child. Victoria is played by British actress Jena Coleman portraying the young queen as a stubborn willful and rebellious teenager. Adrian Schiller portrays the serious minded Prince Albert who wants to modernize his new country and keep a standard of morality at court. Victoria's mother the Duchess of Kent is depicted as a devout follower of her advisor Sir James Conroy who tries to control the young Queen. Lord Melbourne is more than just a teacher and advisor to the Queen he is her first love which he rejects in order to sustain the monarchy. The miniseries goes into great detail of the early years of Victoria's reign and the extent to which it affected the young woman and her country.

Episode one, *Doll 123*, begins with a title card stating that King William IV is dying and he leaves his country in the hands of his niece Alexandrina. Victoria awakes in the same room as

²² <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5137338/> accessed June 20, 2018.

her mother and learns from her governess Lehzen that a messenger is here with news of her uncle's death. In the traditional depiction of Victoria learning of her new status she meets the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham in her nightdress.

Victoria tells Conroy that she does not like the new name and spoke to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham alone causing outrage from her mother's advisor. He instructs her to have him and her mother present when she speaks to political officials. However, Victoria has already made up her mind to keep both Conroy and her mother out of her meetings with political leaders and becoming more independent from them.

At Victoria's first meeting Lord Melbourne notices a doll sitting on a table. The doll has no name only a number 123 and was given to Victoria by her mother. Victoria recalls her childhood where Lehzen showed her the family tree when she was young and thinking that her uncle's crown would be too big for her. Victoria informs her prime minister about Conroy offering to become her private secretary and Lord Melbourne steps in for her. Victoria haughtily tells Lord Melbourne that if she needs assistance she will ask him.

Lady Flora Hastings the lady in waiting to the Duchess of Kent gives a list of ladies that Victoria should have in her entourage. However Victoria ignores Flora's list because she does not trust her. Lady Flora tries to make Victoria understand her that her ladies in waiting are important because they set the tone of the court. Victoria does not take Lady Flora's advice and is starting to rebel against her mother and her close advisors. Another point of contention for the two is when Lady Flora advises the young Queen that she turned her back on the troops when she is reviewing them but Victoria brushes her off. Victoria feels that she can only trust her Prime Minister who helps her in finding ladies in waiting. Conroy and Lady Flora are unhappy with their relationship with Victoria, knowing they are losing their control of her.

Victoria is informed at her coronation ball by Lehzen that Lady Flora is pregnant after a trip to Scotland, riding in a carriage with Conroy. Lady Flora has a bulging stomach causing many including Victoria to believe that she is have an illegitimate child. Victoria informs her mother that she wants to send Lady Flora and Sir John away because she believes the rumors that the two had sex. The Duchess of Kent refuses to send either one of them away angering her daughter. These rumors cause Victoria to bar both Sir John and Lady Flora from her coronation. Victoria wants Lady Flora to be examine by her doctor to verify if she is a virgin or not. Lord Melbourne tells her to leave the matter alone but Victoria feels that she has a duty to maintain morality in her court.

While Victoria's coronation goes on, Lady Flora is examined to see if she is pregnant. After her coronation Victoria is told that Lady Flora is a virgin and ill with a tumor. Conroy and Victoria's uncle the King of Hanover think a regency is needed because of Victoria's mistreatment of Flora Hastings. When Lady Flora is close to death Victoria visits the unfortunate woman in her rooms at Buckingham palace. Lady Flora tells Victoria that only God can forgive her and that she did not act like a queen. Her subjects are not dolls to be played with and she cannot be a little girl wearing a crown. While at a military review just days after Lady Flora's death Victoria hears people calling remember Flora Hastings. Finally understanding the mistake she has made Victoria puts her doll in a box thus symbolically letting go of her childish ways.

Lord Melbourne's government is failing and Victoria waits to hear about the Jamaica bill which barely passed. Lord Melbourne must resign from his position because he does not have the support of parliament and Victoria is not pleased to hear this. Lord Melbourne advises Victoria to send for the Duke of Wellington who is part of the Tory party to form a government. Victoria and the Duke of Wellington meet and she wants him to become Prime Minister. However the

Duke of Wellington feels that he is too old to form a government and instructs the Queen to send for Sir Robert Peel to hold the position of Prime Minister. Instead Victoria waits for Lord Melbourne to arrive to discuss with him about Peel becoming Prime Minister. She has yet to speak to Sir Robert Peel about becoming Prime Minister. Victoria goes to Dover House to visit Lord Melbourne tries to convince her that he must uphold the constitution and she must speak to Sir Robert. Victoria wants him to come to dinner but Lord Melbourne refuses to come tell her that she cannot favor one party over the other.

Tories are outraged by Victoria's actions and the Duke of Cumberland thinks that his niece is suffering from the same madness disease as her grandfather King George III. He believes that a regency is needed on the grounds of insanity. In a meeting with the Queen, Lord Melbourne tells her he cannot return as Prime Minister and Peel was in his right to tell her to remove several of her ladies. If Lord Melbourne forms a government critics will think he is manipulating the queen. Victoria is worried that things will return to her life at Kensington palace and she will be a lonely prisoner. At unveiling of her portrait Lord Melbourne returns telling her that he will form a government for her. Victoria thinks she has outwitted her enemies with Lord Melbourne back as Prime Minister. However, Lord Melbourne knows that his days are number because the queen must get married and she will look to her husband for moral and political advice.

Episode three, *Brocket Hall*, the Chartist Movement going on during the early months of Victoria's reign. Victoria is not ready to marry yet her uncle the King of Belgium wants his niece to marry her cousin Prince Albert. Uncle Leopold wants Victoria to marry Albert because she needs a cooler head by her side and she cannot marry Lord Melbourne. Leopold informs Victoria that the British Crown is vulnerable and a draft from wrong direction can be made.

While at tea with her ladies Victoria waits on Lord Melbourne to arrive. Instead Lord Melbourne has gone to home named Bocket hall. Victoria travels to see him. Victoria states that she views Lord Melbourne as a companion and the only one she desires. Victoria will give her heart without hesitation but Lord Melbourne tells her she must give her heart to someone else. Lord Melbourne state that he still loves his dead wife and he mates for life. This leaves the young queen emotionally shattered.

Victoria grants Conroy's request by giving him an Irish title and he leaves the royal court for good. Victoria is willing raise her mother's allowance now that Conroy is leaving court. The Duchess of Kent is upset and tells her daughter that it is hard to lose someone you care for. Victoria is unhappy that her cousins Prince Ernest and Prince Albert from Germany are coming to visit. Victoria knows that Lord Melbourne will not be her Prime Minister forever but does not want her life at court to change. Lord Melbourne believes the Queen will not be happy alone even with companions and need a husband to love and honor her.

Episode four, *The Clockwork Prince*, there is a piano scene where Victoria meets Prince Albert after their last visit three years before. Victoria think that Albert looks different from the last time she saw him but Albert sees little change in her. While visiting his cousin Albert wants to see paintings with Victoria but she says she has business with Lord Melbourne. Leopold assures Albert that it is his destiny to be Victoria's husband. Victoria would rather marry Robert Peel than Albert because he is much too serious. Albert has a serious minded personality leads him to explore London and discover the disgusting poverty in the capital. In the next scene Victoria is seen practicing the piano when her uncle King Leopold walks in. He instructs Victoria to overcome maidenly modesty and propose to Albert. However Victoria is not about to marry a man she does not like.

During a walk in the forest Albert tells Victoria that she should marry him. Victoria is furious that Albert wants her to know what to think. Both upset after squabble and they leave Windsor. Victoria discuss with Lord Melbourne the possibility of marrying Albert and her advises her that only a fool would turn her away. Albert is about to return to Coburg and Victoria must quickly decide if she wants to ask Albert's hand in marriage. She is nervous that Albert may not say yes. The night before Albert leaves Victoria to him next to the fireplace.

Episode five, *An Ordinary Woman*, Victoria knows that she must now an allowance and title established for Albert. At Buckingham Palace Victoria announces to her ministers that she is marrying Albert at Buckingham Palace. Lord Melbourne advises the queen that the match may not be popular in Parliament. Sir Robert Peel and other members of Parliament are upset that too many German princes have grown fat from the country's purse and gives Albert only 30,000 pounds a year and no title. Victoria is upset about Parliament's decision and even more so by the thought that her future husband could possibly have a mistress. Victoria confronts Albert about the possibility of having a mistress but he assures her that she is the only woman for him. Victoria views Albert not as her subject but as her husband and Albert sees her as his wife. They are married in a magnificent ceremony surrounding by their family and friends. Victoria and Albert travel to Windsor Castle to spend their honeymoon together.

Episode six, *The Queen's Husband*, the couple returns to Buckingham Palace after their honeymoon and Victoria is busy with work while Albert has no define role. Victoria and Albert go to dinner together for the first time as a married couple but the event is ruined when the Duke of Sussex process before the Prince Consort because he is of a lower status. Victoria meets with Duke of Sussex to give his wife a title who was not allowed one because he did not have permission to marry. This left the Duke of Sussex's wife without a title but Victoria gives her the title

of Duchess of Inverness. Albert is allowed to walk in with his wife and the Queen please with herself. However Albert sees this as Victoria's victory not his. Albert speaks at Abolitionist convention to rounding success but Victoria does not attend because she does not want to overshadow him.

Episode seven, *Engine of Change*, after becoming ill during a concert at the palace Victoria learns that she is pregnant. Albert is thrilled by the news but Victoria is worried about the dangers of childbirth. Lord Chamberlin speaks with Victoria and Albert hat a regent must be appointed. Victoria wants to appoint Albert as regent, if she dies and her child lives. Like many members of Parliament the Duke of Wellington is not happy that a German could possibly sit on the English throne.

Victoria wants to send Albert out into the countryside to learn more about England in case he becomes regent. The couple visits Staffordshire where Albert goes to the railroad and is fascinated by it. Victoria is upset when Albert visits a railroad station without her. Albert wants Victoria to bring attention to the railroads but she rebuffs him stating that she will only do it by her own choice. Albert tells her that Britain is now his country and Victoria embraces her husband and progress by riding the railroad for the first time by herself. Peel announces to the Tories that Albert should be regent and he endorses the queen's decision.

Episode eight, *Young England*, Victoria is heavily pregnant with her first child. Duke of Cumberland and Leopold arrive for the birth. Baroness Lehzen handles the Queen's correspondence and she dismiss the letters of some of her overzealous subjects. Albert and Peel talk about the upcoming birth and how the King of Hanover arrival and how he has overturned the constitution in his kingdom. They are worried that if Victoria dies the King of Hanover will become the King of England. The only solace the Queen has during this time is going out for a daily carriage

ride but Albert is worried that she could be targeted by an assassin. However Victoria does not want the past to repeat itself and be treated like a prisoner like she was in Kensington Palace. Victoria wants to go on a carriage ride to see her people although everyone wants her to stay at the palace because of an earlier incident when a man approached her stating that he wanted to release her from captivity. After the incident with the mentally ill man Albert wants her correspondence to come to him and not Baroness Lehzen who did not take the man's threats seriously.

The King of Hanover visits the Queen at Buckingham Palace and stirs up trouble with his tactlessness. He suggest that Victoria's daily rides could prove tragic for the Queen and she should take care in making sure she is safe. On a carriage ride a next day with Prince Albert Edward Oxford attempts to assassinate the Queen but she is unharmed. The police investigators discover that Oxford is part of the Young England society which has ties to Hanover. Oxford could be working for the King of Hanover who is the heir presumptive to the English throne. The police later discover that Oxford made up Young England up and fired his gun with no bullets. Oxford is declared mentally insane but Victoria feels that Oxford should pay the full price for nearly killing her. The King of Hanover denies that he had any involvement in the possible regicide.

Victoria is worried that Oxford could be declared innocent and released. The Queen is worried that she will be a prisoner and her child will grow up in the shadows like she did. In a meeting with the King of Hanover Victoria realizes that her uncle does not trust his subjects and does not believes in their laws after abolish the Hanoverian constitution. Victoria states that she is a better monarch than him because she upholds her country's laws. The King of Hanover leaves in amazement that his niece had the will to stand up to him and call out his failings as a sovereign. After this Victoria learns that Lehzen is not over her official correspondence anymore and the Queen feels she can decide that and not Albert. Peel comes into relate that Oxford is

cleared because he is insane and detained at mental hospital. To prove that Victoria will uphold the jury's decision by going out on a carriage ride. Albert learns that his wife has what it takes to be an effective monarch. Not long after Victoria goes into labor and gives birth to a daughter she names Victoria. The Queen survives childbirth and her daughter is healthy causing celebrations in London.²³

The representation of the young Queen Victoria in *Victoria*, is a strong-minded, rebellious and opinionated individual unlike the previous representations. In previous representations of the young queen in *Victoria the Great* and *Victoria and Albert*, the young queen is demure and reserve rarely showing her true emotions. The interpretation of Queen Victoria in *Victoria* is similar to *Edward the Seventh* and *The Young Victoria*, who is abrasive, and stands up for herself against Conroy, Sir Robert Peel and her uncle the King of Hanover. At the beginning the series Victoria is a novice to royal duties and relies on Lord Melbourne to help her learn to be an effective monarch. Victoria falls in Lord Melbourne and even goes to home to express her feelings towards him. Lord Melbourne knows that Victoria is a young woman who he would be unable to marry and suggest she look for love in someone else. Victoria is hurt by Lord Melbourne's request but eventually marries and finds happiness with Prince Albert. The interpretation of Victoria in their part of the miniseries is relatable to many young women, who have dealt with unrequited love and moved on to be in love with someone else. The Victoria in *Victoria* represents the current time period by standing up for herself and her people, against her uncle the King of Hanover. The King of Hanover does not allow the citizens of his country the same rights and freedoms that Victoria's England allows. In a heated discussion with her uncle, Victoria states that she believes and trust in her people to do the right thing, while her uncle prevents his people

²³ *Victoria*. Directed by Daisy Goodwin. London, England. ITV. 2016. DVD.

from gaining essential human rights. Victoria is seen as a modern queen who trust her subjects even when they may not always do as she wishes, while her uncle is viewed less favorable for his authoritarian actions. In the twenty-first century, there are more democracies than monarchies and by interpreting Queen Victoria as a modernizer gives viewers the impression that Victoria in *Victoria*, was ahead of her time.

Fall of Eagles (1974), is a British miniseries produced by the BBC and divide into thirteen parts.²⁴ It portrays the events leading up to and after World War I from 1848 to 1918. Queen Victoria is featured briefly in episode two “The English Princess,” when she bids farewell to her eldest daughter, Vicky, as she leaves for Germany with her new husband, the Crown Prince of Prussia. In this brief depiction, Queen Victoria is solemn when her daughter leaves and there is no hint of jealousy between the two compared to the miniseries like *Edward the Seventh* and *Victoria and Albert*. In episode five “The Last Tsar”, Queen Victoria is older and dressed in her widow’s black. She is thrilled that her granddaughter, Alix, daughter of Princess Alice, is visiting with her future husband Nicholas, the future Tsar of Russia. She reminisces about Albert who had been dead for over three decades, still mourning her dead husband. After the murder-suicide of Crown Prince Rudolf and his mistress in Austria, the Queen believes the Hapsburgs of Austria have bad blood. Victoria is insistent that her granddaughter Alix marry Nicholas, hoping to increase family ties to Imperial Russia.²⁵

Lillie (1978) is a British miniseries produced by London Weekend Televisi and filmed in Great Britain.²⁶ The miniseries is about the life of Edward the Seventh’s most famous mistress,

²⁴ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0207885/> accessed on June 20, 2018.

²⁵ *Fall of Eagles*. Directed by John Elliot. 1974. London, United Kingdom. BBC. 2006. DVD.

²⁶ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0077042/> accessed on June 20, 2018.

Lillie Langtry. Francesca Annas portrays Lillie Langtry as she did in the earlier miniseries, *Edward the Seventh*, and Sheila Reid is Queen Victoria. The depiction of Victoria is only portrayed in episode five “Bertie” when she visits her youngest son Leopold, who is in poor health. Reid portrays the Queen as sympathetic to her son’s illness and she depends on him to help her with state affairs. In the room, Victoria spots a picture of Lillie Langtry and takes it proclaiming that she is much too pretty.²⁷

Disraeli (1978) is a British miniseries, produced by Association Television about the life of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli.²⁸ The miniseries focuses on both his personal life and political career. Disraeli is portrayed by Ian McShane, a well-known British actor who has worked on such projects as *Wuthering Heights* and *Deadwood*. Actress Rosemary Leach portrays Queen Victoria, who in historical fact had an exceptional relationship with Disraeli. In the miniseries, the first meeting between Queen Victoria and Disraeli is when he becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer. Prince Albert is in attendance at their first visit and does most of the talking. Albert and Disraeli hold similar viewpoints on politics and Victoria is pleased with his handsome appearance. At a dinner party, Victoria, her daughter Vicky and Disraeli’s wife Mary, converse on his education background. In the presence of Disraeli, Albert is at ease because the Prime Minister has an unbiased opinion of him. After the death of Albert, Disraeli visits the Queen, who is in deep mourning. He is sympathetic to the Queen and sends his condolences to her. Victoria states that Albert’s loss is an immense loss for her and the country. At this time Victoria realizes that she is alone, and needs Disraeli more than ever to run the country in her absence. When Disraeli resigns from his position, Victoria is upset that Gladstone won the elections and will become

²⁷ *Lillie*. Directed by John Gorrie, Christopher Hodman, and Timothy Wharmby. 1975. London, England, London Weekend Television. 2013.DVD.

²⁸ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078601/> accessed on June 20, 2018.

Prime Minister. She wants Disraeli to be head of the Conservative party, but he declines because his health is failing.²⁹

The last three miniseries were all released during the 1970's and have different interpretations of Queen Victoria. In *Fallen Eagles*, Victoria is an elderly widow thrilled with the news of her grand-daughter's marriage to the future czar of Russia. In *Lillie*, Queen Victoria is critical of her son's extramarital affairs and in *Disraeli*, she grieves for the loss of Albert. All three interpretations give a stereotypical representation of the Queen as a moral and widow ruler trying to control her family and politicians.

Over the past eight years Queen Victoria's life has been adapted to for movie and TV screen for audiences to view her long life. Although, there were original treatments on the films and miniseries on Victoria's life there were five common themes that emerge in the treatment. Morality, gender, intrusion, assassination, and seclusion are the five themes that will be discussed in the fourth chapter analysis. This next chapter will focus on how the five themes address representations of Victoria's agency throughout her life.

²⁹ *Disraeli*. Directed by Claude Whatham. 1978. London England: Granada Productions. DVD.

Chapter IV: Analysis

In the numerous films and miniseries on Victoria's life, several themes are presented such as morality, gender roles, assassination, intruders and seclusion. These themes tie into representations of Queen Victoria's agency and how she acts on the behalf of the monarchy. When Victoria became queen, she and Prince Albert wanted to present themselves as moral and righteous leaders. They wanted to be seen as the antithesis of her uncles, who were known for living scandalous lifestyles. The immorality of the Hanoverians drove Victoria and Albert to ensure that their children would lead moral lifestyles, especially the Prince of Wales. Gender roles are another overarching theme in the films, they affect the image in which the Queen's agency is depicted. Even though Victoria occupied the most powerful position in the world, she was still a woman in a male dominated society. Although Victoria was the Head of State, she is presented as needing a male by her side to secure and legitimize her reign. Assassination is a third theme found in many of the films and miniseries. Throughout Victoria's reign, there were seven assassination attempts on the monarch, and these events have been selected for the dramatization in the film treatment of her life. Intrusions are another common theme: Victoria faced such an event in the early years of her reign. The last theme, seclusion, was part of Victoria's early life and during the first years of her widowhood. As a child, Victoria was kept away not only from the court of her uncle King William IV, but also from children her own age. These themes portray the Queen's agency in different ways, and collectively make up the many interpretations of Queen Victoria's representation of her agency in films and television.

Morality in the Royal Household

Before Victoria's birth in 1819, there was growing urgency for the sons of King George III to secure legitimate marriages and have legitimate heirs. For years, Victoria's uncles and her father, the Duke of Kent, had been living with mistresses, having illegitimate children, and racking up debts.¹ Victoria's grandparents, King George III and Queen Charlotte, had fifteen children but by 1812 had few legitimate heirs of the second generation, due to the Royal Marriage Acts.² The Royal Acts required a member of the royal family to gain the permission of the sovereign in order to marry.³ The eldest son, the Prince Regent and future George IV, had legitimately married Caroline of Brunswick and had one daughter, Princess Charlotte.⁴ Princess Charlotte was young, and found to be popular by the British people due to the "complete contrast of her uncles." There was a hope among British subjects that once Princess Charlotte became queen a new era for the monarchy would begin.⁵ In 1816 Princess Charlotte married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg and it seemed that the Hanoverian line would continue when the young bride became pregnant in 1817. Sadly, Charlotte died at 21, after a fifty hour labor resulting in the birth of a stillborn son.⁶ For Charlotte's six uncles, it became necessary to continue the Hanoverian dynasty and have legitimate offspring.⁷

¹ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 8.

² Woodham-Smith Cecil, *Queen Victoria: From her birth to the death of the Prince Consort* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), *passim*.

³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

After the death of Princess Charlotte, the Duke of Clarence, the future King William IV, gave up his mistress and ten illegitimate children to marry Princess Adelaide in hopes of conceiving a legitimate heir.⁸ At twenty five, it was believed that Princess Adelaide would be able to give birth to a healthy heir, but sadly both of her infant daughters died.⁹ Victoria's father, the Duke of Kent, had previously been in the military and had been living for decades with his mistress, Madame de St Laurent.¹⁰ The couple had no children and two years before the death of Princess Charlotte, the Duke of Kent had been searching for a suitable wife, forced by his elder brother the Prince Regent.¹¹ The Duke of Kent in his mid-fifties, married the thirty-one year old widow Dowager Princess of Leiningen, Princess Victoria, who already had two children.¹² The Dowager Princess was the sister of Prince Leopold, the husband of the late Princess Charlotte. Before her death, Princess Charlotte knew of the potential marriage and approved of it.¹³ The couple was married in Germany in May of 1818 and left several days later to be married again in England.¹⁴ In November the new Duchess of Kent was pregnant and arrangements were made for the family to move back to England.¹⁵ The Duke of Kent wanted his child to be born in England for the possibility that the child could be a candidate for the English throne.¹⁶ The Kents were staying at the palace of Amorbach which was deemed unsuitable for the Duchess of Kent to

⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹² *Ibid.*, 12.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁶ Hough Richard, *Victoria and Albert*, 2.

give birth. The Duke and the Duchess of Kent along with her daughter, Princess Fedora, left Gotha, Germany for England on March 28th of 1819.¹⁷ Arriving in England on April 24th, 1819, the couple traveled to London to their new home, Kensington Palace where, Victoria was born on May 24th.¹⁸ A plump and healthy baby, the princess was christened Alexandrina Victoria, called Drina throughout her childhood.¹⁹ On January 23rd of 1819, only seven months after Victoria's birth, her father, the Duke of Kent, died of pneumonia and six days later, her grandfather, George III, died.²⁰ Victoria's childhood was rife with conflict due to animosity between her mother and her Hanoverian uncles. The Prince Regent, now King George IV, was enraged when he learned that his brother, the Duke of Kent, had produced an heir.²¹

When Victoria became Queen of England in 1837, it was the hope of many of her subjects that she could make the monarchy free from scandal. The films and miniseries depicting Victoria's life show how courtiers and advisors alike hope that the young queen will bring new life into a dying monarchy. However, there is no rule book for how to be a good ruler and in Victoria's early years, she made mistakes that threatened the new morality that the British monarchy had placed on itself. The Flora Hastings affair and the Bedchamber scandal tarnished Victoria's reputation as a pure and moral Queen until her marriage to Prince Albert. The image of a moral monarchy returned once Victoria married and had children, which was the best thing a young woman could do to improve her situation.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 7.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 17.

²¹*Ibid.*, 15.

In January of 1839, a year and a half after she became queen, Victoria faced one of the earliest threats to her reign.²² Lady Flora Hastings was the lady-in-waiting to the Queen's mother, the Duchess of Kent, and came from a family of Tories.²³ Hastings was thirty two years old, unmarried and the eldest daughter of the Marquess of Hastings. She was also a close family friend of Sir John Conroy, the Duchess of Kent's advisor, and Victoria's most hated enemy.²⁴ Like Sir James Conroy, Lady Flora Hastings and her family were Tories, while the Queen held Whig sympathies.²⁵ When Lady Hastings appeared in court with a swollen figure, Victoria assumed it was due to sexual misconduct with Conroy.²⁶ There was such scrutiny around Lady Flora's figure that she would either consent to a medical examination or leave court.²⁷ The young woman was not only forced to have a medical examination to determine if she was a virgin or not, but had to deal with rude innuendos and gossip that circulated around Queen Victoria's court.²⁸ The examination concluded that Hastings was a virgin but royal doctor James Clark failed to diagnose her with liver cancer.²⁹ After learning of Lady Flora's condition Victoria "was both relieved and deeply upset, "at how the situation had turned out."³⁰ In an attempt to smooth over the situation, Victoria sent Hastings a message asking to meet so that she could personally apologize. On February 23, of 1839 Victoria visited Lady Flora who expressed her wish for the matter to be forgotten and that for the sake of the Duchess of Kent "she would suppress the

²² Hough, *Victoria and Albert*, 46.

²³ Wilson *Victoria*, 92.

²⁴ Hough *Victoria and Albert*, 46.

²⁵ Wilson, *Victoria*, 92.

²⁶ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 29.

²⁷ Hough, *Victoria and Albert*, 46.

²⁸ Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 29.

²⁹ Wilson, *Victoria*, 93.

³⁰ Hough, *Victoria and Albert*, 46.

wounded feeling.” However, the wounded feeling was not forgotten by Lady Flora who informed her uncle Hamilton Fitzgerald and her brother Lord Hastings about the events at Buckingham palace. Lady Flora complained that “her honor had been most basely assailed,” and her Lord Hastings believed that “the false allegations were a plot to insult the whole family.” Using the *Morning Post* as an outlet for their anger, the Hastings family released letters that Lady Flora had written to the Queen. (Victoria was enraged by the intrusion of privacy.³¹) On July 5th 1839 Lady Flora Hastings died from liver cancer and the criticism of Victoria’s character only became louder.³² Pamphlets did not directly attack the Queen but rather depicted her as “the victim of an uncleaned court.” A pamphlet titled *Warning Letters to Baroness Lehzen* described Victoria’s longtime governess and friend “as a certain foreign lady who pulled the wires of a diabolical conspiracy of which Lady Flora was to be the first victim.”³³ Her hatred for John Conroy led her to “not behave with the discretion and wisdom that she would later acquire.”³⁴ Her accession to “the throne had added arrogance and disdain to her character,” even though she was just twenty years old.³⁵ This proved to many that the young Queen was inept to rule and immoral to the situations of a dying woman. Her close relationship with Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, who was Whig, pushed the situation even further for many who believed that Victoria’s immoral behavior had its origin in political spite.

The Bedchamber Crisis occurred the same year as the Lady Flora Hastings Scandal.³⁶

When Victoria came to the throne, Lord Melbourne was the Whig prime minister at her side

³¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

³² *Ibid.*, 48.

³³ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁶ Wilson, *Victoria*, 94.

guiding her in her new role.³⁷ In his late fifties, Melbourne was a widower deeply in love with the memory of his late wife Caroline (who had an extramarital affair with Lord Byron.³⁸) Melbourne became a father figure to Victoria, in a sense replacing her uncle, King Leopold of Belgium.³⁹ Melbourne had to resign in May of 1839 due a loss of majority in parliament after a vote to suspend the Jamaican Constitution. Melbourne instructed Queen Victoria to call for the Duke of Wellington to become the next Tory prime minister. The Duke of Wellington was unable to take the position due to old age and advised the Queen to send for Sir Robert Peel to be the next Tory prime minister.⁴⁰ Peel accepted the office, but was reluctant to do so because he and the Tories had been taken by surprise by Lord Melbourne's resignation. During her meeting with Sir Robert Peel, Victoria brought up the question of her household. The issues surrounded her ladies who had husbands who were strong opponents against Peel in Parliament.⁴¹ Although Peel wished to remove her Whig ladies, he gave no answer to the Queen except "nothing would be done with her knowledge and approbation." Still in correspondence with Lord Melbourne, Victoria's former prime minister advised her that her household was her own business. The next day Victoria met with Peel again who insisted that the Queen give up some of her Whig ladies, to which she refused.⁴² From Peel's point of view, there were several ladies in the Queen's household like, Lady Normanby, whose husband was the former Lord - Lieutenant of Ireland, who would be an opponent of his new government. Victoria argued that she never discussed pol-

³⁷ Weintraub Stanley, *Victoria* (New York: Truman Talley Books, 1987), *passim*.

³⁸ Wilson, *Victoria*, 94.

³⁹ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 105.

⁴⁰ Wilson, *Victoria*, 94.

⁴¹ Charlot Monica, *Victoria: The Young Queen* (Blackwell. Oxford UK, 1991), *passim*.

⁴² Charlot, *Victoria*, 144.

itics with her Ladies of the Bedchamber and complained that nothing like this had been done before. “Peel replied that she was a Queen Regent-not a consort- and that made a difference.” The Tories believed that they could not proceed with and form a new government unless the Queen removed her Ladies of the Bedchamber. The breakdown in negotiations with Peel prompted the Queen to call for Lord Melbourne to resume his former position as prime minister. In a meeting with his Cabinet Lord Melbourne, who agreed, advised the Queen to give the following response to Peel: “The Queen having considered the proposal to made to her yesterday by Sir Robert Peel, to remove the Ladies of her Bedchamber, cannot consent to adopt a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage and which is repugnant to her feelings.” Some, like Greville, viewed what Melbourne’s cabinet did as unconstitutional and saw the Queen’s lack of understanding of the British government.⁴³ Parliament and the press were not impressed and felt that the only solution for her childish actions was a husband who could control her.⁴⁴

The *Young Victoria* (2009) depicts the Bedchamber Crisis as a major event in the Queen’s early reign. Victoria leans on her Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, who resigns from his position after a low vote. Victoria must deal with the new Prime Minister Robert Peel who she is not fond of after he advises her to remove several of her Whig ladies. This causes a constitutional problem in the government and Victoria continues to write to Lord Melbourne about her problems with Peel. During this turbulent time Victoria is lonely and is comforted by letters she receives from Albert and her estranged mother, the Duchess of Kent. The letters comfort Victoria, especially when public demonstrations are held outside Buckingham palace against the Queen’s actions. This film takes liberty with historical accuracy about Victoria and her correspondence

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴⁴ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 126.

with Prince Albert and the Duchess of Kent using this to dramatize the Bedchamber Scandal. The film depicts Victoria's actions during the Bedchamber Crisis of 1839, as that of a young woman harboring animosity to her new prime minister, and making a crucial mistake in the early days of her reign. Events smooth over with Victoria's marriage to Prince Albert who confirms to Peel that the Queen will relieve some of her ladies when he returns as prime minister. Just as her contemporary critics desired, Victoria needed to be controlled by a man in order to make a rational decisions. Morality was needed in the palace and only a man could bring it.

The miniseries *Victoria* (2016) depicts both the Flora Hastings Affair and the Bedchamber scandal. Flora Hastings is the lady in waiting to Victoria's mother, the Duchess of Kent, and therefore, the young Queen's enemy due to her friendship with Sir John Conroy. Victoria does not know all the protocols when it comes to royal occasion and Hastings tries to be helpful by correcting her. When Victoria turns her back on the soldiers during a show of the military, Hastings informs her that this is a mistake she should no longer make. The young queen dismisses Hastings's remarks and continues to ignore her advice. Victoria learns from Baroness Lehzen that Hastings is pregnant by Sir James Conroy after a carriage ride from Scotland.⁴⁵ Historically, the woman spreading the rumors about Lady Flora was Lady Tavistock who was a known Whig supporter.⁴⁶ In *Victoria*, Hastings denies the accusations, but Victoria wants a physician to examine her. Lord Melbourne advises the Queen against it, suggesting that she leave the situation as is. Victoria does not listen to Melbourne, believing that she must protect the morality and virtues of her court. A physician examines Hastings, only to discover that she is a virgin and her bloated belly is a symptom of a tumor. The young woman has liver cancer and only has a short matter of

⁴⁵*Victoria*. Directed by Daisy Goodwin. London, England. ITV. 2016. DVD.

⁴⁶ Wilson, *Victoria*, 105.

time to live. Victoria is criticized for her mishandling of the situation by politicians, especially those in the Tory party. When Lady Flora is close to death, Victoria visits her and asks for forgiveness from the dying woman. However, Flora tells her that only God can forgive her. Hastings dies and Victoria's mother, the Duchess of Kent, blames her for Hastings' swift demise. Many wondered, if Victoria could not give any sympathy to a dying woman, could she be an effective queen and bestow sympathy on to her subjects?

The miniseries *Victoria* also portrays the Bedchamber Crisis brought on by Lord Melbourne's resignation from the office of prime minister. In the miniseries drama, the relationship between Melbourne and the young Queen is not only that of a teacher instructing a student but that of a young girl in love with an older man. In a male dominated world, Victoria finds comfort in Melbourne, who helps her navigate her new role. When Melbourne resigns due to low support in Parliament, Victoria is devastated by the loss of her friend and romantic interest. Melbourne instructs her to have the Duke of Wellington form a government, but the war hero is too old for such a position. Instead, Sir Robert Peel is made prime minister, upsetting Victoria even more because she does not know him very well. Peel does not possess Melbourne's charm and at his first meeting with Queen Victoria, he informs her that some of her ladies will need to resign. New ladies who are supporters of the Tory party will need to be added to the Queen's bedchamber in order for her to be seen as neutral. However, Victoria refuses Peel's idea and hopes by doing this Melbourne will be forced to return as prime minister. For several weeks, the country is held in suspense while in a state of constitutional crisis. Peel is unable to form a government because he feels that he does not have the support of the Queen. Lord Melbourne returns as prime minister to the delight of a victorious Queen. The Lady Flora Hastings Scandal and the Bedchamber Crisis are due in part to Victoria's rebellion against her mother and Sir James Conroy,

who kept her locked away in Kensington Palace. With the Bedchamber crisis, the Queen is still new to politics and does not comprehend that she must play a neutral part in government. However, politicians and advisors believe that it is time for the Queen to marry, in hopes that a husband can control her outrageous actions.⁴⁷

Victoria's marriage to Prince Albert is viewed as a step towards the Queen legitimizing her rule, due to nineteenth century standards that the husband was the chief breadwinner and head of household.⁴⁸ His wife and children were expected to be obedient and submissive.⁴⁹ Prince Albert is a moral man who would never commit adultery, due to his parent's acrimonious history. His brother, Ernest, is portrayed as a womanizer, which is true to his actions in real life. Albert does not approve of his brother flirting with one of the Queen's married ladies-in waiting. He wants the role of the royal family to be seen as a beacon of morality and his wife must follow suit.⁵⁰

For the future of the monarchy, it was important for the Prince of Wales to maintain a sense of morality in order for the mistakes of the Hanoverians would not be repeated.⁵¹ The Prince of Wales born Albert Edward, known as Bertie, was the second child of Albert and Victoria. Born just a year after his elder sister, Vicky, Bertie was constantly in his sister's shadow. Vicky was the favorite of her father because she was highly intelligent; this causes Victoria to become jealous of the relationship between daughter and father. Bertie had a difficult time in the classroom. Albert believed his son was "too backwards," yet Victoria believed her husband was

⁴⁷ *Victoria*. Directed by Daisy Goodwin. London, England. ITV. 2016. DVD.

⁴⁸ Perkin, Joan. *Victorian Women*, (New York: New York University Press, Washington Square, 1993), 51.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵⁰ *Victoria*. Directed by Daisy Goodwin. London, England. ITV. 2016. DVD.

⁵¹ Lassiter, *Exploring Power and Gender-Role Expectations*, 33.

requiring too much of their son and asked for Lady Lyttleton to look after him.⁵² Albert wanted his son to be an intellectual and moral man, and sent him to both Oxford and Cambridge University, just as he had been sent to Bonn University in his youth. Bertie was separated from other undergraduates living in a house with his tutors and he desired a life in the military. On a stint in a military camp in Ireland, Bertie had a brief liaison with actress Nellie Clifton. Albert heard about the affair through Lord Torrington and sent his son a letter on November 16, 1861. In the letter, Albert states that the indiscretion had caused him “the greatest pain I have yet felt in this life.” The letter also stated that the Prince of Wales had “broke his parents’ hearts,” due to his poor choices.⁵³ Upset by his son’s actions, Albert visited Bertie at Cambridge to discuss the Nellie Clifton matter. The Prince Consort had become increasingly ill over the past several days but pushed on to see Bertie. Albert leaves Cambridge for Windsor to be with the rest of his family for Christmas.⁵⁴ On December 14, 1861 Albert died in the Blue room at Windsor from typhoid fever. Victoria would blame Albert’s death on stress caused by Bertie’s affair.⁵⁵

In the 1975 miniseries *Edward the Seventh*, Victoria and Albert hope that their eldest son, Bertie, will become a moral and virtuous king. The Prince of Wales must not fall into the same trap that his great uncles fell into, having multiple affairs and illegitimate children and damaging the monarchy. Bertie’s education is designed to make him a scholarly and moral man, yet the young boy is unable to live up to such high expectations. When the Prince of Wales learns that he is one day to be king, he is upset because he thought his older sister Vicky would become Queen like his mother. Vicky is intelligent and the favorite of her father Albert, causing him to

⁵²Weintraub, *Victoria*, 225.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 292.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 293.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 300.

spend more time with his daughter than his son. Bertie feels isolated and wants to be with boys his own age. His father and Baron Stockmar send Bertie to Oxford to become a scholarly gentleman, but instead he spends his time making friends and enjoying the pleasures of dance halls in London. Bertie is happy to learn that his parents are sending him to train with the Calvary in Ireland since he had always had an interest in the military and he can be with young men his own age. At a party in the military barracks, Bertie has a liaison with Irish actress named Nellie Clifton. Baron Stockmar discovers the affair and writes a letter to Victoria and Albert, alerting them of Bertie's transgression. Both are extremely upset about Bertie's behavior and Albert travels to Cambridge to discuss the issue with his son. Bertie apologizes to his father, stating that he wants to be a better man like his father. Satisfied with the answer, Albert leaves for Windsor to spend Christmas with his wife and the rest of his family. By the time Bertie arrives, Albert is desperately ill and dies, much to the surprise of his devastated wife. It was Victoria's belief that she would die before her husband, who she believed would be a great help to Bertie when he becomes king.⁵⁶

Victoria resented her son's behavior and knew that he was not guilty of the Prince Consort's death, but Bertie did not match Albert in morality nor intellectually. To protect her son for further embarrassment, Victoria forced Bertie to marry Princess Alix of Denmark in hopes that she will turn him into a "plausible king." Many thought that once Bertie and his new wife became fit enough to take the throne, Victoria would abdicate and spend the rest of her life in Coburg. For Victoria, Bertie's marriage would "keep him in a state of unreadiness for responsibility," and the Queen is unwilling to give up her throne through her years in seclusion.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Edward the Seventh*. Directed by John Gorrie. 1975. Midlands, UK. ATV. DVD.

⁵⁷ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 321.

Edwards the Seventh depicts the years following Albert's death as difficult ones for the Queen and her relationship with Bertie. Victoria is deeply depressed by his loss and does not feel that she can attend public appearances. Several of the Queen's prime ministers try to convince her to give her son some of her duties, which she refuses. Victoria does not believe her son has the capabilities to perform these duties because he is lazy. Instead, the Queen orders Bertie to marry Princess Alix of Denmark or she will never speak to him again. After his marriage, Bertie is popular with the people, much to the annoyance of the Queen who is jealous of her son's charm. No matter how popular Bertie is, he cannot stay away from scandal, having multiple extramarital affairs, and he becomes embroiled in a divorce case. Bertie is also involved in a gambling scandal, when a fellow courtier cheats at the illegal card game of baccarat. The continuation of Bertie's immorality as an adult does not help with convincing his mother that Bertie has the ability to handle public duties. Following in Prince Albert's footsteps, Queen Victoria wants the monarchy to be seen as a symbol of morality, but Bertie is unable to live up to his parent's standards.

The miniseries *Victoria and Albert* (2001) also portrays the Prince of Wales's immorality and the effect it has on his parents. In a conversation with his son, Albert tries to explain to him the importance of his position and the need to focus on his education.

Albert: You have gotten involved with the wrong sort of men. They squander money and drink. You need to focus on your education.

Albert to Bertie: Study Bertie. You will find nothing more rewarding.

Victoria to Bertie: You have no sense of duty you are a constant source of worry to your father.

Albert: Twenty years of work thrown away.

Albert: When mama came to the town the monarchy was held in utter contempt. Your mother and I have worked for twenty years to eradicate such ideas. You have ruined all of that with this one mistake.

Bertie: I'm sorry I didn't know she would say anything. I try to study but I can't! I try to make you proud and I admire you.⁵⁸

Like *Edward the Seventh, Victoria and Albert*, depicts Bertie's affair and the aftermath. Bertie is viewed as a difficult young man who will not live up to his parent's ideals. In Bertie's youth, he makes the mistake of being involved with frivolous friends and an actress who runs to the newspapers with her story of a sexual liaison with the Prince of Wales. Where *Victoria and Albert*, ends *Edward the Seventh*, picks up with the adult Bertie having multiple extramarital affairs and a gambling habit. Although Queen Victoria is embarrassed by her son's behavior, he is popular among his people. Both *Edward the Seventh* and *Victoria and Albert* highlight the immorality of their son Bertie, as they try to persuade him to be moral like themselves so the monarchy can be a stable entity.

Victoria's agency on morality as depicted in films, such as *Edward the Seventh, Victoria and Albert, The Young Victoria*, and *Victoria* is used as a force to maintain the British monarchy. Victoria knew her Hanoverian uncles were involved in immoral acts such as extramarital affairs and siring illegitimate children. As queen, Victoria knew that she could never make the same mistakes as her uncles given her gender and fears that monarchy would end if another scandal occurred. In *Victoria and Albert*, Victoria allows her courtiers to have affairs before her marriage to Albert. When Albert learns about the poor behavior of courtiers, he insist on transforming how the court is run, which Victoria agrees to. In *Edward the Seventh*, Victoria follows the moral code of Prince Albert who is adamant in continuing the monarchy and ensuring his son Bertie

⁵⁸ *Edward the Seventh*. Directed by John Gorrie. 1975. Midlands, UK. ATV. DVD.

becomes the ideal prince. *Edward the Seventh* and *Victoria and Albert*, a teenage Bertie is allowed to spend time at an army base in Ireland and has a liaison with an actress. Both films portray Albert and Victoria's disappointment in their son's inability to live up their high moral standards. In these films Victoria quickly adapts to Albert's moral code and has no sympathy for her son's irresponsible actions. After Albert's death, as seen in *Edward the Seventh*, Victoria still upholds the moral code of her husband, thus instilling the moral authority of the nineteenth century.

Gender Roles

The gender roles depicted in films, miniseries, and television show Victoria as a dutiful wife who relies on her husband for advice, especially when it comes to politics. During Victoria's lifetime, women were part of the private sphere, taking care of the home and children; men were part of the public sphere, working outside the home. For Victoria, her role as queen was a peculiar position because she was female yet she had a public role. There were few women who had previously worn the crown, and there were many who believed that Victoria would fail in her duties. In her early years as Queen, Victoria relied on Lord Melbourne and after Albert's death, she relied on John Brown while in seclusion. Although Victoria was the sovereign of the nation, she was still a woman and could not rule in the same manner as a man. Victoria must fulfill the middle class role of wife and mother in order for her politicians and subjects to be comfortable with a female sovereign.⁵⁹ While Victoria fulfills the traditional role of loving wife, she is not a hands on mother. However, Albert is a devoted father. After the death of her husband, Victoria feels that no one can take the place of her husband in many respects and she is not able to perform her public role as queen.

⁵⁹ Fidler, *Newspaper Representations of Queen Victoria's Agency*, 20.

When Victoria became queen she had no idea how to rule and looked to her Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. Melbourne helped Queen Victoria in her new role as sovereign, and taught her how to deal with government and politicians. Through Lord Melbourne's guidance and charm a friendship was formed between him and the young Queen.⁶⁰ The relationship between Queen and prime minister is depicted in *Victoria the Great* (1937), *Sixty Glorious Years* (1938), *The Young Victoria*, *Victoria and Albert* and *Victoria*. Most of the depictions of the relationship between Queen and her prime minister present Victoria as being a student and Lord Melbourne as the teacher. In *The Young Victoria*, Lord Melbourne is presented as swaying Victoria from helping poor and suffering people. In *Edward the Seventh*, Lord Melbourne is presented as guiding the Queen in the art of ruling. *Victoria and Albert* depicts Lord Melbourne as exploiting the young woman's dependence so he could remain as prime minister.⁶¹ However, in the miniseries *Victoria*, the young woman falls in love with Lord Melbourne, although he makes it clear to her that he is not suitable husband material. In Victorian times, an unmarried woman was looked down upon and she needed to have a husband to take care of her. In her early years as queen, Victoria did not feel ready for marriage, but looked to Lord Melbourne to protect and guide her as queen until she found a husband to take his place.

In the historical records before the events of Lady Flora Hastings and the Bedchamber crisis, Queen Victoria had been showing signs of restlessness and dissatisfaction in her new role as sovereign. Victoria was desperate for young people her own age and was at the right age for marriage.⁶² Her maternal cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, born just three months after her, was another suitable candidate that her uncle Leopold, King of the Belgians, desperately wanted

⁶⁰Woodham-Smith, *Queen Victoria*, 145.

⁶¹Merck, *The British Monarchy on Screen*, 77.

⁶²Hough, *Victoria and Albert*, 53.

her to marry. Albert was the second son of Duke Ernest I of Saxe-Coburg Gotha and his wife, Louise. The marriage between Ernest and Louise was acrimonious because of the Duke's extramarital affairs.⁶³ After being neglected by her husband, Louise fell for a handsome army officer and went to live with him in Paris. At just thirty one, Louise died from an unknown painful disease which caused great distress on her youngest son.⁶⁴ Albert had been trained by close family friend, Baron Stockmar, in the affairs of state in hope that the young prince would marry Victoria. In the spring of 1837, along with his older brother Ernest, Albert was sent to Bonn University for eighteen months where they would learn about "Roman law, natural sciences, political history and philosophy."⁶⁵ After his time at Bonn University, Albert met with his uncle Leopold in Brussels to discuss the possibility of marriage to Victoria. Albert admitted that he felt too young for marriage at the time. In the same year, Victoria wrote in a letter to Leopold expressing the desire to hold off marriage for a few more years in order to enjoy a young girlish lifestyle.⁶⁶ Victoria and Albert made it clear that they were not ready for marriage but corresponded with each other from 1836 to 1838.⁶⁷ Not until the events of the summer of 1839 did it become imperative for Victoria to find a husband who would guide her in her role as queen and provide an heir.

The Flora Hastings affair and the Bedchamber crisis had weakened the monarchy and there were fears that the house of Hanover would become unpopular again. For Victoria, the events of the summer of 1839 were not a state crisis but a personal one, and she did not understand the political implications that her actions had caused. For the security of the Crown, it was

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁵ Charlot, *Victoria: The Young Queen*, 157.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 159.

best for the young queen to marry in order to stabilize life in the English court.⁶⁸ In October of 1839, Prince Albert along with his older brother, Prince Ernest, arrived at Windsor court in hopes of wooing Queen Victoria. Before Victoria became queen, Albert had spent several weeks with her but there was no evident affection between the two. However, the visit of October 1839 would change Victoria's view on marriage, especially towards Albert.⁶⁹ Throughout her life, Victoria was attracted to male beauty and in a conversation with Lord Melbourne, the Queen admitted to the power of Albert's beauty. Just four days after his arrival, the Queen made up her mind to marry Prince Albert.⁷⁰ Victoria proposed to Albert and their wedding was arranged for February 10th 1840. Both were happy about their upcoming union and knew they were making sacrifices for one another. Albert was leaving his homeland for England, where foreigners were looked at with suspicion.⁷¹ Albert wanted to guide his future wife in her efforts as Queen but he was unprepared for the task, because he was easily tired by palace life and deeply attached to his native land.⁷² Victoria was more than happy to repay her fiancé for his sacrifice with love and devotion to the man who would take over her role in the years to come.⁷³

In the early months after his marriage to Victoria, Albert was finding it increasingly difficult to live in the Queen's household.⁷⁴ From the beginning two tables were set up in the Queen's room so the pair could work side by side, but the Queen did all the work of state.⁷⁵ Not only did

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁷² Charlot, *Victoria: The Young Queen*, 179.

⁷³ Charlot, *Victoria: The Young Queen*, 166.

⁷⁴ Charlot, *Victoria: The Young Queen*, 180.

⁷⁵ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 142.

Victoria work solely on affairs of state but she often decided who would be part of her husband's household. Victoria informed Albert that she had chosen an English courtier, Mr. Anson, to be his private secretary. Albert was dismayed, given that he would have been happy to choose a private secretary of his own choice.⁷⁶ The Queen and her Prince Consort had different temperaments when it came to domestic affairs. Victoria loved grand balls, being entertained and staying up all night. Albert enjoyed the country, disliked court life, and went to bed by eleven.⁷⁷ Albert was bored with court life and was desperate to find a role in his new country. The Queen spent much of her day dealing with the affairs of state or in meetings with her Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne.⁷⁸ In the first few months of her marriage, Victoria was adamant in keeping her role as Queen and "there was friction between husband and wife." There was one occasion where an official box arrived from a government department that had document that Victoria needed to sign immediately. Albert believed that his wife was being treated "as a glorified civil servant," and Victoria should wait a few days before signing. Victoria was annoyed by her husband's interference with her royal duties and refused to share political matters with him. Upset by Victoria's behavior, Albert felt that his wife lacked confidence in him because she refused to share political matters with him.⁷⁹ It was only after discussing political matters with Melbourne and Baroness Lehzen that Victoria would discuss matters with Albert.⁸⁰ Through his private secretary, Mr. Anson, Prince Albert expressed his frustration with Lord Melbourne, who spoke to the Queen about the matter. Victoria confessed to Melbourne that she knew it was wrong but she

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁷⁷ Charlot, *Victoria: The Young Queen*, 188.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁸⁰ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 143.

would rather discuss other matters with Albert. Baron Stockman knew it would take time for Victoria to gradually let Albert take on her royal duties and the young prince would grow in his position over time.⁸¹ Lord Melbourne included the Prince in the discussion of public matters but the conversations were difficult due to Albert's awkward English.⁸² Albert was eager to show off his talents by organizing his first public concert in April of 1840 and giving his first speech at a meeting for abolitionists.⁸³

Although Albert was gradually gaining ground in his new role as Prince Consort, he was having a difficult time maintaining control in Victoria's household. Baroness Lehzen, former governess to Victoria, was a woman with no official title and her usefulness had run out at court. Lehzen had a great deal of responsibilities and duties but had no idea how to deal with administrative details. Lehzen did not run the most efficient of households and much of Victoria's Privy Purse was being wasted on lavish expenditures.⁸⁴ Albert disliked Lehzen from the beginning and saw her as the reason behind the Queen's desire to rule alone.⁸⁵ The court was divided on Lehzen and her interference with the royal couple. Lady Lyttleton, the governess to the royal children, had a favorable view of the Baroness stating that she was "very kind and helpful. Albert's private secretary, Anson, saw the Baroness as a danger to the marital bliss of the royal couple. Lord Melbourne believed that the Queen could not be asked to retire the woman who had been with her since childhood, knowing the devotion the two had for one another.⁸⁶ However, Albert was more

⁸¹Charlot, *Victoria: The Young Queen*, 188.

⁸²Weintraub, *Victoria*, 144.

⁸³Charlot, *Victoria: The Young Queen*, 193.

⁸⁴Weintraub, *Victoria*, 158..

⁸⁵Charlot, *Victoria: The Young Queen*, 193.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 194.

than ready to get rid of Lehzen and only needed his wife's permission due to the informal position in Victoria's household.

In many of the films and miniseries, the friction between Victoria and Albert over the non-traditional gender roles they play early in their marriage are portrayed in great detail. Victoria plays the role of queen in ceremonies in the public sphere and is a devoted wife and mother in private. While Albert stands quietly by Victoria's side at public events, in private he plays a role as an international dignitary, helping Britain in political affairs. Eventually, Albert assumes the more dominant and traditional male role in the relationship when his wife becomes pregnant, and when Baroness Lehzen was removed, Albert discussed the inefficiency of the household caused by Lehzen's poor capabilities with his wife.

In the historical record Victoria refused to view Lehzen as obsolete and did not feel that she was dangerous to her relationship with Albert. After everything that Lehzen and Victoria had been through together during the dark years at Kensington Palace, a fierce bond had been formed. Using Stockmar as an intermediary, Victoria and Albert wrote to the close family friend exchanging bitter words about the Lehzen situation in early 1842.⁸⁷ The Queen was not fully convinced of Lehzen's incompetence until the Princess Royal became ill. Albert blamed his daughter's condition on Victoria's toleration of Lehzen's handling of the royal nursery and the incompetence of Dr. Sir James Clark. After Albert declared that Sir James and Lehzen were poisoning and starving Vicky, Victoria fell into submission to her husband. Lehzen's time was up and on July 25th when Albert informed his wife that her longtime governess was retiring for health reasons. Lehzen was still in good health at fifty six and knew that her removal was for the

⁸⁷Weintraub, *Victoria*, 159.

happiness of the royal couple. In September of 1842 Lehzen departed from London, without saying goodbye to Victoria in order avoid any tears of her beloved Queen. Not long after Lehzen's departure back to Hanover, Victoria realized that there was a degree of stability in her marriage and Albert had more responsibility than ever before. When Albert died in late 1861 he had become king in all but name due to Victoria's multiple pregnancies.⁸⁸

In the first episode *The Boy* of the miniseries *Edward the Seventh*, Queen Victoria discovers that she is pregnant with her second child. Prince Albert is thrilled to learn that he will be a father again but Victoria is unhappy because the pregnancy will take her away from Lord Melbourne. Victoria is not looking forward to another painful birth and dislikes babies because they are ugly. She throws a tantrum and Albert is concerned about his wife's mental state, confiding in his advisor and friend Baron Stockmar. Stockman gives several words of advice to the overwhelmed Prince Albert about dealing with Victoria.

Baron Stockmar: For the past four years she has had great power. Melbourne has taught her how to use it and how to enjoy using it. You my prince have been married to her for over a year and in that time you have taught her with the birth of the princess royal that she is only a woman. A bitter lesson and one she knows that she will have to learn again.

Baron Stockmar believes that Victoria will eventually lean on Albert for support and political guidance. As of now Victoria is preoccupied with Lord Melbourne and his government. Later in the same episode, Albert requests to join his wife when she meets her Prime Minister Lord Melbourne. However, Victoria scoffs at the idea of Albert joining in on her meeting.

Albert: You must rely on me more.
Victoria: I'm sorry

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 160.

Albert: I shall come with you.

Victoria: To see lord m but you don't know what he may have to talk with me about

Albert: But still.

Victoria: No no no dear. you stay and play the piano so I can hear it. I won't be long.⁸⁹

This representation is also seen in *Victoria the Great*, when Victoria does not allow Albert to meet with her prime minister, and Albert is restricted to playing the piano. In *The Young Victoria*, the marriage of Victoria and Albert is seen as a “modern marriage,” with the portrayal of the Queen as a canner and more of an equal to her husband. Emily Blunt's portrayal of Victoria shows her becoming angry when she learns of her husband's working partnership with her hated Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel:

Queen Victoria: I will not have my role usurped! I wear the Crown! And if there are mistakes they will be my mistakes, and no one else will make them! No one, not even you!

Prince Albert: I am leaving before you excite yourself and harm the child.

Queen Victoria: You will go when I dismiss you. I am your queen, and I am telling you to stay!

Prince Albert: Good night, Victoria.

[exits]

Queen Victoria: [storms over to door] You may not go! You may not go! I order you to stay here in this room! Albert!⁹⁰

Victoria feels that Albert has overstepped his bounds as Prince Consort, and that she should be the one as Queen to have say in political matters. In later years, Albert will accompany his wife when she meets the prime minister (as depicted in *Disraeli*) this presenting them as equals in the realm of politics. However, as Victoria bears more children, Albert starts to have a role in political matters and takes control of the household. Albert takes over the role of Melbourne, guiding and leading her through the male sphere of politics. In *Victoria and Albert*, the

⁸⁹ *Edward the Seventh*. Directed by John Gorrie. 1975. Midlands, UK. ATV. DVD.

⁹⁰ *The Young Victoria*. Directed by Jean Marc-Vallee. 2009. London, England: Momentum Pictures. 2010. DVD.

Prince finds the care of his young children insufficient, due to the incompetence of Victoria's former governess Baroness Lehzen.⁹¹ The Baroness has more say in Victoria's life than Prince Albert and it is driving a wedge between the couple. The dialogue below shows the strain of gender roles on the young couple who have differences in parenting style.

Prince Albert: [Victoria bangs on Albert's study door] Who is it?

Victoria: [In a loud annoyed voice] What do you mean? "Who is it?" It's your queen!

Prince Albert: [Victoria takes a deep breath and calms down a bit knocks on the door calmly] Who is it?

Victoria: [In a calm and quiet voice] It's your wife.

[Albert opens the door and Victoria goes in and closes the door quietly]

Prince Albert: I'm not speaking as your consort, I am speaking as Vicky's Father!⁹²

Eventually, Victoria sends Lehzen back to Germany, knowing that in order to have a happy marriage her governess must leave. The antagonism between Baroness Lehzen and Prince Albert is depicted in *Victoria and The Young Victoria*. In *Victoria*, Albert does not approve of Lehzen's handling of Victoria's correspondence and in *The Young Victoria*, he disapproves of her care of the household. All of the scenes of Lehzen's departure are due in part to Albert asserting himself in the role of man of the household, even if his wife is queen. These two recent films deal with Lehzen's departure to show Albert as Victoria's new caregiver and protector. During Victoria's childhood, Lehzen was a close friend and protector whenever Conroy try to influence the young princess. Victoria's marriage to Albert eliminated Lehzen's role and influence. These recent films suggest that Lehzen was treated badly by both Victoria and Albert for performing her duty to her queen. In older films Lehzen is a minor figure, but the current filmography focuses on minor female servants who have made a larger impact on history.

⁹¹ *Victoria and Albert*. Directed by John Erman. 2001. New York, NY: A&E, 2001. DVD.

⁹² *The Young Victoria*. Directed by Jean Marc-Vallee. 2009. London, England: Momentum Pictures. 2010. DVD.

At the beginning of their marriage Victoria is involved in the public sphere of men while Albert is restricted to the private sphere of women. This theme can be seen in *Victoria the Great*, *Sixty Glorious Years*, *The Young Victoria*, *Edward the Seventh*, and *Victoria and Albert*. The role for Albert was not defined until his wife was unable to perform her duties due to her numerous pregnancies. Albert handled the affairs of state and was appreciated for his work with the Great Exhibit in *Victoria the Great* and *Victoria and Albert*. When Albert dies, Victoria no longer feels that she can handle the pressure of public duties. *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, highlights the Queen's need for a male companion after her husband's death and John Brown fits the role, rarely leaving the sovereign alone. Brown is not only a companion to the Queen but takes control of the household and servants, just like Albert did. Victoria finds solace in John Brown, who brings comfort to the Queen's gloomy world. In a gender stratified society, even the most powerful woman in the world needs a man to fulfill a specific role that she could not or would not perform. In *Edward the Seventh*, Victoria admits to her prime minister that she cannot perform public duties because Albert is not standing by her side and she will not allow her son to take her place. Victoria feels that Bertie is irresponsible and could never represent her and the deceased Albert.⁹³

Queen Victoria was defined by her role as a sovereign and as a woman. The films discussed present Victoria as in need of a male companion throughout her years as monarch. Films like *The Young Victoria*, *Victoria and Albert*, and *Victoria*, Victoria has little understanding of her royal duties and is taught by her Whig, Prime minister Lord Melbourne. As evident in films like *Victoria and Albert* and *The Young Victoria*, Victoria needed a male figure to help and guide her as learned stately duties. Lord Melbourne guides Victoria in how to run the government and

⁹³ *Edward the Seventh*. Directed by John Gorrie. 1975. Midlands, UK. ATV. DVD.

spending long hours with the queen daily. Early in the queen's reign events like the Flora Hastings scandal and the Bedchamber Crisis incited criticism of Victoria's marital status. These two early scandals demonstrated to courtiers that Victoria needed a husband to control her. Victoria's cousin Prince Albert was the first choice and the best match to the willful young queen. In films like, *The Young Victoria*, *Victoria and Albert*, *Victoria*, and, *Edward the Seventh*, Prince Albert quickly asserts his dominance taking over Lord Melbourne's role as chief galvanizer in Victoria's life both in public and private. Due to the queen's multiple pregnancies, Albert became king all in but name. From running everyday government affairs to being in charge of the World's Fair in 1851, Albert was the head of government and an unofficial ambassador for the queen. His death in 1861 left a huge void in Queen Victoria's life and she had to learn how to be queen again. During the years after Albert's death Victoria found friendship and sympathy in her husband's former gillie John Brown, who relished his high position which was portrayed in *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*. Although Victoria was a powerful ruler with a vast empire she would never been seen as a legitimate sovereign because she was foremost a woman. For nineteenth century standards, Victoria need a male by her side to quash any fear from the British public of having an emotionally women as monarch. Victoria plays to the established gender roles of the day allowing men like Lord Melbourne, Prince Albert, and John Brown to take on royal duties that were God-given to her when she was crowned queen. Films like *Edward the Seventh*, *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, *Victoria and Albert*, *The Young Victoria* and *Victoria* detail Victoria's giving away her royal duties to interfering men because she too believes in the nineteenth century standard that women are incapable of ruling.

Assassination

The theme of assassination is portrayed in several films and miniseries about Queen Victoria's life. Assassination attempts on public figures were not uncommon in the nineteenth century as seen with the assassination of various U.S. presidents and the Tsar Alexander of Russia. During Victoria's reign, there was political and social upheaval that translated into assassination attempts on the Queen, even though many of her country's issues had little to do with her specifically. In Victoria's own lifetime, there were seven assassination attempts on the Queen and she was never injured during these events. In films like *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown* and *The Young Victoria*, the assassination attempts are altered or exaggerated for dramatic effect, thus taking away the true historical essence of Victoria's life. The miniseries *Victoria and Albert*, depicts an accurate assassination attempt by her first assassin, the young Edward Oxford. In this section, the representations of Victoria's assassination attempts will be analyzed to explore the varying ways films and miniseries on the Queen's life have been altered for dramatic effect.

The first assassination attempt on Victoria occurred on June 10, 1840 when the Queen and Prince Albert were riding in their carriage on Constitution Hill. At the time, Victoria was four months pregnant. A youth by the name of Edward Oxford with pistol in both hands fired blanks six paces away from the royal couple. Luckily, Oxford missed the couple and the next time he fired "Albert drew Victoria out of view."⁹⁴ Oxford was apprehended by onlookers in the crowd and the couple continued on their drive to "Aunt Kent" who had moved into Infester House, Belgrave Square. After their visits with "Aunt Kent" Victoria and Albert rode back in their open carriage through Hyde Park to cheering crowds, in order to show the public that the couple had confidence in them.⁹⁵ Before the assassination attempt, Oxford was working in an inn

⁹⁴ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 145.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

when he decided to commit the offense.⁹⁶ The young man was taken into custody and was acquitted due to his psychiatric issues. Oxford was committed to an insane asylum and lived the rest of his life in Australia.⁹⁷

The sixth attempt on Victoria's life occurred on February 29, 1872 at Buckingham Palace after a carriage ride through Regent's Park.⁹⁸ The carriage also had three other riders, the Queen's Lady-in-waiting Jane Churchill, and Victoria's two sons Prince Arthur and Leopold. Victoria's faithful servant John Brown was sitting on the box of the carriage as part of her security.⁹⁹ The eighteen year-old would-be assassin, Arthur O'Connor had watched the Queen's carriage leave Buckingham Palace at 4:30 pm and waited for her return.¹⁰⁰ When it returned, O'Connor climbed the palace railings and sprinted across the courtyard and waited near the Garden entrance. O'Connor approached the carriage where he was apprehended by Brown and taken into police custody. The police discovered through examination that O'Connor was the great nephew of Chartist leader Fergus O'Connor and had a history of mental illness.¹⁰¹ The youth claimed that he was only trying to give the Queen a petition, yet he was holding a flintlock pistol when he was captured.¹⁰² The pistol had been bought at a pawn shop but O'Connor was too poor to afford ammunition and thus stuffed the barrel with wads of paper and leather. For Brown's efforts he was awarded a medal by a grateful Victoria.¹⁰³ Bertie was annoyed by the fact that Brown was made the hero of the hour, while he believed that his brother Prince Arthur had acted

⁹⁶ Wilson, *Victoria*, 109.

⁹⁷ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 147.

⁹⁸ Lamont-Brown Raymond, *John Brown: Queen Victoria's Highland Servant* (United Kingdom: Sutton Publishing, 2002), *passim*.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 111.

just as valiantly. The Queen only awarded her son a tie pin while Brown was given a gold medal and a public announcement was made to celebrate his brave action.¹⁰⁴

The sixth attempt on Queen Victoria's life is chosen to be portrayed in the film, *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, because it demonstrates John Brown's strong relationship with Victoria, who she holds in high esteem after the near fatal incident. The assassination attempt highlights the strained relationship between Victoria and Bertie who resents Brown. The other attempts on Victoria's life are not portrayed on screen because these events do not cement the queen's relationship with the leading man in her life. Both the first and sixth assassination attempts portray Albert and Brown as heroic, saving the woman they love from insane young men.

The film, *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, depicts the relationship between Queen Victoria and her servant turned companion, John Brown, after the death of Prince Albert. Victoria has been in seclusion since the death of her husband from typhoid fever and spends time between her palace on the Isle of Wight, Osborne House and her Scottish castle, Balmoral. Brown worked for the Queen before her husband's death and is brought down from the Scottish Highlands to alleviate Victoria's distress by taking her out on horse rides. The two form a close friendship, much to the dismay of Victoria's adult children and her advisors. When Prime Minister Disraeli visits the Queen at Balmoral, he convinces Brown to persuade her to return to her public duties in London. Brown confronts the Queen in a gruff manner about returning to London, causing her to become angry and thus altering their close relationship. After the Prince of Wales, recovers from typhoid fever on the anniversary of her beloved husband's death, the royal family holds a service of thanksgiving in London. When the Queen and her son leave the church, they are fired upon by a potential assassin, who John Brown tackles to the ground and saving everyone from harm. At a

¹⁰⁴ Wilson, *Victoria*, 353.

dinner later that day, the Prince of Wales boasts that it was he who told Brown about the assassination, causing the Queen to see through her son's words and award her valiant servant with a medal. To the casual viewer it would seem that Brown had won the favor of the Queen again. However, the entire event was significantly altered for theatrical purposes.

The assassination scene from *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, was exaggerated but it was rooted in historical fact. John Brown did save the Queen from an assassination attempt and was awarded a medal, much to the Prince of Wales's annoyance. However, the assassination attempt portrayed in the movie occurred at the Thanksgiving service, as the Queen leaves the church in order to bring the two back together in their relationship. The fictionalization of the Queen's attempted assassination at the thanksgiving service was meant to dramatize the mending of Brown's relationship with Victoria after a quarrel. In an earlier scene Brown and Prime Minister Disraeli discuss Victoria's unpopularity because of her refusal to perform public duties. Disraeli convinces Brown to urge the queen to return to public life because the growing republican sentiment in the country. Initially apprehensive, Brown addresses the matter with Victoria who becomes enraged and believes her faithful servant had betrayed her. After the assassination attempt, Victoria realizes that Brown is a loyal servant and would never do anything to betray her.

In *The Young Victoria*, the assassination attempt by Edward Oxford is romanticized to show the bond between the Queen and the Prince Consort. In the days leading up to the assassination attempt, Victoria and Albert quarrel over his collaboration with his wife's hated Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel. The estranged couple go on a carriage ride, presumably through Constitution Hill, where an assassin tries to shoot Victoria. Albert leaps in front of his wife and is wounded in the process. He is taken back to the palace, where his wounds are attended to. Victo-

ria is consumed with grief and guilt when she finally sees her husband recovering. The two profess how much they love each other and the assassination attempt demonstrates how much they need each other. To attract audiences to a historical movie on a British queen known for her morality and stubbornness, the director and producers turned Victoria and Albert's love story into a romantic, adventurous tale. The actual Albert did not take a bullet for the Queen but movie deviates from historical fact by producing a dramatic scene to depict as a dashing hero from a fairy tale saving a vulnerable princess.¹⁰⁵ This scene is projected on female moviegoers who are familiar with fairy tales on images of princes saving a kingdom. This shows Albert in a positive light prompting any viewer to have a falsified view of the prince. The assassination scene is dramatized to bring the young couple back together. An accurate historical drama would not bring in the number of moviegoers that studio executives would want for a high revenue. *The Young Victoria* is not meant to be a historically accurate account on the early years of Victoria's life but a film to entice viewers into a love story that would otherwise be dull.

In the miniseries *Victoria and Albert*, the couple's relationship is the central focus of the production and the first assassination attempt on Queen Victoria's life is depicted. In the beginning of part two of the miniseries, a young man, presumed to be Edward Oxford, sits alone in a dark room smearing red paint onto a picture of the Queen. In the next scene, Victoria discovers that she is with child, much to her dismay. Victoria is even more aggravated by the fact that she is going to visit her estranged mother, who is living in another palace. Similar to the scene in *The Young Victoria*, the couple is riding in an open carriage when Oxford fires his pistol from a crowd of onlookers. Both are unharmed and continue the ride to the residence of the Duchess of Kent. While visiting her mother, Victoria is convinced that she and Prince Albert must return to

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 109.

Buckingham Palace in an open carriage to prove to the people that she is a dutiful and capable monarch. Albert and the Duchess of Kent do not approve of Victoria's idea and try to convince her to not ride in an open carriage. However, Victoria will not be deterred and the couple rides back to the palace without incident. This is a different take on the assassination story because Victoria is acting as the hero instead of her husband Albert, who is portrayed as saving his wife in *The Young Victoria* and *Victoria*. The miniseries *Victoria and Albert* portrays Victoria as being dutiful to her role as being a present sovereign to her people subjects and, gives complexity to her character and deviating from the gender role of the nineteenth century, in which women were viewed as fragile creatures.

The miniseries *Victoria* is about the early years of the Queen's reign and her marriage to Prince Albert. In the series finale, Victoria is heavily pregnant and is frightened by the idea that she may die in childbirth. Her only solace from the court is going on a daily carriage ride with either close attendants or Albert. During this time, Edward Oxford is living alone in a dilapidated flat, receiving messages from an unknown messenger. The Queen's former governess, Baroness Lehzen, receives Victoria's correspondences from her subjects. Some of the letters are worrisome, including one from a Captain Cannery, who wants to rescue the Queen from her "German captors." Lehzen ignores the letter, believing no harm will come to Victoria and does not notify her. While on a carriage ride in London, Victoria, her lady-in-waiting, and Baroness are forced to stop due to an overturned wagon. A man from the crowd approaches the Queen, giving her a bouquet of flowers and announces himself as Captain Cannery. He wants to release Victoria from her captors and Lehzen is visibly worried by the man's accusation. Captain Cannery is arrested and Victoria is frightened by the incident. Albert takes over Victoria's correspondence from Lehzen, who he believes to be incompetent.

A few days later, Victoria goes on a carriage ride, this time with her husband, Prince Albert. Similar to the portrayal in *The Young Victoria*, during the ride, Oxford fires blanks at the queen and her husband. Victoria ducks down and Albert smacks the assailant with his cane. Unlike *The Young Victoria*, Albert is unharmed and Victoria is shocked by the events but quickly recovers. Oxford is arrested and is found to be part of the Young England society, which has ties to Hanover. The drama stays true to history, with the fact that Oxford had made up his own society in his mental insanity. The King of Hanover is the uncle of the Queen and the heir presumptive, the Duke of Cumberland. He has returned to London from Hanover in case the Queen and her child do not survive the birth, he will become King of England. It is believed by many, including the Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel that the King of Hanover has played some part in committing regicide, which he denies. It is later discovered that Oxford is mentally ill and the Young England society is a figment of his imagination, clearing the King of Hanover.¹⁰⁶

The real Edward Oxford was born on April 9th, 1822 to poverty stricken parents.¹⁰⁷ His father, Edward Sr. died in 1829 after years of abusing his mother, Hannah, who was left alone to care for her young son. Young Edward had a history of emotional outbursts, constantly having outbursts of violent rage and would destroy anything in his sight. His mother was unable to care for him and sent Edward to live with relatives where his odd behavior continued.¹⁰⁸ At age fourteen, Edward was sent to live with his aunt Claudia Powell in Hounslow, southwest of London. While living with his aunt, Edward was arrested after a fight with a neighbor who he hit over the head with a chisel and was found guilty of assault. Although his aunt Claudia defended Edward, she knew that his sanity was in question. Oxford left for London to seek employment against the

¹⁰⁶*Victoria*. Directed by Daisy Goodwin. London, England. ITV. 2016. DVD.

¹⁰⁷ Murphy Paul Thomas, *Shooting Victoria: Madness, Mayhem and the Rebirth of the the British Monarchy* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2012), 25-48.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

advice of his aunt and worked for the next three years in public houses. The last public house that he worked in was the Hog in the Pound where he was fired for his peculiar behavior after working for one quarter. His boss, Mr. Robinson, gave Oxford his last wages of 5 pounds on April 30, 1840, which he used to purchase a gun. This would be the same gun that Oxford would use in his attempt to kill the Queen. For the next five weeks, Oxford spent his time becoming a marksman and creating the Young England Society. Oxford was living with his sister, Susannah Phelps, who witnessed Oxford leaving her home for his “meetings” with the Young England Society, which she believed were held in secret during the depths of night. During his planning time, Oxford read extensively, such as Charles Dicken’s *Oliver Twist* and William Harrison Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard*. Both works were criticized for their glorified portrayal of criminals and the affect the novels would have on young readers. Another book Oxford read, *The Bravo of Venice*, a German novella, “valorized the faked assassin.”¹⁰⁹ In the novel, the main character, Bravo, “points a gun loaded with powdered but without bullets to the face of the ruler.” The novel also consist of a secret society of assassins, which held secret meetings, regalia, weapons, and disguises, which Oxford delineates to his fictional society.

In an effort to legitimize his imaginary Young England Society, Oxford wrote three letters and sent them to himself. Signed by the fictitious secretary “A.W. Smith,” of the Young England Society, the first letter was dated May 16, 1839, addressed to Oxford at Mr. Minton Shepard and the Flock public house. The letter depicts Oxford as a promising new member of the organization and details “the cloak-and-dagger nature of Young England. The second letter, addressed to Oxford at Mr. Parr’s Hat and Feather and dated November 14, 1839, suggests that the

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

young man is rising through the ranks in the society thanks to his great talents.¹¹⁰ Oxford's final letter connected his fantasy society with actual political events and fears of the 1840. The letter was dated April 3rd 1840. Oxford would have to attend a meeting to receive important information from Hanover. The final letter shows the "conspirators" in the Young England Society were reaching a climax and Oxford would have to risk his position as barman to play the role of conspirator.¹¹¹

For any British subject in 1840, the reference to Hanover would have been a fearful thought, because the small German kingdom was ruled by Queen Victoria's Uncle Ernest, the Duke of Cumberland. Ernest was the son of George III, who was most hated and feared by the British public. To many he was a murderer, thought to have slit the throat of his servant in 1810. (The truth was that the servant attacked the Duke of Cumberland and later killed himself.) He was an ultra-Tory reactionary, against progress and an enemy of the Reform Bill of 1832. Ernest was an extremist in religion, the Grand Master of the ultra-protestant Orange Lodges, an anti-Catholic, Protestant fraternal organization.¹¹² The Duke of Cumberland "had a following-distinctly conspiratorial king- and, to many, Ernest "had the ambition and agenda that could not be contained by the lesser throne of Hanover. There was real fear when King William IV died in 1837 that Ernest and his Orange supporters would rise up and declare the throne for himself over Victoria. Fortunately, these events did not take place but things could easily change with an assassin's bullets.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 30.

When Oxford was taken into police custody after nearly killing Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, he dropped a hint that he was part of a larger conspiracy.¹¹⁴ For Oxford, the events of June 10, 1840 were the highlight of his life and police took note of his strange behavior. He was given special attention due to the nature of his crime and Oxford realized that he was now a person of great importance. Oxford's plan to represent himself as a Captain of Young England was working well as the police searched through his room at West Place and found a box filled with a sword, scabbard, and numerous papers, including his fictitious letters.¹¹⁵ Oxford was brought from his cell to confront the evidence found by Inspector Hughes and Sergeant Otway. The would-be-assassin claimed that he meant to destroy the papers but would not admit to being a member of the Young England society or to know the rules of the secret organization.¹¹⁶

Oxford was sentenced to time in Newgate Prison and there were rumors that others could be connected to the crime.¹¹⁷ The reasoning behind the rumors were "the letters E R stamped on Oxford's pistols - suggesting Oxford was acting on the orders of Ernest Rex, the King of Hanover." There were those, like Prince Albert and Baron Stockman that believed Ernest had no connection with the assassination attempt. For those who took the rumors seriously, they believed that Young England was a reactionary, ultra-Tory movement bent on abolishing the British constitution as Ernest had done in Hanover. Victoria could not accept that Oxford was part of a conspiracy plot because she would have to accept that there was a life threatening opposition to her

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

among some of her subjects. By acknowledging that some of her subjects were against her, Victoria had to relinquish her absolute trust in her people.¹¹⁸ Yet, Victoria continued to go out in public despite the assassination attempt, “demonstrating to the nation that nothing had happened. The British people had an enthusiastic response to the Queen’s public appearances “by submitting their loyalty to the monarchy and deploring Oxford’s act.”¹¹⁹

The miniseries *Victoria* depicts a meeting with the King of Hanover, who has recently overturned the Hanoverian constitution, in which Victoria realizes that she is a better ruler than her corrupt uncle because she values the liberty of her people. Initially, Victoria wants Oxford to die a traitor’s death, until she learns from Sir Robert Peel that her assassin was acquitted due to insanity. Victoria accepts the jury’s verdict and proclaims that she will go on another carriage ride to prove to her people that she believes in them. After an enjoyable carriage ride, Prince Albert praises his wife, stating that she has everything it takes to be queen. The assassination attempt in *Victoria* is different from previous films on Victoria’s life because the miniseries goes into great detail about Oxford’s trial and fictionalized association with the Young England society. In other adaptations, such as *The Young Victoria*, and *Victoria and Albert*, viewers are given an in-depth look at how Victoria’s emotions immediately after the assassination attempt, but never know what happens to Oxford or how Victoria felt about his trial. In *Victoria*, the young queen is highly involved with Oxford’s trial and the possible outcome of him being released. Even though Victoria is under immense pressure because of her pregnancy and fears of becoming a prisoner in her own home, she confronts her uncle Ernest. Victoria’s uncle has undermined

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

her authority since the beginning of her reign and she finally confronts him after the assassination attempt. Ernest believes that he should be King of England and investigators into the assassination attempt suspect that Victoria's uncle could be behind it. By adding the Hanoverian dimension into the miniseries, an otherwise straight forward assassination attempt, is given suspense and intrigue. Films like *Victoria and Albert*, and *The Young Victoria*, Ernest is not a character in these films because these are earlier attempts on young Victoria's life. For viewers who have seen multiple historical dramas on Victoria's life the added Hanoverian dimension is demanded to give substance and excitement to story that has been on retold on film so many times before.¹²⁰

Out of all the assassination attempts that Victoria experienced throughout her reign, movies have focused on dramatizing the first attempt. *The Young Victoria*, *Victoria and Albert* and *Victoria* all depict the assassination attempt by Edward Oxford as an event that strengthened the young Queen's resolve to be a public symbol of strength to her people. However, in *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, the Queen is a matronly widow who rarely appears in public, unlike her younger years. At the thanksgiving service for her son Bertie, an assassination attempt occurs, causing the Queen to have a closer relationship to her servant John Brown. This is similar to the dramatization in *The Young Victoria* where the assassination is used to bring Victoria and Albert closer after a heated argument. *Victoria and Albert* stands apart because Victoria acts as the hero compared to the other dramatizations *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, *The Young Victoria* and *Victoria*. Victoria in, *Victoria and Albert*, wants to ride back to the palace from her mother's, the Duchess of Kent, in an open carriage to demonstrate that she is not afraid and willing to go out in public after a frightful experience. The dramatization of any assassination attempt of a monarch brings

¹²⁰ *Victoria*. Directed by Daisy Goodwin. London, England. ITV. 2016. DVD.

intensity to a film, but in the case of Victoria, it is used to show the strength of the Queen as an individual and in her intimate relationships.

Intruders

Not only was the Queen a victim of assassination attempts, she was also the victim of an intruder. Even in today's society, it is not uncommon to hear of news bulletins about an intruder in the Queen's palace. The current Queen of England, Elizabeth II, faced an intruder on June 7, 1982 who awoke her one night sitting on her sofa.¹²¹ Luckily for Queen Victoria, her intruder was a small boy that she never came in contact with. Before Victoria's marriage to Prince Albert, an intruder known as "the boy Cotton," had entered Buckingham Palace and spent a year living in the domestic offices and servant's quarters. The boy had never entered the Queen's suites or state apartments but "had broken a sealed letter addressed to the Queen in hopes of finding money." "The boy Cotton," was apprehended in December 1837, covered in soot, and had stolen a number of items such as a sword, a pair of trousers, a book and two glass inkstands.¹²² On December 2nd, 1840, Mrs. Lilly, a nurse working for the Queen, heard a "stealthy noise," in the Queen's sitting room. Mrs. Lilly summoned "a page who found a boy rolled up under the sofa which the Queen had been sitting on just three hours earlier. The intruder was another boy known as "the boy Jones," who claimed that he could gain entrance into Buckingham Palace whenever he wanted by getting over the wall at Constitution Hill and entering through one of the windows. "The boy Cotton," stated "he had sat upon the throne and that he saw the Queen and heard the Princess Royal squall."¹²³ The boy's name was Edmund Jones, the son of a poor tailor, who appeared much younger than his seventeen years because of stunted growth. After his first

¹²¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/9/newsid_2498000/2498731.stm, accessed April 21, 2017.

¹²² Woodham-Smith, *Queen Victoria*, 211.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 221.

arrest at the palace, Jones was declared insane and was committed to the House of Correction in Toothily Street for three months, spending much of his time on the treadmill. Jones's third apprehension in the palace caused him to spend three months in House of Correction and he was then sent to sea, so that his character could be improved under naval discipline.¹²⁴

In movies like *The Mudlark* and *Victoria and Albert*, the young intruder is portrayed as a poor innocent boy who has no knowledge that he is committing a criminal act. In *The Mudlark* the film depicts the fictional story of a young boy named Wheeler, who finds the Queen's image on a coin. He is told by a kindly old sea captain that the queen is the "mother of England." The orphan travels to Windsor palace to see the Queen, who is living in seclusion after the death of Prince Albert. In *Victoria and Albert*, the Queen has recently given birth to her oldest child, Vicky. A boy has been sneaking into the palace for several months and is caught by one of the servants. The portrayal of the intruder in *Victoria and Albert* is similar to the story of "the boy Jones," but adds extra emphasis on Prince Albert's desire to improve security in the palace. In these two films, the intrusion of a young boy into the Queen's palace demonstrates her vulnerability even though she has a powerful position. Throughout time royalty has always been viewed as distant from their subjects. Wheeler breaks into the palace and intrudes on the private life of the Queen who has distanced herself from her people. A poor orphan meeting the most powerful person on earth plays on the fantasy of an ordinary person meeting an extraordinary person. Unlike so many people Wheeler is able to meet Victoria and "lift the veil" of royalty on the grieving Queen. Victoria at the end of *The Mudlark*, starts to have a relationship with her subjects and is presented as caring for her subjects. Victoria is seen as a sympathetic character because of her

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 222.

palpable grief over the death of Albert. This is an attempt by the director and producers of the film to humanize Queen Victoria and portray to audiences that royalty is similar to them.

The *Mudlark* is based off a book of the true life story of the boy Jones, who broke into Buckingham Palace in December of 1838.¹²⁵ Mudlarks were street children who survived by scavenging and selling what they found on the banks of the Thames river. In the movie, young Wheeler is down by the banks of the river Thames looking for items to sell. He is a poor orphan, like many of the children living on the streets of London. Wheeler finds a valuable coin with the Queen's likeness on it and takes it to the pawn shop. The owner refuses to give Wheeler any money for the coin and sends him away. Two older boys stalk Wheeler, assaulting him and stealing his coin. A kindly old sea captain comes to Wheeler's aide and tells him that Queen Victoria is the "mother of England." For a lonely orphan, a mother figure is something that Wheeler has always desired and he travels to Windsor Castle.

At Windsor, the Queen is living in seclusion and is urged by Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli to return to London. Queen Victoria is stubborn and refuses to make a public appearance. Wheeler has broken into the palace and is hiding in various spots throughout the castle. He is found by two servants in the dining room and is told to hide behind a large curtain. The Queen, Disraeli, John Brown, and several ministers come into the dining room to have an evening meal. During the course of the meal, Queen Victoria hears snoring but is not sure where it is coming from. A servant pulls back the large curtain near the table and finds a sleeping Wheeler. The young boy is awakened and tries to run, only to be caught by palace guards. The Queen is upset that an intruder has threatened her person, even if Wheeler is only a small boy. In Parliament, there are members who believe that Wheeler is part of an assassination plot to kill the Queen.

¹²⁵ Bondenson, Jan. *Queen Victoria's Stalker: The Strange Cases of the Boy Jones*, The Kent State University Press, Kentucky, 2011.

Wheeler is taken to the Tower of London and the Queen urges Disraeli to have the boy punished for his crimes. However, Disraeli makes a passionate speech in Parliament about how Wheeler's circumstances are not his fault and indirectly criticizes the Queen's withdrawal from public duties. Queen Victoria is not amused by Disraeli's speech and is unconvinced that she should return to public life. Disraeli brings Wheeler to meet the Queen, hoping to encourage her to change her mind. Through her conversation with the young Wheeler, who only wanted to see the Queen and not harm her, she decides to return to public duties.

Brown: He's got nobody ma'm

Victoria: I'm very sorry Wheeler

Wheeler: Ah you don't have to worry yourself about it

Victoria: You've caused us a great deal of trouble.

Wheeler: I didn't mean no harm ma'm

Victoria: why did you do it?

Wheeler: I don't know ma'am

Victoria: now wheeler why did you do it?

Wheeler: I just wanted to see you ma'am

Victoria: You really are a jack-o-nines.in a brood as large as mine that's to be expected now days.

Wheeler: I'm sorry ma'am

Victoria: I'm not cross with you. Thank you Wheeler

Brown: Is that all ma'm?

Victoria: I suppose so

Victoria: Have you answered the hospital gentleman yet?

Disraeli: Not yet ma'am

Wheeler is sent to a boarding school in the countryside in hopes that he will become a fine gentleman. In the final scene, the Queen is seen in an open carriage riding through the streets with a smile on her face. The ending of the film portrays the Queen's return to public duties and that her understanding that her people to need to see their sovereign as it is part of her duty.¹²⁶

¹²⁶*The Mudlark*. Directed by Jean Negulesco. 1950. Los Angeles, CA: 20th Century Fox. 2013.DVD.

In *Victoria and Albert*, the intruder into the palace is a young boy similar to that of *The Mudlark*. Baroness Lehzen is in the charge of the household, much to Prince Albert's disapproval. One night a young boy sneaks into the palace, running into the various rooms of the palace. The boy even goes into the nursery of Victoria's newborn baby, Princess Vicky. The boy is discovered by a servant, who chases him throughout the palace into a room of a male courtier who is in the middle of an affair with a female courtier. Prince Albert learns that the boy has been sneaking into the palace over a period of several months, angering the Prince Consort and furthering his belief that Baroness Lehzen is incompetent in her position. Prince Albert is also aghast by the immoral character of a fellow courtier who would cheat on his wife. He is even more dismayed when he discovers that Victoria knew all about the affair and did nothing to stop it. Albert explains to her that he is against adultery because his father cheated on his mother, which caused her to become mentally ill. Victoria realizes that she has hurt her husband and will no longer tolerate immorality in the court. This brings the couple closer together and their relationship becomes stronger.¹²⁷

Both *The Mudlark* and *Victoria and Albert* portray the young intruder as bringing the Queen to some realization about how she must rule her country. In *The Mudlark*, the young orphan Wheeler helps the Queen leave her seclusion and return to her public role. In *Victoria and Albert*, the boy is used to show the immorality within the court and brings the young couple closer together. In dramatizations of Victoria's life, the young vulnerable intruder is portrayed to show the cracks and vulnerability in how the Queen is ruling at certain points in her reign. Both intruders' scenes from *The Mudlark* and *Victoria and Albert* humanize Victoria's representation.

¹²⁷ *Victoria and Albert*. Directed by John Erman. 2001. New York, NY: A&E, 2001. DVD.

In *The Mudlark*, Victoria is vulnerable and frightened by the thought that a young boy could be an assassin. In *Victoria and Albert*, the young boy uncovers the immoral actions of a courtier, which was unknown to Albert but not to Victoria. Albert explains to his wife that the infidelities of his father drove his mother to a mental breakdown. Prince Albert never saw her again and Victoria sympathizes for her husband's childhood pain. Victoria agrees with Albert that the court must become a place of morality and virtue. Victoria wants to correct the mistakes of her uncles and ensure that the new royal family will not disgrace the nation. The experience of the intruder portrays Victoria growing and changing her ideas on how members of royalty should act.

Seclusion

As a child, Victoria was kept away from the public gaze at her childhood home, Kensington Palace. While living in seclusion, Victoria was forced to adhere to the Kensington system designed by Sir John Conroy which detached the young girl from the English court and her Hanoverian uncles.¹²⁸ Victoria was rarely around children her own age and spent most of her time with her older half-sister Fedora.¹²⁹ When Victoria was alone, she played with her immense doll collection.¹³⁰ Victoria became dependent on her mother and Sir James Conroy causing the young girl to form an animosity towards both of them.¹³¹ In her youth, Victoria became ill with typhoid after a royal tour. Conroy tried to have the sicken princess sign her signature to a document that would allow Conroy to be her private secretary once she became Queen.¹³² Many of the films

¹²⁸ Wilson, *Victoria*, 52.

¹²⁹ Hough, *Victoria and Albert*, 18.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹³¹ Wilson, *Victoria*, 52.

¹³² Hough, *Victoria and Albert*, 26.

and miniseries highlight her seclusion at Kensington Palace and present her as a prisoner desperate for freedom. When she is allowed to go to public events, like the birthday party of her uncle King William IV, the events are full of conflict due to the poor relationship between her mother and the King. These presentations suggest that Victoria will only be free when she becomes Queen and is free from her mother and her advisor, Sir James Conroy. Victoria was not totally dependent on Conroy and her mother, for she also had a close relationship with her German governess Baroness Lehzen. As Victoria grew older, Lehzen became more of a “lady companion,” keeping the young princess company and chaperoning her. This relationship would continue into the early years of Victoria’s reign. A lady’s companion was common for the upper classes of society when women stayed at home and did not have employment.¹³³ A lady’s companion was not a servant but not the equal to the woman she worked for.¹³⁴ (An example of this is in Jane Austen’s work *Emma*. A character, Miss Taylor, works as a lady’s companion for a family named the Woodhouses.¹³⁵) The young princess did travel outside of London, going on a tour of the North of England to experience life in her country before she became queen.¹³⁶ (In Jane Austen’s other work, *Pride and Prejudice*, the five Bennet daughters always travel with a married woman as their chaperone.¹³⁷) This was the respectable way to behave in nineteenth century England and young Victoria would have been well aware of it.

¹³³ “Governess, Companions and Housekeepers Ads.” accessed April 21, 2017. <http://victoriancon-texts.pbworks.com/w/page/12407398/Governess%2C%20Companion%20and%20Housekeeper%20Ads>

¹³⁴ “Governess, Companions and Housekeepers Ads.” accessed April 21, 2017. <http://victoriancon-texts.pbworks.com/w/page/12407398/Governess%2C%20Companion%20and%20Housekeeper%20Ads>

¹³⁵ Austen, Jane, and Alistair M. Duckworth. *Emma: Complete, Authoritative Text with Biographical, Historical, and Cultural Contexts, Critical History, and Essays From Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

¹³⁶ Wilson, *Victoria*, 66.

¹³⁷ Austen, Jane, *Pride and Prejudice*. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003.

Victoria's uncle, King William IV, was aware of the seclusion that his niece was under and was infuriated by the actions of the Duchess of Kent and Sir James Conroy. The previous year, the Duchess of Kent applied for permission to occupy seventeen rooms, which the King was using for his own purposes. The King refused to allow the Duchess of Kent to use the rooms, causing a great rift between the two. William arrived at Kensington Palace only to find that the Duchess had defied his orders and was occupying his rooms. After this, the King travels to Windsor Castle, where his birthday party was being held and the Duchess of Kent and Victoria were waiting for him. Meeting with the two in the drawing room, he embraced his niece, wishing he could see her more often, and lashed out at the Duchess for taking his rooms. The next day at the birthday dinner a drunk King William went into a tirade about the Duchess of Kent calling her incompetent and that he was insulted by her. Victoria burst into tears and her mother abruptly left the dinner table and called for her carriage.¹³⁸

The animosity between Victoria, her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and Conroy is depicted in *The Young Victoria*, *Victoria*, and *Victoria and Albert*. All three miniseries portray Victoria's childhood as being sheltered from the world. She has no personal space of her own, and sleeps in the same room as her mother. The princess relies heavily on her governess, Baroness Lehzen, for whom she has greater affection than her own mother. Besides Lehzen, the only other friend Victoria has is her dog, Dash, and her large collection of dolls. Her lonely days are filled with her mother and Conroy who try to control her in hopes of gaining power via a regency.

The movies deviate from the historical record with regret to the events of King William's last birthday party, at times downplaying the event. In a rare outing, Victoria attends the birthday

¹³⁸ Wilson, *Victoria*, 69.

party of her uncle King William IV (this is depicted in *The Young Victoria* and *Victoria and Albert*). In *The Young Victoria*, the King is happy to have his niece at his party, but holds disdain towards her mother. At dinner, King William goes into a tirade towards the Duchess of Kent, who he views as keeping his niece away from him and his court. He also accuses Victoria's mother of taking seventeen rooms in Kensington Palace after the death of her husband, the Duke of Kent. The Duchess of Kent leaves the dining table, but Victoria stays, talking to Lord Melbourne about her deceased father. In *Victoria and Albert*, King William's birthday party is portrayed as an embarrassing moment for Victoria when the Duchess of Kent wants to leave Windsor Castle after being humiliated at dinner. Victoria convinces her mother to stay and the young woman is put in an increasingly hostile position between her mother and her uncle. However this scene is not entirely accurate. The Duchess of Kent was humiliated by King William and Victoria burst into tears. The Duchess of Kent did leave the dinner table and order for her carriage.¹³⁹ In *The Young Victoria*, Sir James Conroy is at the center of Victoria's forced seclusion at Kensington Palace. In the beginning of the film, Victoria states that it was Conroy who came up with the Kensington system, which forced the young girl to rarely leave the palace and to always be in the presence of an adult:

Princess Victoria: [*voiceover*] Some people are born more fortunate than others. Such was the case with me. But as a child I was convinced of quite the opposite. What little girl does not dream of growing up as a princess? But some palaces are not at all what you would think. Even a palace can be a prison. Mama never explained why she would have someone taste my food, why I couldn't attend

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 70.

school with other children or read popular books. When my father died, Mama and her advisor, Sir John Conroy, created rules. He said they were for my protection, and he called it The Kensington System. I could not sleep in a room without Mama, or even walk downstairs without holding the hand of an adult. I learned the reason for all this when I was eleven: my Uncle William was the King of England, yet he and his three brothers could boast only one living child. And that was me. Sir John's dream was that the King would die and there would be a regency where my mother would rule England and he would rule my mother. So I began to dream of the day when my life would change and I might be free. And I prayed for the strength to meet my destiny.

In reality, Conroy wrote a letter to the prime minister the Duke of Wellington on the behalf the Duchess of Kent who wanted to be named regent in case Victoria did not reach her majority.¹⁴⁰ However, *The Young Victoria* depicts Sir John as the villain in the story which is shown early in the film when Victoria is ill, Conroy tries to convince the girl to sign a document that will allow her mother to become regent, which she refuses.¹⁴¹ In *Victoria and Albert*, Conroy takes the letter from Victoria, while the Duchess of Kent does nothing to stop him. Victoria is upset about her mother's actions, worsening their already deteriorating relationship. Conroy makes Victoria write a letter to the king refusing the allowance and appointing Conroy to become her private secretary. Victoria writes another letter to the king stating that the first letter is a forgery. When Victoria becomes Queen, Conroy is no longer able to control the young woman as she becomes more confident and independent in her role as sovereign. Conroy is sent away to

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁴¹ *The Young Victoria*. Directed by Jean Marc-Vallee. 2009. London, England: Momentum Pictures.2010. DVD.

estate in Ireland and the Duchess of Kent must live without the man who caused so much pain between her and Victoria.¹⁴²

After the death of Prince Albert on December 14, 1861, Queen Victoria went into seclusion for over a decade.¹⁴³ This seclusion is different from the one in her childhood because this is self-induced after the devastating loss of her husband. Victoria mourned deeply for her beloved Albert, and made sure everything in his rooms was kept exactly as it had been. For some this mourning practice would be deemed strange, but this was commonly done throughout England and Scotland, “keeping the room of a departed loved one undisturbed as a documentation of the beloved’s life was fashionable.” Victoria would wear black for the rest of her life, which was common practice among peasant women in France and Italy. For the women of her time, Queen Victoria’s grief was no different than any other widow of her time, yet she was no ordinary mourner. As the Queen of England, she had royal duties to fulfill, such as opening Parliament and entertaining foreign dignitaries.¹⁴⁴ Her prime ministers tried to stir her from her seclusion, but Victoria was persistent in staying far away from London and not giving any of the duties to the Prince of Wales.¹⁴⁵

During the Queen’s seclusion, her Highland servant John Brown was her sole companion and protector. Brown was born in Scotland and had been a royal servant to the royal family for several years as a gillie and was Albert’s favorite.¹⁴⁶ When Victoria and Albert came to Balmoral, they gave these servants a new role in the nineteenth century to a sportsman’s attendant in

¹⁴² *Victoria and Albert*. Directed by John Erman. 2001. New York, NY: A&E, 2001. DVD.

¹⁴³ Woodham-Smith, *Queen Victoria*, 435.

¹⁴⁴ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 308.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 372.

hunting and fishing. Brown had this role and was a constant companion of the royal family while Prince Albert was alive.¹⁴⁷ When the Prince Consort, died Brown was given a new role, becoming Victoria's male companion which her children would later resent.¹⁴⁸

In December 1864, Brown was sent by the Queen's daughter, Alice, from Balmoral to Osborne to take the sovereign on pony cart rides¹⁴⁹ Princess Alice was worried about her mother's mental and emotional state and thought that fresh air and exercise would help her.¹⁵⁰ John Brown was chosen to organize the pony rides because the Queen hated unfamiliar faces.¹⁵¹ The daily pony rides caused the Queen to form a bond with her servant, who she relied heavily on due to his familiar presence.¹⁵² Although Victoria enjoyed Brown's company, courtiers and her adult children saw his tactless behavior on more than few occasions. On a daily basis, the Queen used Brown to convey messages to her household and courtiers that were delivered in a "rude manner." There was one occasion at Windsor where Brown delivered a dinner invitation to several Lord-in-Waitings in the billiards room. Opening the door, Brown roared into the room; "All what's here dines with the Queen." As Brown was given more responsibility, his manners became more acerbic, but Victoria did not know or care about his behavior.¹⁵³

Their relationship was under intense scrutiny by the press, who made fun of "Brown's alleged power over the invisible sovereign."¹⁵⁴ Yet, there could be no doubt of Brown's devotion

¹⁴⁷ Lamont-Brown, *John Brown*, 12.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 70

¹⁵⁴ Weintraub, *Victoria*, 373.

to the Queen, which she praised.¹⁵⁵ The Queen had always held her servants in “high esteem,” and, in some cases, in higher esteem than her own friends and family.¹⁵⁶ The Prince of Wales was irritated by the Queen’s attitude towards Brown and was hurt by the persistent rumors of a sexual relationship between the two.¹⁵⁷ There were several rumors that Brown and the Queen were married and secretly had a child together. Another rumor consisted of Queen Victoria using Brown as a spiritualistic medium who helped her to keep in touch with her departed Prince Albert. The final rumor was that John Brown was the “keeper” of the Queen because she had gone insane.¹⁵⁸ The Queen knew about the rumors and was used to the gossip surrounding her person. As a child, Victoria had to deal with the rumors surrounding the relationship between her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and advisor Sir James Conroy.¹⁵⁹ There was also scandalous gossip surrounding her immoral Hanoverian uncles and their sexual liaisons with women from lower social classes.¹⁶⁰ Victoria never wanted to be associated with Conroy, her Hanoverian uncles or the rumors that followed them, yet she was apparently following in their footsteps. When John Brown died in 1883 from pneumonia, the Queen deeply mourned his loss by commemorating memorials to her beloved friend at Balmoral. When Bertie became King Edward VII, he took his revenge on Brown destroying all the statues and monuments that his late mother had so tenderly cared for.¹⁶¹ For Victoria, Brown was her protector, comforter, and friend, but for her family and subjects her Highland servant was a nuisance besmirching the Queen’s reputation.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 375.

¹⁵⁶ Lamont-Brown, *John Brown*, xiv.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, xiv.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, xviii.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, xvi.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, xv.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

During Victoria's years in seclusion from public life, a republican movement grew calling for the abolishment of the monarchy. Dislike for the monarchy or the monarch was nothing new, with many subjects disgusted by the actions George IV and William IV.¹⁶² There were those who opposed the monarchy in theory but put forth their time and energy into other ventures.¹⁶³ The late 1860's and early 1870's saw the rise of an intellectual and populist republican movement. Charles Bradlaugh founded the National Republican League, which was small in size with only a few thousand members and protested the high cost of the monarchy. "The populist republican movement was more widespread and was part of a long tradition of populist critiquing the government and elites." Popular republicanism was not a political criticism but a negative reaction to the Queen's seclusion and even popular disdain for the Prince of Wales. The Prince of Wales was well known for his immoral behavior such as his extra marital affairs and gambling habit. To populist republicans, the monarchy was seen as unrepresentative to the needs of the people and to "aristocratic moral both political and personal as immoral." The tide changed for the British monarchy's popularity in December 1871 when the Prince of Wales became deathly ill with typhoid fever, the same disease that killed his father, Prince Albert, exactly ten years earlier. On December 14th, 1871, the Prince of Wales was near death and many believed that the heir would die. Thankfully, the Prince of Wales recovered and a thanksgiving service was held in February of 1872. Queen Victoria returned to public life and royal ceremony with her presence at the thanksgiving service and the republican and anti-monarchist movement faded away.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Thompson, *Queen Victoria*, 10.

¹⁶³ Steinbach Susie, *Understanding the Victorian: Politics, Culture, and Society in Nineteenth Century Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 190.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 190.

In the movies and miniseries about the Queen's life, her years of seclusion are represented as a period of depression and grief. The Queen is represented as depressed and has no motive to return to public duties. Victoria is devoted to her dead husband's memory and stubbornly refuses to let her son and heir, Bertie, Prince of Wales, partake in any public events representing his mother. Her seclusion is also represented with her relationship with her servant, John Brown. Brown had been part of the Queen's household before Prince Albert's death and knew the Prince Consort. Their relationship is a point of contention for Victoria's adult children and her ministers, who are worried that her association with Brown could ruin the integrity of the monarchy. The Queen's seclusion is a point of contention for her prime ministers. In *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown* the Queen's seclusion was a product over the loss of her husband and a nervous breakdown caused by it.¹⁶⁵ When Queen Victoria returned to public life, her popularity was at its zenith, most notably during her Golden and Diamond Jubilee.

In the film *Victoria the Great*, her seclusion is represented as a dismal point in the Queen's life. Victoria grieves deeply and mourns her beloved husband by surrounding herself with his image.¹⁶⁶ In an effort to help the Queen out of her depression, John Brown visits the Queen and reminds her that Albert would not want her to live in such a sad manner.¹⁶⁷ The Queen gradually recovers from her grief and returns to her royal duties. The film *Sixty Glorious Years*, a sequel to *Victoria the Great*, goes into great depth of the Queen's seclusion. In *Sixty Glorious Years*, Victoria spends much of her time in the room where Albert died. Albert has been dead for two years and the Queen writes in her journal of her unhappiness. When John

¹⁶⁵ Wilson, *Victoria*, 279.

¹⁶⁶ Smith, "Constructing Victoria." 11.

¹⁶⁷ *Victoria the Great*. Directed by Herbert Wilcox. 1937. New York NY. RKO Pictures. 2015. DVD.

Brown becomes a servant in the Queen's household, he does convince her to start living her life again.¹⁶⁸

In *The Mudlark*, Queen Victoria spends her years of seclusion at Windsor Castle and is accompanied by her servant John Brown. Victoria's Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, visits the Queen hoping to convince her to return to London for the sake of her crown. The people of London no longer believe their Queen cares about them and Disraeli delivers the unsettling news to Victoria:

Disraeli: I wish to tell you myself ma'm that the disturbances are under control and you are no longer under any immediate danger.

Victoria: I can see you are going to be devious again what disturbances?

Disraeli: They begin as I believe about debates surrounding your majesty regrettable protracted absence from London.

Victoria: Oh yes I know.

Disraeli: Of late they have taken a more serious turn. Thousands performed in demonstrates last night outside of Buckingham palace the other night after someone posted a too late sign on the gate.

Victoria: Too late?

Disraeli:the implications ma'am that the tenant had moved out for good

Victoria refuses to return to London even after hearing the news of the growing crowds outside of Buckingham Palace. Even the anger of her people cannot stir the Queen from her grief and return to public life is a daunting task for her. Victoria enjoys staying at Windsor because she feels close to her husband, even though her people no longer feel close to their Queen.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ *Sixty Glorious Years*. Directed by Herbert Wilcox. 1938. New York NY. RKO Pictures. 2015. DVD.

¹⁶⁹ *The Mudlark*. Directed by Jean Negulesco. 1950. Los Angeles, CA: 20th Century Fox. 2013.DVD.

The film *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, chronicles Victoria's years in seclusion through her relationship with John Brown. The Queen is living at her palace, Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight, far away from the hustle and bustle of London. In a voiceover, her Private Secretary, Henry Ponsonby, states that the Queen has been mourning for her husband for several years and gillie John Brown is brought from her Scottish estate, Balmoral, to take her on horse rides and improve her mood. Before Brown's arrival, the Queen is nervous around people, even her own family, asking a lady-in-waiting how many people will be dining with her:

Queen Victoria: No-one should think themselves wiser than me! It is not for any of the Queen's subjects to presume to tell Her Majesty when and where she should come out of mourning. It is the Queen's sorrow that keeps her secluded! It is Her overwhelming amount of work and responsibility, work which She feels will soon wear her out entirely! Is it not enough that She is uncheered and unguided that she should also have to suffer these malicious rumors? I am not a fool. I know there are those in the establishment too afraid to attack me and so they attack my dearest friends. Sometimes I feel that Brown is all I have left of Albert. And now they attack Brown too. I will not give him up to them.

When Brown meets the Queen, he admits that Albert would hate to see her in such a pitiful state, causing her promptly to leave the room out of great distress. For the next several days, Brown stands outside Osborne House with a horse ready for the Queen in case she wants to ride. Initially, Victoria is upset and frustrated to see Brown waiting outside her window, but reluctantly agrees to go on a horseback ride, thus beginning a close friendship with her servant. The two enjoy riding together and Victoria shares with Brown that she wants to publish her highland journals, portraying the Queen as still being a presence in British society without physically being there. Although the Queen no longer wants to appear in public, she is still interested in political affairs like the growing tension between Ireland and England. For a monarch who no longer approves of going out in public, she is still heavily involved in the affairs of the outside world.

While Victoria spends her time between Osborne and Balmoral with Brown, Prime Minister Disraeli must deal with the threat of the republican movement. Worried about the future of the monarchy, Disraeli travels to Balmoral in hopes that he can convince the Queen to return to London. Unable to persuade Victoria, Disraeli turns to Brown, hoping he can convince her otherwise. Brown confronts the Queen about returning to public life, but instead of convincing her to return, he only angers her more. The dynamics of their relationships change and Brown is no longer seen as the dutiful companion. Victoria feels that Brown has betrayed her trust and has overstepped his place as her servant. Their relationship is restored when Brown saves the Queen from an assassination attempt at the thanksgiving service for Bertie and is awarded a medal for his heroic deed. Brown dies in 1883 from pneumonia while out near Balmoral looking for a would be intruder. The portrayal of Brown's death is a heroic sacrifice for the Queen and the woman he has grown to love and admire. The Queen grieves for Brown and Brown's diary is disposed of by Victoria's private secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby. On a title page, it is stated that John Brown's diary has never been found. This suggest that Victoria's diary was disposed of because of scandalous remarks the Queen made about her relationship with Brown and that the relationship was romantic. By this point in her life, Queen Victoria has returned to public duties and the monarchy is safe from abolishment. The final scene shows a bust being thrown out a window by the Queen's oldest son Bertie, who hated Brown. In *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, Victoria is portrayed as the suffering widow and Brown is the heroic servant, bent on saving her from herself.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*. Directed by John Madden. 1997. Santa Monica, CA: Miramar Films. 1998. DVD.

In the miniseries, *Edward the Seventh*, the Queen's seclusion is represented through her refusal to have her son partake in any royal duties. The relationship between the two is acrimonious because Victoria believes it was Bertie's fault that Albert died. The stress of Bertie's affair put stress on Albert, who wanted the royal family to be a symbol of a morality and purity. From Albert's death, Victoria blames her son for his father's death until her own passing.

While in seclusion, Queen Victoria sends Bertie off to a tour in Egypt because she can barely stand to be in his presence. She wears black and only allows her daughter, Alice, to touch Albert's things. In a meeting with cabinet members, Palmerston states that the Queen has been given ample time to mourn Prince Albert's death and should return to public duties. However, the Queen is a nervous individual and Albert was always by her side to comfort and support her when she made public appearances. Palmerston suggests to the Queen that she should have Bertie take her duties to which she refuses. Queen Victoria views her son as incompetent and lazy and he could never take the place of his father. Victoria orders him to marry Princess Alix of Denmark or she will withdraw herself from him. After Bertie's marriage, he tries to convince his mother to allow him to take on public royal duties and even Victoria's prime ministers try to convince the Queen. Victoria's seclusion isolates her son from learning about foreign policy, which would be pertinent for Bertie know once he became king:

Palmerston: About him taking on a share of the royal duties. Which he should fulfill and expected of him.

Victoria: There are no duties laid down for the heir.

Palmerston: But you said yourself ma'am.

Victoria: I may have done but I have reconsidered. We do not believe that our son is capable in taking part in government. I intend to carry out all my duties as my husband would have expected by myself.

Palmerston: Of Course ma'am

Victoria: As for the Prince of Wales my husband intended him to be marry. That scared wish must be fulfilled. Our choice is the Princes of Denmark Alexandria.

Bertie agrees to marry the Danish princess, to the Queen's delight. Throughout the rest of the decade, the Queen is asked numerous times by several prime ministers to hand over some of her public duties to Bertie, but she stubbornly refuses to do so:

Victoria:you don't understand the other side of foreign policy

Bertie: How can I? I have no chance to learn. The only way I learn about foreign affairs is from gossip and the newspapers. How can I serve you and the country properly if I can do nothing?

Victoria: Mr. Disraeli agrees that you will only be fully trusted when you learn to be discreet. You fill your days with mindless amusement and frivolous conversation.

Bertie: And do you know why mama ? Because I have nothing else to do....

Victoria's seclusion isolates her son from learning about foreign policy, which would be pertinent for Bertie to know once he became king.¹⁷¹ The representation of Victoria's seclusion is that of a lonely woman, desperate for company and refusing to allow her son and heir to take any kind of public role on her behalf. In *Victoria the Great* and *Sixty Glorious Years*, her personality is represented as depressed, opinionated, and stubborn in her state of mourning her husband. Even in death, she is utterly devoted to him and his memory by constantly visiting his tomb and only allowing certain family members to touch his possessions in the miniseries, *Edward the Seventh*. In *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, Queen Victoria's relationship with John Brown is similar to the one that she had with her husband Albert, where she relies on him for support in her role as monarch. Brown is resented by her children, her servants and advisors because of his

¹⁷¹ *Edward the Seventh*. Directed by John Gorrie. 1975. Midlands, UK. ATV. DVD.

rough and blunt nature. When Brown falls ill and later dies, the Queen grieves deeply for him, angering Bertie. Bertie feels that Brown does not deserve the recognition Victoria gives him and is resentful of the attention to her servant. In all four film adaptations of her life, Victoria's agency is represented as no longer having a public role to fill because she lost a male role in her private life. Victoria was in constant need of a male companion to help her in the difficult role of being queen. Albert was not only her husband but fulfilled the political role that Victoria could not because of her sex. Albert comforted Victoria and guided her in her role as queen. Without Albert, Victoria felt that she could no longer carry on her public role. However, the films depict Victoria as struggling with her grief but unwilling to give up her duties as queen to her son Bertie. For the audience Victoria was a relatable and sympathetic figure yet, she is stubborn because of her unwillingness to willing to give up her royal duties.

Chapter V: Conclusion

Queen Victoria of England defied the nineteenth-century gender roles, giving the young queen a complicated challenge. Men were meant for the public sphere, involved with the politics of the day and women were for the private sphere, taking care of the home and children. Yet her predecessors, King George IV and King William IV, had no legitimate heirs and Victoria would be viewed as a less than perfect choice because of her sex. There were hopes that the young queen would be moral and virtuous compared to her immoral uncles. The early years of Victoria's reign were rife with anxiety over her ruling alone and, along with the Flora Hastings scandal and Bedchamber crisis, tarnished her flawless reputation. Her critics were worried that a passionate female would be unable to control her court and her country. Victoria was married to her first cousin, Prince Albert, who took on the public role when his wife became pregnant, thus calming the fear of her critics. A devoted wife to Albert, Victoria took on the contradictory role of being the most powerful woman in the world and being an ordinary middle class wife. Albert's early death in 1861 caused Victoria to go into a self-inflicted seclusion and she refused to allow her eldest son, the Prince of Wales, to take on any royal duties. With her husband no longer by her side, Victoria turned to her servant, John Brown, for support, causing a scandal. Her years of seclusion brought on a short lived republican movement that was easily wiped out when the Queen returned to public life. During her Golden and Diamond jubilees, Queen Victoria was at her zenith of popularity due to her long years as sovereign. At the time of her death in January of 1901, Queen Victoria was the longest reigning English monarch. Previously discussed films and miniseries represented the different periods of Victoria's life and her agency over time.

To understand Queen Victoria's agency in multiple films and miniseries, I applied historical and film analysis to examine how filmmakers have interpreted the famous British queen over time. The five themes; gender, morality, assassination, intruders, and seclusion were interpreted

by filmmakers to represent Queen Victoria and her agency. Queen Victoria's agency is her actions towards the people around her and how she used her actions to produce a particular result. The result that Victoria wanted was to make the monarchy popular and to continue it even after her death.

For her entire life, Queen Victoria's identity was never separated from her royal status and from those who tried to control her. She was never simply seen as Victoria the individual but as Queen of the British Empire. In Margaret Homans *Royal Representations*, Victoria's representation revolves around her position as queen and she must act within the confines of her title. Homans argues that, unlike other historians who have concluded Victoria had lost some state power by the end of her reign, Homans states that the queen was more powerful because she controlled her representation.¹ Victoria could manipulate her image to some degree while others, like her subjects, could form their own representations of the queen.² Victoria did not have control of her image and it was never entirely her own. As a child of the nineteenth-century, Victoria learned that British society viewed men as superior to women, even if a woman was the queen of England. Her marriage to Prince Albert and his subsequent control of her household made him the controller of her representation. Before her marriage Victoria was influenced by her Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, who wanted to teach the young woman how to be queen. Albert wanted the monarchy to be represented as a moral institution and Victoria was willing to follow the ideas of her husband. With her marriage to Prince Albert, Victoria became passive with her role as queen and allowed her husband to be the "unofficial" king of England. By not taking part in affairs of state and allowing Albert to be "unofficial" king, Victoria was giving her subjects

¹ Homans, *Royal Representations*, xx.

² *Ibid.*, xxi.

what they wanted. British subjects wanted a demure, motherly queen with a happy life but they wanted a man to handle the responsibilities of ruling. Victoria was represented as a middle class and moral mother who was dedicated to home and family. This is only partly true because Victoria hated the idea of pregnancy and the agony of birth, yet she was more than happy to be by her husband's side. The idea that a middle class woman who upheld the moral standards of nineteenth-century Britain, would enjoy motherhood was a concept driven outside the royal household. Society believed that Victoria should be seen as a passive, moral, mother just as Prince Albert did.

Victoria the Great (1937), and *Sixty Glorious Years* (1938), represent young Queen Victoria as demure and easily controlled by her family members and politicians. In these films on Victoria's life, she is never hostile towards her mother and the character of John Conroy is not in either movie. As a young woman, Victoria never states her opinion and acts similar to a Disney princess, pleasing everyone she meets. Young women of the 1930's, were taught to be submissive to their elders and male superiors, and this is reflected in *Victoria the Great* and *Sixty Glorious Years*. It was the belief that women should be seen and not heard, and their opinions were inadmissible. Both films were made in the interwar years between the first and second world wars, in which many citizens wanted a sense of normality. *Victoria the Great* and *Sixty Glorious Years*, represent Queen Victoria's agency as demonstrating an image of how young women should act in a position of power, which is to give it away to a trusted male.

Unlike *Victoria the Great* and *Sixty Glorious Years*, other films and miniseries have represented Victoria embracing her new freedom and responsibility in being ruler of the United Kingdom. Victoria is celebrated by her people, who are happy to have a young, unmarried monarch who is scandal free. With little knowledge of how to rule, Victoria is taught by her

mentor, Lord Melbourne, how to be an effective ruler, and her subjects grow fond of her. However, when Victoria allows her feelings to take over the running of the government, the public turns against her as seen in *The Young Victoria*, *Victoria*, and *Victoria and Albert*. With her once good reputation ruined by her poor choices, the public believes that Victoria needs to be guided by a husband to help her rule and contain her emotions. By marrying her cousin Prince Albert, Victoria diminished the public's fears of her ruling alone and brought legitimacy to her rule. Albert impresses on her the need to change how the couple is viewed and wants them to be represented as middle-class and moral royal family for Victoria's subjects. *The Young Victoria*, *Victoria*, *Victoria and Albert*, *Edward the Seventh (1974)*, *Victoria the Great*, and *Sixty Glorious Years*, portray the changes Victoria goes through during her marriage with Albert, such as removing Baroness Lehzen and immoral courtiers in order to make her husband happy. The films also portray Victoria as in love with her husband and happy to be married. The concept of Victoria marrying for love would reflect the ideas of the modern era in which most people marry for love and happiness. For the average nineteenth-century woman, making her husband happy was a sign of being a good wife and Victoria wanted her subjects to believe that she was doing everything possible to make a happy home for Albert.

All of the films and miniseries on Victoria's life show the queen at some point handing over her power and royal duties to Prince Albert, who gladly takes on the responsibility. For Victoria, her role in the monarchy is to provide children and set the moral example for the country as advised by her husband. After Albert's death, Victoria's intense mourning inhibits her from performing royal duties, causing in-fighting with her adult children and fears from her prime ministers that the monarchy will be replaced by a republican government. Victoria is unfazed by both her prime minister's and public's outrage that she will not perform royal duties in public, instead

spending her time away from London and hero worshipping her deceased husband. Prince Albert was at the center of Victoria's life and the queen could hardly cope with the reality of his death. Victoria was performing a basic act of her gender by mourning the loss of her husband.³ Her image was based on her femininity and her devotion to her husband, yet she was the reigning Queen of England and had to perform basic functions of state. Although Victoria's subjects never questioned her devotion to her husband, they were begging to question her devotion to her royal duties by her reclusiveness from public life. Yet part of her appeal was that Victoria remained as passive as possible, therefore she can hardly avoid reigning by her own existence.⁴ In the films on Victoria's life, filmmakers comment that women in a position like the queen's should return to their public lives for the benefit of the country and the duty that was instilled upon them. Without the approval of Queen Victoria's subjects, the monarchy could possibly be replaced by a republic. Queen Victoria and her image are at the mercy of her people who view her as a figure head and therefore, she should perform certain duties to please the masses. These films suggest that a woman in a male's position must put personal feelings aside and attend to the affairs of state or else the monarchy will cease to exist. Filmmakers portray Victoria as far from the strong feminist protagonist, willingly giving her power away and becoming a recluse after Albert's death.

In *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown* (1997), *Victoria and Albert* (2001), *The Young Victoria* (2009), and *Victoria* (2016), the theme of assassination is depicted as a pivotal moment in Victoria's life. For many moviegoers and history buffs alike, excitement is brought to the screen with suspension and the possible death of the beloved queen. However, the theme of assassination

³ *Ibid.*, xxviii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxviii.

adds more than excitement and suspense to the films on Queen Victoria's life. The movie viewer of the modern age has seen multiple scenes of violence from murder to horrific battles, and an assassination attempt would not cause too much distress on the average person. For twenty first century Americans, an assassination attempt on a political figure is not an uncommon occurrence. Historical events like the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in 1865 and John F. Kennedy in 1963 have made it acceptable for American viewers to watch the portrayal of an assassination attempt on a British sovereign. Unlike Presidents Lincoln and Kennedy, Victoria is unharmed by the assassination attempts, providing not only an accurate historical portrayal of the queen's story but a happy ending for viewers.

In *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, *The Young Victoria*, and *Victoria*, filmmakers portray the assassination attempts on Victoria's life as a heroic moment for the men in her life. In *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, Victoria attends a church service for her son, Bertie, where an assassin nearly kills her, if not for the heroic efforts of her servant John Brown. Filmmakers use the assassination attempt for audiences to enjoy Brown's devotion and loyalty to Victoria, even after a previous argument between the queen and her servant in an earlier scene. In *The Young Victoria*, Victoria is saved by Prince Albert when he lunges in front of his pregnant wife. Albert is injured by the assassin's bullet and is rushed to Buckingham palace to receive medical attention. Victoria is grief stricken until she learns that her husband will recover and she expresses her love to him. Prince Albert is portrayed as a dashing prince from a fairytale, saving his princess, yet the movie inaccurately depicts the actual historical event. In the miniseries *Victoria*, the young queen is saved by Albert, who hits Edward Oxford with a cane and the culprit is apprehended. Victoria goes into shock from the thwarted event and is rushed back to the palace. All of the representations of Victoria portray her as a vulnerable woman in need of male protection. However,

not all the representations of Victoria during the assassination attempts display a woman in crisis.

In contrast to the previous three films *Victoria and Albert*, represents Queen Victoria's agency as resilient against the adversity of the assassination attempt. Instead of representing Victoria as nearly having a mental breakdown in films like *The Young Victoria*, and *Victoria*, the Victoria in *Victoria and Albert* is more than willing to return to her palace in the same carriage when she was attacked by Oxford. Victoria wants to convey to her subjects that she is a strong leader and will not be frightened by the attempt on her life. The film makers of *Victoria and Albert* represent Victoria's agency as strong and defying the objections of her mother and husband, who want to protect her from further harm. Victoria's actions in *Victoria and Albert* are similar to those of a twenty-first century woman who is independent and goes against the wishes of her family. This Victoria has control of her life, much like women of the modern age. The film makers of *Victoria and Albert* represent Victoria as a relatable figure to young women who would most likely be in the audience of the film.

In *Victoria and Albert*, a young queen Victoria is more than willing to return to the public eye after an assassination attempt on her life. Yet seclusion was a big part of the real Victoria's life during her childhood and the decade after Prince Albert's death. In the latter half of the twentieth century, monarchies are a rarity in the modern world and representing the life of a historical queen in a recognizable way is done to entice audiences. Films portray Victoria's secluded childhood similarly to those of a fairytale princess like Cinderella, who suffers in private but eventually has public triumph. In *Victoria and Albert*, *The Young Victoria*, and *Victoria*, the queen's childhood is portrayed as a captive in a palace, isolated from the royal court of her uncle and children her own age. Victoria suffers under the control of the Kensington system, in which she

is never to be left alone, set up by Sir James Conroy and her mother, the Duchess of Kent. Although Victoria is living a lavish lifestyle as a princess, she is a sympathetic figure, given her isolation from her father's family and the control of Conroy, who is represented as ruthless, using the young girl for a source of power. When Victoria becomes ill, she tries to break away from Conroy and her mother by refusing to sign a document that would allow her mother to become regent if the princess does not reach her majority by the time she is queen. For anyone who has dealt with the angst of being a teenager, Victoria's actions are relatable and she is represented as a less than perfect princess. Like the Cinderella story, when Victoria becomes queen, she is able to banish Conroy from her court and rarely sees her mother, just as the fairytale princess does when she lives in the castle with her prince far away from her step-family. Her marriage to Prince Albert solidifies her public triumph, when she is able to love a man that will protect her and her interests. Victoria's representation during her time in isolation as a child is parallel to Cinderella stories, making the films recognizable and relatable to female viewers.

When Albert dies, Victoria is devastated by the loss of the man she loved and the work he did on the behalf of the monarchy. Victoria goes into seclusion, shutting herself away from her subjects and refusing to perform public duties as seen in *Victoria the Great*, *Sixty Glorious Years*, *The Mudlark*, *An Evening at Osborne (2001)*, and *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*. In contrast to the other films, *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, examines the relationship between the widowed Victoria and her servant. Released in 1997, over a hundred years after Albert's death, it has since become more acceptable to depict infamous relationships between royals and their servants. The film was released around the same time as Princess Diana's death, another famous royal with her own scandalous affairs.⁵ The Queen finds solace with Brown, who she can confide

⁵ Merck, *The British Monarchy on screen*, 76.

in and be herself with. *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown* is one of the few films which openly depicts such a controversial relationship about a queen who is often stereotyped for prudishness and morality.

All the films on the Queen's seclusion detail Victoria's forced return to public life when politicians begin to question her abilities to rule and a republican movement begins. Victoria is not in control of what she does for the monarchy and her actions are guided by her subjects who she must keep in good relations with in order for her to continue to rule. Although, Victoria is unwilling to resume royal duties, she knows that Albert would want her return to public life and the monarchy must continue as a stable force for the United Kingdom. The theme of seclusion may be relatable to many moviegoers who watch as Victoria tries to navigate a lonely childhood and, later on, ten years of grief makes the Queen sympathetic. The theme of seclusion may also endear the audience towards Victoria who is not viewed as a powerful god-like figure but is seen in all her human vulnerability. The long life of Queen Victoria will continue to be adapted on film given her contradictory position and the many events that made her life extraordinary.

Representations of Queen Victoria's agency reflect the time period in which they were made and the effect filmmakers wanted to have on the royal figure. Films and miniseries on her seclusion in childhood by her mother and Sir James Conroy, highlight her actions as queen to assert her power and authority against the two people who controlled her life. Victoria's actions as a young queen looking for guidance from Melbourne represent her as inexperienced, yet willing to be a capable ruler. In her marriage to Prince Albert, Victoria acts in accordance of a middle-class wife allowing her husband to perform royal duties for her. By doing this, Victoria molds the public perception that she is like them and brings legitimacy to her reign with a male asserting his authority over her. By agreeing with Albert's moral code, Victoria tries to instill her son,

Bertie, to act as his father would. When Bertie refuses to live up to the expectation of his parents, both parents criticize the young man in an effort to change his way. Victoria wants to change Bertie's behavior, so when he her son becomes king he will not cause a scandal like her Hanoverian uncles. When Victoria goes into seclusion after Albert's death, she acts as an ordinary woman would however, by prolonging her bereavement period, she neglects her royal duties. When the monarchy's popularity declines because of her seclusion, Victoria is convinced to return to public life for the sake of the Crown. In all the representations of Queen Victoria's agency, the common act that Victoria is doing is keeping the monarchy applicable to her subjects and continuing it for further generations. This is what I believe is the message that filmmakers are trying convey to the audience and Queen Victoria's greatest impact on the United Kingdom. Even after more than a one hundred years after Queen Victoria's death, the British monarchy is still in existence and the most popular monarchy in the world. For this reason, my analysis on Victoria's agency in films and miniseries is significant to overall knowledge on her impact on the British monarchy.

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