Professor John Plunkett (University of Exeter), 'Of Death and Dominion: Queen Victoria and the cult of colonial loyalty' in *Personality Cults from Empires to Nation-States and Beyond: Symbolic Patterns and Interactional Dynamics,* forthcoming for Routledge, 2020

The bicentenary of Queen Victoria's birth was 24 May 2019. Her image, painted and sculpted, still dominates public spaces scattered throughout every continent. More than any other historic individual, places, institutions and squares still bear her name. Biographies and biopics also continue to proliferate; the hugely successful period drama produced by ITV/PBS, *Victoria* (2016-), which has so far completed three series, attracts millions of viewers in Britain, America and beyond. The still monumental nature of her imperial presence continues to enrage as well as fascinate and habituate however: in the run-up to Commonwealth Day in Canada, on 14 May 2019, Victoria's statue in Montreal was covered in red paint by the Montreal May Anarchists ('Montreal: Macdonald Monument & Queen Victoria Statue Vandalized Again' 2019). It had been covered in green paint only two months earlier by an anti-colonial group, the *Brigade de solidarité anticoloniale Delhi-Dublin*. In a statement published initially in French, the group declared that the statue is an 'insult to the struggles for self-determination and resistance of oppressed peoples worldwide' ('Anti-colonial group claims responsibility for Queen Victoria vandalism' 2019). This followed three previous attacks on the same statue in 2018, and a similar defacement of Victoria's statue in Georgetown, Guyana, in June of the same year ('Queen Victoria Statue Defaced' 2018). These episodes are all part of the potent, living legacy of a figure who is a leading modern example of the global creation of a ruler personality cult.

While it is commonplace to acknowledge that Queen Victoria was the overarching symbol that sought to meld together the disparate parts of the British empire, my essay seeks to demonstrate the specific discourses and practices through affection and loyalty to her were promoted by the colonial elite, and the consequent way it was remediated and challenged by, indigenous and settler communities. More particularly, it argues that the myth-making around Victoria stemmed from the extensive and unprecedented circulation of her global image through newspapers, biographies, photographs, statues, prints and film, and that this helped to promote the myth of a personal relationship between Victoria and her subjects in both Britain and its various colonies. The age-old reverence accorded to monarchs intermingled with, and was augmented by, the charisma and celebrity created by the modern media industry that developed in the period. As Eva Giloi and Edward Berenson have noted, 'The nineteenth century saw an explosion in the number of charismatic figures, largely because the audience for them grew so significantly' (Giloi and Berenson 2010, 16).

Queen Victoria has too often been regarded as exceptional in the historiography of nineteenth-century Europe. The longevity of her reign at over sixty three-years; the prospering of the British monarchy at a time when so many other European monarchs were deposed through democratic reform; her femininity; her position as head of the leading industrial and imperial nation; all these factors marked her as exceptional. Yet Victoria herself had extensive and close-knit personal links with many other European royal families. Moreover, while the political fortunes of

European monarchies differed, the expressions of popular loyalty Victoria inspired was not an isolated example in that it has similarities with the personality cults attached to Nicholas II, Louis Napoleon, Franz Joseph I, Garibaldi, Kaiser Wilhelm II, and Emperor Meiji (Giloi, 2011; Riall, 2008; Giloi and Berenson, 2011).

What is distinct about Victoria's charismatic figure is that it was most evident in the versions exported across the British empire. Miles Taylor describes the second half of the century as 'the heyday of viceregal rule; that is to say, a system of government in which the apparatus of European monarchy was applied to remote colonies and dependencies' (Taylor 2018, 7). Whereas, domestically, Victoria was lauded for being part of the transition to a constitutional monarchy, across the empire, she was much more of a charismatic, untrammelled, focal point of British rule. India, for example, was transferred to Crown rule from the East India Company in 1858, accompanied by a proclamation from the Queen to preserve religious tolerance and act benevolently. The colonial representation of Victoria was – to a large degree - an intensification of the existing familial discourse around her. From Kolkata to Cape Town, her motherly concern for *all* of her subjects, was used to emphasise the existence of an imperial family and to soften the imposition of British rule. Victoria Smith has argued that 'the image of a maternal Victoria allowed for the representation of the empire not as a project of domination or conquest but of familial love and domestic duty' (Smith 1998, 7). While Victoria herself never left Europe, she took a keen personal and diplomatic interest in her overseas subjects and in non-European royals.[1] She certainly encouraged and facilitated the global loyalty she inspired, albeit much of her colonial fashioning was done in her name.

The scale and character of Victoria's colonial presence, and the way that this was played out through countless local circumstances and political engagements, is far beyond the scope of a single chapter. As such, I focus on a single episode at the height of British imperial sway – Queen Victoria's death and funeral in early 1901 -- in order to demonstrate the way that the global simultaneity of the event became part of the narrative of imperial familiality, personal charisma and affective loyalty. A spotlight on this distinct event throws into relief the organisational structures and symbols which facilitated the *cultus* around Victoria. It particularly highlights the importance of the imperial press and telegraph network, and the way local communities used the many statues of Victoria that had been already erected as sites of mourning. Her iconography was fashioned through the interplay of the work of colonial ideology and the political character of local populations. As Sarah Carter and Maria Nugent have argued in their work on indigenous communities and Queen Victoria, 'symbolic vocabularies and vernaculars of monarchy, empire, sovereignty and the Crown (among other things) were produced, or at the very least co-produced, by colonised communities and constituencies' (Carter and Nugent 2016, 10). In this vein, tributes to Victoria could be both unstable and surprising; there was never a univocal, simple, top-down fashioning. White settler colonies in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, unsurprisingly, lauded imperial unity and citizenship through Victoria; however, the response of Indian nationalist groups demonstrate that her matriarchy could be turned against the dominant power structures. By taking literally Victoria's personal affection for her colonial subjects, they could exploit the contradiction with more oppressive aspects of imperial rule.

At Home: Victoria as National and Imperial Mother

In 1851, the poet laureate, Alfred Tennyson, celebrated Victoria's reign in an ode commemorating the opening of the Great Exhibition. She was praised for her serene life, pure court and, above all, her virtues as 'Mother, Wife and Queen' (Tennyson 1969,961). Tennyson's phrase was subsequently repeated countless times, extolling as it did the maternal and familial before the regal, while nonetheless recognizing that Victoria successfully combined all three roles. The stress on Victoria's motherhood meant that she was turned into a paragon of domestic propriety; at the same time, it also functioned metonymically for the emotional and immediate relationship her subjects experienced towards her. Familiarity bred familiality.

The familial relationship between Victoria and her subjects was encouraged by the oft-proclaimed interest she took in their welfare, through personal letters, visits, or philanthropic donations. Upon Victoria's death in 1901, the *Daily Express* was one of many newspapers to reiterate her matriarchal affection, imbuing her with the common pleasures and sympathies *of* her subjects, *for* her subjects:

> She was essentially the mother of her People. When we sorrowed she sorrowed with us. Quick as the news of a disaster on land or sea came always the Queen's message of regret for the dead, of sympathy for the mourners. . . When we heard of this or that good deed done by the Queen we did not think of it as something official, passed through the office of the Lord Chamberlain, but as the spontaneous benevolence of a dear old lady who loved children and dogs, and quiet chats with the old wives of Highland cottages, and all innocent and wholesome pleasures, who would weep readily for the suffering of her people, and join heartily in their enthusiasm and pleasures. ('A Collection of Cuttings', 1901, 19)

Prints and engravings, such as fig. 1, showing Victoria reading to a working-class family, enforced this intimate portrayal. Moreover, such concern was said to exist outside official structures and stemmed from her own uninhibited character as a 'dear old lady'.

Victoria was certainly not the first British monarch to be proclaimed for their close relationship with their subjects. George III was revered for his domestic character and given the title of father of his people. Nevertheless, Victoria's femininity, working in tandem with her constitutional position supposedly above party politics, gave added impetus to the loyalty she evoked. The human interest in her was also unprecedented because of the new ability of print and visual media to create a day-to-day involvement with the life of the royal family. The promotion of Victoria's relationship with the British people; the assertion of a bond of intimacy between her and her subjects; her position at the heart of an imagined national community – all these were achieved, at least partially, through the extensive and novel media coverage given to her through the new media landscape of popular newspapers, prints and photographs. One political effect of this is evident in Walter Bagehot's treatise, *The English Constitution* (1865-7), wherein he famously distinguished between the *dignified* and *efficient* parts of British constitution. In contrast to the complexity and efficiency of parliamentary government, the dignified parts were 'those which excite and preserve the reverence of the population' (Bagehot 2001, 7). For Bagehot, inspiring populist feeling around a single distinct,

comprehensible figure was now the primary role of the Crown: Bagehot codified and elevated the emergent personality cult around Victoria into part of the constitutional role of the monarchy.

With the expansion of the burgeoning British Empire in the final decades of her reign, Victoria was deployed as a unifying figure. There are many examples of the notion that it was love for Victoria as a paragon of womanhood that helped secure colonial loyalty and pave the way for a greater imperial unity. During the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the *Graphic* declared that the 'love which she has universally inspired has given the throb of life to the loyalty which every different Colony owes the Crown. She has ruled in the hearts as well as through the Constitution' ('For Queen and Empire' 1897, 782). The exporting of Victoria's familial role was an important part of the way that the British empire attempted to reproduce familiar, hierarchical, and often conservative, versions of the domestic social structure. David Cannadine has noted that, to the degree there was a coherent imperial project, 'it was the effort to fashion and to tie together the empire abroad in the vernacular image of the domestic, ranked social hierarchy' (Cannadine 2001, xix). Victoria's imperial iconography was an idealized form of the familial and familiar icon that had already been successfully developed.

This imperial reinvention of Victoria's sovereignty reached its zenith at her Golden and Diamond Jubilees (1887, 1897), and her funeral in 1901. Portrayals of Victoria as an imperial matriarch were instrumental to a discourse of kinship between British colonies and the mother-country. The racial and cultural diversity of the empire was constituted as one whole; moreover, the links between the dominion countries of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, were often naturalised as blood-ties. Alfred Tennyson's poem, 'Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen, 1886', is a typical assertion of imperial brotherhood:

> Sharers of our glorious past,
> Brothers, must we part at last?
> Shall we not through good and ill
> Cleave to one another still?
> Britain's myriad voices call,
> 'Sons, be welded each and all,
> Into one imperial whole,
> One with Britain, heart and soul!
> One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne!'
> Britons, hold your own! (Tennyson 1996, 210)

The anaphora of Tennyson's refrain rousingly culminates with 'one Throne', making it the overdetermined centre of unity.

Lewis Morris's Golden Jubilee ode, 'A Song of Empire', used Victoria's already iconic matriarchy to cast imperialism as a familial project. Morris's work enjoyed considerable popularity in its day, probably second only to that of Tennyson. His jubilee ode literalizes, naturalizes and racializes the notion of an imperial family. Victoria becomes, somewhat bizarrely, the grand matriarchal progenitor of her colonial children:

> First Lady of our English race,
> In Royal dignity and grace

Higher than all in old ancestral blood,
But higher still in love of good,
And care for ordered Freedom, grown
To a wide tree where'er
In either hemisphere,
Its vital seeds are blown; (Morris 1891, 475)

Victoria's idealization as a constitutional monarch segues into a role as overseer of the expansion of liberty across the empire. Morris, however, rather awkwardly uses her 'old ancestral blood' to naturalise political relationships as cherished biological and racial ones:

See what a glorious throng they come,
Turned to their ancient home,
The children of our England! See
What vigorous company
Thou sendest, Greater England of the Southern Sea!
Thy stately cities, sown with domes and spires,
Chase the illumined light with festal fires
In honour of their Queen, whose happy reign
Began when, 'mid their central roar,
The naked savage trod the pathless plain [. . .]

Yet everywhere are found
The English laws, the English accents fair,
'Mid burning North or cooler Southern air.
A world within themselves, and with them blent
Island with continent. (Morris 1891, 476)

Morris's poem invokes a progressive vision of an empire united across continents, imbued with inherited English character and customs. Through their bloodline resemblance to the mother-country and to the imperial mother, the 'Greater Englands' beyond the sea become Victoria's children.

Politicians as well as poets liked to imagine Victoria at the heart of an imperial family. Her Diamond Jubilee of 1897 sought to embody this position through large-scale royal ceremonial. The Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, had the idea of turning the Diamond Jubilee into an imperial pageant**.** As he noted, 'there never has been in English territory any representation of the Empire as a whole, and the Colonies especially have, hitherto, taken little part in any ceremony of the kind' (cited in Lant 1980, 219). Troop detachments from different colonies were invited to participate in the centrepiece of the jubilee celebrations, a long procession through London with an open-air Thanksgiving Service at St Paul's Cathedral.

The Diamond Jubilee brought a microcosm of the empire to London, but it was Victoria's death, at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight on 22 January 1901, that marked the culmination of her potent role as the mother of the British Empire. The outpouring of grief returned again and again to a charged discourse of familial intimacy in order to convey the unique position she had occupied in the lives of her subjects. The mourning that took place across the empire confirmed that the

motherliness of the Queen-Empress was the symbolic heart of a mythology of imperial unity.

Responses to Victoria's death reveal the importance of global communication technology in concretizing the affective links between Victoria and her colonial subjects. Scholars such as Chandrika Kaul, Donald Read, and Simon Potter, have demonstrated that the final decades of the century saw an imperial press system emerge: communication and media networks helped to facilitate and maintain imperial power (see Potter 2003; Kaul 2003; Read 1999). As Potter argues, commercial and political interests 'came to mesh press enterprises around the empire into a situation of mutual interdependence, influencing the development of the press as an institution and an industry in Britain as well as in the colonies' (Potter 2003, 1). The creation of a global telegraph system, through a network of undersea cables, also played a key role in the formal and informal growth of empire. The first line between India and Europe had been opened in January 1856; Australia was linked with India in 1872, and Shanghai and Tokyo were reached in 1873. Demonstrations of Victoria's personal concern for her multitudinous subjects were aided by the communicative power of this network. Before leaving Buckingham Palace for her Diamond Jubilee procession, Victoria sent a special telegraph message rippling across the empire reading 'From my heart I thank my beloved people. God bless them!' This simultaneity was magnified for Victoria's final illness, death and funeral. The event was unprecedented in bringing together global communities around a single individual; it was perhaps the first such example of a global media occasion played out in almost real-time.

During her last days, regular bulletins were issued giving the latest on the Queen's health. Communities from Montreal to Manchester, Bombay to Cape Town, were aware that they were part of a global drama. As fig. 2. demonstrates, illustrated newspapers were fond of depicting crowds gathered around the latest telegraph or press bulletins, implicitly promoting their own central role in the unfolding events. The personality cult around Victoria was heightened by the positive feedback loop of audiences, at both the centre and periphery of empire, knowing that they were connected through events at Osborne House.

The speed with which news of Victoria's death was transmitted around the world was extraordinary. The official announcement of Victoria's death was made at 6.45pm on the 22 January through a telegraph from the Prince of Wales to the Lord Mayor of London, the Lord Chancellor and the Archbishop of Canterbury. A large crowd of journalists, who had been waiting at the gates of Osborne House, also rushed *en masse* to transmit the news from East Cowes telegraph office. By 7pm, the Lord Mayor was reading the news to large crowds gathered outside the Mansion House, his official London residence. At the same time, it was at 6.58pm that a private wire told the *Birmingham Daily Mail* and the *Birmingham Daily Post* of the news; special editions were on the streets within a few minutes ('The News in Birmingham' 1901, 2). This was a familiar story, with newspapers often receiving the news before the official communication.

Cities across the British empire, particularly those in the settler colonies, received the same news around the same time as towns and cities in the United Kingdom. In Canada, the news had been received just after 1pm by the *Ottowa Journal* ('When the News Came' 1901, 2). It was the *Ottowa Journal* that telephoned

the news to all of the schools and other institutions in the city. In Toronto, Victoria's death was announced by the Great North Western Telegraph at 1.32pm; that it took only a few minutes to transmit the news from Osborne ('Toronto Mourns' 1901, 2). In Montreal, the news was first known just after 1.30pm through the bulletin boards outside the office of the *Montreal Star*; a special edition was on the streets minutes later 'Announcing the News' 1901, 1). In New York, the news arrived just as instantaneously, first being received through a private cable to the sexton of Trinity Church, which arrived just before 1pm; special news editions were on the streets by 1.30pm ('New York's Mourning for Queen Victoria' 1901, 2). The official telegraph confirming Victoria's death was not received at the British Consul in New York until 2.40pm. At least some remote villages in Britain received the news several hours later than communities thousands of miles away across the Atlantic. At one small village in Devon, Sampford Courtenay, they did not receive the news until 6.30am the following morning, long after New York and Montreal ('Sampford Courtenay' 1901, 8).

Looking east, the news arrived in Calcutta around 2am on Wednesday morning, suggesting that it took just over two hours for the information to be transmitted, albeit Victoria's death was not officially confirmed until a Reuters telegram was received at 5.25am ('Receipt of the News in Calcutta' 1901, 2). It then took another couple of hours to reach Australia. In Sydney, the news was received just after 9am by Admiral Beaufort, the Commander of the British Fleet in Australian waters, who communicated it to the Governor General ('How the News Arrived' 1901, 7). The message had been sent from London at 7.45pm, so had taken four hours to reach Australia with the *Sydney Morning Herald* printing a special late edition at 10.15am ('The Southern States' 1901, 5). In Brisbane, the news was received just before 10am ('Reception of the News in Queensland' 1901, 5).

Editorials in both the British and colonial press referred to the telegraph and press network as nerves that carried feelings as well as information backwards and forwards. *The Age* in Melbourne declared that 'Through the agency of the newspaper press the people in this part of the world were able to realise what had happened almost as completely as if they has stood by the bedside of the dying Queen' ('Mourning in Melbourne' 1901, 5). The *Hindoo Patriot*, published in Kolkata, declared, 'the wires whimper in the winds, taking the news from the dark house of death to the children of the Queen, watching, waiting, sore hearted, at the uttermost ends of the earth' ('Death of our Beloved Queen' 1901, 5). In Britain, an editorial in the *Daily Express*, a best-selling mass circulation newspaper, waxed lyrical in imagining the news of Victoria's death being transmitted around the world:

> The sun had sank in the Western seas when England heard the news that she had feared. But as the sun swept westward over the broad waters of the Atlantic the cables caught and passed him in the race, so that it was but early afternoon when the great Dominion knew the melancholy tidings.
>
> The bells jingle loudly in the streets of Ottowa as sleigh after sleigh come dashing to hear the news they feared...
>
> And so with flags at half-mast high and tolling, we leave the snow-clad north and drop southwards to warmer climes. If the telegraph at Halifax has been swift Bermuda will know the sad news and will send it on to Turks Island, and so eastward to the Leeward and Windward Isles, to Jamaica and British

> Guiana. The merry, careless negroes will be mourning in their own fashion, crying bitter tears for her they loved so well. . . Once more we sweep on, across the Southern Seas, leaving behind the islands we own where the happy folk are splashing in the surf, ignorant of their loss since no cables pierce those waters till New Zealand bulks larger to the southward.
>
> The news may have reached them from Australia: and to Australia we pass, finding it now four in the morrow's morning. The cities still sleep, hut when they rouse there will be no place where grief will be more deeply felt. Once more we track the cables westward. The news has reached Calcutta at midnight, and the crowded native quarters are awake mourning. ('An Empire in Tears', 1901, 4)

The *Daily Express* propels its British readers on a fantastical journey: they become one with the telegraph cables to experience the colonial affection towards Victoria. The global sweep of such narratives amplified Victoria's aura through the reader's mass participation in this imperial family.

Commemorative poems published in newspapers similarly linked the unprecedented mass affect towards Victoria to the agency of the telegraph network. Even at the time, it was realised that the fervour towards her was not just due to her personal charisma but due to traditional positions of authority coming together with the new forms of technologically mediated visibility. Henry Bellyse Baildon (a Scottish poet and close friend of Robert Louis Stevenson) envisaged the message diffusing around the earth, collapsing time and space into one mourning imperial body politic:

> Then thrilled the great globe like a sentient thing,
> Stung into life by sorrow, from there sped
> Along its swift electric nerves, that bring
> Together to one whole with heart and head
> Members and limbs of that vast realm that are
> By continents and oceans sundered far,
> The words that said,
> '*The Queen is Dead.*' (Baildon 1901, 63)

Baildon's sentiments were echoed by George Gordon Mcrae in a poem published in the *Melbourne Argus* on 2 February 1901. McCrae was a significant figure in Australian literary circles, and his poem, like the *Daily Express* editorial, imagines the grief being carried around the world by the undersea cables:

> Swift coursers, urged by dire distress,
> Speed on their 'hest, beneath the seas;
> All tireless, sans strain or stress,
> Each on his faithful mission flees,
> I mark them flying on the track,
> Deep mid the ocean's gathering gloom,
> 'Neath leagues of floating kelp and wrack,
> That mantle many a sailor's tomb.
> They travel east, they travel west,
> And north and south, away from Home,
> Where each blind billow beats her breast
> And merges all her tears in foam. . .

I see it on Old England's shores
Beneath the Polar Star,
Out on the Hoogly's Sand Heads,
On the coasts of Malabar:
At Madras (down Coromandel).
Past Palks Straits, on Ceylon's Isle,
On proud mascarene Mauritius,
Where the sunny Seychelles smile.
Where Gibraltar grimly frowning
Guards to windward and to lee,
And where Malta's island fortress
Sternly sentinels the sea.
Where the sun smiles sore on Aden
And bleaches Singapore. . . . (McRae 1901, 4)

It was not only British readers that were interpolated into the fantasy of an imperial family united: in the settler colonies of the Anglo-world, there was a desire to feel part of events taking place in *both* London and other colonial towns and cities.

Victoria's death produced an outpouring of grief across the empire. When news reached Montreal, for example, the fire bells were tolled for an hour, all flags were lowered, and the theatres closed ('Announcing the News' 1901, 1). It was a similar situation in India with public buildings closed and many businesses suspending trading. In Madras, a combined meeting of the Hindu and Muslim members of the business community, held typically enough at the Victoria Public Hall, called on all traders in Southern India to shut their doors from the following morning (Friday) to Sunday evening as a mark of respect (Editorial, 1901, 4.). Lord Ampthill, Governor General of Madras, noted that reaction to the Queen's death was unprecedented, 'Contrary to all custom, black is being worn by natives and put upon the door-posts and in the temple prayers are being said' (BL IOC Ampthill to Hamilton Correspondence, piece 41).

On the same day as Victoria's funeral cortege made its slow progress across London, memorial services took place across Britain and its empire. The consciousness of the day as an imperial coming together was frequently referred to during the innumerable memorial services. At the state service in St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, the Dean spoke of their participation in 'a mighty burial which is bounded by no insular limits – the tread of whose mourner's feet is to be heard at the one time in India and Africa' ('St Paul's Cathedral' 1901, 5) **[INSERT FIG 3 NEAR HERE**] Many statues of Victoria became sites of formal and unofficial mourning. Public statuary of Victoria had proliferated in the preceding decades, particularly in commemoration of the Golden and Diamond Jubilees. Monuments could demonstrate the civic loyalty of a locale, but they were also used to proclaim Britain's imperial presence in key urban spaces. Some sculptors received repeated commissions; statues of Victoria by Francis John Williamson, for example, were installed as far afield as Londonderry (1898), Auckland , King Williamstown, South Africa (1899), Paisley (1901), Hastings (1902), Christchurch (1903), Perth, Western Australia (1903), Wakefield (1905), and Rangoon (1908).[2]

Victoria's death and funeral turned her statues became totemic sites for local commemoration, a type of embodied presence in marble or bronze. For many audiences, this was the closest they would ever get to a life-sized presence of the Queen. The usage made of the statues demonstrates the symbolism and cultural memory that could be embedded in statuary: they were not just inert abstractions. In Birmingham, the recently unveiled statue of Victoria by Thomas Brock became the site of civic commemoration; floral tributes were laid by many schools, organisations and businesses 'The Adornment of the Birmingham Statue' 1901, 4). Thus, the day after Victoria's death, the schoolboys from Gem Street Industrial School marched to her statue with their band playing the 'Dead March' in order to formally lay a wreath ('An Impressive Scene' 101, 4). On the day of the funeral, the pedestal of the statue was draped in purple and black and was the centrepiece of the city's mourning: processions of individuals and groups of soldiers came to lay wreaths and pay their respects. Just under 100,000 people were claimed to have visited the statue in the course of the day. The *Birmingham Daily Gazette* described it as 'the shrine of the people's loyalty' ('Birmingham in Mourning' 1901, 6).

Across the British empire, statues were put to use as sites of official and communal mourning. On the day of her funeral, Victoria's statue in Montreal was heavily draped. A procession of troops marched through the city to Christ Church Cathedral for the memorial service. As they passed through Victoria Square, the troops saluted the statue of the dead Queen ('The Brigade Parade' 1901, 24). Cape Town witnessed similar scenes; its statue of Victoria, al so by Thomas Brock, opened in 1890 and situated in the gardens of the House of Parliament, became the fetishized centre of mourning. The pedestal was draped in black and numerous wreaths were placed around its base. At 2.30pm, a time deliberately chosen to mimic the service taking place at Windsor, there was a service around the statue, attended by troops, the mayor and local Corporation ('Funeral Ceremony' 1901, 5). Throughout the day a constant stream of people filed past the statue: an attendant band played hymns and funeral marches. In addition to the official service, around 800 members of the Guild of Loyal Women held their own individual service by singing a hymn and slowly filing past the statue while also laying wreaths ('In cape Town' 1901, 7). In Durban and Pietermauritzberg in Kwa-Zulu Natal, commemoration was similar. Around 5000 members of the local Indian Muslim community gathered for their own early morning mourning service around the Durban statue erected in honour of the Diamond Jubilee; addresses extolling Victoria were given in six languages ('Durban' 1901, 5; 'Memorial Service Abroad', 1901, 7).

Events in Australia and India mirrored those in Canada and South Africa. In Adelaide, the Queen's statue in Victoria Square, unveiled in 1894, became the centrepiece for the mourning; crowds gathered around it day and night and many wreaths and tributes were laid at its feet, including one from the Governor 'At the Queen's Statue' 1901, 7). It was the same in Sydney; Victoria's statue in the appropriately named Queen's square was the site for the laying of floral wreaths by organisation like the Young Women's Christian Association of New South Wales 'The Queen's Statue' 1901, 5). On 1 February, the National Guard marched to the statue with reversed arms so that their commanding office could lay a wreath at its base ('In Other States' 1901, 7). On the day of the funeral itself, troops stood with arms reversed around the statue and an estimated crowd of 40,000 people gathered 'At

the Queen's Statue' 1901, 6). In India, there were fewer statues but that in Bombay by Matthew Noble, the first of Victoria to be erected after the rebellion 1857, played a key role in local ceremonial. The night prior to the funeral, Indian soldiers had kept guard with arms reversed at Victoria's statue, an eerie echo of the actions of those soldiers guarding Victoria's coffin before its final journey from Portsmouth to Windsor ('Vigil By the Queen's Statue' 1901, 10).

The intensity of reaction to Victoria's death seems to have taken colonial officials by surprise. Members of the British Raj certainly did not expect such a fulsome response. On 24 January, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, wrote a letter to Lord George Hamilton, the London-based Secretary of State for India, which epitomizes the perceived imperial importance of Victoria's matriarchy:

> No one who has not been to this country can well realise the extent to which the British Government, the monarchy, and the Empire, were summed up and symbolised in the mind of the Oriental in the personality of the Queen. Nowhere throughout the empire did loyalty assume a more personal, and therefore, a more passionate form. . . The virtues of the Queen, her domestic character, her homeliness, the old-fashioned simplicity of her sentiments and sayings, the fact that she was equally revered as Mother, Wife and Queen, have all combined to produce an overpowering effect upon the imagination of the Asiatic. (BL IOC MSS Hamilton Papers, 24 January 1901)

Curzon's self-congratulatory belief in the susceptibility of Indians to the potent charisma of Victoria is part and parcel of his Orientalism. In a fashion akin to Bagehot's conception of the Crown's *dignified* role dazzling the populace, it is as if the naiveté of the Indians needs British rule to be concentrated in the individual of the Queen-Empress.

Expressions of loyalty by native and indigenous communities need to be treated with caution however. Nugent and Carter argue that an 'affective mode of speaking and of expressing relationships with a distant queen were a medium for a hardnosed and clear-eyed political agendas, or for extending the terms of engagement between Indigenous people and settlers, or indeed among Indigenous people themselves' (Carter and Nugent 2016, 6). Taylor has likewise argued that Indian reverence for Queen Victoria was complex and multifaceted, noting that while it encompassed 'clientelism' and a means of gaining patronage, particularly on the part of Indian princes and mercantile elites, personal fealty towards Victoria was a means of critiquing from a standpoint of loyalism. Taylor claims that such loyalism 'was not just incidental to nineteenth-century Indian nationalism, a polite addition for the sake of form – it was central to its ideology' (Taylor 2018, 6).

Across these varied motivations for the expression of personal loyalty for Victoria, what is striking is the way it became a capacious discourse for engagement between Indian communities and British officialdom. In the immediate aftermath of her death, Curzon was struck by the weight of native discourse reiterating maternal homage. He noted that in 'score after score of the communications that I am getting from Native Societies, or individuals, the word recurs. They truly loved her as a mother even more than they revered her as a Queen. Strange freaks of phraseology sometimes find their way into these telegrams' (BL IOC MSS Hamilton Papers, piece 91). Others were equally taken aback; William Mackworth Young, the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab noted, after having seen numerous evidences of native grief,

noted 'It is marvellous what a hold she acquired on the affections of the people' (BL IOC Curzon Papers, piece 18). Hamilton, too, was equally surprised at Curzon's letter reporting the Indian devotion to Victoria's character, writing back that 'I had no idea that the deference and homage given to her were of so personal a character' (BL IOC, Private Correspondence of Lord Hamilton to Lord Curzon, piece 47). The surprise of Hamilton and Curzon suggests that, while the Raj certainly made the most of Victoria's iconic position, the British ruling elite did not fully comprehend, and was certainly not fully controlling of, the symbolism invested in the Mother-Empress.

Curzon's own memorial address at the Supreme Legislative Council is just one example of the institutional deployment of the *cultus* of the maternal Queen-Empress. Reiterating Tennyson once again, British rule was legitimated and humanised through Victoria's feminine and familial qualities.

> India in its long cycles has had no such Empress, tender-hearted, large-minded, just, humane, the loving parent of her subjects of every race and clime. All the Princes of India have been proud to own their fealty to so noble an example of sovereignty, and the hearts of all the Indian peoples have been drawn together by this singular and beautiful combination of mother, woman, and queen. ('The Viceroy's Tribute to the Late Queen' 1901, 13)

Addresses from Indian societies and newspaper editorials in the wake of Victoria's death do reiterate, or at least reflect back to the British Raj, the pervasive matriarchal discourse. The *Oudh Times* declared that the people 'knew it was the Maharani who was the mistress of their destinies. Who has fed the famished – the Maharani. Who protects their life and property – the Maharani. Who protects their religion – the Maharani. They have never cast their eyes upon that Maharani, but all the same they sang her praise' ('The Oudh Times' 1901, 8).

The extent of Indian mourning suggests that she was genuinely more than the distant Great White Queen. Moreover, the tributes suggest that her interest in the religious and constitutional freedom of her Indian people could be appropriated to highlight failures in the British Raj. A long article in the *Bengalee* exemplifies how Victoria could be claimed for India and turned against the masculine and martial values of British imperialism. The *Bengalee*, published in Calcutta between 1863 and 1931, was the highest-circulating Indian weekly in the late nineteenth-century. It was also an important voice of the Indian nationalist movement, and this is reflected in its final verdict upon Victoria:

> To our people she was not a mere abstraction, but an incarnation in the very flesh and blood of the lofty womanhood which they have adored through the ages in a Sita or a Savitri. . . And the personality of the Queen was the property of every Indian home. She was not to us the Queen who rides in the thick of the battle with blood on her sword-blade and blood on her spur and her bridle-rein, not the Queen described in Kipling's verse, not the Queen of the hard-hearted, iron-heeled, pitiless Neo-Imperialism which at present is the master passion of England, but the Queen who was the emblem of an exalted widowhood, of a sacred and all embracing maternity. . . And at the same time we knew that although she could not do much to influence our destinies, her mother's heart yearned with an equal affection for all her subjects, irrespective of colour and of creed. . . . They had never seen her in their midst, it is true. But her gentle virtues and the riches of her love had

made her a holy presence among them. And the Hindoo knew her as the Bhagavati of his Pantheon, the sacred well of infinite Power and of infinite Beneficence, the incarnation in the Kali Yuga of the Universal Mother in whom all Being is and from whom all Being draws it life. ('The Native Papers' 1901, 7)

The *Bengalee* fashions an Indianized Victoria, a figure akin to a revered Hindu deity; such comparisons were not uncommon in that Taylor has noted that other Indian writers saw her as the incarnation of Lakshmi or a Chakravarti, while she was also 'likened to Muslim women rulers – Bilqis and Qaidafa, and to Persian kings such as Nausherwan, renowned for their justice' (Taylor 2018, 184). The *Bengalee* is deeply aware of both Victoria's personal interest in India but also the limitations on her ability to directly impact their lives. This clear-eyed refashioning of Victoria and the limits of her matriarchal agency is the antithesis to Curzon's Orientalism. The more Victoria's role as beneficent mother was stressed, the more its contradiction with the ultimately forcible maintenance of British rule could be exploited.

In the English-language *Hindoo Patriot*, a newspaper generally supportive of the British administration, a poem by Satish Chandra Mukherjee similarly fashioned an Indian Victoria. Mukherjee was a well-known nationalist writer and educationalist who founded the Dawn Society in 1902. His poem declares that India is most attuned of all nations to Victoria's character and benignant rule. Her feminine virtues allow Mukerji to claim her as Hindu, 'For thou was Hindu/ In Spirit, self-forgetful, forgiving'. The final lines go even further in desiring an Indianised Victoria:

But India keeps remembrance of days
When to her the Sovereign was divine,
And glad should she be, if Victoria,
The same, but enrobed in homelier garb,
Under Indian skies, should reappear,
With benignant grace, Goddess-like, herald
Of morning peace and brotherhood of nations!
(Babu Satish Chandra Mukerji, 1901, 4)

The British Raj's promotion of Victoria's concern for her Indian subjects could spill over into those subjects quite literally making Victoria one of their own. Arguably, the very strength of personality cult around the Queen-Empress was not its totalising dominion but its mutability.

It was not only Indian tributes that turned Victoria into a quasi-deified figure; for others, it also marked the apotheosis of her familial role. Poets reaching for suitably redolent symbolism employed tropes more often associated with the Virgin Mary. One epic tribute, published in Trinidad, even referred to her as 'England's Madonna' (Charles Eryl Secundyne Assee, 1902, 71). Many elegies, including those by poet laureate Alfred Austin, Theodore Martin and Alfred Munby, imagined Victoria continuing her maternal protection after death.[3] Lewis Morris imagined Victoria as a star shining above the lives of her countless subjects, who continue to yearn for her comforting presence. Morris's elegy is the most prominent tribute to use Marian imagery in that it was first published in the high-circulation *Graphic* in its issue of 26 January 1901 (Morris 1901, 114). In Morris's poem, Victoria's role as protector and guardian carries on from above:

Thou showest a single star

Shining serene above the gathering strife,
The clouds, the troubles of thy people's life;
For thee to-day thy countless millions yearn
With heart and lips that burn. (Morris 1901, 114)

Victoria is transfigured into the abstract yet universal figure of 'The Mother', taking up the cares of her subjects regardless of creed. The final stanza goes further in that Victoria is again figured as a star, whose steadfast will and pure heart continue to guide Britain and the colonies. Morris's call for maternal protection was given impetus by imperial anxieties of the day because 'The curse of war still vexes, and our race/ Seems sinking to disgrace', a reference to both the reverses of the Boer war and the fear of racial degeneration. Morris desires Victoria to plead with God on their behalf:

Think of us still, if God so wills, and plead!
As dearly thou wert wont indeed,
For this thy people which must toil and bleed.
Plead thou for Peace for all the suffering Earth
Till comes at last Man's New Millennial birth:
Plead, tender, aged voice, till all is well!
Friend! Sovereign! Mother! Oh, Farewell! Farewell!
(Morris 1901, 114)

Victoria, the universal pure mother who is also a star, is to act as intercessor with God on behalf of her people, who are not only the British but also her race. Morris's poem is the culmination, in its most extreme form, of the matriarchal icon of Victoria: her sanctified figure takes on the qualities of the holiest mother of all.

Public statuary and the imperial press network were not the only way for remote audiences to participate in the death and mourning for Queen Victoria: the new medium of film was able to replay the funeral events that took place again and again in the subsequent months. Since its inception, Victoria and Albert had been enthusiasts for the new medium of photography. Compared to prints and drawings, the realism of the camera seemed to offer a more authentic and intimate link with the sitters it depicted. Between 1860 and 1862, 3 to 4 million copies of Victoria's *carte-de-visite* were said to have been sold (Wynter 1869, 126). The moving images of early film extended this phenomenon. Queen Victoria was first filmed at Balmoral in early October 1896 during a visit by Tsar Nicholas II and his wife, Alexandra. Her journal describes being captured 'by the new cinematograph process, which makes moving pictures by winding off a reel of films. We were walking up & down & the children jumping about' (Queen Victoria's Journal, 1896). The scenes were delightfully intimate and domestic – a family at leisure showing off for the latest novelty.

Film, though, was equally successful at capturing the grand ceremonial occasions that were intended to bring nations together. Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was one of the first major public events to be filmed, and provided a significant boost for the early British film industry. Films of every part of Victoria's funeral procession subsequently received showings as far apart as New York, Bombay, Cape Town, Paris, Singapore, Auckland and Singapore.[4] Just like the telegraphed news of her death, there was an impetus to get the pictures developed and distributed as fast as possible. In Melbourne, funeral scenes were first shown at the Athenaeum on

18 March 1901; they were also in Sydney at the Centenary Hall by 23 March 1901, and also in Brisbane in early April.[5]

When Diamond Jubilee films were shown in Adelaide, crowds gave sustained applause for the appearance of the Queen and the South Australian Premier and troops ('Royal Jubilee Cinematograph' 1897, 6). This frisson of intimacy, recognition and participation pervaded responses to the funeral pictures. The *Daily Telegraph* in Sydney noted that the audience clapped when the royal personages first appeared in the procession:

> The audience was quick to recognise the royal presences, and applauded, inappropriately, perhaps, but spontaneously. . . It was a cold day in London and Windsor, and the hot breath of the horses as it comes into contact with the sharp air can be distinctly seen. In fact one can easily imagine standing on a point of vantage and viewing the procession for himself. (The Queen's Funeral' 1901, 5)

In New Zealand, the first appearance of the funeral pictures was 3 April at Auckland Theatre Royal and 'gave all present a splendid Idea of what the solemn pageant must have been like' (Cinematograph Entertainment' 1901, 2). The whole evening performance was devoted to Victoria; it included films of her visit to Ireland in 1900 and lantern slides of royal residences. Funeral pictures continued to tour relentlessly, spreading out from cities to smaller towns. Nearly six months after the funeral, at the Theatre Royal of the small New Zealand town of Palmerston, Cooper and McDermott's Cinematograph Company was still touring with its Victoria films ('Palmerston News' 1901, 4).

Victoria's funeral created a new proliferation of commemorative schemes, ensuring a lasting manifestation of her charismatic global presence. Long after death, many of her former subjects had statues of the Queen-Empress looking imposingly down upon them. Often located in key public spaces, the statues continued to be used as sites for civic ceremonial. In Toronto, Victoria's statue in Queen's Park, unveiled in 1903, was repeatedly used as the focal point for celebrations of Empire Day in the year running up to 1914. In 1913, for example, a review of cadets in the park included them marching past the statue, which was then covered in floral tributes by groups of schoolchildren ('Great Day for the Toronto Children' 1913, 7).

The monumental legacy of the personality cult around Queen Victoria, however, had the consequence of aligning her firmly with colonialism and its discontents. Statues became targets for a range of nationalist groups and causes. In the aftermath of the Second World War, post-colonial regimes in Africa and Asia removed many signs and symbols of imperial rule; and more recently, the #RhodesMustFall movement has protested against the continued presence of imperial monuments. With Queen Victoria, however, such attacks have a much longer history than is often realised. Even before the end of her reign, in 1895 Victoria's statue in Bombay was attacked and covered with a large bucket of tar, and also had a pair of old sandals draped around her neck ('Insult to Queen Victoria' 1896, 5). In August 1901 in Malta, a statue of Victoria was similarly defaced with corrosive liquid during a dispute over whether the official language on Malta should be English or Italian ('Malta' 1901, 5). Again, during the rise of the Indian nationalist movement, the crown of Victoria's statue was struck off during riots in Delhi in 1907; in 1908, Queen Victoria's statue in Maharaj Bagh, one of public gardens in Nagpur,

was also vandalized ('Reported outrage. . .' 1907, 10). No longer the Great White Queen: it had been covered with tar, the nose was pulled off and sceptre broken. For this crime, a student at the Agricultural College at Nagpur was sentenced to two year's imprisonment, and an Overseer at a government farm, to one year's imprisonment ('Desecration of Queen Victoria's Statue' 1909. 5). The tar proved difficult to erase and the statue was ultimately removed from its pedestal; it was forgotten about until 1951, when it was rediscovered at the bottom of a city water reservoir ('Queen Victoria's Statue' 1951, 7).[6]

The paradox at the heart of Queen Victoria's position is that, unlike some other examples of ruler personality cults, the potency of her idealised status operated in an almost inverse proportion to perceptions of her direct political power (albeit in her personal interactions with governments and officials she was more than capable of making her strong views known). Her death, funeral and commemoration is just one intensive example of the plurality of agents and formats through which – thanks to their cumulative and iterative effect - she became a monumental yet everyday colonial presence. Its international sweep made her commemoration unprecedented; however, the concomitant global unifying narrative was itself ideologically deployed. As with the spectrum of geographical and political responses to her death, there remains a need for more focused studies of her fashioning by different countries and communities. Moreover, the period around the end of Victoria's reign was the high point of British imperial sway – the chequered afterlives of her statues show how quickly her benevolent iconography was challenged and disrupted.

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[1] Victoria's personal interest in her empire, and its subjects is complex, but has a more extended trajectory than often realised. She looked after Sarah Bonetta Forbes, a West African princess given to her, as a goddaughter, in the 1850s; she also enjoyed a friendship with the exiled Sikh ruler, Maharajah Dhuleep Singh; after her 1887 Jubilee, she famously took on Abdul Karim as an Indian servant, who taught her Hindustani; see Priya Atwal, 'Dynastic Diplomacy and the Global Politics of the Anglo-Punjabi Royal Friendship, 1806-1854', *Global Intellectual History* special issue (forthcoming), and Taylor 2018, 12-63.

[2] On the global proliferation of statues, see Stocker 2016.

[3] Examples can be seen in Austin 1901, 6; Martin, 1901, 335; Munby, 1901; Wyatt 1901, 8.

[4] 'Athenaeum Hall,' 16;' 'Huber's Museum', 19; 'Royal Biograph', 6; 'Place Aux Dames', 16; 'The Cinematograph', 3; 'The New Biograph', 2.

[5] See 'Cinematograph Show', 1901; 'Athenaeum Hall', 1901, 3; 'The Cinematograph Pictures', 1901; 'Queen Victoria's Funeral', 1901.

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