Veiled in Sorrow:

The Influence of Victorian Mourning on Culture

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Death and mourning have had a significant role in society since the beginning of time. However, the methods by which people have mourned have varied throughout different cultures and time periods. The way in which people dealt with death in the 19th century is significantly different than that of the 21st century. Today, people might see Victorian mourning as weird, strange, or even morbid. However, the unique mourning rituals of the Victorian era are important to look at as they shine a light on the ways in which mourning influenced aspects of their culture. At a time when death was a common occurrence, it is understandable that the Victorian era seemed to have an obsession with death. Before diving deeper into the presence of mourning rituals within the Victorian era, it is important to briefly discuss the concept of grieving which will be focused on heavily throughout this paper. The five stages of grief, created by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, describe the common responses to grief portrayed by a mourner. These stages are important to know for this paper. Kübler-Ross describes grief through the five following stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.[1] Throughout this paper, it will become clear that the Victorian era created a variety of mourning rituals that assisted in the process of these stages of grief.

The Victorian era lasted during the reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901. Even from the beginning, the Victorian era began to experience mourning rituals in everyday life. Mourning was anywhere and everywhere. Jen Cadwallader explains the appearance of mourning in almost everything, stating that "entire London shops specialized in mourning clothes, and mourning fashions were advertised in leading periodicals. Mourning cards, mourning stationery, mourning fans, mourning ear trumpets - all were commonplace."[2] It is clear that mourning was a

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[1] Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler, "On Grief and Grieving: Five Stages of Grief," 1-2, https://grief.com/images/pdf/5%20Stages%20of%20Grief.pdf.
[2] Jen Cadwallader, "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning," *Modern Language Studies* 37, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 13, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40346959.

large part of Victorian society. Ultimately, in response to growing mourning rituals, Victorian culture changed in its nearly 65 years.

The first way one can see this role of mourning in the Victorian era is through spiritualism and the rise of supernatural beliefs. As spiritualism grew through the mid-1860s, séances were more frequent and became an important way for people to communicate with the dead. Not only did these medium-led séances allow for the bereaved to reunite with their lost loved ones, but they also opened the door for thoughts and ideas about life after death.

Moreover, mourning can also be seen through a connection between art and memory. Specifically, photography was a significant part of Victorian mourning in more ways than one. Photography, which was something that had only been invented during the early years of the Victorian era, began to focus on death as time went on. This occurred through the use of photography for spirit photographs and post-mortem photographs. Spirit photography grew out of the developing world of spiritualism by the mid-1800s, utilizing photography to capture images of deceased relatives in the form of a spirit. In addition, post-mortem photography, or photography of the dead, occurred throughout the 19th century as a way to preserve a photograph of a deceased loved one. Also, it was a way to display pictures of the deceased family member in order to provide a constant reminder of their loved one.

Finally, mourning had a great impact on Victorian fashion, especially for women. The 19th century consisted of numerous mourning rules in regards to clothing that were expected to be followed for up to two years, depending on who the person was mourning. However, mourning dress eventually transcended the rules that were in place as many Victorian women often began to wear dark, black clothing as it had become the new style. Even though mourning dress started as a way to honor the deceased and portray grief through clothing, it caught on as a

trend and became more fashionable for everyday wear. Furthermore, the Victorian era saw a rise in something known as hair jewelry in which the hair of deceased people was utilized. This form of jewelry fashion worked in a similar way to spirit and post-mortem photography as it assisted in the grieving process. Overall, fashion shifted in the mid-1800s and mourning clothes became trendier, more fashionable, and in a variety of cases, form-fitting in addition to the introduction of mourning jewelry.

Ultimately, Victorian mourning rituals shaped the 19th century in a variety of different ways. *Through the growth of séances, the use of photography, and the shift in fashion, the constructs of Victorian mourning significantly influenced the culture of the era.*

Historiography

In order to understand the significance of the mourning rituals in the Victorian era, one must enter into the significant literature that focuses on aspects of the Victorian world, specifically that of spiritualism, spirit and post-mortem photography, and mourning fashion. There are a variety of literary sources that discuss these topics and, essentially, describe the significance of mourning in the Victorian era and how it influenced society and culture at that time.

To start, this paper will utilize a source that is dedicated to understanding grief, a topic that is important to the discussion of Victorian mourning rituals. “On Grief and Grieving: Five Stages of Grief” is a short article written by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler. The article focuses on the five stages of grief which were first posited by one of the authors, Kübler-Ross. Kübler-Ross was a psychiatrist that studied near-death experiences and wrote extensively on death and grief. Kessler is an author and public speaker who has co-written books with Kübler-Ross. “On Grief and Grieving: Five Stages of Grief” provides detailed descriptions

of each of the five stages of grief and how a grieving person may experience each stage. This research is essential to this paper as it sets a groundwork for the topics of grief and mourning that will be discussed throughout the entirety of the paper.

Furthermore, there are a variety of sources that focus on Victorian spiritualism and the world of the supernatural. A perfect source on this matter is the book, *Servants of the Supernatural: The Night Side of the Victorian Mind*, written by Antonio Melechi. Melechi is a visiting scholar at the University of York focusing on sociology and has written numerous books about parapsychology, a study that focuses on psychic abilities. Essentially, Melechi's book focuses on the spiritual world of the Victorian era and the mediums who led séances. Published in 2008, the second half of *Servants of the Supernatural: The Night Side of the Victorian Mind* is essential to the research of this paper as it goes into great detail about the world of spiritualism as well as the séances that frequently occurred during this era. First, Melechi provides information regarding the origins of spiritualism. Furthermore, the book explores the ways in which the newfound belief system of spiritualism grew for people who wished to communicate with deceased relatives and believe in an afterlife. Finally, Melechi describes famous mediums during the Victorian era and their influence on believers of spiritualism.

Next, the following sources focus on the ways in which art and culture, specifically photography, were influenced by and became a part of the mourning rituals of the Victorian era. In "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning" by Jen Cadwallader, which was published in 2008, the author discusses the popularization of spirit photography throughout the Victorian era as well as the spectacle of mourning. Jen Cadwallader is a professor at Randolph-Macon College and focuses the majority of her work on Victorian literature. Throughout "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning," Professor Cadwallader argues

about the relationship between spirit photography and mourning, positing that the rise of spirit photography was essential to the processing of death, grief, and mourning in the Victorian era. Ultimately, Cadwallader uses spirit photography as a way to explain the unique mourning rituals that people had during the 19th century.

Specifically, Cadwallader utilizes examples from a variety of essential photographers. First, the essay discusses William Mumler, an amateur American photographer. Next, it focuses briefly on Édouard Buguet, a French photographer. Finally, the British photographer, Fredrick Hudson, is examined. Each of these photographers produced spirit photography for clientele at the height of spiritualism and will be discussed in further detail throughout this paper. However, the photographic work of Buguet and Hudson will be primarily focused on in this paper as their work was done in Europe, namely France and Britain. Furthermore, Professor Cadwallader explains the ways in which spirit photography helped Victorian people cope with the grief of losing loved ones. In addition, she emphasizes how spirit photography allowed people to build upon their understanding of spirits and the afterlife.[3]

Another source that discusses the practice of spirit photography is "To Be Undone: The Art of Mystery in Fiction" written by Maud Casey. Casey is a popular novelist as well as a professor at the University of Maryland and teaches creative writing. This 2017 essay focuses primarily on the concept of mystery within fiction, as the title suggests. She discusses writers of mystery, characters within mystery worlds, and mystical happenings such as spirit photography. Professor Casey's conversation on spirit photography will be essential for this paper. The essay's short section on this form of photography focuses extensively on the French photographer, Édourad Buguet. As opposed to Cadwallader's description of Buguet, Casey's essay goes into

[3] Cadwallader, "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning," 16.

greater detail about the case against Buguet and the admission of guilt from the photographer. Buguet's explanation of his photographic tricks in regards to spirit photography is extremely useful for this paper.

Next, this paper will focus on another type of photography that was prominent during the Victorian era: post-mortem photography. A significant source that investigates post-mortem photography is "Taken from Life: Post-Mortem Photography in Britain 1860-1910" by Audrey Linkman. Linkman is an author who has written extensively on Victorian photography in Britain. Published in 2012, "Taken from Life: Post-Mortem Photography in Britain 1860-1910" centers on the practices of post-mortem photography and the aspects that were often utilized in the photographs. This includes the placement of the body, the presence of a coffin, the background of the photograph, the accessories around the body, the lighting, and the presence of other people. Many of these factors will be further analyzed throughout this paper in order to understand their relation to Victorian mourning rituals. Most importantly, Linkman discusses the motives and uses of post-mortem photography. She explains that the use of this form of photography was meant to help loved ones of the deceased deal with the grief of their death.[4]

"Camera Fiends: Early Photography, Death, and the Supernatural," written by Nancy M. West, also centers around spirit photography as well as post-mortem photography. A professor at the University of Missouri, Nancy M. West focuses her work on Victorian literature and culture as well as photographic history and theory. The 1996 essay starts with an anecdote about a photographer who had an experience with a woman bringing in her dead daughter for a photograph, laying the groundwork for post-mortem photography. Furthermore, West provides an introduction to photography in general, which had its start in the early 1800s, comparing it to

[4] Audrey Linkman, "Taken From Life: Post-Mortem Portraiture in Britain 1860-1910," *History of Photography* 30, no. 4 (2006): 312, https://vicusyd.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/linkman_taken-from-life.pdf.

other culturally significant forms of entertainment and notoriety.[5] Moreover, Professor West also dives into the history of spirit photography, how it began, and who started it. Similar to the work of Cadwallader, West introduces American photographer William Mumler and his contribution to spirit photography. However, it is the essay's description of spirit photography's shift to Britain in the 1870s that will be significant to this paper.

Finally, the following sources will center around Victorian fashion and the ways in which mourning rituals at the time influenced style, specifically for women. "Death Becomes Her: On The Progressive Potential of Victorian Mourning," is a 2013 essay by Rebecca N. Mitchell, a professor at the University of Birmingham who studies Victorian literature and culture. This essay starts with an emphasis on the influence that Queen Victoria had on women's fashion at the time of her reign, especially women who were mourning the death of their husbands. Professor Mitchell's argument hinges on the comparison of Victorian mourning fashion and the later popularity of the "little black dress" in the 20th century. However, this paper will focus on Mitchell's discussion of Victorian mourning wear and the evolution of this style throughout the 19th century. Mitchell's essay provides evidence that the Victorian era began to see black mourning attire as trendy, leading Victorian women to utilize the style in order to stay up to date with the fashion trends of the time.

Mimi Matthews' *A Victorian Lady's Guide to Fashion and Beauty* is a book from 2018 that provides a concise overview of the life of a woman living in the Victorian era. Matthews is an award-winning author of a variety of historical nonfiction books. Specifically, *A Victorian Lady's Guide to Fashion and Beauty* focuses on the fashion world of the Victorian era. For this paper, the section on Victorian mourning fashion is essential. This sub-section provides the rules

[5] Nancy M. West, "Camera Fiends: Early Photography, Death, and the Supernatural," *The Centennial Review* 40, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 175, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23740730.

and regulations that a Victorian woman was expected to follow when they were dressing during a phase of mourning. This information includes the amount of time a woman must mourn depending on the relative that has passed. In addition, the section discusses the clothing and accessories that mourning women were allowed to wear which would change during different periods as mourning time progressed. Finally, Matthews touches on the more lenient rules that were present as a mourner got closer to the end of their mourning phase.

The Victorian Celebration of Death, written by James Stevens Curl, is a book from 2000. Curl is a historian, architect, and professor at Ulster University with a variety of works focusing on architecture, many centering on the Victorian era. *The Victorian Celebration of Death* provides information on the mourning rituals of the Victorian era, specifically that of funerals and mourning attire. For this paper, Curl's focus on mourning dress will be essential as he offers detailed descriptions of the requirements of mourning dress for the bereaved. In addition, Curl provides a section that describes the wide range of mourning clothing that existed during the Victorian era, portraying the array of options that mourners, especially women, had at the time when it came to mourning.

The final source that this paper utilizes is "The Dead Still Among Us: Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture," written by Deborah Lutz in 2011. Lutz is an associate professor at Long Island University with a focus on Victorian literature and culture. "The Dead Still Among Us: Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture" is useful for this paper as it provides information on the use of relics in the Victorian era. These relics included objects made from the parts of a deceased person. These objects most often consisted of jewelry made from the hair or teeth of a dead relative. Similar to mourning attire, which was discussed in Mitchell and Matthews' work, this type of jewelry was a way to express the process of mourning

through the use of fashion. Furthermore, Lutz explains that these relics were a way to grieve and hold on to a part of the body of a loved one.[6]

After looking at the historiography for this research paper, it is clear that there are a variety of sources that fit into the literature on the topic of Victorian culture and Victorian mourning. However, this paper will assist in adding to this existing historiography by utilizing aspects of each source and introducing a unique argument. This argument consists of the influence of Victorian mourning rituals on three different aspects of Victorian culture: séances, photographic art, and fashion.

Séances & Spiritualism

The origins of spiritualism and the movement that followed can be traced back to mid-1800s America. On March 31st, 1848 in Hydesville, New York, sisters Kate and Margaret Fox began to communicate with a ghost that they believed haunted their home. The two adolescent girls talked to the spirit through the use of knocks - or raps as they would later be referred to as spiritualism progressed - in order to get the ghost to answer yes or no questions. The Fox sisters later invited their intrigued neighbors over to talk to the ghost in which they learned that the spirit was a murdered pedlar.[7] Eventually, a neighbor of the Foxes named Isaac Post posited the idea to have the ghosts rap their answers to questions while the sisters slowly recited the alphabet.[8] This new form of communication led to even more question possibilities and allowed for more specific and descriptive answers from the ghost. However, in later years, after the sisters had become world-renowned mediums throughout America and Europe, they would admit that they were actually creating the rapping sounds themselves by cracking their

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[6] Deborah Lutz, "The Dead Still Among Us: Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39, no. 1 (2011): 130, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41307854.
[7] Antonio Melechi, *Servants of the Supernatural: The Night Side of the Victorian Mind* (London: William Heinemann, 2008), 161-162.
[8] Melechi, 162.

joints. Specifically, they were cracking their toe joints which were inevitably hidden by their shoes. Nonetheless, the spiritualism movement persisted and expanded. As time went on, different methods for communication with ghosts appeared such as automatic writing, in which the medium writes while being manipulated by the spirit, and trance oratory, in which the spirit is able to speak through the medium.

After growing exponentially in America, spiritualism made its way over to Britain through the famous medium, Maria Hayden, who was "the first spiritualist emissary to cross the Atlantic…"[9] Spiritualism and séances exploded in Britain and became a popular way to deal with the grief of losing a loved one. Even Queen Victoria herself held séances and "table-turnings" in order to feel closer to her late husband.[10] Table-turning was a popular séance event in Britain in which the table the participants were seated at would tilt while the alphabet was being recited. Through the tilting, a word or phrase would eventually be spelled out. As spiritualism and séances grew in Britain, it is clear that the belief system that surrounded them led Victorians to use spiritualism as a way to process death and grief. Victorians felt that they were able to communicate with deceased loved ones through séances. Ann Braude explains this by stating that "'spiritualism's denial of death [...] offered a unique kind of consolation to the bereaved. Messages frequently focused on the spirit's happiness after death and continued concern for family members… Spirits claimed that their estate after death was a pleasant one and did not merit mourning.'"[11] The ideas behind spiritualism allowed grieving Victorians to feel content about the passing of their loved ones. Essentially, it provided them with the idea of an afterlife. This belief helped Victorians process their grief and feel as if their loved ones were not truly gone and were always nearby in some capacity.

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[9] Melechi, *The Night Side of the Victorian Mind,* 163.
[10] Lutz, "Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture," 132.
[11] Melechi, *Servants of the Supernatural,* 162.

Additionally, the role of mediums in Victorian Britain was significant as many famous mediums added to the experience of séances. For example, Daniel Dunglas Home, who was arguably one of the most famous mediums in Britain at the time, aided in the spiritualism belief system. Antonio Melechi explains that "by providing evidence of the soul's immortality, Home had helped herald the dawn of a world religion, a faith beyond petty sectarianism…"[12] The proof of a place beyond death through spiritualist mediums made Victorians feel fulfilled about the passing of loved ones. Additionally, there was a strong and powerful relationship built between these mediums and the Victorian believers as the mediums were a direct connection to peoples' deceased relatives. Furthermore, the faith that Victorians held in the popular spirit mediums of Britain is very telling of the ways that spiritualism seemed to support people who were going through grief. This can be seen through the almost desperate attempts to support and defend spirit mediums that were under fire by scientists and other people against spiritualism.

One interesting example of Victorians' defense of mediums under fire can be seen with a man named Henry Slade. Slade was a popular Victorian medium who practiced spiritualism in both Europe and North America. Slade was most well-known for his invention of slate writing in which, during a séance, a spirit would write a message on a slate that was placed in his lap.[13] This type of phenomena was popular throughout Britain as direct, written communication from spirits was not often portrayed in British séances. However, there were obviously people, namely scientists, that were questionable of Slade's mediumship methods and continually attended his séances to investigate him. After one man found evidence that he believed would prove Slade's fraudulent nature, Slade was looked into and eventually accused with "violating the 1824 Vagrancy Act by 'unlawfully using certain subtle craft, means, and devices to deceive and

[12] Melechi, *The Night Side of the Victorian Mind,* 191.
[13] Melechi, 217.

impose."[14] However, the most significant factor of the story of Henry Slade's trial is the amount of people who came to defend him. Melechi describes the scene, stating that "outside, a rowdy throng of supporters brandished placards proclaiming Slade's innocence."[15] Furthermore, when supporters of Slade were questioned about his possible fraud, they would refute any evidence against him. For example, when asked about the fact that the writing on Slade's slate, which was supposedly written by spirits, was similar to the handwriting of Slade himself, the supporters would deny the significance.[16] Although Slade's trial ended in him being found guilty, his trial portrays the ways in which many Victorians wholeheartedly believed in the idea that they were speaking with their deceased loved ones during séances. For Victorians that believed in the spiritualism movement and the events of séances, it is understandable that they would want to believe that they were truly communicating with their dead relatives. It made their grieving more manageable. When convinced of such a thing, it would be incredibly hard to persuade oneself that what they saw was not actually true, especially when grieving.

Overall, it is clear that spiritualism and the growth of séances helped Victorians process their grief as they were able to communicate with deceased loved ones. Séances allowed people to feel as if they could talk to relatives who had died and also understand the concept of an afterlife. In addition, their staunch commitment to the validity of spirit mediums further proves the fact that Victorians believed the events of séances in their griefstricken state. Ultimately, séances were just one way in which Victorians were able to process their grief and mourn their loved ones.

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[14] Melechi, *The Night Side of the Victorian Mind,* 223.
[15] Melechi, 224.
[16] Melechi, 228.

Spirit Photography

One of the most popular ways that mourning manifested in the Victorian era was through spirit photography. When photography was invented in 1839, it became a large part of Victorian culture and society, as does any new technology.[17] It was only a couple of decades later when spirit photography made its way into Victorian culture. Spirit photography, also known as ghost photography, is a special type of photography in which there is an apparition of a deceased relative in the photograph of a mourner. While the person getting their photo taken would often believe this figure in the frame was their deceased relative, in actuality, it was a photographic trick. First taken in Boston in 1861, William Mumler was presented with the first spirit photograph after taking a picture of himself and seeing another figure in frame. He was only an amateur photographer so he had asked a photographer friend what he thought of it. The friend explained that it was likely due to an "old and dirty plate of glass, so that the previous negative was redeveloped along with the more recent exposure" leading to a second, more faded image of another person.[18] The late 1850s and early 1860s began to see an increase in glass plates being used to create negatives for photographs. Therefore, it is understandable that the practice of spirit photography, which relied heavily on glass plate negatives, would become such a popular format in which photographers would adopt. Eventually, in the 1870s, spirit photography made its way to Britain, and a popular photographer named Frederick Hudson took up the practice. One intriguing question that arises when looking at spirit photography is who the "spirits" were that appeared in the photographs. Were they random, unassuming clients? Or were they hired by the photographers to pose as spirits? Unfortunately, this question can not be entirely answered as many spirit photographers never fully admitted to their fraudulent practices. However, when the

[17] West, "Early Photography, Death, and the Supernatural," 175.
[18] West, 183.

French photographer, Édouard Buguet, was arrested for falsifying his spirit photographs, he immediately admitted that his photography was fake and shared his method. Ultimately, Buguet stated that he had used dolls and dummies to create the spirits in his photographs.[19] Furthermore, Buguet explained in detail that before an appointment for a spirit photograph, "he would construct an approximation of the dead person with whom his client wished to be photographed and then, while his receptionist chatted the client up, he would photograph the dummy dead person set against a dark background, and obscured by a 'fluidic veil' to disguise the rough edges."[20] This trick can be seen in figure 1 which depicts Édouard Buguet himself with a spirit figure hovering slightly above him. Knowing that the figure of the spirit is actually a doll, it is much easier to notice that the spirit does not necessarily look human. In addition, the figure seems almost devoid of any emotion. However, the most important thing to note about spirit photography, in general, is the fact that almost all clients of the spirit photographer truly believed that they had paid for a photograph of themselves with their deceased loved one. They did not doubt the validity of the photograph and they did not know about the photographic trickery behind spirit photography.

One significant argument that Cadwallader posits in her essay is that in a spirit photograph, the roles of the bereaved and the deceased are reversed as the "mourned [...] watches the mourner."[21] This is an intriguing way to look at spirit photography and its significance in the mourning rituals of the Victorian era as it opened up a space for the mourner to process the death of their loved one. Visible and public grief was seen as almost forbidden in the Victorian era. Other than mourning attire, mourners were expected to keep their grieving emotions out of the

[19] Maud Casey, "To Be Undone: The Art of Mystery in Fiction," *New England Review* 38, no. 2 (2017): 190, https://www.jstor.org/stable/44841549.
[20] Casey, 190.
[21] Cadwallader, "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning," 14.

public eye. Therefore, spirit photography was a way for mourners to "gain conceptual control over" their emotions.[22] This can be seen in a variety of examples of spirit photography from the Victorian era. In one spirit photograph taken by Frederick Hudson, one can see a woman named Lady Helena Newenham and the spirit of her deceased daughter (fig. 2). Taken in 1872, the photograph shows the woman sitting in a chair, her expression melancholy. In front of her is the figure of a spirit covered in a white sheet. This photograph seems to capture the grieving emotions of Lady Helena Newenham as she is clearly going through a mourning period due to the death of her daughter. However, in many ways, one might think that the photograph is obviously fake. This is due to the fact that the spirit in the photograph is completely unrecognizable as the viewer cannot see their face. Furthermore, the spirit is dressed as a stereotypical ghost in a sheet, something that may seem a little ironic. It is interesting to think that Lady Helena Newenham looked at the photograph thinking that the figure in the sheet was truly the spirit of her deceased daughter. However, at the time, photographs like these were fully believed to show the deceased relative of the sitter.

Similar to how Victorians would vehemently defend spirit mediums for their validity with the use of séances, people would also defend spirit photographers who had been charged, and eventually convicted, with fraud. Even though the spirit photographer was often proven in court to be creating false photographs, many Victorians continued to insist that their photographs were real and that they truly showed a relative of theirs. This occurred multiple times. First in the 1869 case of the American photographer, William Mumler, the "father" of spirit photography itself. Then in the 1875 Paris case of French photographer, Édouard Buguet. The interesting thing about Buguet's case is that he actually confessed immediately to manipulating the spirit

[22] Cadwallader, "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning," 16.

photographs he took.[23] Regardless of this fact, however, hundreds of people who had gotten spirit photographs from Buguet defended him and the validity of the photographs. This shows how deep their grief and mourning were. Maud Casey details the case of Édouard Buguet and explains that the prosecution brought in former clients of Buguet's spirit photography which included "a journalist, a professor of history, a colonel of artillery, an optician, and, most notably, a photographic expert," however, every single one of them defended Buguet's work even after Buguet admitted his crimes in front of them.[24] The most interesting thing about this group of clientele is the fact that they each seemed to be incredibly intelligent people just based on their careers alone. Yet, their overpowering grief and their commitment to Buguet's spirit photographs led to their defensive nature. Cases like these further prove how influential spirit photography was in the lives of grieving Victorians. A grieving Victorian would rather believe that they truly got a photograph with their deceased relative, demonstrating an interesting connection to the denial stage of grief.

In other ways, spirit photography allows one to understand the afterlife and what happens to one's soul after death. With the growth of spirit photography in connection with the rise of spiritualism in Britain, the idea of the afterlife became more and more popular. For many people, spirit photography showed proof of an afterlife and provided comfort to many who may have worried about their deceased relatives.[25] Spirit photographs offered them evidence that their relatives were safe, happy, and comfortable. In addition, spirit photographs provided the bereaved with a sense of love from their deceased family member. For many Victorians, the fact that the spirit of their deceased family member even showed up in a photograph with them

[23] Cadwallader, "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning," 25.
[24] Casey, "The Art of Mystery in Fiction," 191.
[25] West, "Early Photography, Death, and the Supernatural," 173.

portrayed the idea that there is “retention of personal feelings and memories” as the spirit “still remembers and cares for its living relatives.”[26] In the context of the spiritualism movement of the mid-1800s, this idea was essential as it opened up a space for Victorians to have their beliefs confirmed or support those who experienced some doubt.

Another intriguing factor of spirit photography was the clear indication of materialism and collection. Spirit photographs were so special to Victorian clients that they would even frame the photographs and put them in family album books.[27] Additionally, it was said that “‘persons who had lost their relatives and others dear to them . . . sometimes would not part with [their spirit portraits] for thousands of dollars’” and would be willing to pay high fees to get their photographs done by a spirit photographer.[28] This is important as it portrays just how significant spirit photographs were to the bereaved. Spirit photography was clearly used as a mourning ritual in order to deal with the grief of losing a loved one. In the realm of mourning, spirit photographs served as a material form of their past loved ones. Not only did it allow the person to have a physical piece of their relative, but it also demonstrated the idea that their loved one was still around in some way. Cadwallader encapsulates this idea well by stating that “...the spirit photograph [...] offered a unique form of conceptual and physical control over grief.”[29]

Overall, it is clear that spirit photography was a large part of the mourning rituals of the Victorian era. It was common for people to utilize spirit photography as a way to connect with their deceased relatives, process their death, and support beliefs about the afterlife. Cadwallader expresses this idea perfectly by stating that spirit photography created a “vision of a material

[26] Cadwallader, “Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning,” 18.
[27] West, “Early Photography, Death, and the Supernatural,” 186.
[28] Cadwallader, “Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning,” 14.
[29] Cadwallader, 14.

heaven" and "helped Victorians move beyond grief" as its "ultimate message was one of hope."[30] Spirit photography was something that provided Victorians with a sense of optimism about the passing of their loved ones. Essentially, spirit photography was an important invention that was quickly ushered into Victorian culture and mourning due to its ability to relieve people from grief and align itself with the newfound beliefs of spiritualism.

Post-Mortem Photography

Another form of photography that took hold of Victorians as another mourning ritual was post-mortem photography, also known occasionally as death photography. This type of photography is similar to spirit photography as it provided an avenue for Victorians to have an image of a deceased loved one. Essentially, post-mortem photography is when the family or relatives of a deceased person, typically an infant or child, takes them in to be photographed. In essence, a corpse is being photographed. This form of photography is an evolved practice of mourning portraits in which a painter would be hired to paint the corpse of someone who had recently died. However, as photography was introduced in the Victorian era, the practice shifted to a photographic style. One reason why post-mortem photography, as well as photography in general, became popular during the Victorian era is that it was not made specifically for royalty. While mourning portraits were typically made for members of the royal family, photography opened up a realm of mourning rituals for Victorians of other class ranks. Interestingly, because of the prominence of the practice in the Victorian era, many photographers were able to live off of what they made from post-mortem photography alone.[31]

Post-mortem photography was used as a way for the bereaved to deal with their grief. This type of photography was utilized to capture one last image of a deceased person. For many

[30] Cadwallader, "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning," 20.
[31] Cadwallader, 13.

people of the Victorian era, a photograph was a way to keep a lasting image of something they loved. Therefore, post-mortem photographs were almost like a preservation of some kind. For those who were grieving the death of a relative, a photograph of their dead body would act as a way to memorialize the deceased. Unfortunately, during the Victorian era, the most common sittings for post-mortem photography consisted of children and babies.[32] Due to this, it is understandable why parents of deceased children would desire a post-mortem photograph. It was a way to preserve the likeness of their child and became something to remember them by. British Victorian photographer, Barrowclough Wright Bentley, touches on this idea by explaining that post-mortem photographs helped "'to remind parents of their pet child, should affliction scourge it and the hand of death snatch it away.'"[33] The concept of memory was important, especially for those who would lose a young child. Post-mortem photographs served as way to remember a deceased child and never forget what they looked like. In addition, post-mortem photography was often utilized as a way to provide evidence that an infant or child had even existed. This is especially true in the cases of still born infant deaths and deaths of children that occurred within the first year of their life.[34] Furthermore, post-mortem photography could be quite expensive for the average Victorian citizen. Even though photography was more accessible to the common Victorian than things like mourning portraits, it was still a bit of an investment. Therefore, it is important to recognize that commissioning a post-mortem photograph was a big decision, especially for families of lower income. This fact emphasizes just how important a post-mortem photograph was for the grieving process as it was often a treasured item to remember their loved one by, similar to spirit photography.

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[32] Linkman, "Post-Mortem Portraiture in Britain 1860-1910," 312.
[33] Linkman, 314.
[34] Linkman, 343.

The importance of post-mortem photography within the context of Victorian mourning rituals is akin to that of spirit photography. Post-mortem photography was meant to relieve the pain of mourning as it was utilized to commemorate a deceased relative. Similar to how spirit photographs were treasured and scrapbooked items in Victorian families, post-mortem photographs have been found "between the leaves of the family album alongside the portraits of the living."[35] This fact is interesting as it shows that the photographs of the deceased were just as important as the photographs of the living. Regardless of the person's state in the photograph, they were family and their photograph was cherished. Furthermore, the retaining of post-mortem photographs was not only done by common Victorians. Queen Victoria herself had a post-mortem photograph of her husband as well showing the versatility of post-mortem photographs throughout all social ranks.

Furthermore, it is significant to understand the specific techniques of British post-mortem photographers as it adds to the way that the deceased were memorialized in photography. The work of Audrey Linkman focuses exclusively on post-mortem photography during the Victorian era in Britain between 1860 and 1910. Therefore, Linkman provides a variety of essential information about how post-mortem photography was addressed in Britain. First, it was common for post-mortem photoshoots to take place in the home of the deceased. This is essentially due to the fact that in the Victorian era, it was more common for people to pass away in their homes rather than in a hospital.[36] During the Victorian era, especially in the earlier decades, hospitals were not as safe as they are in current times. This description of "unsafe" refers to the fact that hospitals did not have the same standards of cleanliness and sanitation as today. For example, surgeries in the Victorian era did not have a high rate of success. Instead, families preferred to

[35] Linkman, "Post-Mortem Portraiture in Britain 1860-1910," 336.
[36] Linkman, 316.

care for their sick relatives in their own homes and only severely ill patients would be sent to a hospital. Furthermore, a photograph of a deceased family member on the mourner's own furniture created a sense of intimacy and fondness within the photograph. It brings up memories of the loved one in the home when they were living. In addition, it also allows the photograph to portray an atmosphere and background that was important to the deceased person. When taken in their own home, the photograph captures their essence in a way that a photograph in a hospital could not.

Moreover, the post-mortem photographs taken in Britain would almost always direct their focus on the deceased. However, one exception to this fact that is important to note is that there is a small variety of post-mortem photographs that include a mother with their deceased child in which the mother is usually holding the child.[37] These photographs are very intriguing as they can be analyzed significantly more as one is able to see the emotions of the grieving mother. The face of the mother in the photograph often portrays how important the one last photograph with their deceased child is to them. One interesting example of a post-mortem photograph that portrays a mother with her deceased child can be seen in figure 3 taken in the early 1860s. This photograph is very telling of the grief that the mother feels after the loss of her child. The expression on her face subtly portrays the mourning that she is going through. Specifically, she seems to be in almost an isolated state of mourning. Linkman expresses this idea by stating that, "[her] expression suggests withdrawal into a private world of grief [...] Here, it reinforces her isolation in a world of painful suffering."[38] This concept is interesting due to the fact that visible grief in the Victorian era was not very common, as stated previously. The mother in this photograph has likely been holding in her emotions since the death of her child and that explains

[37] Linkman, "Post-Mortem Portraiture in Britain 1860-1910," 318.
[38] Linkman, 318.

the possibly isolated portrayal. In addition, one can clearly see that the black clothing that she is wearing fits into the norms of Victorian mourning attire. Moreover, it seems that the mother is attempting to place her child at the forefront of the photograph. It looks as if she is extending her child out towards the camera and holding her baby in a way that allows her child to be the center of focus in the photograph. This reinforces the importance of the photograph as a way to remember her deceased child and capture the features of her baby one last time. Although she is in the photograph, it is meant to capture the essence of her child, not her.

Furthermore, British photographers would almost always photograph the deceased with their eyes closed.[39] This element allows the dead person to look as if they are asleep which adds a calming, serene effect to the photograph. Ultimately, the client and the photographer prefer to make the deceased look as if they are asleep and not dead. Another photographic element that adds to this is the desire to keep the coffin out of the photograph. British Victorian photographer, Alfred Bool, states that "'it is best so to arrange as to make the subject appear like a person asleep; but the least portion of a coffin being seen at once dispels any illusion to the beholder of the picture.'"[40] Essentially, the coffin would only add to the fact that the person in the photograph is dead and not actually sleeping. One intriguing example of a post-mortem photograph from the Victorian era is of an unknown young girl from around 1870 (fig. 4). The most notable thing about this photograph is that the child looks like she is asleep. In addition, she can be seen lying on a couch or chair rather than in a coffin. These factors align with the common tactics of British post-mortem photographers of the Victorian era. Even further, this photograph shows no indication of her being deceased, rather she looks as if she is just sleeping on a couch. It is likely

[39] Linkman, "Post-Mortem Portraiture in Britain 1860-1910," 321.
[40] Linkman, 325.

that the parents of this young girl preferred to retain a photograph of her in this position in order to remember her in a peaceful state.

Ultimately, post-mortem photography served as way to memorialize deceased relatives, provide evidence of their existence, and allow family members to process their grief over their death out of the public eye. They would adore post-mortem photographs of their loved ones in the same fashion as they would the photographs of their living family members. Although this type of photography may seem horrifying or shocking to people of more recent decades, the Victorian era saw post-mortem photographs as a beautiful piece of family history and memory.

Mourning Fashion

Mourning attire in the Victorian era was a way to express a person's phase of mourning, honor the deceased, and portray grief in a way that did not expose one's visible emotions. As mentioned previously, it was not common for mourning people in the Victorian era to express their grieving emotions in public. Therefore, mourning dress seemed to be a way to show others that they were in fact grieving. However, the idea of wearing black later became sensationalized and turned into a new form of fashion.

Before diving into mourning as a popular fashion, it is important to understand the intensity of mourning wear before it became a common fashion as it was extremely regulated. There were many rules associated with mourning in the Victorian era. Depending on who the mourner was related to, the length of time one was required to mourn would be different. For example, widows typically had to mourn the longest after the death of their husbands as they had to continue mourning for at least two years. However, for someone who had lost a parent or a child, they would only be expected to mourn for at least one year.[41] In addition, there were a

[41] Mimi Matthews, *A Victorian Lady's Guide to Fashion and Beauty* (South Yorkshire, England: Pen & Sword History, 2018), 111-112.

variety of rules that were adhered to by being a person in mourning when it came to what they were allowed to wear. Things like the fabric or the color of an outfit was heavily regulated. James Curl explains in detail what mourning Victorians, specifically widows, were expected to wear. He states that "crepe, symbolic of deepest mourning, could not be worn with velvet, satin, lace, bright silks, embroidery, or anything but mourning-silk, paramatta, merino, cashmere, woollen barége or grenadine, or barathea."[42] This description alone portrays just how strict the Victorians were about mourning wear, straight down to the fabric type. In regards to color, black was obviously the most common color worn during a mourning phase. However, when women were in the phase of light mourning, they could wear a range of other colors. As mourning was in stages, light mourning was the stage in which the person's mourning phase has progressed enough to warrant lighter colors. During a light mourning phase, women were allowed to wear colors such as violet, mauve, gray, white, or lilac.[43] However, black was still allowed and was required for the majority of the mourning phase. Furthermore, as time went on, mourning wear began to become almost sensationalized in a way. This meant that everything soon became an item of mourning. Again, Curl goes into great depth when explaining what items evolved to be utilized to express mourning which included

> Mourning day- and evening-wear, mourning wedding dresses (worn when the bride had lost a close relative such as a parent), underskirts, shawls, pelerines, [...] capes, bonnets, veils, caps, toques, [...] boas, [...] aprons, parasols, bags, purses, mittens, coats, hats, canes, umbrellas, handkerchiefs, fans, hat-pins, cockades, rosettes, headbands, armbands, braids, and (bizarre objects) padded chest protectors for widows (worn beneath mourning-dress)).[44]

This list of mourning attire expresses just how expansive the world of mourning was throughout the Victorian era and how it touched every aspect of the fashion world. Essentially, a widow

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[42] James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 201.
[43] Matthews, *A Victorian Lady's Guide to Fashion and Beauty*, 112.
[44] Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death,* 201.

could continue to be fashionable and accessorized while going through her phase of mourning. However, this idea of fashionable mourning would become even more sensationalized as time went on.

The origins of Victorian mourning fashion can be traced back to Queen Victoria, whom the era is named after. In 1861, Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, died and the Queen began to wear black mourning dress every day. Rebecca N. Mitchell describes this look, stating that the Queen was often "...dressed from top to toe in black mourning attire, the white of her gloved hands punctuating the otherwise nearly solid black rectangle of her body."[45] This description of the Queen is essential because her fully black mourning attire eventually sparked a shift in fashion within Britain. With regards to the idea of fashionable mourning wear, the Victorian era began to turn the dress of a mourner into something trendy and new. This can first be seen in the mourning wear of Queen Victoria after the death of her husband as she began to wear black for the rest of her life. Images and depictions of Queen Victoria portrayed this attire during the entirety of the Victorian era. An example of this can be seen in figure 5 which portrays an illustration of Queen Victoria as she seems to be completing a daily task while covered head to toe in black mourning clothing. Furthermore, the attire of the Queen was utilized by stores that specialized in mourning wear as a way to bring attention to the trends that existed within the royal family, especially that of Queen Victoria. An example of this can be seen with Jay's Mourning Emporium of London, a British store that sold mourning products and clothing. It was known as Jay's throughout London and, according to Mitchell, their advertisements included the names of royal family members stating that "the store vocally counted among its patrons 'Her Majesty the Queen, the Princess of Wales, and many members of Continental Royal

[45] Rebecca N. Mitchell, "Death Becomes Her: On The Progressive Potential Of Victorian Mourning," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 41, no. 4 (2013): 595, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24575727.

and Imperial families, as well as ... the nobility and the *élite* of society,' thereby conferring the status of *élite* upon the rest of their customer base."[46] As the Queen's image began to portray mourning wear consistently, the fashion world of the Victorian era began to shift. Ultimately, Victorians, especially women, began to incorporate mourning wear into their lives as they lost loved ones and, eventually, just as a way to stay with fashion trends. One important point made by Cadwallader is that "'mourning' during the [Victorian] period was more noun than verb, referring to the state of one's dress rather than the state of one's feelings."[47] This is essential to understanding mourning rituals in the Victorian era, especially when it comes to fashion, as the idea of dressing for the death of a loved one seemed to be above the visible, emotional display of one's grief.

The Victorian era started to see mourning fashion as trendy. Not only were mourning widows updating their outfits to be more fashionable and stylish, but non-mourners were beginning to take part in mourning wear as well. Notably, "'...the growing presence of black outerwear for women in the nineteenth century due to extensive mourning rituals merged with the growing sensibility that dressing in black was fashionable,'" and no longer seemed to be delegated to mourners only.[48] Additionally, mourning wear became such a popular concept that for many, there was no way of knowing whether a woman was shopping because of a recent death or if she was shopping to take part in the current fashions.[49] For those who were mourning, Victorian media began to push the idea that black was in and very stylish. As seen in figure 6, there is an illustration of a young woman wearing black mourning attire. However, this illustration is interesting due to the fact that the dress is very form-fitting, something that was not

[46] Mitchell, "On The Progressive Potential Of Victorian Mourning," 611.
[47] Cadwallader, "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning," 14.
[48] Mitchell, "On The Progressive Potential Of Victorian Mourning," 595.
[49] Mitchell, 606.

very common in the early days of Victorian mourning. In fact, if a woman had worn something considered flattering while in a period of mourning, they would be seen as being disrespectful to the deceased.[50] However, this perception began to shift as mourning attire became more fashionable and as it turned into a trend, the idea of form-fitting mourning attire was not as disagreeable. Moreover, Mitchell explains that the text included with illustration in figure 6, which was published in an 1892 *Penny Illustrated* newspaper covering the recent death of a royal family member, states that "'smartness in attire is not incompatible with mourning.'"[51] This illustration and the description portrays the idea that mourning wear can be stylish.

Furthermore, for those who were simply keeping up with the recent fashion trends, mourning attire was an easy and affordable way to match the style of other Victorians, including the Queen herself. In addition, the growth of this style seemed to allow those of the lower class to match with those of higher standing. Mitchell explains this alteration of social change perfectly as mourning attire was inexpensive and easily attainable to all classes which "ultimately led to a kind of democratization of fashion through the uniform of the black dress."[52] However, this is not to say that the upper classes were unable to show off their wealth as lower classes took over the style. For the Victorians who wanted to express their status, the many mourning accessories previously described by Curl were a perfect way to do so. In addition, the growing clientele of mourning attire seekers led to the development of stores and shops dedicated to mourning wear. Stores like Jay's Mourning Emporium began to transform into "upscale dress shops" leading to more exposure as a fashion store with things such as "an 1892 travel guide to London, which describes Jay's as the authority for finding 'beautiful gowns' for 'deep-mourning, half-mourning, quarter-mourning,' or, amusingly,

[50] Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, 200.
[51] Mitchell, "On The Progressive Potential Of Victorian Mourning," 606.
[52] Mitchell, 610-611.

'one-eighth-of-an-inch-mourning.'"[53] This clearly expresses how the shift in Victorian fashion trends not only affected the culture, but the society of business and commerce.

Ultimately, mourning fashion grew to become a trend of the mid to late 1800s. Through the model of Queen Victoria and the growth in mourning attire in all social classes, this type of fashion took over. The Victorian era saw a modification of fashion as mourning attire stretched across all classes and all women regardless of their state of mourning. Furthermore, Victorian fashion was influenced by mourning in ways other than just the attire.

Another manner in which mourning found its way into the fashion of the Victorian era was through the creation of jewelry with parts of a deceased relative. These pieces of jewelry were often made from items such as hair or teeth. Although it may seem morbid by the standards of the 21st century, the Victorians believed that jewelry of this kind was an essential part of their mourning rituals. Similar to how mourning attire became a popular piece of culture, leading to the growth of stores dedicated to clothes for mourners, jewelry makers specializing in creating pieces with the hair or teeth of the deceased began to flourish around the 1850s.[54] This decade is not random as it was clear that the rise of spiritualism in the mid-1800s had an impact on the growing popularity of hair jewelry and the like.[55] The idea of keeping a memento of a loved one seemed to continuously correlate with spiritualism as this can also be seen with spirit photography and post-mortem photography.

Items such as hair jewelry were an even more intimate way to preserve the memory of a deceased loved one. Just like spirit photography and post-mortem photography, hair jewelry was a way for Victorians to process their grief and hold on to a piece of their loved one. Furthermore, the idea of keeping a physical piece of a deceased relative's body can be looked at as a way to

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[53] Mitchell, "On The Progressive Potential Of Victorian Mourning," 606-608.
[54] Lutz, "Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture," 129.
[55] Lutz, 132.

view death as impermanent as the mourner is able to hold on to a part of their relative.[56] Unlike the use of photography to keep a memory of a relative alive, hair jewelry represents the continuation of the relative. One valuable argument that Deborah Lutz makes about hair jewelry is the fact that is is able to act like a talisman, or a lucky charm, in its attempt to comfort the bereaved and provide a direct connection to a deceased loved one.[57] In addition, the jewelry is a physical piece of evidence that the relative existed. Items like hair jewelry were treasured as being special and even sacred items within a family. Lutz provides a primary example of a family that received hair jewelry after the death of a loved one. This example portrays just how important these pieces were to mourners and why they felt so connected to them. The mourner, Emily Palmer, explains why she wore hair jewelry made from the hair of her recently deceased sister, Dorthea, by stating that,

> Dear Laura [her sister-in-law] has given us each a ring of our Do's hair with a small pearl in the middle. I am so fond of it. We chose a ring - and I am glad for 3 reasons. First because always wearing it - helps me always to think of her - 2nd because a ring seems to be bond of love - 3rd it being round - a circle reminds one how one's love and communion with her may and will last for ever.[58]

Each of her reasons for wearing the hair jewelry of her sister is essential. Most importantly, as Palmer stated, mourners who wore jewelry with pieces of their deceased relatives would be reminded of their loved ones' existence while they wore the jewelry. Similar to how post-mortem photographs served as a reminder of their deceased relative, hair jewelry was a physical reminder that can be kept on the body of the bereaved - whether on their chest as a necklace or on their finger as a ring - throughout their life.

In the end, one can see how impactful fashion was on Victorian mourning and how fashion changed due to the mourning rituals of the era. Mourning, a rigid system in regards to

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[56] Lutz, “Victorian Secular Relics, Hair Jewelry, and Death Culture,” 128.
[57] Lutz, 130.
[58] Lutz, 133.

fashion, shifted to become trendy and stylish leading to people who were not in mourning to take up the style as well. In addition, mourning can be seen through the fashioning of jewelry made from the hair and teeth of deceased loved ones. These pieces of jewelry allowed the bereaved to feel closer to their departed relatives and helped them remember their loved ones with a physical piece of them.

In conclusion, it is clear that the mourning rituals of the Victorian era influenced the culture of that era. Through the connection of Victorian mourning to séances, photography, and fashion, the era's culture was significantly influenced. Ultimately, the rise of spiritualism and séances led to a shift in many Victorians' belief systems. They began to believe that they were able to speak to their deceased loved ones through the work of the spirit mediums. They also would ardently defend the work of these spirit mediums when necessary as they were adamant that their experiences during the séances were real. In addition, their ideas of death and the afterlife changed significantly. Furthermore, the newly introduced photography was quickly ushered into Victorian mourning rituals through spirit and post-mortem photography. Both of these forms of photography were used as a way to assist with the processing of grief. Additionally, they were both material pieces that were treasured as ways to hold on to the memory of a deceased family member. As for spirit photography, Victorians would support the photographers who had been charged with fraud as they fully believed the photographs provided an image of their deceased relative. In regards to post-mortem photography, there were a variety of factors that British photographers would utilize in order to create a photograph that honored the deceased person. Finally, fashion was completely changed as mourning attire became trendy and stylish through the influence of Queen Victoria. In addition, the creation of jewelry as a

wearable piece of mourning aided in the grieving process and, similar to spirit and post-mortem photography, became tangible pieces of a loved one that captured intimacy and memory. Overall, it is evident that séances, photography, and fashion played a crucial role in the mourning rituals of the Victorian era. These three categories that became integral pieces of the Victorian lifestyle had major effects on the culture of the 19th century. Through the shift in belief systems, the introduction of new technology, and the cultivation of a new fashion trend, the culture and society of the Victorian era changed in a way that had a lasting impact.

Ultimately, when looking at Victorian mourning rituals, it is understandable that ideas and questions about other eras of mourning would arise. This includes ideas about past time periods, our current time period, and the future. First, it is interesting to look at the ways in which mourning has changed throughout history. It is clear that the eras that came before the Victorians played a role in some of their fundamental mourning rituals. This includes the use of mourning portraits in the earlier centuries of Britain which shifted into post-mortem photography as photography was invented during the 19th century. In addition, the idea of wearing black to show the fact that one is in mourning is not new to the Victorian era, although its influence on fashion trends was unique to the 19th century. Moreover, the influence of Victorian mourning rituals on the world we live in today is intriguing. For example, the fascination with the supernatural during the Victorian era due to the spiritualism movement can be seen throughout the paranormal obsession within the 21st century. This can be seen through the growing attempts to capture ghosts in photographs in the 20th and 21st centuries. This phenomenon is somewhat similar to spirit photography in the sense that it is meant to catch a spirit on camera. However, the evolution of ghost photography has clearly surpassed mourning and has become something more recreational or even investigative. Furthermore, while the mourning rituals of the 21st

century are obviously very different from the Victorian era as séances and photography are not utilized for mourning in the same way, fashion is one mourning ritual of the 19th century that has been somewhat retained. This can be seen through both aspects of fashion mentioned in this paper. While people today do not typically wear hair jewelry, many mourners may have the ashes of their loved ones placed in pieces of jewelry, especially necklaces and bracelets. In addition, the concept of mourning attire is still used. People continue to wear black clothing when they are in mourning and when attending funerals. While the rules and regulations behind mourning wear are less intense, the idea of wearing black to express mourning is something that has continued for decades well past the 19th century. Moreover, the stylization of mourning fashion has stuck around since the Victorian era. Mourners today, especially women, can accessorize their mourning outfits with black hats, scarves, shoes, jewelry, and more in order to keep their mourning attire fashionable in some way. Clearly, the impact of Queen Victoria's lifelong mourning fashion can be seen today. Furthermore, it is even more interesting to think about how the mourning rituals of the current era will eventually change in the future. Maybe black clothing will continue to be the staple for mourning attire. Maybe new technological inventions will insert their way into the mourning rituals of the future similar to the effects of photography. Maybe spiritualism will revive in future generations and séances will assist in the grieving process again. Or maybe the future will create brand new mourning rituals that are unique to their era and can almost never be completely replicated just like that of the Victorian era.

Figures

Figure 1. “Spirit Photograph by Edouard Buguet (ca. 1870)” as cited in Andrew H. Miller, “The Specters of Dickens’s Study,” *Narrative* 5, no. 3 (Oct. 1997): 325. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20107127.

Figure 2. "Lady Helena Newenham and the Spirit of her Daughter" as cited in Jen Cadwallader, "Spirit Photography Victorian Culture of Mourning," *Modern Language Studies* 37, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 15, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40346959.

Figure 3. “Mother Holding Dead Child” as cited in Audrey Linkman, “Taken From Life: Post-Mortem Portraiture in Britain 1860-1910,” *History of Photography* 30, no. 4 (2006): 319, https://vicusyd.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/linkman_taken-from-life.pdf.

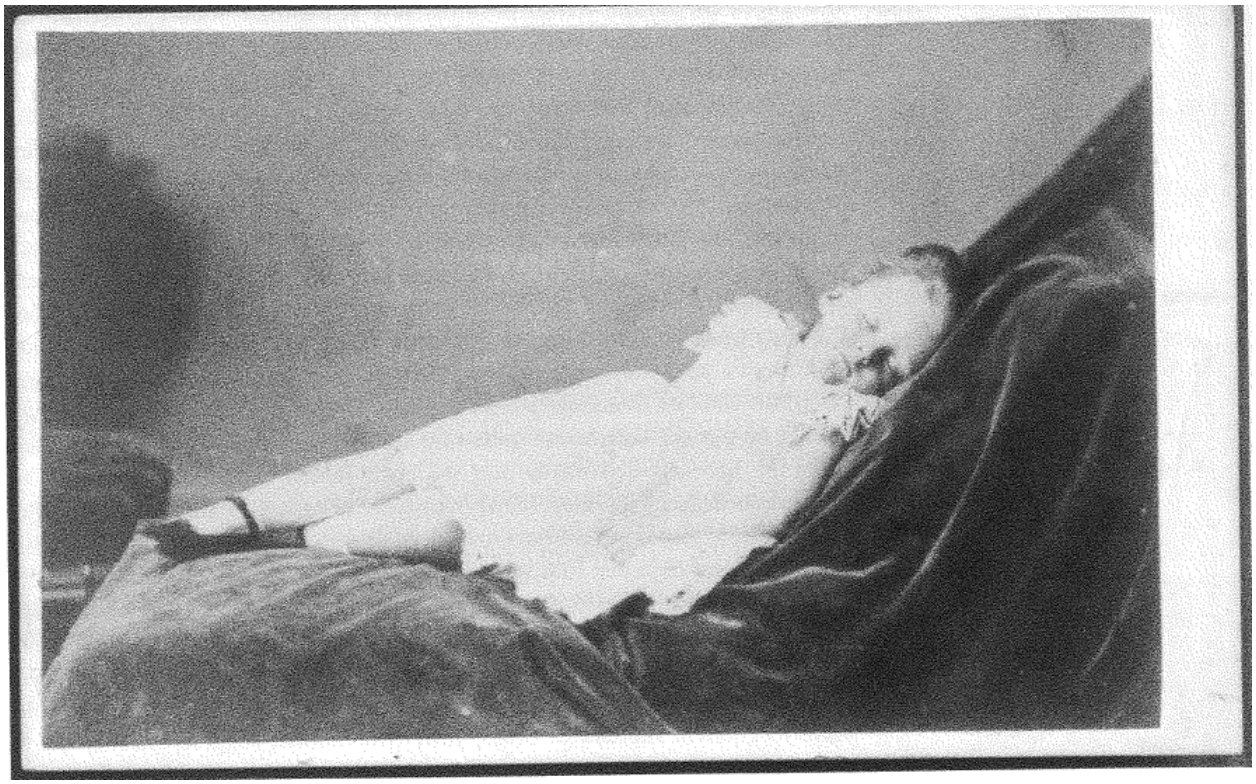

Figure 4. “Unknown Child” as cited in Audrey Linkman, “Taken From Life: Post-Mortem Portraiture in Britain 1860-1910,” *History of Photography* 30, no. 4 (2006): 324, https://vicusyd.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/linkman_taken-from-life.pdf.

Figure 5. "H. M. THE QUEEN (QUEEN VICTORIA)" as cited in Rebecca N. Mitchell, "Death Becomes Her: On The Progressive Potential Of Victorian Mourning," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 41, no. 4 (2013): 596, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24575727.

Figure 6. "Mourning in Fashion" as cited in Rebecca N. Mitchell, “Death Becomes Her: On The Progressive Potential Of Victorian Mourning,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 41, no. 4 (2013): 607, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24575727.

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