THE MODERN MONARCH:
EMPRESS ELISABETH AND THE VISUAL CULTURE OF FEMININITY, 1850-1900

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Modern Monarch:
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Dissertation Director:
Susan Sidlauskas

This dissertation examines painted, photographic, and printed portraits of Empress Elisabeth of Austria (1837-1898) as sites for the visualization of modern women. A renowned beauty whose images were collected by individuals of every social class across the continent, Elisabeth was both a producer of culture and an instrument in the expression of larger political, psychological, and artistic forces. Pairing visual analysis with archival research, historical contextualization, and theoretical frameworks drawn from visual culture, photography, and the history of psychiatry, Elisabeth’s portraits emerge as active participants in the modernist project.

Chapter 1 situates Elisabeth’s portraiture within the historiography of nineteenth-century modernism. Her simultaneously theatrical and self-protective beauty reveals how the phenomenon of celebrity influenced female portraiture. The second chapter examines how Habsburg artists appropriated Elisabeth’s photographic image to project their own vision of femininity. Inexpensive photolithographs of the imperial family integrate photographs of Elisabeth to create narratives of domestic bliss. I argue that photographic technology was central to the success of these images because the trace of Elisabeth’s body masked the reality of her difficult relationship with her Habsburg relatives and refusal to perform the public duties of empress. Chapter 3 explores how Elisabeth
created her own construction of feminine beauty using *carte-de-visite* portraits of beautiful women she requested from her foreign ambassadors. Elisabeth’s beauty albums pair Parisian courtesans with reproduced paintings of the French Empress Eugénie, suggesting an equivalence between empress and entertainer; this sensibility is visualized in Elisabeth’s 1865 state portrait by Franz Xaver Winterhalter. The fourth chapter links portraits of Elisabeth by Winterhalter and Anton Romako to the visual culture of psychiatry. As a woman who struggled publicly with mental instability, I argue that Elisabeth’s portraits allowed artists to visualize mental illness as an alluring, modern disease.

In identifying portraits of Elisabeth as sites for the development of modernism, this dissertation introduces a sphere of visual and political imagery typically excluded from examinations of avant-garde artwork in the nineteenth century. Additionally, this dissertation undermines the traditional narrative of Vienna 1900 as an abrupt break from the past by revealing mid-century roots for the celebrated art of Viennese modernism.
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation argues that painted, photographic, and printed portraits of Empress Elisabeth of Austria (1837-1898) were sites for the visual construction of modern women. I suggest that this visualization was forged not only in the brothels and dance halls of Paris, as many scholars have suggested, but also in the staterooms, castles, and bedchambers of this central European monarch. The overwhelming social forces of urbanization and industrialization, which are more closely identified with the sensuous and psychically charged female subjects of modern artists like Édouard Manet or Gustav Klimt, were concentrated in the figure of Elisabeth, whose image saturated both the aristocratic and popular culture of nineteenth-century Europe. As a public figure, portraits of Elisabeth became templates for artistic experimentation with questions of femininity and beauty. At the same time, as empress, Elisabeth possessed greater authority over her images than most subjects of female portraiture. Portraits of her by Franz Xaver Winterhalter (fig. 1) initially appear to be romantic visions of the beautiful empress; however, my visual analysis reveals that these portraits incorporate imagery

1 Upon her April 1854 marriage to Franz Joseph, Elisabeth’s full title was Empress Consort of Austria; Queen Consort of Hungary and Bohemia; Queen Consort of Lombardy and Venice, of Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Galicia, Lodomeria, and Illyria; Queen Consort of Jerusalem, etc.; Archduchess of Austria; Grand Duchess of Tuscany and Cracow; Duchess of Lorraine, of Salzburg, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Bukovina; Grand Duchess of Transylvania; Marqugravine of Moravia; Duchess of Upper and Lower Silesia, of Modena, Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla, of Auschwitz and Zator, of Teschen, Friuli, Ragusa, and Zara; Countess with Princely Rank of Habsburg and Tyrol, of Kyburg, Gorizia, and Gradisak; Princess of Trent and Bressanone; Marqugravine of Upper and Lower Lusatia and in Istria; Countess of Hohenems, Feldkirch, Bregenz, Sonnenberg, etc.; Lady of Trieste, of Cattaro, and in the Wendic Mark; Grand Voivode of the Voivodeship of Serbia, etc., etc. She was widely known by her childhood nickname “Sisi,” which today is sometimes spelled “Sissi,” after the title of the three biographic films produced by Ernst Marischka in the 1950s. Throughout this dissertation, I will refer to her by either Empress Elisabeth or Elisabeth.


from Elisabeth’s personal collection of erotic _cartes-de-visite_, suggesting the empress’s agency in the production of her image. In this painting, Elisabeth’s celebrated, ankle-length hair actually denies access to her body by concealing her slender physique with its chestnut tendrils, a visual choices that anticipates traits Alessandra Comini identified as essential to the women portrayed by painters like Klimt. Linking such visual analysis with archival research and theoretical frameworks adapted from photography theory, visual culture studies, and the history of medicine, my dissertation interprets Elisabeth’s portraits as vehicles for innovation in the representation of modern women in the nineteenth century.

Histories of this period typically divorce aristocratic imagery from avant-garde depictions of women, a choice that limits the scope of social art history. My dissertation combats this exclusion by locating modernism within the codified and sacrosanct genre of state portraiture. Collected by individuals of every economic class across the continent, representations of Elisabeth had an enormous impact on the perception of modern women. Elisabeth’s images make visible the ambiguous political circumstances of nineteenth-century monarchies, whose decline forced their representatives to forge new roles; they became celebrities whose images circulated alongside those of actresses and dancers. Additionally, public knowledge of Elisabeth’s alleged melancholia aligned such mental instability with the most illustrious woman of the realm, thereby elevating the status of psychiatric illness. This fusion of aristocracy and commercialization creates

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a complex network of high and low culture, politics, psychiatry, and femininity that plays out on the surfaces of Elisabeth’s portraits.

The interpretative practices associated with visual culture studies are vital to my dissertation. James D. Herbert notes that visual culture democratizes the selection of objects meriting art historical study by insisting that any visual artifact is “capable of aesthetic and ideological complexity.” My alignment of photolithographs and albums of cartes-de-visite with modernism reflects this sensibility, but the methodology of visual culture also informs my choice to analyze court portraiture. Though allied with a category of objects typically included within the sphere of art history, nineteenth-century court portraits are often rejected as incapable of the aesthetic and ideological complexity described by Herbert. My interpretation reveals that painted, photographic, and printed portraits of Elisabeth offer rich insight into central questions of nineteenth-century art history, including the representation of women, the role of photography, and the influence of psychiatric medicine.

The study of portraiture necessarily provokes questions about the likeness of a portrait, the relationship between the subject and artist, and the biography of a subject. These problems play a role in each of my chapters, but they also distinguish Elisabeth as a premier case study for the history of female portraiture. As empress, Elisabeth possessed remarkable agency in the production of her image; she drew upon the

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diplomatic resources of her government to amass portraits of beautiful women, which she then assembled into albums that evidence her personal interpretation of feminine beauty. This construction informed the production of Winterhalter’s state portraits, which I interpret as a collaboration between empress and artist. In spite of this authority, as a public figure, Elisabeth became a template upon which artists could project their own vision of femininity. Though she could control some of her portraits, most images were outside the realm of her influence. Such portraits reveal anxieties about the shifting position of women within the family, as well as cultural changes in the understanding of female sexuality.

Elisabeth’s representations also force us to abandon what has been a binary opposition of queen and prostitute. While prostitutes are typically considered the canonical figures for signifying nineteenth-century modernity, my analysis reveals similarities between courtesans and queens that suggest the usefulness of the latter for understanding the changing role of women in the public sphere. The sexuality of both courtesans and monarchs was on display, as it was the responsibility of a consort to produce a male heir who would continue her husband’s dynasty. As such, the sexual activity of an empress like Elisabeth was public knowledge. However, there also exist significant differences between the recreational sexuality of a prostitute and the almost ritualized sexuality of a female consort. I argue that Elisabeth actively incorporated imagery from cartes of Parisian courtesans into her state portraits, thereby blurring the

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distinctions between these two spheres and complicating our view of nineteenth-century queens as chaste symbols of retrograde institutions.

This dissertation contributes to recent studies of monarchical imagery by the art historians Alison McQueen and Michael Yonan.\(^8\) Both scholars build productively upon the work of Mary Sheriff and Lynn Hunt on Marie-Antoinette,\(^9\) although they fall short of fully integrating their subjects within the currents of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art. Yonan’s study of Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa’s portraits demonstrates thoughtful visual analysis, but his failure to bring her portraiture into conversation with those of her French counterparts continues a discipline-wide tradition of excluding central European art from the canon. My dissertation attempts to rectify this perception of central Europe as removed from avant-garde production by identifying ways in which Elisabeth’s portraiture engages many of the same issues at stake in classic modernist artworks like Manet’s *Olympia*. McQueen’s study of French Empress Eugénie’s patronage provides a comprehensive archival resource for any student of French art in mid-century Paris. However, her reluctance to tie Eugénie’s images to the artwork of the Parisian avant-garde perpetuates the art historical tendency to set aside aristocratic portraiture as archaic and unrelated to modernism. By analyzing Elisabeth’s portraits with the tools typically reserved for modernist artworks, I suggest that aristocratic portraiture is a resource for understanding the construction of this style in the nineteenth century.

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I examine Elisabeth as both a producer of culture and a figure manipulated by others in the expression of larger political, psychological, and artistic forces. Though necessarily distinguished by her imperial status, Elisabeth participated in the same visual, political, and psychological movements as her subjects. Swept up by the 1860s cartes-de-visite craze as well as the nationalist fervor surrounding the 1867 establishment of Austria-Hungary, Elisabeth may have experienced the “madness of the married woman” that psychiatrist Caspar Brosius diagnosed among upper middle class women in 1881. Such cultural shifts have long been the focus of interdisciplinary research by historians like Carl Schorske, but no one has analyzed the role of visual culture and aristocratic imagery in these changes. I argue that Elisabeth’s appearance as mentally unstable and physically pliant anticipated the representation of women within clinical psychiatry and psychoanalysis, as well as the eroticized femininity that Viennese modernist artists would embrace.

My first chapter situates Elisabeth within the context of modernism. I examine how Elisabeth fulfills Georg Simmel’s dictum that modern people need to preserve their individuality in order to maintain dignity in the face of increasing urbanization. Elisabeth achieved this through her body, whose trademark slenderness, hairstyling, and athleticism earned her a continental-wide reputation for a beauty that was simultaneously theatrical and self-protective. The cultivation and preservation of her body was a life work for Elisabeth, as I demonstrate through a close study of her biography and athletic

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12 Simmel, "The Metropolis and Modern Life (1902-3)," 324.
practices. I tie Elisabeth to the development of celebrity, a phenomenon that shifted focus to the individuality and exteriority of celebrated persons, as opposed to the honor of their position. For Elisabeth, this focus on individuality became an opportunity to direct her own representation, particularly within Winterhalter’s 1865 portraits. The portraits consequently represent a rupture in the history of female portraiture; rather than allowing the viewer to create his or her own fantasy encounter with the empress, Winterhalter’s portraits instead visualize Elisabeth’s self-construction.

The second chapter investigates the visual strategies employed by the Habsburg court to deflect attention from Elisabeth’s determined pursuit of her own agency. Elisabeth shirked the public appearances that were central to her responsibilities as empress; she even refused to be photographed with her family. To circumvent Elisabeth’s idiosyncratic behavior, I argue that the Habsburg court employed photographic reproductive technology to create family portraits that reimagined Elisabeth as ideal wife and mother. The primary resources for this chapter are photolithographs that appropriate photographs of Elisabeth to produce imperial portraits that have the appearance of contemporary cartes-de-visite. W.J.T. Mitchell’s description of visual culture as “seeing made visible” drives my analysis of these objects, as I argue that their viewers needed to see a photographic image of the empress for the successful


15 There exists only one photographic portrait of Elisabeth with her family (fig. 38).

communication of their message. Court artists could have more easily created traditional lithographs, but the insertion of photographic portraits gave the photolithographs an aura, an indexical reference to the physical body of the empress, thereby imbuing them with the unique and authentic presence of Elisabeth. By reconfiguring her photographic body into more acceptable family poses, the image overwrote Elisabeth’s behavior and fabricated a new narrative that promoted dynastic loyalty.

My third chapter analyzes how Elisabeth used cartes-de-visite to craft her vision of feminine beauty. In 1862, Elisabeth asked her foreign ambassadors to send her cartes of beautiful women for her albums of beauty. Though most submitted photographs of aristocrats, the Parisian attaché sent portraits of the Parisian demimonde, including several dancers in erotic poses. Elisabeth placed these erotic cartes in a special album alongside reproductions of Winterhalter paintings of the French Empress Eugénie, suggesting an equivalence between the roles of empress and entertainer. Analyzed in relation to her own portraits by Winterhalter, Elisabeth’s reliance upon erotic imagery and its incorporation within her state portrait (fig. 2) offer an opportunity to reexamine the genre of queenly portraiture, as well as a reevaluation of Winterhalter himself. Though Winterhalter’s oeuvre is often seen as the antithesis of modernity, Elisabeth’s portraits reveal an artistic exchange between urban photography studios and his court practice.

The fourth chapter examines Elisabeth’s portraiture in relation to the visual culture of psychiatry in the second half of the nineteenth century in Vienna. I argue that Winterhalter’s oval portrait of Elisabeth anticipates the anxiety provoked by the female body within psychoanalysis. Utilizing a psychoanalytic approach, I interpret this portrait
as a visualization of female fetishism, a conclusion that bolsters the findings of chapter three. The other image I consider within this chapter is Anton Romako’s 1883 portrait of Elisabeth (fig. 3). While psychiatrists struggled to produce anatomical evidence of mental illness, Viennese artists developed a visual language to indicate the presence of this fashionable ailment in their subjects. My visual analysis finds unexpected links between the “mad” portraits of twentieth-century artists like Oskar Kokoschka and the unorthodox portraits of Elisabeth by Romako. I propose that these artists inscribed Elisabeth’s reputation as a nervous woman onto the surface of their artwork, inviting the question of how a viewer can recognize mental illness without actually seeing it. Relying upon Michael Polanyi’s “tacit knowledge,” which suggests that we know more than we can tell,\(^\text{17}\) I argue that these artists and their successors achieved what Viennese psychiatrists could not: a visualization of mental illness that became a trope of modernism in fin-de-siècle Vienna.

These four chapters combine to produce a multifaceted interpretation of Elisabeth’s portraiture, which I illuminate using tools from the disciplines of art history, psychiatry, philosophy, and history. I conclude with an examination of Elisabeth’s legacy within Austrian culture after her 1898 assassination, along with a proposal for the future of this project. As a result, this dissertation positions court portraits of Elisabeth as touchstones for the visualization of the modern woman and undermines the traditional narrative of Vienna 1900 as an abrupt break with the past.\(^\text{18}\) Instead, Elisabeth’s portraits


\(^{18}\) See, for example, Robert Waissenberger, ed. *Traum und Wirklichkeit: Wien 1870-1930* (Vienna, 1985).
reveal nineteenth-century roots for the vision of women most often associated with the art of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.
CHAPTER ONE

The Modern Monarch: Court Portraiture and the Painting of Modern Life

INTRODUCTION

The earliest portraits of Elisabeth were a great disappointment to her imperial fiancée. Produced to satisfy public clamoring for images of this virtually unknown, fifteen-year-old Bavarian duchess, lithographers based their likenesses upon a photograph taken by the Munich photographer Alois Löcherer shortly before the August 1853 engagement to Emperor Franz Joseph (fig. 4). Here, the future empress appears stiff and ungraceful against a high-backed chair. The homely dress suggests her provincial fashion sense, a characteristic that had already stirred gossip amongst the cosmopolitan Viennese countesses who would become her peers. Initial lithographers did little to soften this awkwardness; Franz Joseph complained that lithographer Friedrich Hohe had given Elisabeth “the face of a blackamoor” (fig. 5). Compared to the canonical portraits that emerged in the following decade, the Elisabeth pictured in these images is practically unrecognizable.

Franz Xaver Winterhalter erased the graceless Bavarian teenager with three portraits completed in early 1865 after a four-month residence at Schönbrunn, the Habsburg summer palace in Vienna. In the state portrait (fig. 2), Winterhalter presents the empress in the most fashionable apparel of the 1860s: Charles Frederick Worth’s spangled tulle. The artist also produced two informal portraits (figs. 1 and 6) that

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highlight Elisabeth’s ankle-length chestnut hair, a feature for which she had achieved international recognition.

The preliminary evaluation of these paintings suggests that they are no different from most nineteenth-century aristocratic portraits, a genre of which Winterhalter was the acknowledged master.\textsuperscript{22} Describing the requirements of the nineteenth century’s portraiture of women, Tamar Garb writes, “Female portraiture offered a space for the imagined fabrication of surrogate subjects, viewed, like painting itself, as objects of sensual delight.”\textsuperscript{23} In Garb’s analysis, the misogynist perspective of nineteenth-century viewers presumed women’s identities to be less fixed than men’s; consequently, female portraits invited viewers to envision an imaginary interaction with the subject, thereby eliding the identity of the actual woman portrayed with a fantasy projected onto her representation by the viewer. Elisabeth’s portraits may have inspired similar reverie. Her engaging expression, dynamic posture, and the interplay of skin, diamonds, hair, and textiles combine to conjure the illusion of tactility, provoking the viewer to imagine that he or she could reach out and actually touch the empress.\textsuperscript{24}

Such fantasy is entirely inappropriate in a portrait of a monarch, especially a state portrait. While portraits like Leonardo’s \textit{Mona Lisa} inspire fantasies about the subject’s identity and how the portrait came to exist, fanciful imaginings are not the purpose of a

\textsuperscript{22} For a history of Winterhalter’s portraiture practice see Richard Ormond and Carol Blackett-Ord, \textit{Franz Xaver Winterhalter and the Courts of Europe 1830-70} (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1987). There are dissertations in progress on Winterhalter by Simone Zuther at the Virginia Commonwealth University, Ashley Givens at the Courtauld Institute, and Eugene Barilo von Reisberg at the University of Melbourne.


portrait of a queen; her identity is fixed as the consort to the king, and the circumstances of the painting’s production are clearly delineated by the dynamics of the patron and artist.

The nineteenth-century witnessed a relaxation of these standards, but only for informal representations of royals. A family portrait around the earlier Habsburg Emperor Franz I (1768-1835) offers such an example. Here, Franz appears at leisure with his grown children and grandson in the shade of a villa (fig. 7); the robes and insignia of their glorified positions have been cast aside in favor of stylish gowns, straw hats, and frock coats. A far more formal approach was adopted for Franz’s state portrait in his coronation robes, where the monarch reassumes his enthroned position along with all of the regalia, crowns, and honorific orders associated therewith (fig. 8).

More contemporary with Elisabeth, her French counterpart Empress Eugénie was featured in intimate portraits by Winterhalter, most notably the oval canvas where she wears a luxurious silk gown (fig. 9). Here, Eugénie appears passively arranged so that the viewer can admire the fine garments that adorn her porcelain skin. This contrasts significantly with Eugénie’s official image (fig. 10), also painted by Winterhalter, which satisfies the convention that a queen be represented with a crown. Indeed, eroticized portraits of French queens caused considerable anxiety, as evidenced by the uproar over Marie Antoinette’s portrait en chemise (fig. 11) and the negative critical response to Winterhalter’s group portrait of Eugénie with her ladies in waiting (fig. 12). For the debate around Marie Antoinette’s portraiture see Sheriff, An Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art. On Winterhalter’s portraits of Eugénie see chapter two, “Imperial Identities: the ‘Ornament of the Throne,’” in McQueen, Empress Eugénie and the Arts: Politics and Visual Culture in the Nineteenth Century.
the monarch is defined by her imperial status and the impossibility of any access on the part of her beholder.

On the contrary, in Winterhalter’s state portrait, Elisabeth’s authority emanates from her beauty rather than any relationship to her husband. Elisabeth appears without any crown or regalia to symbolize her status; her provocative pose, cascading gown, and flirtatious demeanor suggest instead a performance in which she controls the relationship with her viewers. Such coexistence of eroticism and power is unprecedented in state portraits of female monarchs, aligning the painting more closely with the canonical images of nineteenth-century femininity that have shaped the art historical understanding of modernism. For just as Manet’s *Olympia* has made visible anxieties over the representation of femininity, so too do these portraits of Elisabeth.

Portraits of an Austrian empress may appear improbable vehicles for questioning the standard narrative of modernism, whose origins in the visual arts have been aligned by scholars like T.J. Clark with paintings of figures such as courtesans in Paris. As a central European monarch far removed from this “capital of the nineteenth century,” Elisabeth ostensibly engages none of the political or artistic touchstones traditionally associated with the movement. Her husband’s neoabsolutist monarchy resisted nineteenth-century political modernization with disastrous consequences. After his 1848 ascent to the throne at the age of eighteen, Elisabeth’s husband Franz Joseph

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26 While portraits of female goddesses were often erotic, this was not a quality included in state portraits of queens. Annette Dixon, *Women Who Ruled: Queens, Goddesses, Amazons in Renaissance and Baroque Art* (Ann Arbor, MI: Merrell Publishers London, 2002).

27 Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*.

28 More recent historians have taken a revisionist approach to this conclusion, arguing instead for how modern political processes were inserted into the existing superstructure of the monarchy. See Ágnes Deák, *From Habsburg Neoabsolutism to the Compromise, 1849-1867* (Boulder, Col.: Social Science Monographs, distributed by Columbia University Press, 2008).
suffered a series of military and political defeats over the sixty-eight years of his reign: territorial losses to Italy and Prussia, the division of power following the establishment of Austria-Hungary in 1867, the suicide of his only son, the Crown Prince Rudolf, in 1889, and the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, which led to the first World War and the dissolution of the monarchy. Elisabeth herself demonstrated no acknowledgment of modern art, preferring instead athletic pursuits and romantic poetry.

Nevertheless, Elisabeth’s formal, ceremonial portraits distill a central concern within modernism, namely the role of the individual in an increasingly industrialized society.29 Georg Simmel’s essay “The Metropolis and Modern Life” epitomizes the struggle of modern people to determine their relationships with the world in the aftermath of the urbanization and industrialization that characterize the experience of modern life.30 Writing about his experience of urban society, Simmel stated, “The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society.”31 To preserve this individuality, Simmel observed that city-dwellers developed increasingly specialized talents. In a world where any laborer could be replaced instantaneously, the individual had to offer a unique, irreplaceable skill.32

Elisabeth’s portraits participate in this project of reimagining the role of the individual, despite the fact that such images have been understood as inherently reinforcing conventional and conservative views. It cannot be denied that Elisabeth’s

30 Simmel, "The Metropolis and Modern Life (1902-3)."
31 Ibid., 324.
32 Ibid., 336.
experience of modernity was necessarily different from that of her subjects.
Nevertheless, an examination of her biography alongside her portraits demonstrates her
desire to assert her individuality independently from her position as empress. Like her
contemporaries in Vienna’s rapidly changing urban landscape,\textsuperscript{33} she sought to distinguish
herself from her peers with an inimitable, irreplaceable contribution. For Elisabeth, this
offering was her body. She exercised herself into impossible slenderness, thereby
building a continental reputation for physical rigor and a fifty-centimeter (19.7 inch)
waistline.\textsuperscript{34} Made by the artist in collaboration with the empress, the Winterhalter
portraits are the pinnacle of this construction, and it is here that we see Elisabeth’s
authority exerted to its fullest.

Having achieved this distinctive appearance, Elisabeth proceeded to limit access
to her body. She avoided participation in court ceremonies and eschewed the public
appearances that were vital to her husband’s domestic policy. She posed for
photographs, but rigidly circumscribed the subjects of these portraits. Only a single
photograph captures Elisabeth alongside her husband and children; otherwise, she
appears alone, save for a handful of portraits with a favorite dog or horse and a few
cartes-de-visite with her Bavarian relatives. After 1868, Elisabeth refused to sit for
photographers or portrait artists, and she rarely appeared out of doors without a large fan
or parasol to shield her face from curious onlookers.\textsuperscript{35}

Her control over her image, particularly this choice to avoid photographic
portraits, evinces a shrewd understanding of visual culture. Elisabeth knew that the
\textsuperscript{33} For an overview of the mid-century urban renewal of Vienna, see Chapter 2 “Ringstrasse” in Schorske,\textit{Fin-De-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture.}
\textsuperscript{34} Hamann, \textit{The Reluctant Empress}, 127.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 200, 351.
preservation of her legendary beauty depended upon restriction of its documentation. Though she was unable to control the appropriation of her photographic likeness by the Habsburg court, Winterhalter’s court portraits were an arena where she could express her unique individuality. Here, she found a genre and a medium designed to canonize her appearance, thereby broadcasting her physical achievement to her peers across the continent, as well as to the subjects of her own empire.

This insistence upon her individual subjectivity within her portraits undermines the fantasy interaction that Garb describes as central to the nineteenth-century experience of female portraiture. Winterhalter’s glossy application of oils appear initially to invite the viewer to enter into the portrait and imagine a physical encounter with the empress. This enshrining of the sumptuous textures of her gemstones, costume, hair and skin seems to satisfy what Richard Shiff has called the transparency of the classical tradition, or, the desire for an illusionistic representation of objects. Shiff positions transparency in opposition to opacity; he associates this latter quality with modernism, which in his formalist analysis is the elevation of technique above the subject matter of an artwork. For example, a still life by Cézanne denies the classical pleasure of imagining the surfaces of apples, dishcloths, and bowls, because the artist’s thick application of paint frustrates the viewer’s imaginary entrance into the space of the painting, forcing the viewer to instead concentrate upon the paint itself.

I argue that a similar obstruction exists within Elisabeth’s portraits, but rather than being built with opaque painting technique, the impediment is Elisabeth. She denies the

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36 Shiff, "Cézanne's Physicality: The Politics of Touch."
37 This argument is inspired by Susan Sidlauskas’s examination of the oscillation between transparency (vision) and opacity (touch) within Cézanne’s portraits of his wife, Hortense Fiquet Cézanne. See chapter
pleasure of an imaginary interaction because she herself has molded and formed the
encounter. It is her individuality that determines the viewer’s experience of her portraits,
thereby undermining both the romanticism that earned Winterhalter his continental
accolades, as well as the Habsburg court’s desire to shape her into their ideal empress.
For unlike the images of courtesans produced by canonical modernist artists, or even her
aristocratic peers in the oeuvres of Winterhalter or Ingres, Elisabeth commands the
viewer’s encounter with her famous body. Anxiety over such a female-directed
interaction is central to the critical rejection of Manet’s Olympia in the Salon of 1865, 38
but few art historians have looked to aristocratic portraiture as a resource for the
visualization of femininity during this decade. My analysis of her biography and the
celebration of individuality realized within the portraits reveals them to be another node
of activity in the nineteenth-century modernist project.

WHY NOT QUEENS?

The omission of queenly portraits from studies of modern portraiture may result
from the ostensibly retrograde nature of their subject matter. Monarchies were
increasingly archaic by the mid-nineteenth century, 39 and it is therefore unsurprising that
art historians dismiss these paintings as too far removed from the social concerns of the
era to contribute to our understanding of modernity. This assumption overlooks how

three, “The Materiality of Vision,” in Susan Sidlauskas, Cézanne's Other: The Portraits of Hortense
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
38 Clark, The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers., especially “Olympia’s
Choice.”
39 On the history of monarchies in the nineteenth century, see Eric Hobsbaum, Nations and Nationalism
since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Ritchie Robertson
transformations in the political climate influenced the role of the queen. These changes created the opportunity for the emergence of an individualized queen, with Elisabeth as her chief representative.

Another reason art historians may disregard monarchical portraiture is the wide breach between its subjects and the accepted symbol of feminine modernity, the prostitute. T.J. Clark posits, “That the courtesan was thought to be a main representative of modernity in the 1860s is hardly in need of demonstration: every second book of gossip or sociology has the same story to tell.”

Gossip surrounding the figure of the prostitute centered on the question of identification, for many prostitutes emulated so effectively the fashions and habits of the haute bourgeoisie as to render them indistinguishable from their respectable peers. Under Clark’s analysis, this ambiguity reflects the blurring of social boundaries in Paris, a context that artists embedded within the bodies of courtesans.

S. Hollis Clayson accounts for the ubiquity of prostitutes within avant-garde French painting of the nineteenth century by aligning the profession with Charles Baudelaire’s interpretation of modernity. Baudelaire described modernity as “the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable,” and Clayson interprets the prostitute as satisfying both sides of this paradox. While an encounter with a courtesan is necessarily temporary, Clayson describes the figure as a type of reified commodity, therefore resolving the seemingly antithetical modern qualities canonized by Baudelaire. As interpretations such as these

40 Clark, The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers, 103.
41 Clayson, Painted Love: Prostitution in French Art of the Impressionist Era.
have guided the social history of nineteenth-century art for the last thirty years, the exclusion of queenly portraits from consideration of modern femininity is to be expected. Since the body of a queen was unavailable to everyone except her husband, she can even be seen as the opposite of the prostitute, and therefore, the opposite of modernity.

Nevertheless, Elisabeth’s portraits raise important issues of social ambiguity. The ubiquitous presence of prostitution in Vienna was a cause for concern among many of the city’s prominent modernist writers, but the disintegration of aristocratic status was also a source of anxiety. The Habsburg court attempted to combat this through the strict application of hereditary rank for admission to imperial audience and governmental positions, yet Elisabeth rejected this practice in the selection of her ladies-in-waiting. Only women from the most ancient noble families should have belonged to Elisabeth’s intimate circles, but the empress instead chose her companions based upon their beauty and ability to keep pace with her rigorous daily walks. These women were always members of the nobility, but more often from minor aristocratic houses rather than the well-established lines who typically enjoyed this type of access to the monarchs. Elisabeth’s circumvention of court etiquette undermined the social authority of the aristocracy by developing new criteria for feminine worth. Her cultivation of these


45 Elisabeth especially prized women whose looks resembled her own, as she occasionally allowed such women to stand in for her during public appearances. Hamann, The Reluctant Empress, 135.
criteria is most concentrated within her portraiture, thereby inserting these ambiguous
issues of social status into the fabric of her representations.

In addition to its perceived irrelevance to these central social concerns, limited
treatment of nineteenth-century aristocratic portraiture stems from a disciplinary bias
against the genre, whose compositional sources appear to have stagnated for several
centuries. Its primary visual resources were developed by the *ancien régime*, the French
political system whose 1793 demise Clark cites as the beginning of modernism.46 The
canonical visualization of this regime is Hyacinthe Rigaud’s 1701 portrait of King Louis
XIV, which remained the standard for monarchical portraits (fig. 13). Louis XIV’s
elaborate costume, monumental architectural setting, and haughty expression appear
virtually unchanged in Winterhalter’s 1843 state portrait of the British Prince Albert (fig.
14). Such archaic iconography violates what Alois Riegl described as the cult of age-
value. According to Riegl, art historians in the early twentieth century saw art works as
singular actors within human history.47 An object occupied a specific, irreplaceable
moment in the course of artistic history; after this moment had passed, the “natural”
decay of the object should proceed unchecked, with prevention of its premature demise
the only acceptable interference. Riegl calls this preference for an arc of artistic
development and decay the *Kunstwollen*, or aesthetic impulse, of the early twentieth
century.48 He writes, “The cult of age-value condemns not only every willful destruction

46 See “Painting in the Year 2,” in T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*
(New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999).
47 Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin (1928),” in *The Nineteenth-
Century Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przybyski, 56-59, (New York,
48 For more on Riegl and the Vienna School of Art History, see Margaret Rose Olin, *Forms of
Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992),
of monuments as a desecration of all-consuming nature but in principle also every effort at conservation, as restoration is an equally unjustified interference with nature." Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin (1928)," 59. The preservation of aristocratic iconography within portraiture, such as demonstrated by the parallels between the work of Rigaud and Winterhalter, was a perpetuation that disrupted the aesthetic preferences of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art historians. This prejudice remains even eighty years later in the critique of Gisèle Freund, who attributed the demise of miniature painting to its preservation of aristocratic elements: “Even though it was popular among the middle classes for a time, it still retained its aristocratic elements, and eventually, as the middle classes became more secure, it died out.” To Freund, the maintenance of aristocratic iconography was a sign of insecurity, one that had to be wiped away for a medium to progress.

With such criteria, it is unsurprising that Winterhalter was dismissed by contemporaries as a “poor parody of Watteau,” and that his artwork has received limited scholarly attention in intervening years. Assessments of Winterhalter’s oeuvre have emphasized the commercial aspect of his production, above all his ability to pander to the vanity of his elite clientele. Such an appraisal is not without legitimacy. However, in focusing on the formulaic aspects of Winterhalter’s portraiture, we overlook the spaces where he subverted the genre. Nowhere is this more apparent than the
portraits of Elisabeth, where breaches between the tenets of monarchical imagery and her alluring appearance unsettle our expectations of the genre.

Perhaps the primary failure of queenly portraiture to satisfy the demands of modernity is its inability to suitably individualize its subjects. Simmel emphasized the importance of individuality for the modern subject, but this quality was traditionally denied to queens. Prior to the nineteenth century, queens were punished for any demonstration of personal concerns outside of their responsibilities as queens. For example, Mary Sheriff ascribes the public outcry over Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun’s 1783 portrait of Marie-Antoinette en chemise (fig. 11) to the work’s portrayal of the queen as an individual: “The queen pose[d] publicly as a private individual, a fashionable woman. ...What Marie-Antoinette failed to realize...was that a queen could not do as she pleased.”54 The French public condemned the painting’s representation of Marie-Antoinette’s private pleasures, especially the sensuality of her transparent, English-produced muslin, neither of which had any place in a portrait of a queen consort.

Three-quarters of a century later, these considerations had eased slightly. Individualized portrayals of queens were permissible, so long as they did not serve as the primary representation of the monarch. Winterhalter’s portrayal of Queen Victoria with unbound hair and exposed décolletage (fig. 15) offered a romantic vision of the young queen, but this portrait was commissioned as a gift for Prince Albert and not intended for public circulation. Both the British monarchs and the French Emperor Napoléon III and Empress Eugénie authorized public distribution of carte-de-visite portraits of their families (figs. 16 and 17), but these depictions were designed to highlight the similarities

54 Sheriff, An Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art, 168.
between the imperial families and their bourgeois publics. Though offering photographic likenesses of the individual queens, the cartes downplayed the unique identities of Eugénie and Victoria in order to resonate more closely with the typical clientele of carte-de-visite studios.

Occasionally, however, portraits depicting a more individualized Empress Eugénie aroused suspicion among her French public. For example, Alison McQueen attributes the governmental rejection of a sculptural portrait bust produced by Marcello (fig. 18) to the confidence, authority, and power exuded by the representation, which “did not conform to the well-known acquiescent representations of Eugénie.” McQueen surmises that the sculpture of an individualized, authoritative empress would have caused some anxiety among the all-male city council that would have been its primary audience. Eugénie appears to have recognized these constraints on her public portrayal, as she reserved more personalized depictions of herself for her private homes and acquaintances.

The continued distrust of individualized queens points to the problematic visualization of public women, be they queens or prostitutes, in the nineteenth century. Both classes of women occupied space in the public sphere, and the sexual activity of female consorts was similarly public, as their primary responsibility was to produce a male heir for their husband’s throne. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the continued relevance of imperial dynasties was less certain. The destruction of the ancien régime and the continental revolutions of 1848 challenged the assumption that ruling

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56 McQueen, *Empress Eugénie and the Arts*, 119.
57 The House of Habsburg in particular was known for its fertility. See Yonan, *Empress Maria Theresa and the Politics of Habsburg Imperial Art*. 
families would retain their positions of power, thereby questioning the need for a long line of male heirs. If there were no longer a throne to which this offspring would ascend, the responsibilities of an empress became equally indefinite. In his announcement of their engagement, Napoléon III promised that his wife would be “the ornament of the throne,” suggesting that her role was confined to public appearances. 58 These were also central to Elisabeth’s responsibilities, but she managed to circumnavigate this requirement. The fact that Elisabeth was even granted agency with regard to these activities reveals an easing of the restrictions that allowed for a redefinition of the role of queen.

The ambiguities of their position allowed nineteenth-century consorts to create their own vision of their role, and indeed for women in general. Such behavior is evident in Elisabeth’s life as early as 1858, as the significant age gap between her third and fourth children Rudolf (b. 1858) and Marie Valerie (b. 1868) evinces an indifference to the responsibility of producing male heirs. 59 On the contrary, the birth of Rudolf marked the beginning of Elisabeth’s withdrawal from imperial life, a choice that reveals the great difference between Elisabeth and her peers, most notably Empress Eugénie. Following the birth of the Prince Imperial, the more civically minded Eugénie played a prominent role in both domestic and international French politics. 60 With the exception of her involvement with the Compromise of 1867, which established the dual monarchy of

58 McQueen, Empress Eugénie and the Arts: Politics and Visual Culture in the Nineteenth Century, 77.
59 Though Rudolf secured the succession, Franz Joseph was anxious for a second son. After giving birth to Rudolf, Elisabeth eschewed sexual activity for supposed medical reasons. Hamann notes that this may also have been part of Elisabeth’s strategy to control the relationship with her husband. See Hamann, The Reluctant Empress, 116-7.
60 For a nuanced analysis of Eugénie’s political activity and its visual counterpart, see McQueen, Empress Eugénie and the Arts: Politics and Visual Culture in the Nineteenth Century.
Austria-Hungary, Elisabeth was increasingly absent from the Viennese court and paid little notice to contemporary political events.

Instead, Elisabeth focused almost exclusively on perfecting her appearance, an interest dramatized in the state portraits produced by Winterhalter. This refusal to subsume her personality and unique interests to the traditions of imperial portraiture reveals both an unprecedented agency on the part of Elisabeth that goes beyond her authority as an empress, as well as a rupture within the development of female portraiture. To better understand how Elisabeth became an agent for this change, it is necessary to closely examine her biography, for it was her idiosyncratic personality that made her sensitive to the peculiarities and possibilities in the role of queen consort.

THE UNEXPECTED EMPRESS

Though she occupied the most exalted position in the empire, Elisabeth always considered herself an outsider in Vienna. Such marginalization of a queen was not without precedent, as demonstrated by the French distrust of the Autrichienne Marie-Antoinette, but Elisabeth’s Bavarian nationality was not the source of her discomfort. Rather, it was Elisabeth’s unconventional upbringing that contributed to the difficulties she encountered upon her marriage to the Austrian emperor.

The role of empress was unexpectedly thrust upon Elisabeth, as her older sister Helene was originally intended to be Franz Joseph’s bride.61 Franz Joseph’s mother, Archduchess Sophie (1805-1872), was a daughter of the Wittelsbach Bavarian King Max I, and her desire to strengthen Austria’s Bavarian alliance prompted a search amongst the

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61 The biographical details for this section are taken from the chapter “Engagement in Bad Ischl” in Hamann’s Reluctant Empress.
daughters of her siblings for a suitable bride. She settled upon Helene, the oldest daughter of her sister Ludovika (1808-1892). As such, Helene was trained in the etiquette, languages, and devout Catholicism expected of a Habsburg empress.

Sophie and Ludovika planned the meeting of the young emperor and his bride-to-be on the occasion of Franz Joseph’s twenty-third birthday in August 1853 at the summer resort of Bad Ischl. Ludovika brought Elisabeth along with the hope that she would make a match with Franz Joseph’s younger brother Karl Ludwig. To everyone’s surprise, Franz Joseph preferred Elisabeth, and the two became engaged. Elisabeth’s family began hasty preparations for the April 1854 wedding and the requirements of her new life in Vienna.

The Viennese court could not have been more different from the comparatively provincial environment where Elisabeth was raised. Elisabeth’s family played a limited role in the royal circles of Munich, largely because of the inferior aristocratic status of her father. Elisabeth’s mother Ludovika was the only Wittelsbach princess to make a less than auspicious match. She married her second cousin Duke Max in Bavaria (1808-1888), a minor aristocrat whose ducal line had no official role at the Munich court. Though producing seven children, theirs was an unhappy marriage; Max spent the majority of his time living in their Munich palace while Ludovika raised the family at Possenhoffen, the family’s country estate on Lake Starnberg outside the capital.

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62 Archduchess Sophie was the primary political force behind the young Franz Joseph. See Hamann, The Reluctant Empress, 6-7.
63 This meeting has been mythologized in the Sissi films of the 1950s, but descriptions of the events within biographies by Hamann and Conte Corti suggest that Franz Joseph truly fell in love with Elisabeth at first sight. Both biographers take their accounts from the writings of Archduchess Sophie, who described the encounter in great detail within her diary and in letters to her other Wittelsbach sisters.
Members of the Viennese court referred to Possenhoffen as the “beggars’ household,” but it was Duke Max’s unorthodox behavior that received the most criticism. His education had not followed the normal course for an aristocratic young man; rather than private tutelage, Max attended school in the company of students his own age, followed by courses at the University of Munich. He surrounded himself with middle-class scholars and artists, an unconventional practice for a man of his rank in the early nineteenth-century. Max called this intellectual community his “Artusrunde,” or Round Table, and he published liberal editorials anonymously in local periodicals. He was popular within Munich for the circus spectacles that he hosted in the courtyard of the city palace, where he joined in horseback riding performances surrounded by clowns and gymnasts. Though an inconsistent presence in her life, Elisabeth’s own interest in horseback riding, gymnastics, and liberal politics can be attributed to her father’s influence.

Elisabeth was wrenched from her casual, family-centered existence to the Viennese court, where the shy behavior that had charmed Franz Joseph in Bad Ischl was ridiculed. She was uncomfortable speaking and appearing publicly, and she could manage only short, memorized speeches in languages other than German. Every activity was structured by rigid Spanish court ceremonial, an archaic code of conduct that used aristocratic rank to determine imperial access. Consequently, Elisabeth’s inferior pedigree only compounded the criticism she received for her awkward behavior. Though she now occupied the supreme rank of empress, before the marriage she was only a

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64 Hamann, *The Reluctant Empress*, 22.
65 Elisabeth eventually developed a talent for languages, becoming fluent in Hungarian, English, and Greek (both modern and classical). None of these languages were the primary forms of communication at the Viennese court, which (besides German) favored French, Italian, or Czech. Hamann interprets Elisabeth’s choice to learn these “less useful” languages as another act of defiance to the Viennese court.
Duchess in Bavaria, and would hardly have been granted admission to any court function if not for her mother’s Wittelsbach ties. Had Elisabeth attempted to behave according to the ceremonial demands of her new position, the aristocracy may have been more lenient; her failure to respond to this pressure earned instead an intractable resentment.

Elisabeth’s discomfort with the pomp of court life was unsurprising for a sixteen year old, especially when one considers how unusual it was for a woman of her age to occupy the role of empress. Most imperial brides marry an emperor-to-be, but Franz Joseph had ascended to the throne at an early age following the 1848 Revolution. Under normal circumstances, Elisabeth would have had years, even decades, to prepare for her role of empress within the setting of the imperial court, but instead she was forced to become the empress while also adjusting to her new role as wife. The marital dysfunction of her parents and her provincial upbringing had provided neither the history nor the skills to construct an imperial persona in the model of a traditional Habsburg empress. Her mother-in-law tried to offer guidance, but Elisabeth saw Archduchess Sophie’s advice as interference. Relations between the two women soured when the archduchess assumed, against the wishes of the empress, the principal role in the upbringing of Elisabeth’s first three children.66

Confined to a Viennese court where she was universally maligne, Elisabeth developed habits that compromised her health. She spent hours every day walking and horseback riding, physical strains only compounded by her constant dieting. By the fall of 1860, Elisabeth developed a severe cough, and court physicians recommended her immediate removal from Vienna for treatment in a warmer climate. This marked the

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66 This arrangement existed even before Elisabeth’s 1860-62 absence, as the imperial nursery was set up to adjoin Sophie’s apartments rather than the empress’s.
beginning of an eighteen-month absence; marital separation was not unknown to
Elisabeth, as she had witnessed such an arrangement between her own parents. However,
this extended absence on the part of an empress was unique among her peers, matched
only by Queen Victoria’s removal from society following the death of her husband,
Prince Albert.

This absence granted the empress greater self-confidence, as she now had a
bargaining point against Franz Joseph: her proven ability to leave the capital with little or
no warning. Elisabeth used this threat to exert more influence over her husband while
simultaneously pushing back against the authority of her mother-in-law. The empress’s
newfound power at court was bolstered by her increasing beauty, news of which
circulated across the continent by diplomatic visitors to Vienna. Whereas before
Elisabeth was often cowed by the criticism of her aristocratic circles, now she ignored
their rules entirely, choosing her own ladies in waiting and engaging in activities that
matched her own interests, especially her increasing fascination with Hungary.

Elisabeth’s devotion to Hungarian nationalism may have been a reaction against
the members of the Bohemian nobility within the Viennese court, as well as the aims of
Archduchess Sophie, who favored Bohemia over Hungary. While the Bohemian
aristocrats had remained loyal to the Habsburgs during the 1848 revolution, the
Hungarian nobility had supported the revolutionaries, even leading armies against the
crown. Bolstered by Russian troops, the Habsburg army brutally suppressed these
insurgents; many of the Hungarian noblemen were exiled or executed in 1849, their
ancestral lands confiscated, and Hungary was placed under military jurisdiction until

1865. This changed in 1867 with the *Ausgleich* (compromise) that created Austria-Hungary. The new constitutional monarchy granted equal status to Austria and Hungary within the Habsburg empire; this undermined the position of Bohemia, which was subsumed under the Austrian half rather than possessing its own national independence. To this day, Hungarians attribute this establishment of the dual monarchy to the intercession of the empress, who persuaded the emperor to embrace this more lenient approach to the Magyar population.

Following her political success in Hungary, Elisabeth increasingly retreated from the public sphere in order to pursue her intellectual and athletic hobbies. She spent her time composing poetry modeled after the work of the Romantic poet Heinrich Heine, studying languages, and above all, exercising. She was an accomplished horsewoman, and her wide travel in pursuit of ever more demanding hunts garnered her a reputation as one of the best equestrians in Europe. Elisabeth also practiced gymnastics, and beginning in the early 1860s, she installed parallel bars, rings, and monkey bars in every imperial residence. Her activity was innovative for the 1860s, as the idea of gymnastics for physical fitness did not become popular until the 1880s, and only truly widespread in the 1910s. This was such unusual behavior that the *Fremdenblatt* erroneously reported

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68 Elisabeth shared her poetry with only her most trusted family members, including her brother Karl Theodor, her daughter Marie Valerie, and her niece Marie Wallersee Larisch, but not her husband. She intended her work for posthumous publication after 1950; she stated that her complete oeuvre, which covered nearly six hundred printed pages, should be turned over to the Swiss federal president in 1951. Proceeds from its publication were to be given to “helpless children of political prisoners of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.” See Hamann’s chapter “Heine’s Disciple” in *The Reluctant Empress*, especially pages 282-5.

69 Elisabeth was known for her ability to maintain the same pace as her male counterparts in hunts, as well as her fearless approach to obstacles and jumps. See Hamann’s chapter “The Queen Rides to the Hounds” in *The Reluctant Empress*.

70 For an example of the type of exercises embraced by this system, see the woodcut illustrations in E Angerstein and G Echler, *Haus-Gymnastik Für Mädchen Und Frauen: Eine Anleitung Zu Körperlichen Übungen Für Gesunde Und Kranke Des Weiblichen Geschlechtes* (Berlin: Verlag von Th. Chr. Fr. Enslin
that the equipment was used by the emperor and the male members of his household rather than the empress.\textsuperscript{71}

No one could believe that a woman would engage in such vigorous physical activity, but for Elisabeth, this control over her body was essential to her visualization of femininity. Like a ballerina or a circus performer, Elisabeth trained her body to fulfill aesthetic standards beyond the realm of typical female beauty. To meet this demand, Elisabeth had to control her body, a desire especially evident in the special costume she designed for her daily exercises. Called “pantalettes,” these doeskin dresses designed to be worn without a petticoat for greater range of motion; the thin garments fit the empress so closely that she had to be sewn into them.\textsuperscript{72}

In donning this costume, Elisabeth became an embodiment of the qualities valued by traditional female portraiture, namely a celebration of tactile sensuality. Describing the dual function of the genre, Garb writes, “they...present a specific female figure for the beholder’s delectation while thematizing through the illusionistic devices of painting, the medium’s suitability for just such a task.”\textsuperscript{73} Though not a painting, Elisabeth’s costume achieves this illusion through the equivalence of its surface with her body. The tightly bound costume fit so closely as to reveal every aspect of her figure. The shape of her narrow waistline and willowy thighs was completely discernable beneath the thin layer of leather, an effect similar to travesty costumes worn by female ballerinas performing male roles. Though these costumes may have covered most of a dancer’s skin, they divulged

\textsuperscript{71} Fremdenblatt, 8 December 1864. Quoted in Hamann, The Reluctant Empress, 139.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 138. It appears that Elisabeth never wore this apparel outside of her palaces, though she certainly would have been seen wearing it by household staff and members of the court.
\textsuperscript{73} Garb, The Painted Face: Portraits of Women in France, 1814-1914, 39.
far more about the shape of her body. Elisabeth’s pantalettes exposed her body in a similar way, especially when compared to typical court apparel; aristocratic women may have worn low-cut gowns, but their full petticoats concealed their legs. On the contrary, Elisabeth’s costume left nothing to the imagination of the viewer. The leather material of the garment evokes a second skin, a supple tactility that invited the viewer to imagine contact with the flesh just below its layers.

The pantalettes showcased Elisabeth’s body in a manner unheard of for an empress, but they also built an inviolable barrier to her body. As she had to be sewn into it, the costume was especially difficult to remove. This encasing assumed the characteristics of a shell that armored the empress against contact with all but her most trusted intimates. The pantalettes therefore became an instrument of control for Elisabeth. Donning the costume allowed the exhibition of her inimitable body while simultaneously withholding her wasp-waisted form from all touch.

**CELEBRITY EXPOSED AND CONCEALED**

The paradoxical combination of intense familiarity with Elisabeth’s body and its physical inaccessibility links her portraiture to the development of celebrity. A relatively new concept in the 1860s, celebrity had ambiguous implications for absolute monarchs; they were representatives of this new phenomenon, while also serving as examples for the type of fame that it had replaced. Above all, celebrities were acclaimed for their

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individual personalities. As absolute monarchs were wary of appearing as anything other than dignified and deserving inheritors of their thrones, celebrity seemed an unsuitable compromise. For Elisabeth, however, this celebration of individuality and exteriority aligned with her own interests. While celebrity proved a stumbling block for the depiction of other queens, for Elisabeth this focus on individuality became another opportunity to direct her own representation.

Fred Inglis dates the advent of celebrity to the mid-eighteenth century, when the idea of fame replaced the archaic notion of renown.\(^{75}\) Prior to the eighteenth century, an office rather than an individual earned renown; celebrity developed when honor shifted from the position to the person occupying it. Inglis uses British monarchs to illustrate this distinction. The sixteenth-century parades that honored Queen Elizabeth I may appear to celebrate her as an individual, but, in fact, they paid tribute to the sanctified office of queen rather than her specific person. In contrast, by the early nineteenth century the Prince of Wales became known far more for his excessive lifestyle than any divinely ordained right to rule. According to Inglis, celebrity is also marked by the broad knowledge of an individual’s personal life, despite limited access to the actual individual.

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Here, Lord Byron serves as an exemplar, as his flirtations and sexual dalliances were subjects of conversation amongst people with whom he would never come into contact.\(^{76}\)

This shift away from renown toward celebrity had unfortunate consequences for a nineteenth-century absolute monarch like Franz Joseph. For though he desired to maintain an inscrutable position as the leader of his nation, he had to contend with an increasingly unsanctified demand by the public for intimate knowledge of his person. Reproduced in weekly journals, the banal details of the emperor’s daily activities undermined the austere façade of divine right essential to his post-revolutionary government. In spite of these ambiguities, Franz Joseph maintained confidence in his absolutist privilege. Elisabeth, however, was less convinced by the rights of aristocracy, or even their future.\(^{77}\) It is perhaps for this reason that she turned increasingly to imagery of celebrities rather than aristocrats as models for her own vision of femininity.

An example of celebrity stemming from actions rather than office was readily available to Elisabeth in her younger sister, Queen Marie of the Two Sicilies and Naples (1841-1925). Marie captured continental attention for her opposition to Giuseppe Garibaldi, the leader of Italy’s unification movement that ultimately dissolved her husband’s kingdom. She married the Duke of Calabria in February 1859; her father-in-law died within the year, leaving Marie’s new husband to ascend the throne as King Francis II. When Garibaldi’s army threatened Naples in 1860, Marie and her husband took refuge in the coastal fortress of Gaeta, eighty kilometers north. The armies of Victor

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\(^{77}\) Elisabeth demonstrated an increasing distrust of monarchies, a sentiment evinced by her choice to transfer a large part of her wealth to the banking House of Rothschild in Switzerland in the case of exile. She praised Switzerland as a “bulwark of liberty” and considered its republican government more secure than a monarchy. See Hamann, *The Reluctant Empress*, 283.
Emmanuel II bombarded the fortress for nearly six months between 1860 and 1861, during which the nineteen-year-old Marie was distinguished for her bravery. She rallied their troops, cared for the wounded, sacrificed her own food, and dared the attackers to come within range of the fortress’s cannons. Though the couple eventually retreated to an exile in Rome, Marie was known across Europe as the “heroine of Gaeta” for what became known as “the last stand of the Bourbons.”

Marie’s combination of beauty, nobility, and passionate activity exemplified the type of celebrity canonized by the bourgeoisie and aristocracy alike. However, the visualization of this ideal remained unrealized, as evidenced by an unfinished portrait of the young queen begun by Winterhalter between 1860 and 1861 (fig. 19). This awkward painting demonstrates the difficulties of representing the celebrity monarch, complexities that would be resolved in Elisabeth’s portraits four years later.

As the artist was living in Paris while Marie was trapped in Italy, he most likely relied upon photographs as a basis for her likeness (perhaps figure 20). Winterhalter depicts Marie in three-quarter format with her head turned to the right. The loose brushstrokes of her hair makes its styling difficult to discern, but it appears to be braided into a wreath, perhaps a fantasy on her photograph’s laurel crown. Her gown is the least finished aspect of the painting, but the initial design shows a formal white ball gown with a tulle shawl. A double-strand of pearls at Marie’s neck hangs down to reveal a cross at her breast, a reference to her status as a Catholic monarch.

79 Hamann, The Reluctant Empress, 98.
Though attributed to Winterhalter, the painting does not resemble his typical portraits. This could be a result of its unfinished state, though the portrait’s most finished areas are also the most uneven. While the gown, torso, and arms remain ghostly outlines, Marie’s face is fully realized, and it bears little likeness to the subject. The nose is elongated to a nearly bulbous and hooked point, while her mouth appears overly small and crooked, especially on the lower right side. Her thick eyebrows give Marie a masculine appearance at odds with the delicate hand that holds her tulle wrap below.

Close inspection of this area suggests that a second artist may have painted over Winterhalter’s original canvas (fig. 21), which would explain the inelegance of the right side of Marie’s face. The left side features the glowing complexion typical of Winterhalter’s female subjects, but the right side has layers of paint that smudge and distort her features. This is especially evident under her mouth, but also between her left eye and eyebrow. Here, an isosceles triangle of green and deep red paint thickens the eyebrow, creating the overgrown effect that so unbalances the portrait. While this could be explained also by Winterhalter’s choice to use photography rather than producing the portrait from life, it appears that the artist might have discarded the canvas, leaving a studio assistant to finish at his own discretion.

Marie’s ungainly appearance is not the only element that distinguishes this canvas from Winterhalter’s typical portrait practice. Winterhalter rarely depicted his subjects outside of a studio setting, but here Marie appears standing before a seascape of Naples. Mount Vesuvius smokes in the background, while the planet Venus sparkles brightly above her head. This dramatic setting is surely meant to evoke her recent history.

80 To date no infrared photography has been performed on the painting.
The seascape may also reference a portrait of another Neapolitan ex-queen: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres’s 1814 portrait of Caroline Murat (fig. 22).\textsuperscript{81} Caroline, the youngest of Napoléon I’s three sisters, married Napoléon’s aide-de-camp Joachim Murat, whom Napoléon established as king of the Two Sicilies and Naples in 1808. Known for her devotion to her husband and their four children, Caroline also had a reputation for political acumen; the early-nineteenth-century Austrian diplomat Klemens von Metternich called Caroline the “true king of Naples,” as Napoléon had granted succession rights to his sister above his brother-in-law.\textsuperscript{82}

Produced the year before Caroline and Joachim were forcibly removed from Naples by anti-Napléonic troops, Ingres’s portrait suggests Caroline’s political abilities. He depicts Caroline within the Neapolitan palace, leaning against a table and offering a steady gaze to the viewer. The bay of Naples and a smoking Mount Vesuvius are visible through the window behind her. As noted by Carol Ockman, the details of the interior paired with the overall composition recall Ingres’s 1804 portrait \textit{Bonaparte as First Consul}, suggesting an equivalence between the abilities of brother and sister.\textsuperscript{83} Similar to her brother’s exile, Caroline was also forbidden to live anywhere south of Trieste for fear that she would somehow reclaim control of the Neapolitan duchy.

\textsuperscript{81} Though Ingres’s painting was missing from 1814 until 1987, it is likely that the painting’s composition was familiar, seeing that its subject was a well-known member of the Bonaparte family and Ingres was still living at the time. See Carol Ockman, \textit{Ingres’s Eroticized Bodies: Retracing the Serpentine Line}, Yale Publications in the History of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), Gary Tinterow, Philip Conisbee, and Hans Naef, \textit{Portraits by Ingres: Image of an Epoch} (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1999). For preparatory drawings for this portrait available in 1860, see Georges Vigne, \textit{Dessins D'ingres: Catalogue Raisonné Des Dessins Du Musée De Montauban} (Paris: Gallimard, Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995).

\textsuperscript{82} Ockman, \textit{Ingres’s Eroticized Bodies}, 43-44.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 45.
The similarities between the Ingres’s and Winterhalter’s paintings offer insight as to the younger artist’s choice to produce such a painting without an explicit commission.\textsuperscript{84} In addition to her appeal as a contemporary person of interest, the portrait of Marie gave Winterhalter the opportunity to produce a Salon submission that highlighted his considerable talent as a portraitist while simultaneously referencing both Bonapartist history and the popular living artist Ingres. Its citation of Ingres’s earlier painting might have held special appeal for his imperial patrons Napoléon III and Eugénie, not to mention the Salon critics, who analyzed every painting for a reference to artwork of the past. Despite its allusions to the First Empire, a portrait of the deposed Neapolitan queen would have been politically unacceptable in the Second Empire. It was the French-supported Piedmontese army that barricaded Marie and her husband at Gaeta. The state-sponsored Salon could potentially have rejected a portrait that celebrated this enemy of the French. For these reasons, it is probable that Winterhalter abandoned the portrait to his workshop.

In addition to these political considerations, Winterhalter may have discarded the portrait of Marie because of the difficulty of properly depicting both her monarchical status and her celebrity, a struggle also apparent within Ingres’s portrait of Caroline Murat. Murat possesses no attributes of a queen. Her apparel, though luxurious, does not emphasize her nobility. It is only in her assertive bearing that the viewer has a sense of Caroline’s power. Winterhalter depicts Marie in a far less authoritative position. While Caroline stands within the royal palace, Marie is outdoors. She looks away from the viewer, her dreamy expression suggesting melancholy. Her pose anticipates the

\textsuperscript{84} The painting is not included in Franz Wild’s catalogue of Winterhalter’s paintings, suggesting that it was uncommissioned. Wild’s list is reprinted in Ormond and Blackett-Ord’s 1987 catalogue.
arrangement of Winterhalter’s 1864 portrait of Madame Rimsky-Korsakov (fig. 23). Rimsky-Korsakov was one of the most prominent women at court, known for her beauty, theatrical fashion, and wit. Rimsky-Korsakov’s coquettishly modest placement of her arm seems incompatible on the body of a “warrior queen.” This is particularly evident when compared with a photograph of Marie taken in the year following the Battle of Gaeta. Perhaps to capitalize on her newfound fame, Marie poses before a studio setting of ramparts with cannons and the Bay of Naples behind her (fig. 24). Her grim expression challenges anyone who doubts the right of the Bourbons to rule in Naples. The difference between the two portraits reveals how Winterhalter’s painting fails to encapsulate the most distinguishing aspects of Marie’s persona.

A certain symmetry results from pairing Ingres’s 1814 canvas with Winterhalter’s 1860 portrait of Marie, as the two women bookend the Bourbon monarchy in nineteenth-century Italy: Caroline Murat’s portrait marks the return of the Bourbons, while Marie’s illustrates their final demise. In both paintings, Mount Vesuvius acts as a metaphor for the tempestuous personalities of the subjects. Caroline Murat was part of a circle of Napoléonist intellectuals known for its artistic patronage as well as its outrageous behavior, whereas Marie became infamous in the years following the Battle of Gaeta for an extramarital affair, which resulted in an illegitimate child. The outsized personalities of both women interfered with their visual representation, as neither Winterhalter nor Ingres could determine the best way to depict their particular sensibilities as well as their unique status as monarchs.

None of these insecurities are apparent in Winterhalter’s state portrait of Elisabeth (fig. 2), where the artist has abandoned all concerns for depicting her as an empress.
Instead of her role, Elisabeth’s dynamic body is the central features of the painting. The tiara and coronation robe of Eugénie’s state portrait are here replaced with diamond star hairpins and a gown of effervescent, spangled tulle. In bypassing the ambiguities of representing an absolute monarch, Winterhalter ceded control of the portraits to Elisabeth. They record her triumph in creating a peerless body, a unique skill that distinguished her among both the nobility and celebrity classes.

CONCLUSION

The representation of individuality makes these paintings, as well as other images of Elisabeth, critical to art historical understanding of femininity in the nineteenth century. Baudelaire’s description of modernity as the ephemeral counterpart to the perceived eternal nature of art seems especially applicable to images of Elisabeth. As portraits of an empress, Elisabeth’s images convey a sense of permanence associated with ancient ruling houses like the Habsburg’s. Her desire to fix her body in its youth, both through exercise and her control of its representation, also links to Baudelaire’s criteria of immutability. Nevertheless, the brittle nature of Elisabeth’s body and the Habsburg monarchy cannot be denied. The empire was soon to be “the world of yesterday,” as eulogized by Stefan Zweig, and Elisabeth’s body would eventually break down and resist the exercise that was so important to her daily life.85 Elisabeth’s refusal to be photographed helped to maintain the illusion of eternal youth, but even this practice eventually proved futile. Because they were forced to base their likenesses on outdated portraits, lithographers produced anachronistic family portraits in which the empress

85 By the 1890s she could neither horseback ride nor engage in the long walks that had been central to her exercise routine.
appeared younger than her children. This is seen in an 1875 portrait of the imperial family produced to celebrate the birth of the first grandchild, Gisela’s baby girl, (fig. 25). Gisela holds her infant daughter, but she appears to be the oldest woman in the group.

The ephemeral and the eternal coexist in Elisabeth’s portraits, positioning this fusion as a template for the examination of a female struggle with modernity. Appropriation of her images to produce family portraits in the early 1860s documents an attempt to force Elisabeth to perform the tasks of imperial consort, even if only within the visual sphere. Elisabeth’s consumption of carte-de-viste suggests her own understanding of the mutability of her position, as well as her desire to model her representation on a more contemporary idea of beauty rather than that of her noble predecessors. Finally, the psychiatric overtones apparent in Winterhalter’s oval painting, as well as Anton Romako’s later portrait, indicate Elisabeth’s engagement with contemporary culture and anxieties over femininity. The embeddedness of these supposedly elite images within contemporary life reveals their enormous potential for a deeper understanding of the social history of art in the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER TWO

The Aura of the Empress and Family Narrative in Imperial Photolithographs

INTRODUCTION

Upon their arrival in Ludwig Angerer’s Viennese studio, visitors encountered a thick, blue Musteralbum, or sample album, filled with myriad photographs produced by the court photographer. Every backdrop, framing technique, and variety of pose available to Angerer’s clients are represented here, but the collection also offers glimpses of the elite clientele of his studio. Organized alphabetically, the identities of Angerer’s portraits serve as an index to the aristocracy of nineteenth-century Vienna, all of whom followed the example of the imperial Habsburg family in trusting Angerer to appropriately capture their likenesses, along with those of their offspring.

The Habsburgs themselves are the first portraits to greet the viewer in the opening pages of the album (fig. 26). Emperor Franz Joseph wears a variety of military costumes, and appears alternately standing, seated at a desk, and in profile. After this series of portraits of Franz Joseph, the focus shifts to Empress Elisabeth, with the spouses appearing to acknowledge each other briefly in the third row of the first page. Franz Joseph offers the photographer a profile of the right side of his face, while in the photograph beside him, Elisabeth turns to reveal her left side. Facing each other, the Kaiserpaar, or imperial couple, offer a mute demonstration of their marital union.

Tellingly, there is more interaction between Franz Joseph and Elisabeth within these two separate, solitary photographs than in the rest of the album. Though they

86 The albums include the name and title of each sitter in a list to the left of the photographs. See figures 26, 27, and 28.
appear together in the large family photograph in the bottom right of figure 26, this is the only photograph in which Elisabeth agreed to pose with her husband and children. The following pages of the album include portraits of Franz Joseph alone or with his two children, 87 but a photographic representation of the nuclear imperial family was not an option.

Elisabeth’s refusal to participate in photographic family portraits becomes even more curious when one continues to page through the album. On nearly every subsequent page, carte after carte feature husbands and wives, mothers and children, and entire families, all happily posing together. For example, on plate 4 (fig. 27), Angerer included a double portrait of Franz Joseph’s brother Karl Ludwig and his wife Maria Annunciata, followed by a carte of the couple holding the infant Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Such group portraits are standard throughout the rest of the album, as demonstrated by plate 65 (fig. 28), where the Hohenlohe-Eszterhazy family pose wearing traditional alpine garb before a landscape background featuring an expansive lake and mountain vista.

In their costumes and postures throughout Angerer’s album, these archdukes and countesses appear no differently than the middle-class clientele who patronized studios like these across the world. Carte-de-visite photography was known for its conformity of representation: though the subject could choose which attitude to adopt for the photograph, the number of positions was somewhat limited. As a result, a prince might appear no differently than a banker, while a salesclerk could mimic the appearance of a banker.

87 Franz Joseph and Elisabeth had four children, Sophie (1855-1857), Gisela (1856-1932), Rudolf (1858-1889), and Marie Valerie (1868-1924). As Sophie was already deceased, she is absent from all of the photographs. On plate 3, a very young Marie Valerie appears alone or with her siblings, but not with her father.
diplomat. Geoffrey Batchen suggests that the banality of these images, which were produced by the million between 1854 and the early twentieth century, shifted the burden of creativity away from the photographer to the viewers.  

Most aficionados collected a wide array of portraits, including family members, celebrated actresses, politicians, and rulers. Holding these calling-card sized images within the palms of their hands or assembling them into albums, the infinite permutations of individuals allowed the viewer to make new connections between the different personalities.

European monarchs capitalized on the capacity for imagination provided by the carte-de-visite, as their participation in this cultural trend reduced the distance between ruler and subject. As argued by Elizabeth Anne McCauley and John Plunkett, rulers like Emperor Napoléon III of France and Queen Victoria of Britain posed for carte-de-visite portraits as a strategy to project an image of bourgeois domesticity to their subjects. In portraits produced by A.A.E. Disdéri and John Mayall, Napoléon appears in the guise of a businessman, while Queen Victoria dotes upon Prince Albert like a typical bourgeois housewife (figs. 16 and 17). They provide an opportunity for rulers to portray themselves and their family as unaffected middle-class citizens who just happen to be monarchs.

Furthermore, these photographs granted access to the private life of the imperial family. Compiled within albums or displayed in homes, this mass production and distribution allowed the monarchs to multiply their presence across their empires.

Such a manifestation within the private spaces of his subjects would have been especially desirable for Franz Joseph. The Habsburg emperor ruled a vast region of

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89 McCauley, A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte De Visite Portrait Photograph.
90 Ibid., 83.
Central Europe; stretching from Innsbruck to Romania and extending into both Poland and Yugoslavia, the subjects of the empire spoke eleven different official languages and harbored a broad variety of nationalist claims. In order to maintain his authority over this heterogeneous terrain, Franz Joseph had to persuade his multinational subjects to embrace a common identity under the Habsburg monarchy. Images were an important part of this strategy. Historian Daniel Unowsky notes that by the end of the nineteenth-century, portraits of the emperor “had become ubiquitous features in mansions, middle-class homes, and peasant huts, reminders of the benevolent imperial personage, the father-figure who aimed to satisfy the needs of all of his faithful subjects.”

Representations of Franz Joseph and Elisabeth in the attitude of their middle-class subjects would encourage such a response, especially when complemented with Franz Joseph’s self-presentation as a symbol of national unity through his participation in religious pageants and national tours.

However, beginning from the early years of their 1854 marriage and continuing until her assassination in 1898, Elisabeth avoided the public appearances Unowsky identifies as central to Franz Joseph’s relationship with his subjects. Photography would have been an apparatus with which to compensate for Elisabeth’s absence across the widely flung regions of the Habsburg Empire, but the empress refused to cooperate. Elisabeth clearly had no aversion to the camera; the great number of solitary portraits taken by Angerer and several other carte-de-visite photographers in Vienna and Munich attest to Elisabeth’s delight in posing in different costumes. In addition to more

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92 Unowsky discusses Franz Joseph’s use of public appearances with a focus on the 1890s.
traditional portraits of Elisabeth holding a book or seated in an upholstered chair, she also posed on horseback, brushing a favorite poodle, and framed by the shutters of a faux-window (figs. 29-32). Yet, in none of her portraits does she perform her role as consort to the emperor, suggesting a special defiance of the demand for imperial group portraits.

While there exists no documentation of Elisabeth’s refusal to be photographed with her family, Franz Joseph’s willingness to appear alongside the children implies that such an opportunity was available to Elisabeth, but that she had declined. Furthermore, the ubiquity of such portrait groupings among their aristocratic peers, as well as the importance of family portraits in the history of Habsburg representation,\(^93\) implies that Elisabeth must have deliberately refused to take part in this visual documentation. Her choice compromised the ability of the court to present an image of the Habsburg family as cohesive, fertile, and stable, which further undermined the central goal of the court to promote Habsburg ruling authority.

Mass-reproduced, inexpensive photolithographs provided the perfect solution for these missing family portraits.\(^94\) More than any political demonstration or religious pageant, photolithographs offered subjects intimate and permanent access to their monarchs. These images, whether inserted into an album with other cartes or tacked to the wall of their homes, provided a daily reminder of Habsburg authority.\(^95\)

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\(^93\) This is especially true during the reign of Maria Theresa. For a study of Maria Theresa’s use of family portraiture to secure her position see Yonan, *Empress Maria Theresa and the Politics of Habsburg Imperial Art.*

\(^94\) For catalog information on these photolithographs see Fischer-Westhauser and Mraz, *Elisabeth Von Österreich: Wunschbilder Oder Die Kunst Der Retouche.*

Photolithographs countered gossip that surrounded the empress and her incompatibility with court life by inventing a new image of Elisabeth as ideal wife and mother (fig. 33). Here, Elisabeth sits with her head bowed deferentially to her husband; this gesture also projects a protective glance over Rudolf and Gisela, who play at her knees. Imperial domestic bliss exudes from the image, covering over the significant rifts between Elisabeth and Franz Joseph, misunderstandings that had contributed to the empress’s decision to leave Vienna for nearly eighteen months.

Produced during Elisabeth’s time away from the empire, the empress’s presence within these images counteracted her physical absence from public life. Lithographers based their representation of each figure on photographs, thereby harnessing the power of photography to evoke the real body of a subject. Roland Barthes describes this as the noeme of photography, or, its capacity to point to something that has been.96 For Barthes, the sentimental power of photography comes from the "emanation of the referent," the physical trace of the real body. As a result, photolithographs of Elisabeth evoke her actual body, covering over the fact that she was far removed from the empire.97

Following Barthes’ interpretation, the photographic medium emerges as crucial to these representations, both for its ability to literally reproduce the presence of the imperial family, as well as its fulfillment of the Habsburg political agenda. For though the final images are lithographs, their appearance depends on the manipulation of photographic technologies. Artists could have chosen contemporary paintings as models

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for their representations of the imperial family or developed an original likeness of Franz Joseph, Elisabeth, and their children. Instead, every example relies on photographic models.

Paradoxically, the use of photography undermines the illusionistic quality of the photolithograph. Returning to figure 33, close scrutiny of the image reveals that it is proportionately inaccurate. Franz Joseph’s head is too large for his body, and the space occupied by Gisela between her mother and her brother is impossibly narrow. The collapse of the image under such attention reveals its brittle nature, and begs the question of why artists insisted on using photography in their representations.

This choice suggests that the artists desired its presence more than they feared an artistically unsuitable final product. For though the photolithographs fail to provide the mimetic realism that afforded photography its broad appeal in the nineteenth century, they did offer the indexical relationship between a photograph and its subject central to the medium’s claim of objectivity. These objects presented an optical illusion to viewers, a trick complementary to the optical parlor entertainment mined by Jonathan Crary in his study of modernism. Instead of the seamless play of images creating a simulacrum of movement or three-dimensionality, photolithographers employed the medium to construct a simulacrum of Elisabeth, a photographic image of the empress without relationship to the empress herself.

Although objects like these are often overlooked by both art and cultural historians, this chapter reveals the important role they played in the construction of ruling authority. Twentieth-century theorists like Barthes, Walter Benjamin, and Jean

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Baudrillard built their photographic philosophies on photographs alone, but in extending their conclusions to photolithographs, I hope to illuminate the appeal of photographic manipulation as a tool in imperial propaganda as early as the 1860s. I first position the photolithographs as instruments for the endorsement of the Habsburg family across Central Europe. I analyze their subject matter alongside the contemporary concerns of Franz Joseph’s political advisors, thereby demonstrating the important role that these objects of visual culture played in the advancement of the emperor’s supranational agenda. Secondly, I insert these objects into twentieth-century theorizations of photography developed by Barthes, Benjamin, and Baudrillard. As promoters of aura and simulacra of the imperial family, the photolithographs offer a means to analyze how these ideas of photography were at play even in the first decades of the medium’s existence. Finally, I examine Elisabeth’s status within these objects and the crucial role that her female presence performed for the family narrative enacted in each photolithograph. Above all, I will argue for the critical role of photography in defining national experience of the imperial family, suggesting that the medium became a tool to bind together the heterogeneous elements of the Habsburg nation.

PART I: IMPERIAL AUTHORITY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC AUTHENTICITY

Franz Joseph faced significant challenges following the 1848 revolutions. He needed to convince a rebellious population to submit to his authority and return their loyalty to the Habsburg monarchy. Unowsky illustrates the use of public appearances to encourage this allegiance, particularly in the early decades of Franz Joseph’s reign. Franz Joseph wanted to appeal to his subjects as broadly as possible: public appearances, along
with imagery that brought him into the homes of his subjects, allowed him to accomplish this goal.

While Unowsky focuses on solitary portraits of the emperor from the 1890s, the photolithographs of the 1860s suggest a much earlier development of this phenomenon. If by the 1890s Franz Joseph was considered a father-figure across his empire, then the photolithographs laid the groundwork for this reputation, as they document his activity as a father. The images negotiate several obstacles, including the paradox between Franz Joseph’s exceptional status as the divinely appointed Habsburg leader and his desire to appear approachable. These tensions play out on the surface of the photolithographs, which highlight a fragile balance between the desire of the sovereign to assert his unique privilege to rule and a popular demand for access to the imperial family.

**Intimacy in a Time of Court Etiquette**

Franz Joseph appears firmly in control of his family in Emil von Hartitzsch’s ca. 1860 photolithograph (fig. 33).\(^{99}\) Centrally placed, his lean, youthful frame towers two heads above the seated Elisabeth and their children, occupying the point of this triangular composition. Elisabeth and Gisela wear nothing to suggest their imperial status, but Franz Joseph and the young Crown Prince Rudolf sport elaborate military jackets. The emperor rarely appeared publicly in anything other than military attire.\(^{100}\) Though Emperor

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\(^{99}\) The photolithographs are only the documentation of von Hartitzsch that I found. Though he includes the aristocratic “von” in his name, no record of a von Hartitzsch exists in the Almanach de Gotha, nor does it appear among the names of individuals under the administration of the Obersthofmeister or the Oberstkämmerer.

\(^{100}\) In addition to its merit as a reminder of his position as leader of the Austrian army, Franz Joseph had an affinity for uniforms. He was delighted by gifts of military uniforms at the age of five. He was also very particular about wearing the proper uniform for each occasion, and was known to change costumes several times a day so as to wear the nationally-appropriate uniform for the particular ambassador, statesman, or
Napoléon III appeared in a bourgeois frock coat for his portrait, it was unthinkable for
Franz Joseph to wear anything other than military apparel, with which he was identified
for the entirety of his sixty-eight year reign.\footnote{In spite of this visual reminder of
authority, the emperor appears remarkably relaxed. He rests his left arm jauntily on his
hip, and his shoulder slopes casually, a stance that belies the rigidity of his uniform.}

Such a representation of Franz Joseph as an informal family man, observing his
children as they play with their toys could not be further from the image normally
projected by the Habsburg court. At this relatively early moment of his tenure – only
twelve years as emperor and a mere thirty years old – Franz Joseph relied upon the
military, the Catholic church, and elaborate state bureaucracy to legitimize his
monarchy.\footnote{This was a dramatic shift from his immediate predecessors, who had
relaxed imperial control in all of these arenas. However, the circumstances of Franz
Joseph’s coronation demanded a more dramatic insistence upon his imperial authority.}

Franz Joseph ascended to the throne amidst the turmoil of the 1848 revolution.
Uprisings occurred in nearly every region of the Austrian empire, with the worst centered
in Hungary. Franz Joseph fled the riots in Vienna along with the rest of the imperial
court in May of 1848, but by November, the imperial army had reestablished control with
the help of Russian troops. Emperor Ferdinand’s abdication, and the immediate
abdication of Franz Joseph’s father Franz Karl, allowed the eighteen-year-old Franz
Joseph to emerge as a youthful and energetic symbol for the reinstated Habsburg
government.

\footnote{There exist a few cartes of Franz Joseph in traditional Lederhosen. These date from later points in his reign and reference his leisure activity of hunting and hiking in the Salzkammergut.
\footnote{Unowsky, \textit{Pomp and Politics}, 26.}
The young emperor and his advisors believed that a forceful response to the revolution was the only means to secure his rule. For this reason, they instituted a reactionary absolutism, known as neoabsolutism.\textsuperscript{103} Franz Joseph withdrew his concession to establish a constitution, placing himself as the absolute, God-appointed leader of the Austrian empire. Revolutionary leaders were mercilessly executed or exiled, and all of the independent nationalist states established in Bohemia, Hungary, and northern Italy were dissolved under a single Austrian state.

Franz Joseph also enacted his authority through the reinstatement of elaborate Spanish court etiquette, whose rituals had been largely neglected over the previous century of Habsburg rule. Originally imported to Vienna from the Habsburg’s Spanish holdings by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (r. 1519-1555), the system regulated all contact with the emperor through an intricate ceremonial process designed to make visible the distinction between the emperor and “mere mortals.”\textsuperscript{104} By careful examination of aristocratic pedigree, the Obersthofmeister, or grand court master, determined who had access to the emperor. This both elevated the emperor and emphasized the aristocratic dependence upon him for social prestige.\textsuperscript{105}

The eighteenth century, however, had witnessed a dramatic relaxation of these rules. Beginning with Maria Theresa (r. 1740-1780), the Habsburg rulers pursued a more relaxed self-presentation with an imperial private life outside the setting of the court.\textsuperscript{106} Maria Theresa’s son and successor Joseph II undertook even greater reform, removing

\textsuperscript{103} For more on the neoabsolutist court in Vienna, see chapter 2 “The Emperor and His Court” in William M. Johnston, \textit{The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938} (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1972).
\textsuperscript{104} Unowsky, \textit{Pomp and Politics}, 12.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
the outdated black Spanish robes from the court, as well as the practice of kneeling in the presence of the emperor.\textsuperscript{107} After the 1804 dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, Franz I presented himself primarily as the leading bureaucrat of state rather than inheritor of the grand Habsburg throne.\textsuperscript{108} Franz I’s son Ferdinand was too weak to participate in such public performances of his position, meaning that the complex system was almost completely abandoned. After the chaos of 1848, the revival of Spanish court etiquette reasserted the legitimacy of Habsburg rule. This close regulation of imperial access insisted upon Franz Joseph’s distinction from his subjects, as peasants, bourgeoisie, and aristocrats alike were subject to the same rules governing access to their sovereign.

These boundaries were further reinforced by Franz Joseph’s identity as protector of the Catholic faith. Acting in parallel with the reestablished Spanish court etiquette, Franz Joseph and his advisors moved to restore the emperor’s participation in the public celebration of two yearly Catholic rituals: the Corpus Christi procession and the Holy Thursday foot-washing ceremony. Over the sixty-eight years of his reign, the emperor never neglected these public appearances, whose yearly repetition entered public consciousness in what Unowsky calls “a reminder of the stabilizing influence of religion and of monarchy.”\textsuperscript{109}

The rituals visualized Franz Joseph’s exceptional piety and God-granted authority. These qualities had been claimed by Habsburgs since their forefather, Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf I (r. 1278-1291), demonstrated his reverence for the Eucharist by

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{108} Though originally known as Holy Roman Emperor Franz II, this ruler changed his title to Franz I when he became emperor of the newly established Austrian Empire. Franz Joseph was also known as the “first bureaucrat,” but he always wore his military uniform to work rather than the “civilian clothes” worn by his grandfather Franz I.
giving his horse to an exhausted priest en route to deliver the last rites to a dying parishioner.\textsuperscript{110} Marching bareheaded behind the Eucharist (fig. 34) or washing the feet of twelve poverty-stricken men (fig. 35), Franz Joseph aligned himself with Christ and reminded his subjects of his distinguished relationship with God.

In light of this insistence upon his exceptionalism and aristocratic dignity, Franz Joseph’s sanctioning of images that collapsed these distinctions is noteworthy.\textsuperscript{111} Even the most highly ranked aristocrat would have been barred access to the family circle, as only members of the Habsburg family could possibly witness Franz Joseph playing with his children. While Franz Joseph’s military uniform insinuates his noble status, overall the image has far more in common with contemporary *carte-de-visite* photography than most images exalting the emperor. However, it was this very intimacy with the ruler and his family that made the image so desirable. By multiplying the presence of the ruler across the empire, these carefully staged images promoted loyalty to the Habsburg monarch while also granting access to his private life.

*Carte-de-visite* technology provided the method by which to accomplish this goal. Patented by the French photographer André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri in 1854, the photographic process used a multi-lens camera with a movable plate holder to capture eight different portrait photographs of around 9 x 6 centimeters (3.5 x 2.4 inches) each onto a single plate (fig. 36).\textsuperscript{112} This shortened the time for each sitting, as the photographer only needed to prepare one plate; furthermore, the small size of the image

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 13.

\textsuperscript{111} Though I found no documentation within the Haus, Hof, und Staatsarchiv indicating Franz Joseph’s personal oversight of their production, stringent censorship laws suggest that he or someone within his court must have sanctioned them. See Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria*, Cambridge Concise Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

\textsuperscript{112} McCauley, *A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte De Visite Portrait Photograph*, 32-35.
eliminated the necessity for retouching, because most defects were unperceivable. After development according to the collodion process onto a sheet of paper, the photographer cut the sheet into its eight individual images, glued the prints onto 11.4 x 6.4 centimeter (4.5 x 2.5 inches) cards, and distributed them to each customer according to the number of portraits he or she had purchased. A client could buy a single photograph, or, as in the case of the ballerina in figure 36, all eight photographs. By using a single plate for multiple sitters, Disdéri economized the elaborate printing process and manufactured images that were far more affordable and durable than their glass Daguerreotype predecessors.

In addition to portrait services, carte-de-visite studios like Disdéri’s also sold cartes of celebrities. Between 1860 and 1862, Disdéri published portraits of Empress Eugénie and Emperor Napoléon III along with other members of the French aristocracy (fig. 16). The triumph of this collection provided a reassuring model for other monarchies, most notably Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of Great Britain, who were featured in John Mayall’s Royal Album (fig. 17). In such carte-de-visite portraits, monarchs appeared in the guise of the bourgeoisie; eschewing royal regalia, these portraits were no different from cartes of middle-class families. The images suggested that the imperial families also embodied bourgeois values, further legitimizing their rule. These objects provided unprecedented access to likenesses of dynastic leaders and were wildly popular across the continent.

113 Ibid., 44-6.
114 Plunkett, First Media Monarch, 152.
115 McCauley, A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte De Visite Portrait Photograph, 83.
Though an intimate portrait of the emperor’s family life may appear incongruous with his desire to emphasize his exceptional status, such representations broadcast the security of the Habsburg family: fertile, cohesive, and supportive of Franz Joseph’s reign. As such, Elisabeth’s refusal to cooperate was especially problematic.

Reimagining Elisabeth as Ideal Wife

Elisabeth’s choice to exempt herself from family photographs was consistent with her general practice of avoiding public appearances, a choice that contradicted one of her primary imperial responsibilities. As empress, Elisabeth was to serve as consort to her husband. When Franz Joseph selected his sixteen-year-old cousin to be his bride, he had no doubts that she would fulfill this task. Elisabeth was a daughter of the Wittelsbachs, the royal Bavarian family whose female offspring occupied queen consort positions across central Europe. Despite her tender age, everyone expected that Elisabeth would quickly adapt to the rigors of Viennese court life.

This was not to be the case. Elisabeth burst into tears during the numerous receptions following her wedding, buckling under the pressure of her new lifestyle. She grew increasingly anxious over the public’s desire to observe her beauty, and never mastered Spanish court etiquette. Far from being an obedient wife, Elisabeth’s political affiliation with Hungarian nationalists contradicted the neoabsolutist goals of her husband. Her travels precluded any active role in the lives of her children and put such strain on her marriage that Elisabeth herself selected a mistress to entertain Franz Joseph in her absence.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{116} Hamann, \textit{The Reluctant Empress}, 306-20.
Above all, public appearances were tortuous events for the empress, and eventually she avoided them altogether. She was supposed to take part in the Corpus Christi procession, enact the Holy Thursday foot-washing ritual on twelve impoverished women, and accompany her husband on imperial tours, but her refusal to participate in these activities meant that she was practically invisible to her subjects. Her absence was compounded by the lack of family portraits, thereby undermining any evidence of stability within the Habsburg family unit.

Photolithography was the ideal medium through which to overcome this obstacle. Artists used this technique to integrate photographs of Elisabeth alongside those of her husband and children. To construct an image, artists like von Hartitzsch cut out the faces from photographs of each individual. For example, the photolithograph of the imperial family (fig. 33) utilizes figures from a photograph of Franz Joseph with Gisela and Rudolf (fig. 37), along with the face from a solitary portrait of Elisabeth (fig. 29). Though he considerably manipulated the posture of each figure, it is possible to distinguish elements from the original photographs that von Hartitzsch used as his models. Franz Joseph’s left eye is darkened by shadows in the photolithograph in the same way as it is in Angerer’s photograph (fig. 37). Elisabeth has the same side curls, part, and widow’s peak in her hair, and Gisela strikes nearly an identical pose, though it is clear that von Hartitzsch narrowed the profile of her skirt. Von Hartitzsch integrated these cut-outs into a cohesive composition with painted clothing, furniture, and a landscape background.

The penultimate step for the artist was to photograph his new composition, and, finally, to use that negative to expose a sheet of light-sensitized gelatin. The lines of the image would become hardened gelatin, receptive to greasy ink, while the white spaces
remained receptive to water. The gelatin surface could then be inked and the image transferred to stone for lithographic printing. Photolithography reproduced easily and at a minimal cost, which allowed the image to be widely disseminated and given didactic captions in any of the languages spoken across the region.

In addition to manipulating photographs of Elisabeth, many details of the objects suggest a photographic sensibility, in particular, that associated with carte-de-visite technology. At roughly nine by six centimeters (3.5 by 2.4 inches), the objects measured the same size as a standardized carte-de-visite photograph, suggesting that they were meant to be collected in the same type of album where an individual might compile photographs. Beyond this physical similarly, a comparison of von Hartitzsch’s lithograph (fig. 33) with the model offered by photographs of Napoléon III and Eugénie (fig. 16) reveals this close relationship between their iconography. Rather than place the sitters within an imaginary interior, von Hartitzsch retained the details that signified carte-de-visite photography to nineteenth-century viewers. Elisabeth is seated on a non-descript chair, and the children play with the kind of toy props that were found within most carte-de-visite studios. Both images incorporate the visual cues of traditional aristocratic portraiture, such as the curtain drawn to one side of the frame or the generalized landscape background featured in von Hartitzsch’s photolithograph.

However, the artist did more than simply paste Elisabeth into the carte with Franz Joseph and the children. Though we cannot know whether he performed this under instruction or his own volition, von Hartitzsch’s composition offers a more convincing representation of the Habsburgs as the ideal bourgeois family. The most apparent change

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is the artist’s rearrangement of the four figures. Franz Joseph has risen from his armchair to occupy a dominant position at the center of the image, and Elisabeth remains demurely at his side. Rather than appear passively seated as in the original carte, the young crown prince plays with toys that foreshadow his future responsibilities as a military leader. These modifications communicated the legitimacy of Franz Joseph’s claim to authority, implied the secure future of the Habsburg dynasty in Rudolf, and emphasized Elisabeth’s participation in Habsburg family life.

Even when a photographer was able to manipulate the actual bodies of the imperial sitters, photolithography proved far more successful in conveying this message. Taken by Angerer in 1859, the single photograph of the extended imperial family (fig. 38) is the only photograph that features Elisabeth with her Habsburg relatives, but their awkward grouping obscures the relationships between the sitters. For example, Franz Joseph is to the far left of the frame, while his brother Ferdinand Maximilian stands above the empress with his arms placed protectively on either side of her shoulders. Elisabeth’s features were not clearly recorded by the camera, perhaps because she was unable to remain motionless while simultaneously balancing the toddler crown prince on her lap and attending to the requests of the three-year-old Princess Gisela. Overall, the portrait offers neither a pleasing intimacy with the royal family nor a didactic perspective on the patriarchal authority of Franz Joseph.

These discrepancies rendered the photograph unsuitable for broad public consumption, but they did not prevent lithographers from mining the image to produce a more appropriate portrait of the royal family. The family hierarchy in this anonymous photolithograph of the Kaiserfamilie (fig. 39) is far more coherent: Elisabeth and Franz
Joseph sit at the center with the others positioned like satellites around them. The subjects appear at leisure, enjoying the landscape of some royal estate. Elisabeth flips through an album of *cartes-de-visite*, a discreet nod to the technologies that made possible such an image.

The improvements performed by the anonymous lithographer to the extended family portrait are especially apparent when compared to a Biedermeier portrait of the Habsburg family a generation earlier (fig. 7). Leopold Fertbauer’s 1826 portrait of the Habsburgs includes Emperor Franz I (1768-1835), Empress Caroline Augusta, a young Archduchess Sophie, Crown Prince Ferdinand, Archduke Franz Karl, as well as Marie-Louise, second wife of Napoléon Bonaparte. At the center of the portrait is the young Duke of Reichstadt, also known as Napoléon II. Both Angerer’s photograph and the anonymous photolithograph incorporate elements from Fertbauer’s portrait, which depicts the imperial family as casually elegant and at leisure in an outdoor space. The Angerer photograph imitates the veranda setting of Fertbauer’s composition, and the positioning of Emperor Franz Joseph mirrors the placement of his grandfather, Emperor Franz I. Both the photograph and the painting devote the central space to the future of the dynasty. The Duke of Reichstadt was the heir apparent, as Sophie had not yet produced the son who would override his claim to the Austrian throne. The placement of Sophie at the center of the image reveals her prominence in the Viennese court, as, already at twenty-one, she was a dynamic political presence, as well as the vessel for the anticipated future emperor. The effective communication of hierarchy evident in

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118 Crown Prince Ferdinand was unable to father children, so the sons of his brother Archduke Franz Karl were next in line. The Duke of Reichstadt would have been emperor had Franz Karl failed to produce any sons.
Fertbauer’s portrait is also at play in the anonymous photolithograph, as Franz Joseph, Elisabeth, and the young Crown Prince occupy the composition’s most prominent positions.

In addition to reimagining the family relationships between the Habsburgs, photolithographs served as visual substitutes for Elisabeth, especially during her absences from Vienna. Her first long period away from the capital was in 1860, when health concerns necessitated travel to a warmer climate.\footnote{Hamann, \textit{Reluctant Empress}, 99.} She spent the next year on the islands of Madeira and Corfu before moving to Venice in late 1861 and finally returning to Vienna in 1862. This absence coincided with Elisabeth’s prime childbearing years, which only further undermined her status as empress.

Lithographs, such as those featuring Elisabeth at leisure on a Venetian canal (figs. 40 and 41), assuaged concerns over the empress’s health and mothering skills. Both images portray Elisabeth as a robust woman enjoying the sights of Venice. Based upon another Angerer photo (fig. 42), figure 40 depicts Elisabeth in an uncovered gondola. She wears a shawl about her head, but still appears comfortable and healthy. The empress rests her right arm casually on the edge of the boat, but she turns her torso sharply to make eye contact with the figure seated beside her. This person gesticulates with her left hand, suggesting that the two women are engaged in conversation. The additional figure is the Baroness Karoline von Weldin, who served as governess to young Rudolf and Gisela. The interaction between Elisabeth and the baroness implies Elisabeth’s involvement in her children’s education. A view of a Venetian canal

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\footnote{Hamann, \textit{Reluctant Empress}, 99.}
dominates more than half of the image, a reminder to viewers that Venice remained a Habsburg possession.

Several details of the second Venetian lithograph (fig. 41) also emphasize the imperial presence in the Italian city. Here, Elisabeth, Baroness Weldin, Rudolf, and Gisela travel the Venetian canals in a gondola topped with the Habsburg double eagle. They sit beneath a sumptuous canopy draped with fringe, plush velvet, and pillows. Elisabeth shows little concern for her health as she travels not only bareheaded, but without a shawl. Von Hartitzsch used the same photograph of Elisabeth (fig. 29) that he manipulated for so many of his images; for Rudolf, the identical hairline and expression suggests that the artist mined the photograph from the portrait of Franz Joseph with the children, but it is unclear from where he drew his representation of Gisela. Once again, von Hartitzsch improved upon these photographic models. Elisabeth places her hand protectively on Rudolf’s shoulder as he leans over the edge of the boat. He pulls a toy ship alongside the gondola, another reference to Habsburg military might. Gisela holds a small dog on her lap, an indication of her preparation to be a mother. In these lithographs, the use of photography references her healthy disposition of 1860 while also asserting Habsburg control of Venetia.

Images of Elisabeth on horseback also reinforce her youth and vitality. Though Elisabeth preferred to be photographed alone on horseback (fig. 30), von Hartitzsch produced a photolithograph featuring both Elisabeth and Franz Joseph riding together in Schönbrunn park (fig. 43). The dust flying about the horses’ feet and the excitement of the dog in the lower right attest to the vigor of their exercise, as does the veil that flies behind Elisabeth’s crown of braids. She turns her head to make eye contact with her
husband, and both appear to enjoy each other’s company. This lithograph suggests an intimacy between the two figures, perhaps an attempt to deny gossip about their marital strife.

Though both figures are featured prominently at center, von Hartitzsch lavishes far more detail on Elisabeth than upon her husband. The viewer can appraise Elisabeth’s full figure, including the outline of her legs beneath the heavy velvet drapery of her gown. This gown appears to be copied from the costume Elisabeth wore in a series of cartes-de-visite by Emil Rabending (figs. 44 and 45). The lace of her collar and ornamentation on her waist and sleeves align with the gown she wore in both Rabending cartes. This lithograph evoked Elisabeth’s fame as a horseback rider and depicted her using this skill for the pleasure of her husband; this masked her increasing absence from Vienna during the late 1860s and 1870s while she pursued horseback riding tournaments and hunts across the continent. It reminded viewers that their empress was energetic and young, but still under the control of her husband.

PART II: PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMPERIAL PRESENCE

Though broadcasting a strong political message, close visual analysis uncovers ruptures in the illusionistic quality of the photolithographs of the imperial family, fissures caused by the artists’ reliance upon photographic models. However, the authenticity provided by photography was far more valuable than any increased artistic quality possible in a strictly lithographic medium. As will become apparent, these images reveal the fragility of the photolithographic method, whose limits point to the desire for photography in imperial imagery of the nineteenth century.
The Failure of Illusion in Photolithography

Nowhere is the image of Elisabeth as an ideal wife more explicitly visualized than in a photolithograph of Elisabeth and Franz Joseph together in Franz Joseph’s office (fig. 46). His pen in hand, Franz Joseph is in the process of turning a page when Elisabeth interrupts his concentration with her desk side appearance. She offers the viewer a profile of her delicate features, while appearing to be intimately concerned with her husband’s work as emperor.

Looking more closely, however, its inconsistencies and disjunctures become impossible to ignore. Franz Joseph’s gilded desk is unfeasibly narrow. The elaborate chair upon which he sits could never fit behind such an insubstantial piece of furniture. In addition to its insupportable depth, the width of the desk is difficult to discern behind the mass of Elisabeth’s skirts. Franz Joseph himself occupies an awkward position. His broad frame is disconnected from the shadowed legs that appear beneath the desk, which also seems altogether too short for the emperor. The scale between the two figures is also inaccurate, as Elisabeth dwarfs Franz Joseph. Another fissure appears beneath Elisabeth’s left hand. She leans against what looks to be the back of a chair, but no feasible space exists for an additional piece of furniture within this tightly packed frame. Perhaps the most alienating feature of this lithograph is the emotional disconnect between the two figures. They make no eye contact, but seemed to be joined in their mutual observation of some activity outside of the frame. Along with the dog seated at the foot of the desk, both figures look to the upper right of the space. In spite of their shared
space and reverie, the solitary photographs from plate 1 of Angerer’s *Musteralbum* seem to have more in common than these two figures.

These illusionistic failures are a direct consequence of the artist’s manipulation of photography to produce his image. The inclusion of a single photograph within a photolithograph would not have been so problematic, as evidenced by the illusionistic clarity of the image of Elisabeth in a gondola (fig. 40). Here, von Hartitzsch could shape his entire composition around the scale determined by Elisabeth’s portrait photograph. However, using the heads of the emperor and empress from two separate photographs reveals medium’s inherent limitations. The artist was constrained to the size of these two heads as he constructed his composition, whose scale did not correspond to that of the two original photographs from which his subjects were cut. Everything that he drew around the visages of the imperial couple – their clothing, props, and architectural space – had to conform to the distinct sizes of their original photographs.

Ironically, von Hartitzsch’s dependence upon photography undermined the photographic quality that the artist sought to emulate. Photographic illusion in a doctored image was possible, as evidenced by the clarity of the combination prints produced by Henry Peach Robinson. In his most famous photograph, Robinson compiled five negatives to create a convincing scene of a grieving family at the bedside of their dying daughter and sister (fig. 47). Similar to von Hartitzsch, Robinson integrated several different figures, but his careful assembly of each negative created a final product that avoids all the discrepancies of scale and narrative that so compromise the Habsburg photolithographs.
As Robinson’s work was famous across Europe, it is likely that the photolithographers recognized the comparatively slap-dash nature of their creations,\textsuperscript{120} and part of the reason that these objects have been so ignored within the history of art is this failure to meet academic standards of perspective and scale. Though such disruptions were desirable in the photomontages produced by modernist artists in the early decades of the twentieth century, the producers of these photolithographs appear to have desired a more illusionistic finished product.

Furthermore, the introduction of photography complicated the lithographic technique, which was desirable for its simplicity and ease of reproduction. The expectations of these images were lower than the fine engravings sold at the city’s Antiquariats, but why incorporate photography at all? The repeated use of photography suggests that the medium itself produced meaning within the image, and that this contribution was critical to their success.

The Appeal of the Photographic Message

Describing press photography in his 1977 essay, “The Photographic Message,” Roland Barthes called photography “a message without a code.”\textsuperscript{121} According to Barthes, no transformation occurs between the object photographed and manner in which the photograph itself communicates this object. Signs are usually substantial different from their referent, but in a photograph, a chair looks exactly like a chair, or, in our case, Elisabeth looks exactly like Elisabeth. Because of this apparent lack of mediation

\textsuperscript{120} Robinson’s \textit{Pictorial Effect in Photography} (1869) went through many editions and was translated into German. Beaumont Newhall, \textit{The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present}, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 76.

between subject and object, the photograph provides what Barthes calls a continuous message, which has the appearance of objectivity. Of course, this appearance is nothing more than an illusion, and Barthes spends the remainder of his essay chronicling the techniques by which photographs are “invested” with meaning.

The most significant technique for the purpose of the photolithographs is the “trick effect,” or any process by which a photograph is manipulated in order to alter its content or composition. Barthes uses a 1951 photograph of an American senator that was doctored to appear as if the subject were in conversation with a Communist leader, but the photolithographs of the imperial family present a much earlier incarnation of this strategy. Barthes writes that this method utilizes “the special credibility of the photograph,” suggesting that the trickery of this effect was somehow masked by the indexical nature of photography. However, the manipulation of photography, in 1862 as well as 1951, is only possible because of a stock of signs available for the artist to manipulate. While the signifier in the 1951 photograph was the “conversational attitude” of the two figures, the details of carte-de-visite studio settings invested the 1862 photolithograph with its bourgeois sensibility. Incorporating photography therefore allowed lithographers like von Hartitzsch to appropriate the medium’s special status in the mid-nineteenth century.

In addition to “trick effects,” Barthes also identified the inclusion of objects as a method by which photography could be invested with concealed meaning. Though objects possess specific connotations for a viewer, within a photograph, they appear to be without significance to its overall composition. Their haphazard quality suggests that the

122 Ibid., 526.
123 Ibid., 527.
photographer simply “captured” these items as they appeared to him. This implies an immediacy and spontaneity that contributes to the impression of a “meaningless” photograph. In the case of the von Hartitzsch images, the military costumes, discarded dolls, and toy ships convey culturally specific information to the viewer about the subjects’ personalities. The photographic medium glosses over the deliberate insertion of these objects and their contrived message, suggesting instead that the artist is merely capturing the image as it appeared before him.

Photographs are thus a paradox, simultaneously “objective” and deeply invested with culturally-specific meaning. This double meaning illuminates the appeal of photography for the artists of the photolithographs, as they could possess the appearance of an unmediated representation of the imperial family while actually including many references to guide viewers’ interpretation and subsequent understanding of these subjects.

The Aura of the Empress

In addition to the appearance of objectivity its inclusion affords, photography communicated the presence of the imperial family in a unique way. Though Benjamin maintained that photography eliminated “aura,”124 I argue that the application of this medium accomplished the opposite: within the photolithographs, Benjaminian aura is restored by the integration of photographic portraits. This transformation is inseparable from the photolithographs’ success as substitutes for the empress, for it was the

reproducibility of Elisabeth’s aura coupled with her increasing physical absence from Vienna that allowed the Habsburg court to obscure the real Elisabeth and replace her with what Jean Baudrillard would term a simulacrum.125

Benjamin acknowledged reproduction as an essential component of capitalism, but he speculated that art based on reproduction might enable one to “brush aside a number of outmoded concepts, such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery.”126 By eliminating these concepts, which all contribute to the authenticity and uniqueness of an artwork, reproduction could destroy the “aura” of the object. Benjamin defines “aura” as “the unique appearance of a distance” between an object and viewer, a phenomenon that originated with cult objects that functioned in religious ritual.127 In such rituals, the object became distanced from viewers because of its sacrosanct nature; it was only available to a privileged few. Photography reduced this distance between object and viewer, thereby destroying aura.128

The aura described by Benjamin overlaps significantly with the type of reverence that Franz Joseph sought to inspire through the reinstitution of Spanish court etiquette. The ceremonial of this regime created an artificial distance between Franz Joseph and his subjects, a gap that was crucial to the re-establishment of Habsburg hegemony following the 1848 revolutions. However, the court recognized that the emperor also needed to develop loyalty among his subjects by making himself more available and visible to them. Photography allowed the court to resolve this paradox by portraying the aura of

the monarchs while simultaneously bringing them nearer to their subjects than they had ever been before.

Benjamin identified a popular desire to “get closer” to things, which could only be met through the reproductive technology of photography. As such, photography was able to uniquely meet the demand for greater accessibility to monarchs and rulers following 1848. Batchen describes how the mass distribution of imperial photography suggests to viewers that anyone can be reproduced; in these objects, the rulers are virtually equivalent to their subjects, appearing as they do in the same basic pose and setting, their photographs lining the same space as family members within private albums. However, the opposite effect is also true: the increase in accessibility to monarchs makes them even more revered, but only as a reproduction, as this image replaces the actual individual in the hearts of their subjects. Most subjects never saw their monarchs; their experience of this sanctified leader was limited to his or her photographic portrait, which takes on an equivalence with the body of the monarch. Under this rubric, the appearance of photography in mass-produced images of the imperial family is essential, because they record the indexical trace of the monarchs. Without the inclusion of these indexical traces of Franz Joseph and Elisabeth, the photolithographs would not have been credible.

However, the irony of the photolithographs is that their indexicality is entirely manufactured. Though the images have the appearance of a photograph, the compositions do not reference any moment when all of the subjects gathered together to create a group portrait. As Benjamin describes it, the existence of an original is the

129 Ibid., 23.
prerequisite to the concept of authenticity and aura;\textsuperscript{131} here, the original is not the particular moment of portraiture but rather the individuals themselves, Franz Joseph, Elisabeth, and their extended family. Their photographic presence within the photolithographs evokes a similar sentimental response that Barthes experienced when looking at a photograph of Napoléon III’s youngest brother Joseph. Staring into eyes that had once looked at Emperor Napoléon III, Barthes felt a deep connection to Joseph, “a sort of umbilical cord link[ing] of the body of the photographed thing to my gaze.”\textsuperscript{132}

These photolithographs may have stirred such a response in its viewers: gazing upon their ruler, his beautiful wife seated beside him, they too might have been reminded of the singular existence of their monarchs, and, by extension, their dynastic claim to authority.

Elizabeth’s photographic portrayal is a poignant twist of Benjamin’s final argument: rather than subvert and destroy aura through photography, this technology becomes the means by which the aura of the empress was sustained. Such a complication was anticipated by Benjamin; though he writes that photomechanical reproduction destroyed an artwork’s aura, he also suggests that early photographic portraits maintained their aura in spite of their technological reproducibility.\textsuperscript{133} He states that aura emerged from these early photographic portraits in the “fleeting expression of a human face.”\textsuperscript{134} “Fleeting” seems an especially appropriate way to describe Angerer’s photographs of Elisabeth, as they were taken only months before her 1860 flight from Vienna.\textsuperscript{135} These photographs were Elisabeth’s most popular carte-de-visite portraits, perhaps because of

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{131} Benjamin, “Work of Art,” 21.
  \item \textsuperscript{132} Barthes, \textit{Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography}.
  \item \textsuperscript{133} Benjamin, “Little History of Photography,” 282.
  \item \textsuperscript{134} Benjamin, “Work of Art,” 27.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} Hamann, \textit{The Reluctant Empress}, 100.
\end{itemize}
her subsequent absence from the empire and the mysterious, possibly life-threatening health circumstances surrounding her departure.

The aura that surfaced from Elisabeth’s portraits within the photolithographs was therefore precious on two levels. First, it was a trace of an individual absent from public life, potentially permanently, if rumors of her serious illness were to be believed. Second, her photograph served as a trace of her unique, queenly body. Though she did not possess the same God-appointed position as her husband, she was the vessel for the continuation of the Habsburg dynasty. When coupled with the increasing fame she earned for her inimitable physique, the cult-value inherent to Elisabeth’s photographic portraits placed them as central tools in the promotion of Habsburg authority.

When Benjamin expressed his hopes for the employment of photography for political action, he could not have had in mind its use in support of the imperialist government of the previous century. Yet, it was the manipulation of Benjaminian aura that allowed for Habsburg erasure of Elisabeth’s undesirable behavior. By attaching Elisabeth’s photographic head to the body of a dutiful empress, these artists produced an aurasitic image of Elisabeth that bore no relationship to the “real” Elisabeth. They function in a manner that fulfills Baudrillard’s description of second-order simulation. Baudrillard argues that the technology of the Industrial Revolution allowed for the production of identical objects without the existence of an original reference.\textsuperscript{136} It was the extinction of the original reference that allowed for the mass-production of industry. In their replacement of Elisabeth with a more acceptable simulacrum, the Habsburg court was able to obscure her idiosyncratic behavior and produce the appearance of normalcy that

\textsuperscript{136} Baudrillard, 55.
had been so compromised. Without this rupture between the original Elisabeth and her photomechanical “other,” the photolithographs would never have been so effective in communicating their message.

Elisabeth herself may have encouraged this obliteration out of both vanity and her own lack of interest in fulfilling her imperial responsibilities. Fearing the loss of her beauty, Elisabeth refused to be photographed at all after 1868, and she spent increasingly little time within the borders of the empire. Though she was involved in the Hungarian nationalist politics surrounding the 1867 establishment of Austria-Hungary, beginning in the 1870s Elisabeth lived abroad as much as eight months each year. She withdrew from public life entirely following the suicide of her son, the crown prince, in 1889. Nevertheless, Elisabeth remains a fixture in imperial photolithographs. Family portraits feature an unchanging image of Elisabeth alongside her steadily aging husband and children, further supplanting Elisabeth’s body with her photomechanical reproduction.

PART III: PHOTOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE IN IMPERIAL PROPAGANDA

Until now, I have focused on the importance of the photographic medium for the success of these photolithographs as both documents of imperial authority and replacements for the disobedient Elisabeth. Additionally, Elisabeth’s presence within the images activates a narrative structure that is critical to the promotion of Habsburg stability. The particular arrangement of the imperial family communicates their bourgeois sensibility, the capability of Franz Joseph to fulfill his duty as its figurehead,
and the promise of monarchical continuity within the person of Crown Prince Rudolf. Without Elisabeth, this narrative would be incomplete.

Happy Mothers and Imperial Narratives

In his examination of narratives within the history of art, Wolfgang Kemp notes that they are seldom original.\textsuperscript{137} This is certainly true within the family portraits featuring Elisabeth, as their special emphasis on motherhood as a bourgeois value within family portraiture dates to the eighteenth century. Carol Duncan identified how artists like Jean Baptiste Greuze and Jean-Honoré Fragonard celebrated the submissive, service-oriented mother in bourgeois society.\textsuperscript{138} In their paintings of the 1760s and 1770s, these artists promoted the idea that marriage is a loving and sexually satisfying institution, and that the individual personalities of children must be cultivated in order to allow them to advance in the world.

Many similar tropes exist within portraits of Empress Maria Theresa and her family. Self-styled as the Landesmutter, or mother of the country, Maria Theresa commissioned numerous portraits of her family, the majority of which featured her and her husband surrounded by their ever-expanding offspring (fig. 48). These children, particularly the archduke Joseph and his brothers, were demonstrations of the empire’s future strength and legitimization of Maria Theresa’s contribution to the Habsburg legacy.


The original iconography of the happy mother can be traced to a secularization of the Holy Family, whose domestic bliss was documented in centuries of Western painting. Duncan notes that the French artists drew upon the specific roles of the Christ child and Virgin Mary to create a more universalized vision of family life; the Holy Family had a special destiny to fulfill, while the secular families had only their own personal happiness at stake.\textsuperscript{139} Like the Holy Family, the imperial family also possessed a unique destiny as inheritors and executors of the Austrian Empire. Consequently, a portrait of the Habsburgs needed to communicate both their suitability for this destiny, while also assuring viewers of their appreciation for bourgeois values.

Without Elisabeth, a portrait of Franz Joseph and his successors suggests a different narrative, especially when compared with recent Austrian painting. Portraits of a father alone with his children were haunted by the absence of the mother, who is presumed deceased. In his 1837 portrait of Rudolf von Arthaber and his children (fig. 49), Viennese painter Friedrich Amerling includes many reminders of the recently deceased mother. Von Arthaber sits in the corner of a loveseat, his daughter Emilie on his lap and the two sons Rudolf and Gustav at his feet. With the exception of Emilie, who gazes placidly into the space to the left of the frame, the family looks at a picture of their dead mother. Though the viewer does not have access to this likeness, other details within the portrait provide clues to her personality. The family seems uncomfortably pressed into the corner of the loveseat rather than in its center, but this arrangement suggests a space for the absent mother beside them. A fashionable shawl hangs on the

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 217-218, note 6.
arm of the couch, another indication of her sense of style and the elegant contribution she made to the household.

Many similarities exist between this celebrated Biedermeier portrait and the ca. 1860 carte-de-visite produced by Angerer of Franz Joseph with Rudolf and Gisela (fig. 37). Though there is no empty seat that Elisabeth would have occupied, as in Amerling’s portrait, a father pictured alone with his small children implied the absence of their mother. Amerling uses the physical relationship of von Arthaber to his children to suggest a gentle love among the family members. Each child touches the father in some way, whether by sitting directly upon his lap or leaning on his knees. The physical contact of Franz Joseph with his children in the carte suggests a similar closeness: Rudolf sits in his father’s lap and Gisela leans upon his chair. Franz Joseph’s arms extend around both children, his hands appearing at their waists in a protective embrace.

Signs of this tender intimacy between father and children have been completely erased from von Hartizsch’s photolithograph (fig. 33). Franz Joseph now stands at a considerable distance from his children, and Elisabeth has replaced his position as their guardian. The shift in the children’s position also changes the dynamic of this narrative. The young crown prince does not sit within the protective space of a parent’s lap, instead mounting a hobby horse and flashing his toy saber. Whereas the photographed Rudolf wore the skirts of a small child, this Rudolf imitates his father’s military apparel, even surpassing it by wearing a cavalier cap. Gisela also abandons the presence of her parent in order to stand beside Rudolf. While Emilie von Arthaber holds onto a doll, Gisela has dropped her toy to the ground to instead rest her hand upon her brother’s horse. These shifts in the position of each member transforms the entire family dynamic of the image.
Group Dynamics in the Family Narrative

As theorized by Kemp, such transformation is an essential element of narrative.\textsuperscript{140} The audience expects a transformation to occur within the subjects of a narrative, usually a dramatic change for the better or worse. Such change proceeds chronologically in prose or film, but within an image it must be communicated within the isolated moment selected by the artist. As a result, the choice of a particular narrative instant is very important. Citing Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s \textit{Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie} (1766), Kemp notes, “[this] single instant, cannot be chosen fruitfully enough. But nothing is fruitful except what gives free rein to the imagination.”\textsuperscript{141} According to Lessing, the artist must choose a moment that allows the viewer the greatest imaginative potential for the narrative. The transformation must be grasped within that moment, even if the “before and after” sequence cannot be portrayed.

The transformation at stake here is the continued relevance of the Habsburg family. In the 1860s, Franz Joseph’s authority was under question. The neoabsolutist regime of the 1850s was growing weaker with the failure of Austria to maintain its status as the leading Central European nation. Though it emerged from the 1848 revolutions on equal footing with Prussia, after its loss in the 1866 Austro-Prussian War, Austria was evicted from the German Confederation and excluded from influence in German politics. The domain of the empire was itself shrinking under pressure from Italy and France. Elisabeth’s increased absence from court and refusal to participate in public events only compounded the perception of Franz Joseph as a weak ruler. To counterbalance these

\textsuperscript{140} Kemp, “Narrative,” 67.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 68.
realities, the Habsburgs needed images that buttressed the imperial family and portrayed Franz Joseph as a reliable leader of a flourishing family.

The photolithograph of the *Kaiserfamilie* communicates this message more effectively than any actual photograph. This medium allowed the artist to employ many of the same tropes of group portraiture utilized within the history of art. In his 1902 study of Dutch group portraits, Viennese art historian Alois Riegl noted that group unity was produced through a linking of psychological and physical functions between the figures.\(^{142}\) Similarly, Franz Joseph demonstrates his authority over his family through his position at the apex of their group composition. His position in relation to Elisabeth is equally vital, as she becomes the link between him and his heirs. Franz Joseph’s right arm disappears behind Elisabeth’s head, creating a line through her body to the children at her knees below. Here she is the vessel through which continued Habsburg vitality is measured. Though Franz Joseph seems somewhat unaware of the children as he gazes confidently at the viewer, Elisabeth focuses intently upon them. In contrast, Gisela turns away from her mother toward her brother Rudolf, an emperor-in-training with his military toys. The two children mimic their father with their poised gazes out at the viewer.

The narrative skill of the photolithograph is especially apparent when compared to the large photograph Angerer produced of the imperial family in 1859 (fig. 38). The toddler Rudolf appears to be wearing some sort of military apparel; his hat is even tipped at the same angle as his father’s above and to the right. But the clarity of the imperial succession is confused, especially as Franz Joseph does not appear at the center of the

\(^{142}\) Cited in ibid., 72.
image. If the visual arts were to serve as agents of optimal, unconditional visibility, then this photograph failed completely. In contrast, the dynamics of the Habsburg family, the roles of each individual, and the promise of future security for the Austrian Empire are all communicated within the single instant captured by von Hartitzsch in his manipulated photolithograph. The photographic presence of Franz Joseph, Elisabeth, Gisela, and Rudolf only heighten the intensity of this image and add to its legitimacy as a representation of imperial authority.

CONCLUSION

The photolithographs reveal how the Habsburg court mined the latest photographic technologies in order to support their imperial propaganda. Strategies of narrative, photography, and imperial presentation work together to create highly symbolic images of the Habsburg family within these ephemeral, inexpensive objects. In this way, they truly answer the methodological concerns of visual culture, or “seeing made visible” as defined by W.J.T. Mitchell. The insistence upon photography within the composition of these objects indicates that its presence was necessary for the proper reception of their narrative. I believe that this success lies in photography’s ability to preserve an indexical trace of its subjects. This physical tie to the bodies of their monarchs reminded viewers of Habsburg exceptionalism, while simultaneously bringing them closer to their every day lives. This was especially important in the case of Elisabeth, who was even less physically available to her subjects than was her spouse

143 Ibid.
145 For more on the indexical nature of photography, see James Elkins, Photography Theory (New York: Routledge, 2007).
While the visual inconsistencies render the images awkward and unconvincing to the twenty-first-century viewer, it is difficult to determine whether nineteenth-century viewers were concerned or even aware of these inconsistencies. The audience for these objects remains a mystery, as there is no mention of them within the Austrian state archives. Minimal information about their production and distribution is available at their repository in the Picture Archive of the Austrian National Library. We must assume that the audience for these objects matches that of carte-de-visite photography, namely middle through upper class subjects of Habsburg Central Europe. Also missing is information about how these objects were sold, and whether they possessed didactic captions. In a multilingual empire, the ability to easily change the language of the explanatory caption to match the regional dialects would have been especially desirable.146

Regardless of these missing pieces of the historical record, the photolithographs are a crossroads at which we witness multiple changes in human perception. Their inexpensive production allowed these scenes of the imperial family to be widely distributed across Habsburg Central Europe. They offered Habsburg subjects the illusion of a more intimate relationship with their monarchs, especially the elusive Empress Elisabeth. Yet, even as they multiplied her presence, the auratic trace of the individuals within photolithographs reminded viewers of the unique existence of their monarchs, and, by extension, their dynastic claim to authority as Habsburgs. Finally, by presenting a “copy” of Elisabeth, these photolithographs provide an example of the simulacrum used

146 Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006). If these objects possessed captions in multiple languages, it would be a very early example of the phenomenon of multilingual publications that Judson identifies.
for political ends. This underscores the critical role images played in transforming public perception of Empress Elisabeth while simultaneously cultivating dynastic loyalty in Habsburg Central Europe.
CHAPTER THREE

Princesses and Pinups: Crafting Femininity in the Carte-de-Visite Album

INTRODUCTION

In March of 1862 Empress Elisabeth wrote to her brother-in-law, “I am creating a beauty album, and am now collecting photographs for it, only of women. Any pretty faces you can muster at Angerer’s or other photographers, I ask you to send me.”147 With this epistle, Elisabeth launched a period of visual experimentation, and photographic beauties were her primary resources. She expanded the geographic breadth of her research in August of that same year. Under Elisabeth’s direction, foreign minister Count Rechberg instructed Austrian diplomats in Paris, London, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Constantinople to contribute carte-de-visite photographs from their capitals for the empress’s collection. Compiled into two ornamental albums, the images that Elisabeth assembled blur boundaries between the elite and demimonde, an equivalence she used to craft her portraiture over the next five years.

Elisabeth sent her initial request from Venice, where she was living after nearly eighteen months of separation from her husband. In late 1860, imperial doctors recommended Elisabeth’s immediate departure from Vienna for a warmer climate to treat her pulmonary illness. She returned briefly to the Habsburg capital in June 1861 only to leave again within a few weeks due to the return of her symptoms. During this time apart, Elisabeth began her collection of cartes-de-visite. The albums were sequestered in

a private collection until 1978, yet since then they have received comparatively limited scholarly attention.\textsuperscript{148}

The majority of the empress’s acquisitions were \textit{cartes} of family members and aristocratic acquaintances, and most scholars have dismissed the application for beautiful women as simply another example of her interest in beauty. This assumption overlooks the coincidence of Elisabeth’s request with her return to imperial life, timing that positions these photographs as part of her preparations to reassume the public responsibilities of consort to Franz Joseph I. In collecting images of beautiful, often anonymous women from across the continent, Elisabeth created a survey of beauty that she used to reimagine her role as empress and its relationship to other women whose lives were lived in the public sphere. Filled with images selected by others but curated by Elisabeth herself, the albums serve as guides for how one individual constructed her ideas of feminine beauty with materials supplied by her diplomatic connections.

The \textit{cartes} Elisabeth received from the Parisian embassy were especially critical to the development of this vision. Diplomatic attachés in London, Berlin, and St. Petersburg sent portraits of leading aristocratic beauties, but the ambassador to Paris, Brigitte Hamann published four catalogues with a selection of Elisabeth’s photographs, but the thematic organization of these publications does not reflect the physical arrangement of the \textit{cartes} within Elisabeth’s albums. While Hamann’s catalogues made no claim to reproduce every image in Elisabeth’s collection, it is interesting to note that very few of the images contained within Albums 126 and 127 are included within the 1980 publications. See Brigitte Hamann, ed. \textit{Sisis Familienalbum, Fürstenalbum, Künstleralbum, Schönheitenalbum: Private Photographien Aus Dem Besitz Der Kaiserin Elisabeth Herausgegeben Von Werner Bokelberg}, 4 vols. (Dortmund: Harenberg Kommunikation,1980). Several of Elisabeth’s albums were featured in a 1997 exhibition at the Museum Ludwig and the accompanying catalogue. See Bodo von Dewitz, ""Ich Lege Mir Ein Album an Und Sammle Nun Photographien": Kaisern Elisabeth Von Österreich Und Die Carte-De-Visite Photographie," in \textit{Alles Wahrheit! Alles Lüge!: Photographie Und Wirklichkeit Im 19. Jahrhundert}, ed. Bodo von Dewitz and Rolan Scotti (Köln: Museum Ludwig, 1997). Juliane Vogel also devotes part of her chapter “Schönheit” to the albums in Juliane Vogel, \textit{Elisabeth Von Österreich: Momente Aus Dem Leben Einer Kunstfigur} (Frankfurt am Main: Neue Kritik, 1998).
Prince Metternich, submitted something quite different. Presumably assisted by his wife Pauline, the notorious wit and confidante to the French Empress Eugénie, Metternich’s contribution from Paris contained cartes of opera stars, actresses, and dancers, including a handful in erotic poses. Habsburg biographer Brigitte Hamann speculates that the empress was disappointed to receive such representations of Paris’s disreputable underside, but Elisabeth’s placement of these photographs in the two most elaborately decorated albums of the collection suggests quite the opposite. While the majority of her albums were simple leather-bound volumes (fig. 50), Elisabeth placed photographs of beautiful women in a pair of intricately tooled and jewel-embellished albums (fig. 51). Numbered Albums 126 and 127, these two volumes became the experimental fields where Elisabeth employed the latest forms of photographic reproduction to shape her vision of a feminine beauty.

Elisabeth’s choice to use images from the demimonde to shape her own portraiture demonstrates an awareness of the increasing equivalence between nobility and celebrity in the nineteenth century, an equivalence reified within the leaves of carte-de-visite albums. Though the dancers and actresses possessed a dramatically different heritage from the noble women who fill most of Elisabeth’s albums, entertainers and

149 The photographs of harem women from the Constantinople embassy were also significantly different, but an examination of the Orientalist implications inherent in these objects is beyond the scope of this study and will be examined in a later publication.
151 The exoticism of the Parisian cartes may also have appealed to Elisabeth because of her recent experience living in Venice, one of the most decadent European capitals. The biographic literature on Elisabeth offers little information about her 1862 residence in the Italian city, but I believe this could be useful context for the development of her album. This is a line of research I would like to pursue for a later publication. For more on the appeal of Parisian popular culture in the nineteenth century, see Vanessa R. Schwartz, Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-De-Siècle Paris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
152 Along with the rest of Elisabeth’s cartes-de-visite, these albums are in the collection of Cologne’s Museum Ludwig. These numbers were inscribed on the inside cover of each album before their entrance into public collections, and I use them to refer to them throughout the chapter.
aristocrats occupied increasingly common ground under the new phenomenon of celebrity. In *carte-de-visite* albums, monarchs mingle with ballerinas, politicians, and actors, all of whom occupy the same space as the collector’s private family portraits. Elisabeth’s collection can be analyzed as an exemplar of this activity, amassing as she did more than twenty-five-hundred objects across thirty-nine albums. However, Elisabeth did more than simply assemble an extraordinary sampling of *cartes*. She mined her collection of beauties to develop new strategies for how to shape her own public persona, one that was increasingly associated with beauty and her athletic physique. Nineteenth-century ballet is described as the personification of eternal femininity, making the Parisian ballerinas especially relevant for the empress’s endeavors. By the mid-nineteenth century, dancers were closely associated with the demanding physical training necessary to produce their graceful aesthetic. Such athleticism in pursuit of idealized beauty may have appealed to Elisabeth, who herself strenuously exercised and dieted her body.

Nevertheless, Elisabeth was less interested in the refined postures of professional ballerinas than in a series of dancers straddling chairs, spreading their legs, and lifting their skirts. The women in these *cartes*, whom nineteenth-century viewers would have recognized as prostitutes, do not at all conform to the visualization of beauty that one would expect from an empress. Views of the stockinged legs of Parisian dancers were a

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154 Ibid., 35.
155 This observation was confirmed by Anne McCauley in personal communication, 8 February 2012.
permissible titillation in the 1860s,\textsuperscript{156} but these photographs expose far more than a dancer’s muscular calves (fig. 52). Though covered by the heavy expanse of her skirt, the focal point of figure 52 is the dancer’s groin. The dark, vertical lines of the chair frame her concealed anatomy while simultaneously suggesting a phallic overlay, and the performer’s averted eyes offer no resistance to this gaze. Inserted within an album devoted to erotic imagery, photographs like this suggest that Elisabeth was interested in sexuality and how its aesthetic contributed to the visual culture of femininity in the nineteenth century.

While the inclusion of such photographs within an imperial collection is unexpected, even more surprising is Elisabeth’s choice to place these portraits of courtesans alongside photographic reproductions of Franz Xaver Winterhalter paintings. The visual dialogue constructed by Elisabeth within this album raises questions about the relationship of women and sexuality in portraiture, issues usually not addressed by typical examinations of Winterhalter.\textsuperscript{157} However, my visual analysis of Elisabeth’s albums in conjunction with the iconic portraits of Elisabeth produced by Winterhalter only two years later (figs. 1, 2, and 6) reveals that the representation of sexuality and power is central to the success of these images, which established Elisabeth’s reputation as one of the most beautiful women in Europe.

Elisabeth may have assembled her vision of beauty using the most current technologies of image reproduction, but her practice must be understood in relation to a much older album culture. Anne Higonnet describes nineteenth-century women’s albums


\textsuperscript{157} A notable exception is Carol Ockman’s review of the 1987 Winterhalter exhibition, where she acknowledges that the sexuality of Winterhalter’s \textit{oeuvre} had not been adequately explained. Carol Ockman, "Report from Paris: Prince of Portraitists," \textit{Art in America} 76, no. 11 (1988).
as “a widespread, self-conscious, and imaginative interpretation of femininity as a crafted social role.”

Elisabeth’s album fits into this rubric of self-presentation, though it departs from expectations that women’s albums should be private and focused on the home. Her reliance upon public servants to compile her objects, as well as the special consideration that she gave to portraits of courtesans, places Elisabeth’s albums outside the domestic sphere typically reserved for women’s albums.

Instead, I suggest that Elisabeth’s excavation of portraits of prostitutes aligns her collection with many of the central tenets of modernism, both in her formal practices and in terms of subject matter. Elisabeth’s integration of disparate materials to create a cohesive whole anticipates assemblage, one of modernism’s critical artistic practices. Despite their widespread presence in drawing rooms across Europe, critics often describe albums as little more than charming curiosities, while photo historians such as Gisèle Freund dismiss them as evidence of the “bad taste” and conspicuous consumption of the bourgeoisie.

However, in collecting and reassembling photographs from a variety of sources, the producers of these albums engaged in the same technique employed by twentieth-century artists like Pablo Picasso and Hannah Höch to create their far more radical collages. The technology that facilitated the twentieth-century assemblages first emerged in the nineteenth century, and Elisabeth’s albums reveal how this modern method is rooted in nineteenth-century practice.

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Furthermore, her use of courtesans to examine the representation of femininity echoes T.J. Clark’s dictum on the ubiquity of the Parisian prostitute as a symbol for modernism in the visual arts.\textsuperscript{161} Elisabeth had plenty of models available to her as she produced her vision of feminine beauty: her peer queens in England and France, the fashionable women within the Viennese court, and even Empress Maria Theresa, the legendary eighteenth-century matriarch of the Habsburg family. Instead, she embraced the sensuality depicted in these scandalous photographs, offering a new vision of how an empress should look in the nineteenth century.

To fully extract the many levels of meaning contained within Elisabeth’s albums, it is necessary to examine them both thematically and individually. I study Elisabeth’s collection in relation to contemporary album culture as it intersected with female portraiture in the nineteenth century. Illuminated by these traditions, the albums serve as case studies for how women used visual culture to imagine a new conception of femininity. However, Elisabeth’s collection is also intensely personal and defies expectations of what women’s albums should be. I examine individual \textit{cartes} along with the compositional choices made by the empress in the placement of these objects within her albums. Reinforced by biographical information from this emotionally charged period of her life, I expose an interplay of eroticism, authority, and femininity that informed Elisabeth’s self-presentation within the most significant portraits of her reign. This discovery within the state portraits of a nineteenth century monarch reveals Elisabeth’s images to be far closer to the modernist project than has previously been acknowledged.

\textsuperscript{161} Clark, \textit{The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers}.
SKIRTING ALBUM CULTURE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Albums were long associated with feminine culture by the time Elisabeth began her beauty collection. Patrizia Di Bello describes the important role played by albums in the construction of genteel identities for a woman and her family, specifically those of devoted mother and society hostess. While analyzing Elisabeth’s collection within the context of nineteenth-century album culture reveals how this tradition informed her acquisitions, the comparison also uncovers Elisabeth’s resistance to the use of photography prescribed for female consumers. Above all, this contextualization reveals the important role albums played in the construction of feminine identity, a task that held particular significance for Elisabeth between 1860 and 1864.

Elisabeth’s photographic experience reflected many of the patterns of collecting developed by her aristocratic and bourgeois peers. Photographs of family members held a prominent place in most albums, and this was no different for Elisabeth. Cartes of her younger sister Marie, Queen of Naples (1841-1925, figure 53), are found throughout both the leather-bound and ornamental albums, including many duplicate copies. Such inclusion of extended family was typical, but what is unexpected is the frequency of Marie’s presence throughout the albums. Images of Marie outnumber photographs of Elisabeth’s husband and children, a choice that indicates more than a sentimental sisterly attachment.

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162 Di Bello, Women’s Albums, 3.
163 Photographs were still such precious commodities that such preservation of duplicate copies was common.
164 Hamann, Familienalbum, 77.
Photographs of Marie fascinated Elisabeth, for in addition to being the sister who most resembled her in appearance, of Elisabeth’s seven siblings Marie was the only one to achieve a celebrity approaching that of the Habsburg empress. Marie captured international attention during the 1860-61 siege of Gaeta, where she and her husband, King Francis II, endured extended bombardment at the hands of Garibaldi’s Italian unification movement, earning Marie the title “heroine of Gaeta.” She appears particularly heroic in this carte wearing a hat, her cape slung over her shoulder, chin set in an expression of defiance.

Simultaneously sister and famous beauty, Marie muddies the distinctions between the categories of family and celebrity that shape our expectations of the nineteenth-century carte-de-visite album. Her role within Elisabeth’s albums is but one example of how the empress’s collection confounds the traditional role of albums as sentimental reminders of family or voyeuristic compilations of celebrities. For though Elisabeth’s choice to collect celebrity cartes was not uncommon, as a celebrity herself who was personally acquainted with many of her albums’ subjects, she necessarily had a different experience of these portraits. Rather than a voyeur admiring celebrities from afar, Elisabeth occupied the same space as these individuals. Consequently, assembling these portraits was a way of reconstructing and analyzing her own relationship to her peers.

This activity aligns Elisabeth with a well-established nineteenth-century practice. Higonnet notes that women all over Europe used albums as forums for the representation of their social values and domestic spaces.\(^{165}\) The association of album-production with femininity was common in the nineteenth century, as they were symbols of earlier

\(^{165}\) Higonnet, “Secluded Visions.”
feminine amateur artistic traditions. Drawing was considered an appropriate activity for elite young women, and their works were often contained within albums. The advent of inexpensive image reproduction techniques, including lithography and photography, shifted the contents of such albums away from hand-produced pictures to mechanically reproduced images. The wide availability of these images allowed album makers to incorporate objects from a range of sources, thereby introducing new possibilities for combinations and permutations of imagery. Elisabeth’s albums are examples of this trend, as they include carte-de-visite photographs alongside photographic reproductions of paintings.

Elisabeth was not the only monarch to engage with this new technology, for like so many of her peers in the noble and middle classes, the empress was swept up by the cartes-de-visite mania of the 1850s and 60s. In addition to producing photographic portraits, ateliers also sold cartes of celebrities. Collectors stored such cartes within albums, where portraits of family and friends mingled with members of the political class, entertainers, and the aristocracy. Elisabeth’s participation in this fad was evidently well known, as a popular 1863 photolithograph of the extended Habsburg family featured the empress leafing through a carte album (fig. 39). Elisabeth’s albums contained the same cartes that this anonymous artist manipulated to produce the image, and the visual conversation that appears in the lithograph imitates the juxtapositions of celebrities with intimate friends and family members that appeared in nearly every photographic album.

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166 Even women with substantial artistic ambition like Julia Margaret Cameron stored their finished drawings and photographs within albums, which they gave as gifts to friends.
167 Empress Eugénie and Queen Victoria also collected carte-de-visite photography. For the use of carte-de-visite photography in the 1850s and 60s, see McCauley, A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte De Visite Portrait Photograph.
The inclusion of celebrity photographs within *carte-de-visite* albums is an incarnation of the eighteenth-century networks of exchange upon which album culture was built, particularly in central Europe. Here, the practice of contributing artwork, witticisms, and personal notes for the albums of friends began in the eighteenth century with the popularity of *Poesiealben* (poetry albums) or *Freundschaftsbücher* (friendship books) (fig. 54). The owners of such albums exchanged their books with peers, who inserted poems or proverbs into the album’s leaves. The inclusion of a celebrity signature indicated access to elite circles, a network presented to the public by displaying an album to guests in the drawing room. These texts were often accompanied by highly finished watercolor or pencil drawings, which were replaced by printed illustrations in the nineteenth century. An example from the 1820s in Vienna’s Sammlung Frauennachlässe (fig. 55) features a colored lithograph of a dog with a small, tightly folded paper glued upon his mouth. The contributor illustrated the paper with ink lines that resemble the folds of a letter, and, once opened (fig. 56), contains a poem about friendship. Simpler additions were also possible, as seen in a circa 1860s example from the same archive (fig. 57); here, one page features the initials of the owner and the contributor framed by intersected rings of tiny blue flowers.

Such handmade contributions became less common as the century progressed. Higonnet notes that the advent of inexpensive image reproduction deskilled women artists; rather than actively produce the images in their albums, they were transformed into passive consumers by the ability to fill their pages with purchased prints and, eventually, photographs.¹⁶⁸ Despite the possibility of personally acquiring photographs

¹⁶⁸ See Higonnet, “Secluded Visions.”
from photoateliers, it remained common to build an album with photographic gifts from family and friends. Elisabeth participated in this tradition, though with an imperial authority commanding contributions from a broad spectrum of urban centers.

In this way, Elisabeth’s collection upholds the tradition of integrating objects from a variety of sources. Though she did not physically give the albums to her diplomats like a Poesiealbum, her collection reflects the multifaceted contents that characterized these books. Yet, her experience was different from that of her bourgeois peers, for Elisabeth was not concerned with the identity of her contributors or the personal stamp that a submission from a particular individual granted her collection. Though Pauline Metternich made her mark upon Elisabeth’s albums, it was not Metternich who impressed the empress; rather, it was the subjects of the erotic photographs submitted by the Parisian ambassador and the possibilities for their arrangement within the albums. The collection consequently tells us far more about Elisabeth rather than the interests and personalities of the individuals who supplied photographs for her album.

The tradition of exchange also invested albums with the ability to advance the social position of its owner. Poesiealben were used as mementos of friendships and family members, but they also demonstrated an individual’s social connections. When handwritten contributions were replaced with carte-de-visite portraits, the sale of celebrity cartes proved a lucrative business for photographers like A.A.E. Disdéri in Paris or Ludwig Angerer in Vienna. Disdéri’s “Galerie des contemporains” series featured weekly installments with several photographic portraits of a celebrity accompanied by a biographical sketch. These pamphlets provided subscribers with visual and contextual
information about leading public figures, knowledge that was expected of the modern urban resident.\textsuperscript{169}

By including such celebrities alongside their family portraits, women used their albums to simultaneously perform the acceptable feminine identities of mother and hostess. Photos of a woman with her children nestled on her lap demonstrated tender maternal bonds, while the presence of celebrity cartes signaled knowledge of contemporary artists or participation in the cultural and political activities of her time. Both roles are closely tied to the domestic sphere, which remained the emphasis throughout women’s albums. Higonnet observes that many women’s albums contained images of porcelains, fans, knick-knacks, needlework, and small pets, all objects that commemorate women’s responsibility for maintaining a household and the pleasures of entertaining within that home.\textsuperscript{170} This celebration of bourgeois values links the handmade albums of the early nineteenth century to their commercially produced successors.

Elisabeth’s albums fulfill none of these expectations. Though her husband may have been desired an outward show of bourgeois sensibilities, the empress had little interest in developing a façade as the ideal mother or wife. Elisabeth spent minimal time with her children in the early 1860s, a fact that she does not attempt to disguise with family photographs.\textsuperscript{171} Neither was Elisabeth interested in society or her role as imperial hostess, abhorring as she did the rigorous Spanish etiquette of the court and public appearances. Furthermore, the use of photography to construct such an identity was

\textsuperscript{169} McCauley, \textit{A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte De Visite Portrait Photograph}, 56.

\textsuperscript{170} Higonnet, “Secluded Visions,” 177.

\textsuperscript{171} As discussed in my previous chapter, the empress posed only once for a photograph with her children, whereas her peers in every social class clamored for shots with their offspring.
unnecessary for Elisabeth, possessing as she did the most exalted social position in the empire.

Val Williams has argued that albums were an exclusively aristocratic and conservative method of celebrating upper-class values, but these goals also seem far from the purpose of Elisabeth’s collection. Instead of performing the typical roles of wife or mother, Elisabeth used her album to produce a different vision of herself, that of a connoisseur of feminine beauty. This choice aligns Elisabeth with her uncle, King Ludwig I of Bavaria, whose “Gallery of Beauty” in Munich’s Nymphenburg Palace was surely familiar to her. Between 1827 and 1850 Ludwig commissioned court portraitist Joseph Karl Stieler to produce fifty-one portraits of beautiful women. Each subject was selected by the king himself, without regard to social class. The gallery includes a portrait of Ludwig’s sister Archduchess Sophie, who would become Elisabeth’s mother-in-law, a peasant girl whose beauty impressed the king, as well as Lola Montez, the dancer who became Ludwig’s mistress and for whom he ultimately abdicated his throne in 1851. Elisabeth could not determine the subjects of her album to the same extent as her uncle, but her choice to include women from every social class echoes Ludwig’s desire for a broad spectrum of beauties.

Elisabeth could control the organization of photographs within her albums, which makes the positioning of the straddling dancers even more compelling. She inserted these photographs into an album that includes cartes of other similarly erotic ballerinas,

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173 For the history of King Ludwig’s gallery, see Gerhard Hojer, Die Schönheitsgalerie König Ludwigs I., 6th ed. (Regensberg: Verlag Schnell & Steiner GmbH, 2006).
174 Stieler (1781-1858) was a mentor to Winterhalter while the younger artist was a student in Munich between 1823 and 1828.
reproductions of a Winterhalter portrait of Empress Eugénie, and busts of anonymous brunette women with unbound hair. These disparate representatives of feminine beauty, corralled into a single album, produce a visual conversation that would have been impossible without the new image reproduction technologies of the mid-nineteenth century. Drawn from the most popular images of the early 1860s, the albums offer an explicitly contemporary vision of feminine beauty, one that is quite different from the sensibility constructed by most women’s albums, or even the Gallery of Beauty compiled by Ludwig I. At this point in Elisabeth’s life, such a reimagining of the self and the nature of beauty was especially important.

BEAUTY AS PROTECTION: ELISABETH’S 1860 FLIGHT FROM VIENNA

The advent of Elisabeth’s interest in photography coincides with a critical period of her emotional development. After six years of marriage, Elisabeth was intensely dissatisfied with her life at court. When diagnosed with a lung ailment in late 1860, Elisabeth took her illness as an opportunity to recuperate at a distance from the capital. Her first refuge was the island of Madeira off the coast of Portugal. After a brief return to Vienna, Elisabeth departed for the Greek island Corfù in 1861, and finally, Venice in 1862. Biographers have romantically referred to this episode as Elisabeth’s “flight” from her Viennese oppressors, and they emphasize the significant increase in confidence and self-awareness that Elisabeth gained during her extended absence.\textsuperscript{175} Photography was her constant companion throughout this maturation abroad, suggesting the important role the medium played in the development of her self-perception.

\textsuperscript{175} Biographers Hamann, Corti, and Haslip all refer to it as such.
Elisabeth’s departure came in the midst of the politically tense period following Austria’s 1859 defeat in Italy. Garibaldi’s Italian unification movement had led to revolts in the Austrian province of Lombardy. The insurrection was encouraged by Garibaldi’s Piedmontese Army, whose secret pact with France emboldened the principality to provoke a war with Austria. Though incited by the Piedmontese, Austria appeared as the aggressor in the military intervention, which ended disastrously for the empire. Austrian military blunders led to a humiliating surrender, whose terms were proctored by French Emperor Napoléon III in the November 1859 Peace of Zurich.

Affectionate letters between Elisabeth and Franz Joseph during his encampment at the Italian front attest to the warmth of their marriage, but the months of separation were very difficult for Elisabeth. She suffered intense anxiety over her husband’s safety, which she considered compromised by the poor strategic choices pushed by his mother and her conservative advisors. Elisabeth begged him to allow her to join him at the army headquarters in Verona, a request that was refused. To appease her nerves, she spent hours each day horseback riding and her nights awake composing long letters to Franz Joseph. In one response, her husband wrote, “I beseech you...not to grieve so much, but to take care of yourself; ...go for rides and drives in moderation and preserve your dear, precious health.”

Franz Joseph was justified in his concern for her health, which had been weakened by three pregnancies in four years. These troubles were further compounded by daily bickering with her mother-in-law, Archduchess Sophie, over Elisabeth’s

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176 The political and familial details from this period are drawn from Hamann’s Reluctant Empress chapter “Flight” (p 95-125) and the chapters “The Italian War and the Madeira Crisis” and “Domestic Broils and Fluctuating Moods” from Corti, Elizabeth, Empress of Austria.
177 Corti, Elizabeth, 82.
behavior and the upbringing of the children. Most of the court took the side of the archduchess, including Elisabeth’s personal physician, who wrote, “[Elisabeth] is unfit for her position both as empress and wife.... Her relations with the children are most perfunctory...[and] she goes out riding for hours on end, ruining her health.”¹⁷⁸

In October 1860 the lung specialist Dr. Josef Skoda concluded that Elisabeth suffered from life-threatening “affected lungs,” a diagnosis that remains vague.¹⁷⁹ Hamann acknowledges that the form of Elisabeth’s disease was completely obscure.¹⁸⁰ Though it appears that Elisabeth had some type of lung affliction, it is unclear whether her symptoms were the result of an actual infection or exacerbated by Elisabeth’s anxiety and poor care for her own health. Elisabeth’s coughing fits and “greensickness” (anemia) were recorded, but the descriptions of her pulmonary ailment suggest psychosomatic causes. Elisabeth’s biographer Egon Corti speculates that it was either an incipient affection of the lungs or a tubercular affection of the throat,¹⁸¹ noting “she really [was] ill, her mental state also affects her body severely. And what would otherwise be a little anemia, an insignificant cough, under such circumstances, [becomes] almost really an illness.”¹⁸²

Contemporary accounts were skeptical about Elisabeth’s illness. One of the Viennese court ladies, Archduchess Maria Theresia wrote, “One cannot get to the bottom of whether there is much or little wrong with her, since so many versions of Dr. Skoda’s pronouncements are told.”¹⁸³ Corti’s original manuscript included lines that revealed

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 81.
¹⁷⁹ Hamann, Reluctant Empress, 99.
¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 100.
¹⁸¹ Corti, Elizabeth, 91.
¹⁸² Ibid., quoted in Hamann, Reluctant Empress, 102.
¹⁸³ Hamann, Reluctant Empress, 100.
Archduchess Sophie’s frustration with the supposed illness: “[Archduchess Sophie] ...is merely outraged at Elisabeth, who is unmindful of her obligations and who, in her opinion, was only shamming illness in order to escape winter and to be able to pursue her peculiar habits without constraint.”\(^{184}\) These reports demonstrate the persistent gossip that surrounded Elisabeth’s health.

The severity of Elisabeth’s condition was also brought into question by the choice of destination for her recovery, which seemed intentionally selected to preclude visits from Franz Joseph.\(^{185}\) Rather than choose any of the temperate resorts available within the empire, Elisabeth selected the Atlantic island of Madeira, a destination so far removed from Vienna that the empress had to borrow a yacht from Queen Victoria of England to complete the trip.

Elisabeth’s symptoms improved almost immediately upon her departure from Vienna, and reports of her grave illness did not match the seemingly healthy woman who arrived on the Portuguese island in November. The tropical setting improved her pulmonary ailments, but she continued to suffer emotionally. Responding to New Year’s greetings from her brother-in-law Archduke Ludwig Viktor, Elisabeth wrote, “May it be a better one for us all than the last. I am often dreadfully agitated [agiert] at present.”\(^{186}\) The foreign minister Count Rechberg, who was sent by the emperor to evaluate Elisabeth’s condition, wrote from Madeira to his aunt, “Her cough seems in no way better than before her voyage here, though as a rule she does not cough much...but mentally she

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\(^{184}\) Corti, quoted in Hamann, *Reluctant Empress*, 102. Hamann suggests that Corti omitted this information from the final publication out of loyalty to the Habsburg house.

\(^{185}\) Hamann, *Reluctant Empress*, 100.

\(^{186}\) Corti, *Elizabeth*, 94.
is terribly depressed, almost to the point of melancholia...she often shuts herself up in her room all day crying.”

These were the conditions under which Elisabeth began her photography collection. Photographs were initially sent of Elisabeth’s family to alleviate her homesickness for the children, but Hamann notes that Elisabeth soon extended the scope of these family photos to include less exalted personages. Elisabeth wanted portraits of anyone who came into regular contact with her family, be she a lady-in-waiting, tutor, or nursery maid. Photography also became a favorite pastime for the imperial household on Madeira, whose limited society made for an often painfully boring six months. They had photographs made around their rented estate, including a comical arrangement of Elisabeth with her ladies in waiting dressed in naval costumes (fig. 58). The four women pose outside the villa, with Elisabeth seated at center strumming a small guitar. Mathilde Windischgrätz aims a small rifle over Elisabeth’s head, while Helene Taxis sits at her feet and Lily Hunyady stands behind her. The costumes referenced the international naval officers who were the only occasional visitors to the remote island, but the entire arrangement was unsightly for a woman who was supposedly on her deathbed. This photograph garnered much criticism in Vienna, where members of the

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187 “Ihr Husten jetzt soll in gar keinem Verhältnis besser sein als vor ihrer Reise hierher, sie hustet auch im allgemeinen wenig...Moralisch ist aber die Kaiserin schrecklich bedrückt, beinahe melancholisch,... sie sperrt sich oft beinahe den ganzen Tag in ihrem Zimmer ein und weint.” Ibid., 94.


189 This choice may be a reflection of the Bavarian noble tradition of considering staff members to be part of the family, a practice sneered upon in Vienna. Ibid., 9.

190 Depending on the number of strings, the instrument is either a macheta (four strings) or a rajão (four strings). Both instruments are native to Madeira, but, unfortunately, it is impossible to count the number of strings in the photograph.
court saw it as evidence that the empress was enjoying a holiday rather than recovering from any significant illness.

The Viennese aristocracy doubted the seriousness of Elisabeth’s ailment, suggesting instead that she merely wished to pursue her eccentric habits at a distance from the court and its social demands. This critique had some legitimacy, as Elisabeth’s illnesses only seemed to emerge while she lived in Vienna. Following six months on Madeira, Elisabeth returned to Vienna, only to depart within six weeks because of the return of her symptoms. She traveled next to Corfu, a Greek island known for its malarial climate rather than as a healing destination. After several months on Corfu, Franz Joseph persuaded Elisabeth to move to Venice, which was still a part of the Habsburg Empire in 1862. Here she was close enough to Vienna for the children to live with her, and Franz Joseph could visit more regularly.

Her time abroad had not completely cured Elisabeth’s pulmonary disease, but it did teach her the power of her extraordinary body to influence Franz Joseph. Whether genuine or feigned, Elisabeth’s ambiguous illnesses were an instrument of control, as they allowed her to leave Vienna at a moment’s notice for legitimate reasons. In tandem with her focus on her health, Elisabeth became increasingly concerned with her beauty, which is described to have been at its height in the 1860s. This was also a tool against her husband, who was unable to deny her anything. The maintenance of her appearance became a lifelong pursuit, and it was during this first extended absence that Elisabeth developed the beauty practices, eating habits, and exercise routines that would

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191 Hamann, Reluctant Empress, 100.
192 The empress traveled to Bad Kissingen to treat her lungs each year until 1865.
193 Ibid., 126.
194 Ibid., 249.
order her days. This period was also the beginning of a fascination with travel. Upon her return to the capital in 1862, the empress spent increasingly less time in Vienna; by the 1890s, she lived less than two months a year in Vienna.

Travel and beauty collide in Elisabeth’s “Albums of Beauty,” as Elisabeth encountered the denizens of Europe’s foreign capitals first through her photography collection. Her explicit request for photographs of beautiful women from other capitals indicates a desire to experience and judge beauty from a broader perspective than that offered by the Austrian Empire, an international awareness that did not exist before her time abroad. This study of beautiful women was also an opportunity to visually crystallize the opinions on feminine beauty that Elisabeth had developed over the previous eighteen months. Pulling together aristocrats, actresses, and dancers from across the continent, Elisabeth crafted a new vision of the beautiful woman upon her body and within her album.

EMPRESSES AND PIN-UPS

The diversity with which Elisabeth constructed her vision is evident in the two albums of beauty (figs. 59 and 60).195 Here, the noblest of women share pages with unidentified entertainers, while other cartes are placed in juxtaposition with reproductions of paintings. This variety is most evident in album 127, which contains more overtly erotic imagery than album 126. Of its seventeen cartes, all but one feature women revealing some part of their bodies. Every photograph is drawn from the Parisian

195 These numbers were inscribed on the inside cover of each album before their entrance into public collections.
contribution, which Pauline Metternich may have selected to mock Elisabeth’s lack of social graces.¹⁹⁶

Regardless of this intent, the albums reveal that these Parisian cartes were the primary resources for the empress’s examination of the female body. A common figure across all the albums is the ballerina, which is hardly surprising considering that nineteenth-century ballet has been described as “the most highly articulated and aestheticized expression of idealized femininity.”¹⁹⁷ What is noteworthy, however, is the broad range of performers that Elisabeth includes in the two beauty albums, and the uncommon pairing of the lowest classes of dancers with the most exalted personages in Europe.

As discussed above, most carte-de-visite albums contained portraits from a variety of social circles, but the explicitly thematic designation of Elisabeth’s beauty albums distinguishes them from this typical practice. Her choice to intermingle women of different classes could be part of a rebellion against the rituals of Spanish court etiquette, which stratified the imperial court into layers of rank and privilege. However, integrating this broad sampling of beauties also reflects her newly international perspective; having never traveled to any of these capitals, these photographs offered her an almost voyeuristic opportunity to compare various standards of beauty. Though she does not include photographs of herself within the albums, the coincidence of the project with the development of her beauty rituals suggests that Elisabeth saw this thematic

¹⁹⁶ Hamann, Schönheitenalbum “Introduction,” 9. The animosity between Metternich and Elisabeth is documented, but not very specific. Hamann suggests that Elisabeth’s inadequately noble origins and inability to perform her function at court as the reason behind Pauline’s disdain. See Hamann, Reluctant Empress, 130.
undertaking as means to compare her own achievement to that of other remarkable women across Europe.

The two beauty albums are the most elaborate books in her collection, imitating as they do the appearance of late-medieval prayer books. Album 126 is gold-plated with large green stones studding its borders and centerpiece, while album 127’s cream, leather-tooled cover is framed by metal bindings embellished with purple stones. Both albums are more richly adorned than the other large album in the collection, album 116 (fig. 61), which contains portraits of Elisabeth’s children, photographs of Greek statuary, as well as a series of collaged cartes of entertainers. In addition to being more visually enticing than the leather albums that house most of Elisabeth’s cartes, these larger tomes offered more secure storage for their photographs. The leaves contained slots designed to hold cartes-de-visite, so their images were never damaged by glue or excessive handling. These were the type of albums that were placed in drawing rooms for guests to peruse, but one can hardly imagine that Elisabeth would have placed an album filled with prostitutes out for the consumption of her aristocratic visitors and ladies-in-waiting. Instead, the choice to contain the beauties within these elegant volumes suggests the pleasure Elisabeth had in its handling, and the distinction that she wished to grant it from her more pedestrian collections.

Across both albums, Elisabeth includes more entertainers than aristocrats, a noteworthy choice considering that she should have been taking beauty cues from her peers. The French Empress Eugénie provided the best model, as her cartes provided the

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198 Though Elisabeth included a few cartes of actresses within album 116, the album’s overall variety of subjects distinguishes it from the focus on beauty of albums 126 and 127.
feminine ideal for photographic portraiture of the 1860s. Elisabeth had at least two *cartes* of the French empress in her collection, including an unusual pose in which Eugénie appears with her back to the viewer and her head turned sharply to offer a profile of her face (fig. 62). This portrait highlights Eugénie’s costume more than her actual person; the dark satin gown is modest, yet includes fashionable details like ruffles and horizontal bands near the hem. Nevertheless, photographs of Eugénie do not appear in either of Elisabeth’s beauty albums. Instead, Elisabeth inserts a reproduction of Franz Xaver Winterhalter’s 1855 painting *Empress Eugénie and Her Ladies in Waiting* (upper *carte* in figure 63 and figure 12). This is the first image contained within album 127, and the sole *carte* within the album that does not feature a nude or scantily clad female body. Its alignment with such erotic photographs complicates our understanding of the Winterhalter painting and the anxiety that colored any public appearance by a woman, whether empress or actress.

Maria Elena Buszek argues that for nineteenth-century viewers, the more public the woman, the more “public,” or available, her sexuality. Though perhaps true of the women who appeared on the stage at the theater or ballet, this assumption becomes problematic for female consorts. Arguably the most public women of their time, their sexuality was hardly available for public consumption. Yet, the sexual activity of an empress was paramount to her role, as one of her primary responsibilities was to produce heirs for her husband’s throne. This was particularly true for Habsburg consorts. Long before Empress Maria Theresa’s renowned fertility, Habsburg wives were expected to

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produce numerous heirs for the continuation of their own ancestral line as well as for marriage to other leading European houses. Elisabeth’s inclusion of Winterhalter’s portrait of the French consort within an album dedicated to erotic imagery suggests that the empress was aware of this tension between the presumed modesty of an imperial consort and the public expectation of her successful pregnancies.

Elisabeth pairs the reproduction of Winterhalter’s painting with the artist’s earlier Florinda (lower carte in figure 63 and figure 64), where the artist depicts an episode from the legend of Roderick, the last king of the Visigoths. Here, the king spies on his bathing maids of honor in order to select the fairest. He is visible in the back left, peering through the trees at the nude women. He chooses Florinda, who appears at center, and she becomes his lover. The painting was first produced in 1852 for Queen Victoria, who gave it as a gift to Prince Albert. Winterhalter subsequently made a copy of the canvas for the Salon of 1853, and he used its compositional structure as the basis for his 1855 group portrait of the French empress and her ladies. The visual parallels between the two Winterhalter reproductions align the figures of Eugénie and Florinda, suggesting that like Florinda, the sensuality of Empress Eugénie was just as available for imperial consumption.

Winterhalter’s group portrait celebrates the tactile and visual pleasures of the French court. Eugénie sits in a lushly wooded enclave surrounded by eight ladies-in-waiting. The shining satin skirts of the attendants create a luxurious carpet around the

202 Maria Theresa was pregnant sixteen times over the course of her nineteen-year marriage to Emperor Franz Stephan. The political marriages of her children became a primary diplomatic tool for the empress, giving way to the expression, “Let others wage war, but you, happy Austria, marry!” For more on the political marriages of the Habsburgs, see Beller, A Concise History of Austria., Yonan, Empress Maria Theresa and the Politics of Habsburg Imperial Art.

empress, who offers a nosegay of violets to the woman on her right. The flowers in Eugénie’s hair are echoed across the canvas by overflowing floral arrangements, verdant foliage, and corsages pinned to the breasts of the women’s gowns. In addition to the imagined aroma suggested by these blooms, the inclusion of flowers points to Eugénie’s fertility. Alison McQueen interprets the painting within the context of Eugénie’s reproductive history, for the empress was rumored to have suffered two miscarriages when the painting premiered. The fecundity of Winterhalter’s setting may have alleviated fears about Eugénie’s ability to produce an heir.

Elisabeth acquired the images from the Viennese photography studio Miethke and Wawra, which advertised itself as both an artistic and photographic atelier. The French painting’s presence in a Viennese photographic atelier is not surprising when one considers that Winterhalter’s group portrait of Eugénie and her ladies was one of the most successful paintings of his career. The painting first appeared at the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where it won a first-class medal, and it traveled to Vienna in the spring of 1856 for an exhibition at the Kunstverein. The room where Winterhalter’s portrait hung was so popular that the exhibition coordinators issued tickets to control the crowds. According to one journalist, “the charming female figures from Winterhalter’s brush are the main topic at all the tea parties and salons.”

Winterhalter’s work enchanted the Parisian and Viennese public; French critics were less celebratory, seeing it as an example of Winterhalter’s frivolous artistic taste.

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204 Eugénie was already pregnant at this point with the Prince Imperial, and the pregnancy was announced in October 1855. See McQueen, Empress Eugénie and the Arts, 97.
205 As the artistic status of photography was not established in the 1860s, this description must refer to the availability of reproduced paintings at this particular studio.
206 Ormond and Blackett-Ord, Franz Xaver Winterhalter and the Courts of Europe 1830-70, 48.
207 Kunstblatt, Karlsruhe, 21 March 1856. Quoted in Ormond and Blackett-Ord, Winterhalter, 48.
Prosper Mérimée called it a “troop of tarts in a garden,” an observation that reveals anxieties about this public display of the French empress’s beauty. The equation of the empress’s entourage with prostitutes suggests that Eugénie’s femininity unsettled the expectation that an empress be suitably chaste while also promising to produce an heir. We cannot know what Elisabeth thought of the painting, but she did make an extended visit to the 1856 Kunstverein show with Franz Joseph, and her choice to include the painting in an album thatcatalogues the exposed female body suggests that she saw parallels between the position of Eugénie and the women of Paris’s demimonde.

If she recognized such a relationship, it is also interesting that Elisabeth included Florinda, a painting depicting a beauty competition. While Winterhalter’s portrait of Eugénie depicts a utopian world without men, Florinda is the only image within the album with a male figure. However, Elisabeth can be interpreted as appropriating the role of Roderick. Just as Roderick was the judge of Florinda, in the pages of her album Elisabeth becomes the arbiter of beauty.

The fashions of Eugénie’s ladies-in-waiting have little in common with the hastily compiled costumes of the dancers, and the haphazard studio arrangements of the cartes can hardly compare with orchestrated pastoral setting of the Winterhalter, yet the women in all of these images are presumed to be sexually available. This is particularly true of the photographic portraits, whose postures border on the pornographic. While pornography is the explicit representation of sexual organs and sexual acts, these more subtly erotic depictions contain self-consciously controlled references to sexual

208 McQueen, Empress Eugénie and the Arts: Politics and Visual Culture in the Nineteenth Century, 98.
activity. Abigail Solomon-Godeau refers to such images as prototypes of the modern pin-up, an image type that “was predicated on the relative isolation of its feminine motif through the reduction or outright elimination of narrative, literary, or mythological allusion.”

Winterhalter’s group portrait of the French empress maintains some of the narrative allusion that Solomon-Godeau references, but Mérimée’s critique of the painting implies that contemporary viewers may have recognized the portrait as a type of distilled femininity not too far removed from the erotic visual culture of which Elisabeth’s straddling dancers occupied a central space. The images following the album’s two Winterhalter reproductions suggest that Elisabeth made this visual connection, as allusions to narrative disappear in the album’s subsequent leaves.

The next two pages contain photographic reproductions of four allegorical paintings of brown-haired women (fig. 65), each with partially unbound hair. Two of the subjects wear translucent veils; one woman braids her hair, while another allows it to flow unrestrained down her back. All four women wear gowns that are either loosely draped just below their exposed shoulders, and on the far right, the subject bares her breast. This portrait is also unique within the grouping in that it contains two figures. The women appear in profile, and a shadow conceals the background subject’s face. The foregrounded woman wraps her left arm about her companion’s shoulder, echoing the female companionship depicted within the two Winterhalter paintings. The sensuality of these women and their inviting gazes anticipate the photographs in the subsequent pages;

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209 Buszek, Pin-up Grrrls, 11.
for while these images offer a representation of available skin, the *cartes* that follow depict actual bodies in poses broadcasting their status as prostitutes.

The first dancer in the album is photographed sleeping upon a brocade-covered couch (left *carte* in figure 66 and figure 67). When holding the album the subject initially appears balanced precariously upon her toes, but the *carte* is oriented horizontally, an unusual choice for the medium. This sleeping dancer extends her legs while pulling up her skirt with her right arm, creating a diagonal that bisects the image. The jeweled straps of her costume rest on her shoulder, revealing the curve of her breast and delicate clavicle bone. She appears vulnerable, unaware and exposed to the viewer. This is particularly evident when compared with Achille Devéria’s 1829 lithograph *Le Rêve* (fig. 68), whose subject appears in nearly the same position as the dancer. Devéria’s nude extends her left leg while tucking her right leg behind it, thereby splaying her full torso. The unconsciousness of both women suggests that they no longer control themselves, thereby granting the viewer complete access to their bodies.

Beside this sleeping figure appears the album’s first straddling dancer, “Valhalie” (right *carte* in figure 66 and figure 69). Valhalie’s costume is more historical than the sleeping dancer. She wears a velvet jacket with large buttons over a lacy-collared blouse, and her heeled shoes are reminiscent of eighteenth-century fashion. This appears to have been a famous role for her, as another *carte* from Elisabeth’s collection depicts her in the same apparel (fig. 70 – Valhalie is the topmost portrait). In figure 70, Valhalie is one of thirteen dancers included in Arthur Radoult’s collage *Célébrités Théatrales*, but her pose

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211 Most photographers maintained a vertical orientation in their studios, and very few albums featured slots to accommodate such an image.
212 Many of the *cartes* are identified in pencil in handwriting that is not Elisabeth’s. The identifications are not always accurate, as noted by Hamann, *Familienalbum* “Introduction,” 7.
is far less suggestive than that of the carte in Elisabeth’s collection. In album 127, Valhalie straddles the back of a wooden chair with curling legs, a brocade-upholstered seat, and long fringe. The chair’s backrest is concealed by a large lace panel at the center of her white skirt, which also covers her groin. Valhalie turns her legs to silhouette her calves, and a sliver of her left thigh appears beside the chair’s seat.

Valhalie’s impassive expression and averted gaze belie the erotic tone of the photograph, but the women on the next page are far more brazen, staring directly at the viewer with a smile. Such expression was not unusual in portraits of performers. McCauley notes that while propriety demanded that women pose fully clothed and with their mouths closed, dramatic gestures and smiles were permissible in photographs of female entertainers. 213 The first dancer on page five, who is identified as “Clotilde,” sits on a large cushion with her skirt pulled behind her to reveal her extended and crossed legs (fig. 71). Beside her, the dancer identified as Louise Lepage appears in a far more suggestive pose (fig. 72). Lepage, who appears en travesti, stands with one leg raised upon a chair. She rests her elbow upon this raised knee, and stares directly at the viewer. Her costume is also more revealing than most of the apparel within Elisabeth’s albums. Though dark pants cover her thighs, she wears a thin chemise that hugs the curves of her breasts.

The suggestiveness of such travesty costumes was part of their appeal for mid-century Parisian audiences. The performance of a male role by a female dancer became increasingly common beginning in the early nineteenth century, when ballet’s poetry and

213 McCauley, A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte De Visite Portrait Photograph, 91.
grace was deemed more appropriate for female dancers than males. As a result, male dancers were reduced to comic characters or occasional “lifters,” while female dancers assumed their roles. According to Lynn Garafola, this shift did not empower travesty dancers in any way, for they did not appropriate the privileges accorded to men. Instead, the tight costume revealed her body even more completely to audiences, whose male patrons viewed dancers as sexual commodities. Indeed, the absence of male members within the ballet corps only further removed obstacles between the patrons and the ballerinas.

While Elisabeth may have been aware of the phenomenon of travesty dancers, it is unlikely that she had seen many perform by the time she received these cartes in 1862 and 1863. Travesty dancers appeared primarily in privately operated ballet companies, which existed in London and Paris; for the most part, state-managed companies, like those in Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, and Vienna, maintained traditional roles for male and female performers. As such, these Parisian performers provided Elisabeth with a different vision of public women, one with specifically sexual connotations.

Garafola describes the danseuse en travesti as an “emblem of wanton sexuality, feminized masculinity, and amazon inviolability, symboliz[ing] in her complex persona the many shades of lust projected by the audience on the nineteenth-century dancer.” This description seems especially apt when applied to Lepage. Along with her pointed cap, the details at the belt and seams of Lepage’s satin pants suggest a feminized military costume. Actual military costumes would cover a soldier’s body completely, but

215 Ibid., 38.
216 Ibid., 35.
217 Ibid., 37.
Lepage’s stop above her knees, and she does not wear any sort of jacket. Her pose suggests both the excessive sexuality and inviolability central to the paradox of the travesty dancer described by Garafola. Legs splayed and torso shifted, Lepage’s posture exposes the contours of her breasts and situates her groin at the very center of the image. In spite of these details, her expression appears to challenge any viewer who would possess her. The dark color and full fabric of her pants obscures the shape of her thighs, and her steady gaze suggests an engagement with the viewer that defies any straightforward consumption of her body.

The ambiguous nature of Lepage’s carte is especially apparent when compared to the portraits of dancers en travesti in Elisabeth’s other beauty album, particularly a carte of Maria Taglioni (fig. 73). Taglioni was one of the most famous travesty dancers in Paris, but her reputation was more virginal than other danseuses en travesti.218 In contrast with Lepage, Taglioni appears far more available for the viewer’s pleasure. She wears a similarly militarized costume, but the details of the waist and hem of her pants serve to emphasize her figure. Yet even as Taglioni’s costume reveals more of her waistline, her bosom is concealed by her jacket. Lepage’s loose chemise and curls appear sloppy beside Taglioni’s delicate coiffure, embellished sleeves, and jauntily angled hat.

Most importantly, Taglioni holds a prop linking her to a specific character, a narrative reference that elevates her portrait. Lepage’s is completely divorced from any such allusion. Such narrative plausibility is also central to the distinctions between the subjects of the next page. Here, the dancer Hélène (fig. 74) wears the costume of a harem woman. Her gauzy pants conceal her legs, and her velvet top, heavy jewelry and beaded

218 Ibid.
headpiece all evoke an Orientalist fantasy. These details tie her to a specific role, one for which she may have been renowned, as the same carte is reproduced in another Radoult collage Célébrités Théatrales (also in Elisabeth’s collection, figure 75, upper right quadrant). These details grant Hélène greater respectability than the dancer beside her. Labeled “Dimersou,” this dancer bends over to pull up her stocking, thereby revealing both her décolletage and legs. She does not reference any particular character or ballet, suggesting that this photograph was designed exclusively to showcase her body.

The following carte offers even less narrative suggestion (left carte in figure 76 and figure 77). “Mlle. Armande” wears the least amount of clothing within Album 127. Her white chemise falls off both shoulders, and her long dark necklace emphasizes her breasts. Lepage’s costume may have revealed more about the shape of her bust, but Armande actually bares the skin of her chest. The rest of her body is draped with a black, lace-trimmed fabric, but it is difficult to discern whether this costume is a skirt or a cape. Regardless of its function, the positioning of this fabric reveals more of her legs than the other straddling dancers. Armande’s right thigh is visible nearly to her groin, while her white tights highlight the details of the lace on her stole. She wears a hat that resembles a fez, and its crooked position on her head suggests clumsiness. Her off-center position within the frame further emphasizes the casual, even sloppy production of this carte.

Armande’s eroticism far exceeds that of the women on the surrounding pages. In the next carte (see carte to the right in figure 76), a more fully-clothed ballerina labeled “Zou Zou” balances one foot upon a chair that leans against a stool. Though Zou Zou’s legs are revealed to the viewer, her photograph possesses more of the features of dancing photography. Her somewhat precarious position highlights her ability to balance and
extend her legs, but Armande squats indecorously upon her chair. On the next page (fig. 78), the dancer labeled Mlle. Olympe offers an even more active dance position. She pulls her skirt to her left while pointing her right leg, suggesting the motion of a dancer on stage. Even the dancer labeled Lankers (fig. 51) has more propriety than Armande. She does not confront the viewer with her gaze, and her apparel aligns with theatrical costumes. Regardless of the phallic shape and positioning of its backing, the chair that Lankers straddles is far more substantial than the café-style chair that Armande uses. The album concludes with a seated dancer whose legs are spread wide enough to reveal the lower curve of her thighs (fig. 79), but her elaborate costuming and accessories suggest a more respectable identity than that of Armande or Lepage.

Perhaps it is the eye contact that makes the cartes of Lepage and Armande the most brazen. T.J. Clark argues that the steady eye contact of the subject in Édouard Manet’s Olympia (fig. 80) was part of what made the painting so disturbing to Parisian viewers at the Salon of 1865. While eye contact was not uncommon in nudes, as evidenced by Titian’s Venus of Urbino (1538) or Ingres’ Venus Anadyomène (1848), Clark notes that their gaze was a “dreamy offering of self, [a] looking that was not quite looking.” Such eye contact offers no challenge to the viewer and it extends the illusion that the nude exists solely for the viewer’s pleasure. On the contrary, in Manet’s painting, Olympia looks at the viewers in a way that implicates them in the financial and sexual exchange implicit in an interaction with a courtesan. Her eye contact collapses distance between the subjects and the beholder, who now occupy the position of clients.

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220 Ibid., 133.
Though the costumes of Lepage and Armande signify their class status more explicitly than Olympia’s nakedness, the directness of their gazes complicates their photographs in a manner similar to *Olympia*. The gazes of other dancers within album 127 are mediated by narrative allusions. For example, the dancer directly beside Lepage (fig. 71) smiles dreamily at the viewer as she exposes her legs, and the ballerina shifting her skirt (fig. 78) lifts her leg as if she were about to dance. Neither Lepage nor Armande suggest that their portrait represents anything more than a financial exchange – a titillating glimpse of their bodies in exchange for the viewer’s cash.

Elisabeth’s segregation of these *cartes* from the rest of her collection suggests that she was cognizant of their erotic themes. Nineteenth-century viewers would have recognized the photographs as mildly pornographic, as similar portraits of women in dressing gowns or other stages of undress were distributed in all-male clubs.\(^ {221} \) Such *cartes* were not tied to specific studios, and their subjects often used assumed names like Olympe, Zouzou, Aimée, or Marguérie.\(^ {222} \) Two of Elisabeth’s photographs are labeled with these names, implying their subjects’ participation in the production of soft-core pornography. However, photographs of dancers could also circumnavigate these strictures, since ballet costumes revealed more of their subjects’ physiques as a matter of course. For example, while a photograph by Thomassin of the entertainer Lucie exposing her legs and petticoats (fig. 81) was considered pornographic,\(^ {223} \) the dancer in figure 78 holding nearly the same pose could avoid censorship, as it represented an acceptable position for a ballet dancer.

\(^ {221} \) McCauley, *A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte De Visite Portrait Photograph*, 149.
\(^ {222} \) Ibid., 104.
\(^ {223} \) Ibid.
Though there are many ballerinas in Elisabeth’s second beauty album (album 126, figure 59), none present the sexuality that characterizes the subjects of album 127. The ballerinas of Album 126 wear costumes that conceal their bodies or reference a specific role, thereby downplaying the erotic undertones of their profession. Nevertheless, several leaves in particular are worth examining for their relationship to Elisabeth’s visual construction of femininity across the two volumes.

Each leaf of album 126 contains four cartes, and Elisabeth often grouped her photographs thematically. One such example is figure 82, where three out of the four women wear their hair partially or completely unbound. Elisabeth became famous in the 1860s for her ankle-length hair, and these earlier cartes may have held her interest because of their focus on long hair. The subject of the carte in the lower right quadrant (fig. 83) of the page assumes a posture designed to showcase her long hair. Standing in profile, her hair hangs completely loose down her back, allowing the viewer to marvel at its length and glossy sheen. In the lower left quadrant (fig. 84) the subject’s hair is not nearly as long or straight as her neighbor’s, but she has removed her clothing and stands bare shoudered with her body enveloped layers of striped fabric.

There are far fewer reproductions of paintings in album 126, but their positioning suggests that Elisabeth continued to use them in the construction of visual dialogues. On one page (fig. 85), Elisabeth pairs a painting of Mary Magdalene with an anonymous portrait of a woman holding a fan. There are many visual resonances between the two images. Both women sit with their bodies facing to their right while turning their heads toward the viewer, and the raised fan of the photographed woman echoes the lifted arm of Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene’s pose also echoes the allegorical portraits of Album
127 (fig. 65), her glossy hair and loosened drapery exposing her to the viewer. As a former prostitute who used her long hair to wash Jesus’ feet, Mary Magdalene aligns well with the overall theme of beautiful, public women showcased across Elisabeth’s two beauty albums; as will be discussed in chapter four, she even may have provided Elisabeth with a prototype for her own portrait with unbound hair.

Other than Elisabeth’s sister Marie, the figure who appears most frequently within Elisabeth’s albums is the Viennese actress Charlotte Wolter (figs. 86 and 87). For thirty years, Wolter was the leading actress of Vienna’s State Theater, where she was best known for her tragic roles. Here, Wolter appears in character, holding her left hand to her breast while grasping a letter in her right. Her elaborate hair styling surely appealed to Elisabeth, who within the next year would hire a stylist from the State Theater to be her personal hairdresser. Above Wolter are cartes of two anonymous aristocratic women, suggesting that Elisabeth connected the attitude and costume of Wolter with her aristocratic contemporaries.

Elisabeth may also have appreciated the carte’s narrative, as Wolter appears to be deep in thought over the contents of her letter. The reverie depicted here is reminiscent of a Winterhalter portrait of Empress Eugénie in Eighteenth-Century Costume (fig. 88). Here Eugénie appears to have departed a costume ball and entered into a quiet space for daydreaming. Privately commissioned by Eugénie from Winterhalter and never exhibited publicly during her reign, the portrait suggests a freedom from the restraints and expectations of imperial life.224 Elisabeth never saw this Winterhalter portrait, but its sentiment would surely have appealed to her. As described above, Elisabeth’s 1860

224 McQueen, Empress Eugénie and the Arts, 125.
departure from Vienna was in part motivated by a deep dissatisfaction with her life there and the limits it placed upon her personal freedom. Coinciding with her 1862 return, the beauty albums emerge as a space where Elisabeth could freely experiment with definitions of feminine beauty and their implications for an imperial consort.

A THEATRICAL STATE PORTRAIT

In bringing paintings of Empress Eugénie into conversation with the crude photographs of Armande or the actresses of the Viennese stage, Elisabeth created a visual equivalence between these disparate women, the results of which informed the iconic portraits that Winterhalter began in 1864. At this point, Franz Joseph had been emperor for sixteen years and his marriage a decade old, but no artist had produced a state portrait that suitably captured the magnificence, authority, and beauty of the imperial couple as he envisioned them. The most widely distributed image of Elisabeth continued to be a portrait produced in advance of her 1854 wedding (fig. 89). Elisabeth appears childlike in this painting, weighed down by the pearls, crown, and diamond pins showered upon the soon-to-be empress. Ten years later, Elisabeth was more worldly and had succeeded in producing the essential male heir to the Habsburg dynasty, factors that contributed to a dramatically different state portrait.

Engaging Winterhalter for this task aligned the Habsburg court with other noble houses of Europe, most notably France and England. Yet while Winterhalter’s portrait of Franz Joseph is comparable to the images he produced of other emperors, the portraits of Elisabeth have a very different sensibility, a difference tied to Elisabeth’s role in their production. The lessons learned by the empress in the compilation of her beauty albums
play out on the surfaces of these canvases. By identifying the visual links between the Winterhalter canvases and the beauty albums, my analysis uncovers Elisabeth’s agency in the construction of beauty central to the success of Winterhalter’s portraits.

The exceptional nature of Winterhalter’s state portrait of Elisabeth is evident when compared to the artist’s image of his most famous patron, Empress Eugénie (fig. 10). Completed in 1855, this portrait depicts Eugénie in a formal imperial costume complete with mantle; she wears a pearl tiara and gestures toward a crown placed on the tabouret to her right. Winterhalter positions the empress before a massive red curtain that is drawn back to reveal a large column and a garden view with fountains and statuary. Eugénie meets the viewer’s gaze with an impassive expression, which McQueen interprets as suggesting calm assurance and facility. This attitude, paired with the subject’s opulent drapery and jewelry, signals Eugénie’s identity as Empress of the French and her capability to fulfill imperial responsibilities.

Under initial inspection, the portrait of Elisabeth appears to reproduce many of the same conventions as Eugénie’s. Elisabeth stands beside a column overlooking a landscape. She wears a luxurious gown of spangled tulle and her hair is studded with diamond stars designed especially for her by the court jeweler Köchert. However, none of these details allude to Elisabeth’s husband, a reference that Mary Sheriff calls “the defining quality of queenship.”

Sheriff uses Carl Van Loo’s 1741 Portrait of Marie Leczynska (fig. 90), wife of the French King Louis XV, as the archetype for female monarchical portraiture. She identifies two references to the king in Marie Leczynska; the first is its status as a pendant

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225 Ibid., 94.
226 Sheriff, The Exceptional Woman, 154.
portrait to the king’s own representation, and the second is a portrait bust of the king on the *tabouret*. These conventions do not follow for Winterhalter’s pendant portraits of the Habsburgs. Franz Joseph is not referenced in sculptural form within Winterhalter’s painting, nor is there a crown to remind the viewer of Elisabeth’s relationship to him. Furthermore, when paired with its pendant, the relationship between the two figures undermines the expected hegemony of emperor over his consort (fig. 91).

Winterhalter’s painting of Elisabeth entirely overwhelms that of her husband. Called “grandiloquent, but unmemorable” by Gabriel Badeau-Päun, Franz Joseph’s portrait includes traditional iconographic details of kingly portraiture, most notably his military apparel and the discarded helmet on the chair in the background. The artist visually connects the pendant paintings through the landscape behind the fantasy architectural setting, a choice that links the two figures within a comparable space. Nevertheless, Franz Joseph appears stiff and shrinking in comparison with Elisabeth. The sheer size of Elisabeth’s gown dwarfs the emperor, and the light emanating from her skirt draws the viewer’s eyes away from his canvas. Nor does Winterhalter conceal the fact that Elisabeth was the same height as her husband. Elisabeth’s costume also fails to reference the emperor in terms of its function, for while Franz Joseph appears in attire that directly alludes to his imperial status, Elisabeth wears a party dress without any accessories to indicate her office. Eugénie wore a tiara, mantle, and robe over her gown, but Elisabeth’s primary accessories are a fan and a tulle shawl, both suitable for a night at the ball, but not for overseeing an imperial audience.

Elisabeth’s movement across the canvas also establishes a shaky interpersonal dynamic between the monarchs. The angle of the fabric of Elisabeth’s gown in the canvas’s lower right corner suggests that Elisabeth is walking toward Franz Joseph, almost as if she is leading the viewer toward the emperor. This indicates an authority unsuitable to the subservience expected of an empress. Instead of Franz Joseph controlling the space of the portraits, Elisabeth directs the action, like an actress moving across a stage. The overall composition recalls Charlotte Wolter’s pose within album 126 (fig. 87), with Elisabeth assuming the role of leading lady.

The direction of gazes across the two portraits further undermines the authority of the emperor. Franz Joseph looks at his wife, who in turn looks out at the viewer. This choice seems to align with the Marie Leczynska portrait, whose sculpture of the king also gazes upon his wife, who then directs her glance toward the viewer. Sheriff argues that in this arrangement, Marie Leczynska becomes the object of the king’s showing; it is the king who allows her to be viewed.\footnote{Sheriff, The Exceptional Woman, 154.} A parallel authority does not exist within Winterhalter’s pendant, as the gaze of Franz Joseph appears directionless and empty. Instead, Elisabeth looks directly at the viewer with a knowing stare. Her look is neither dreamy nor impassive, and is almost flirtatious.

Such brazen eye contact is unusual within Winterhalter’s oeuvre, but the artist’s 1860 portrait of Princess Pauline Metternich (fig. 92) offers a comparable gaze. The princess wears a tulle gown similar to Elisabeth’s, and her twisted pose foreshadows the arrangement Winterhalter would choose four years later for the Austrian empress. Most notable in Metternich’s portrait is the expression of her eyes, the upturned corners of her
mouth, and the slightly raised left eyebrow, all of which suggest the intelligence and vivacity that endeared Metternich to Empress Eugénie, who put her in charge of organizing games of charades and *tableaux vivants* at Compiègne. Elisabeth’s look pushes propriety even further than does Metternich’s, imitating the playfulness evidenced in a photograph of Madame Rimsky-Korsakov (fig. 93). Elisabeth included this *carte* in her beauty album, which features the beautiful Russian émigré peering out at the camera through her reflection in a mirror. Madame Rimsky-Korsakov struck a far more demure pose in her portrait by Winterhalter (fig. 23), where she looks away from the viewer while covering her décolletage with her unbound hair. Elisabeth’s slight smile makes her eye contact even more brazen than Rimsky-Korsakov’s photographic portrait.

The empress’s bare shoulder and twisting torso resemble the anonymous painted portraits in album 127 (fig. 65), whose falsely naive attitudes do not suggest the gravity expected of a state portrait. The coy quality of Elisabeth’s expression disrupts expectations for a female monarch, aligning the portrait with the forthright eye contact of the dancers Armande or Lepage. Just as Armande and Lepage look out from their portraits without any pretense of narrative or play-acting, Elisabeth’s eye contact reveals her own awareness of being looked at, a knowledge that shatters the illusion of anonymity on the part of the viewer. Other Winterhalter portraits preserve a distance between the subject and beholder, a remove that allows viewers to observe the beautiful subject without being on view themselves. However, the state portrait of the Austrian empress recalls the expression of Manet’s *Olympia*, which also premiered in 1865. Like Olympia, Elisabeth appears cognizant of the simultaneity of viewing and being viewed.

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229 Badea-Päun, *Society Portrait*, 93.
Her shapely shoulder, miniscule waist, and dazzling apparel all project her desirability, but Elisabeth establishes a control over this sensuality reminiscent of Lepage and Armande. For though her sexuality is on display, the fact that she had not been pregnant in seven years suggests that her husband had no access to it. Elisabeth’s assured expression implies an awareness of this discrepancy, and perhaps even pleasure in the power that her beauty affords her.

Elisabeth’s state portrait demonstrates her application of lessons learned in compiling her albums of beauty, especially the sensuality of album 127. However, the portrait of Elisabeth with her hair unbound (fig. 6) also references photographs within her albums, but to very different effect. If the goal of the state portrait was to assert the power that her beauty afforded Elisabeth within the court, the portrait with her hair unbound expresses Elisabeth’s newfound interest in travel and her proven ability to disrupt the Habsburg court with her threats of departure.

Elisabeth’s loose hair and nebulous drapery immediately recall the hair photographs from album 126. Her pose echoes figure 83, but the turn of her back emphasizes the length and expanse of her hair even more dramatically than that of the photographic portrait. The gathering of fabric around her body imitates the woman of figure 84, as both subjects expose their shoulders through the loosening of drapery around their torsos.

Beyond these details, the painting possesses a theatrical quality that parallels the photographic portraits of actresses in Elisabeth’s collection. Turning again to the photograph of Charlotte Wolter (fig. 87), a similar performance of reverie exists within Elisabeth’s portrait. The empress walks by moonlight, seemingly lost in her thoughts and
the experience of the landscape. This tableau recalled Elisabeth’s experience living in Madeira or Corfu, unpopulated retreats where she could flee whenever the atmosphere in Vienna proved too difficult.

The Viennese court became an increasingly contentious place in the years leading up to the 1867 Compromise that restyled the Austrian Empire as Austria-Hungary. Elisabeth’s devotion to the Hungarian nationalist cause led her to become more involved with the politics of the court than at any other moment in her forty-four year reign. Even in this political activity, Elisabeth applied the visual lessons of her beauty albums. One of the most widely reproduced photographs of Elisabeth depicts her as Queen of Hungary (fig. 94). She commissioned a special dress for the photograph from the Parisian designer Charles Frederick Worth, a gown that integrated elements of Hungarian folk costume with Worth’s trademark tulle. In the photograph, Elisabeth wears the Hungarian crown and coronation robes, even though the actual coronation was still many months away. The final product appears far more like a photograph of an actress than that of a queen, especially in comparison to a portrait of Charlotte Wolter in the role of Kriemhild from Hebbel’s play Nibelungen (fig. 95). The elaborate costumes, headdresses, and tilted expressions of both women imbue the photographs with a drama appropriate to their subject matter. Both Wolter and Elisabeth are acting – Wolter in the most celebrated role of her early career, and Elisabeth as Queen of Hungary in advance of her actual ascension to this role.

**CONCLUSION**

In constructing her vision of femininity with photographs of actresses and prostitutes, Elisabeth engaged with female figures art historians have identified as the central representatives of modernity. However, Elisabeth is unique in her application of these lessons to imperial portraiture. She seemed to recognize well in advance of her peers the necessity of such theatrics in the imagery of the ruling class. In addition to allowing her to crystallize her ideals of feminine beauty, Elisabeth’s vision served as fortification against the critique she would experience when she returned to Vienna. Elisabeth’s alluring self-assurance, pictured explicitly within Winterhalter’s state portrait, was her answer to the members of the Viennese aristocracy who scorned her inability to perform the rituals they deemed central to her role as empress. Grounded in her beauty, this representation of power became increasingly threatening, as I will examine at length in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

Seeing and Knowing: Visualizing Mental Illness with Empress Elisabeth

Research can be successful only if the problem is good; it can be original only if the problem is original. But how can one see a problem, any problem, let alone a good and original problem? Michael Polanyi

The previous chapters feature images of Elisabeth that initially appear to match conventions of aristocratic portraiture. This is not the case for the two portraits that are the centerpieces of the final chapter. Franz Xaver Winterhalter’s oval portrait (fig. 1) is a shocking departure from the many paintings of Europe’s crowned heads that the artist produced between 1830 and 1870. Unlike the genteel monarchs who populate his portraits of the French and British courts, Elisabeth stares at the viewer defiantly and conceals her body behind the expanse of her unbound hair. Anton Romako’s 1883 portrait (fig. 3) provides an equally eccentric perspective. The artist portrays Elisabeth in a vague, vegetal environment with a sour expression on her elongated face, and she shares her frame with a giant St. Bernard dog. Why would Winterhalter and Romako choose to depict Elisabeth in such unorthodox manners? Neither portrait has received extensive critical attention, but ties between the paintings and contemporary medical practice position these artworks as useful lenses through which to examine the

231 Polanyi, "Tacit Knowing."
relationship between female portraiture and the visual culture of mental illness in late nineteenth-century Vienna.

Both portraits address one of the most pressing research problems within clinical psychiatry of the nineteenth century: what does mental illness look like? The important ties between clinical psychiatry and the culture of fin-de-siècle Vienna have long been recognized by scholars of this period, yet few art historians have acknowledged this difficult relationship between clinical psychiatry and the visual arts, one that existed before Sigmund Freud. Freud devalued the role of imagery in his psychoanalytic practice, but clinical psychiatrists in Vienna longed for visual evidence of mental illness. While doctors in Paris and London relied extensively upon photographic evidence in their psychiatric applications, Viennese medical practice valued pathological anatomy as a diagnostic method. The Viennese medical school was the leading center for anatomical dissection in Europe, but psychiatric dissections failed to uncover the type of brain lesions that would have gained psychiatrists the respect of their peers. A definitive visualization of mental illness would have provided Viennese psychiatrists with pathological evidence necessary to secure their scientific standing within the city’s medical community.

Despite the physicians’ failure to uncover visible signs of mental illness, by 1900 “nervous” diseases offered a certain allure. Clinical psychiatry had moved into private practice, allowing more affluent patients to be treated without the stigma of entering a mental hospital, while celebrity doctors like Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Freud offered a measure of prestige to their clients. The visual appeal of mental illness extended to modernist portraiture, where Viennese artists would develop tropes of madness to signal their subjects’ participation in this cultural trend.

The Winterhalter and Romako portraits of Elisabeth provide a window onto the early development of this phenomenon, because her conspicuous existence as a beautiful, nervous woman predates the “nervous” age of the Jahrhundertwende by at least forty years. Elisabeth was hailed by French Empress Eugénie as “the loveliest crowned head in Europe,” but she became equally well-known for her ambiguous illnesses and anxious disposition. Beginning with her lung affliction in 1860, Elisabeth spent increasingly more time away from Vienna to appease her pulmonary and nervous maladies. Her habit of using illnesses to shirk courtly responsibilities generated rumors of fragile nerves and unpredictable behavior.

Elisabeth’s reputation as a nervous woman inserts these portraits into a constellation of related events in both psychiatric treatment and perceptions of feminine beauty. Gilles Deleuze proposes that “philosophy, art, and science come into relations of

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mutual resonance and exchange, but always for internal reasons.” Though the connections between the Habsburg empress, changes in psychiatric therapy, and representations of feminine beauty may seem tenuous, Elisabeth’s portraits embody the mutual concerns between these fields. Regardless of the artists’ awareness of these relationships, portraying the notoriously nervous Elisabeth offered an opportunity to explore the visual representation of mental illness. In addition to her own medical history, Elisabeth was part of a generation whose children would become Sigmund Freud’s patients, and her own fascination with mental illness anticipates the concerns that became central to Freud’s views. The portraits were formed within this same aggregate of cultural values, allowing the artists to visually transcribe the related problems of beauty and nervousness upon their artworks.

This is especially apparent in Winterhalter’s oval portrait of Elisabeth, where the empress’s ankle-length hair assumes a psychoanalytic relevance, one that anticipates the significance of hair within Freud’s theories, as well as its currency in Gustav Klimt’s later portraits of femmes fatales. Under this rubric, the concept of fetishism emerges as a useful template for describing the ambiguity of the painting. Sarah Kofman called fetishism a paradigm of indecidability because of its constant shifting between the poles

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242 I use this method to interpret the psychic structure of the painting itself as it exists within cultural representation and socio-historical context. My practice is deeply informed by Laura Mulvey and Griselda Pollock, who suggest that psychic processes inflect and inscribe themselves in all creative acts, regardless of when they were produced. See Griselda Pollock, Psychoanalysis and the Image: Transdisciplinary Perspectives, New Interventions in Art History (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 4, Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure in the Narrative Cinema," Screen 16, no. 3 (1975): 6.

243 In his 1927 essay, Freud defined a fetish as a displacement of the discovery of the mother’s castrated penis onto an object or another part of the female body; the fetish replaces the castrated penis of the mother while simultaneously highlighting its absence. To illustrate this point, Freud describes how, for one patient, a jock strap simultaneously covers the penis and draws attention to it. See Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism (1927)," in Standard Edition, ed. James Strachey (New York City: Basic Books, 1966).
of avowal and disavowal. Elisabeth’s hair functions in a similar way, both drawing attention to her sexuality while also denying access to the viewer. Simultaneously erotic and ascetic, the portrait and its ties to Elisabeth’s obsession with her hair make visible anxieties over female sexuality, power, and nervousness.

By suggesting that the Habsburg empress was mentally unstable within their portraits, both Winterhalter and Romako unwittingly upended conventional representations of mental illness. Sander L. Gilman argues that images of disease embody a projected fear of collapse; by isolating the destructive nature of a disease within the body of an “other,” artists reassured viewers that they faced no such danger of collapse. Empress Elisabeth was certainly an “other” with regard to her viewers, but in an entirely different manner from the typical, impoverished subject of mental illness. As consort to the Habsburg emperor, Elisabeth inhabited a social sphere superior to nearly every one of her viewers. Applying the visual language of mental illness to an elite “other,” Winterhalter and Romako topple Gilman’s perception of disease as a terrifying loss of control and instead invest it with a special desirability.

In my visual analysis, I argue that both artists embed Elisabeth’s reputation as a nervous woman within their artwork. Because of censorship laws, such an inscription had to be concealed, inviting the question of how a viewer could recognize mental illness without actually seeing it. This tension between seeing and knowing invokes the idea of tacit knowledge developed by the Hungarian-British polymath Michael Polanyi. Polanyi writes, “we know more than we can tell”; to demonstrate, he uses the example of how we

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recognize an individual’s face from among millions, yet we cannot explain how we produce this knowledge. I would like to modify Polanyi’s language to suggest that we know more than we can see. Evidence from Elisabeth’s contemporaries within the Habsburg court as well as newspaper and illustrated magazine reports demonstrate Elisabeth’s reputation as a nervous woman. As such, though no clearly established signs that would signify such a conclusion exist within the portrait, we nevertheless ascribe it to particular elements.

In this chapter, I illuminate connections between the visual choices made by Winterhalter and Romako and the psychiatric research question in which they unknowingly collaborated. As described in the chapter’s epigraph, Polanyi suggests that most successful research answers an original question, which in turn must address a hidden concern. Consequently, the researcher must anticipate a problem that is somehow concealed: “It is to have an intimation of the coherence of hitherto not comprehended particulars.”

I observe this intimation of coherence within Winterhalter and Romako’s portraits of Elisabeth, as both artists grappled with the hidden nature of mental illness within their subject. The artists’ struggle teaches us more about the context that produced the psychically charged works of Gustav Klimt and Oskar Kokoschka at the fin-de-siècle. In this way, I will argue that these portraits achieved what Viennese psychiatrists could not: a visualization of mental illness that was recast as trope of modernism in fin-de-siècle Vienna.

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247 Ibid., 21.
PART I: VISUAL ANALYSIS

Close viewing of Winterhalter and Romako’s portraits reveals their unorthodox nature, both within the *oeuvre* of the artists as well as in the broader context of female portraiture. The disruptive nature of each portrait stems initially from the identity of the sitter and the choice to represent the Habsburg empress in such eccentric positions. However, closer visual analysis paired with Elisabeth’s biographical context reveals that the empress was the ideal model for each artist to explore the connection between feminine beauty and mental instability. Links between the nineteenth-century artists and their twentieth-century successors reveal a tacit understanding of how to visualize mental illness, as well as their artistic engagement in one of the more pressing medical questions of the century.

Unbalanced beauty: Winterhalter’s Oval Portrait

Winterhalter features Elisabeth in an unusual pose for a monarch: she wears an intimate dressing gown, her hair unbound. This was not the final product Franz Joseph expected when he commissioned Winterhalter to complete the largest program of Habsburg family portraits of his reign.

The problematic nature of Winterhalter’s oval portrait was evident from the painting’s earliest existence. We have reason to suspect that Franz Joseph was displeased by Winterhalter’s oval portrait of his wife, perhaps because it bears so little resemblance to the feminine portraits upon which Winterhalter built his reputation. Beginning in the 1840s with portraits of Queen Victoria’s court, Winterhalter revitalized

the traditional monarchical portrait.\textsuperscript{249} Eschewing the austere, neoclassical style that dominated early nineteenth-century European portraiture, Winterhalter was praised for his elegant and lively portraits with their more romantic vision of the aristocracy.\textsuperscript{250} His success with Queen Victoria multiplied his contacts across the continent, and the artist’s services were in constant demand for the next thirty years.

Winterhalter was therefore the obvious choice for a large commission of Habsburg family portraits for Franz Joseph, especially considering the political environment of the Austrian Empire. The balance of central European powers was shifting away from the Habsburg monarchy towards Prussia. The next three years would witness Austria’s defeat at Prussia’s hands, the dissolution of the German Confederation, and the loss of the Austrian provinces of Bavaria and Venetia. Over this same period, Franz Joseph’s brother Ferdinand Maximilian would accept the Mexican throne from Napoléon III, only to be executed by his subjects in 1867.\textsuperscript{251} In 1864, Franz Joseph wanted to show his peers across Europe that his court was on secure footing, and the selection of a renowned court painter like Winterhalter aligns these representations with those of more powerful monarchies, like France and Great Britain. By emphasizing the beauty of his wife, Franz Joseph was able to distinguish his monarchy from the others, thereby achieving the appearance of a vibrant Viennese court life. The Winterhalter portraits spread legends of the empress’s beauty and drew to Vienna many diplomats who may otherwise not have traveled so far.\textsuperscript{252}

\textsuperscript{249} Ormond and Blackett-Ord, \textit{Winterhalter}, 37-51.
\textsuperscript{250} For a focus on Winterhalter’s work in Great Britain, see A. Cassandra Albinson, "Peeresses in Paint: Portraits of Aristocratic Women and the Question of Representation, 1837-1901" (Yale University, 2004).
\textsuperscript{251} Hamann, \textit{Reluctant Empress}, xi-xii.
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 126.
Franz Joseph’s desire to promote the outstanding beauty of his wife may also have contributed to the selection of Winterhalter. The artist was known for his representation of hairstyling, an essential element in nineteenth-century fashion.\(^{253}\) Winterhalter’s subjects relied upon the artist to portray them in the latest hairstyles, best exemplified by the stylish *anglaise* curls featured in his 1855 portrait of Empress Eugénie with her ladies-in-waiting.\(^{254}\) During the Second Empire, hairstyles became increasingly extravagant, forcing women to utilize false hairpieces in their attempts to imitate the elaborate coiffures of the moment.\(^{255}\) Elisabeth was exceptional in that she did not need such assistance to replicate the fashions; she possessed hair of length and quality capable of enduring any arrangement. Pauline Metternich, who was herself the subject of a Winterhalter portrait produced while she was living in Paris as the wife of the Austrian ambassador (fig. 92), said of the artist, “[He] made women look stupid. Not that they care. As long as they look like hairdressers’ models they always think the likeness is perfect.”\(^{256}\) Indeed, as Winterhalter emphasized Elisabeth’s hair far more than her expression in all three of his portraits, one might conclude that Franz Joseph desired just the effect described by Princess Metternich.

Elisabeth thus became a figurehead for the sophisticated Viennese culture that Franz Joseph wanted to advertise across the continent. Correspondence between Franz Joseph and Winterhalter indicates that paintings of Elisabeth were the primary concern of both artist and patron.\(^{257}\) The most reproduced painting in the commission served as

\(^{253}\) See Carol Rifelj, *Coiffures: Hair in Nineteenth-Century French Literature and Culture* (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 2010).
\(^{254}\) Ibid., 45.
\(^{255}\) Ibid., 48.
\(^{257}\) Ormond and Blackett-Ord, *Winterhalter*, 217.
Elisabeth’s official image (fig. 2). This full-length portrait fits more comfortably within Winterhalter’s oeuvre, though he replaces the traditional tiara of a royal consort with a crown of braids. In many ways, Elisabeth’s diamond-studded coiffure is the focal point of the portrait, as its styling and glossy quality were among the elements that earned Elisabeth her reputation as one of the most beautiful women in Europe.

In the painting of Elisabeth with loose hair (fig. 6), she stands in a position that mirrors the pose of the pendant portrait. This canvas serves as a transition between the formal painting and the oval portrait: Elisabeth’s unbound hair and partial undress point toward the oval painting, but her upright posture and the nearly full-length format remain in the spirit of her official portrait. Once again, she appears with her back to the viewer and her head sharply turned, but now, she looks off to the right, and her hair loosely cascades down her back. She does not meet the viewer’s gaze. Instead, she offers a moonlit profile of her face and bare shoulder. Layers of lace and crinoline conceal Elisabeth’s body from mid-shoulder down, and the gathering of fabric near her waist suggests that her hands might be holding the cloth together, just out of the viewer’s sight. Her auburn hair is crimped as if it has been recently unbraided and its loose ends tumble over the folds of fabric that envelop her body. She seems to be in a state of partial undress, and her averted and passive glance leaves her to the command of the viewer’s gaze. The texture of these silky tresses against the lace of her garb invites the viewer to reach out and touch the locks. However, the seeming intangibility of her body compromises this illusion of possession; although she is half-dressed, the viewer is unable to perceive the contours of her body. The mass of cloth has no shape or structure,
and the totality of its concealment provides an immobile barrier to any contact with the empress.

Engravings were made after the official portrait, and although the other two paintings were not displayed to the public, figure 96 illustrates that the images and their location in Franz Joseph’s study became well known. This wood engraving published after Elisabeth’s 1898 assassination clearly references both of the informal Winterhalter portraits in the background of the scene; the emperor displayed the oval portrait on an easel behind his desk, while the portrait with unbound hair hung above a side table with more family portraits. Nearly as much as his military uniform, Franz Joseph was associated with his office. Stylized as the empire’s “first bureaucrat,” he spent fourteen hours each day completing paperwork within this study. Exhibiting the more intimate portraits of his wife within this space may have demonstrated Franz Joseph’s continued possession of his wife, in spite of her increasing absence from the capital.

In commissioning an oval shaped portrait of his wife, the emperor may have expected the finished product to resemble a portrait Winterhalter painted in the same format of his most famous patron, Empress Eugénie of France (fig. 9), a painting Franz Joseph and Elisabeth viewed at the Kunstverein when it traveled to Vienna as part of a special exhibition. Here, a seated Eugénie leans against a pillow beside a balcony, her view of a misty sunset partially obscured by a drawn, scarlet curtain. Her arms are folded across her torso, and the three-quarter profile of her face exhibits her luminous auburn

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260 McQueen, Empress Eugénie and the Arts, 98.
hair arranged in an elaborate chignon ornamented with flowers. Alison McQueen describes Eugénie’s appearance within the portrait as “a beautiful object living as the indulged wife of the powerful emperor of the French.”

Such a representation of his own wife would surely have appealed to Franz Joseph. Beyond the shape of the canvas, many details of Elisabeth’s portrait suggest that Winterhalter may have had this painting of Eugénie in mind when he planned the Austrian commission. Elisabeth holds her arms in the same position as Eugénie’s, and she is set against a cloudy background. The similarities end here. Elisabeth makes direct eye contact with her viewer, while Eugénie gazes complacently away. Elisabeth conceals her body behind her hair, but Eugénie’s porcelain décolletage glows at the center of the painting. Though Richard Ormond writes that Winterhalter’s paintings of the 1860s inhabited a different “psychological climate” from his earlier subjects, this characterization does not justify the frank eroticism of Elisabeth’s portrait, which is unique within the artist’s oeuvre.

The oval portrait is striking for many reasons, especially in comparison to Winterhalter’s other paintings of the empress. Gone are the twisted poses of the previous two: here, Elisabeth faces the viewer directly and makes steady eye contact. She wears a chemise with her arms folded inside its sleeves, and her curly hair is draped in front of her and tied in a loose knot over her chest. Her hair becomes a spectacle: how many women can boast hair of length, strength, and texture to withstand such an arrangement? This “hair shawl” might remind one of a hair shirt, but instead of mortifying the wearer’s body, the hair shawl seems to serve as armor for Elisabeth. The knot of hair, which is

\[\text{261 Ibid., 94.}\]
\[\text{262 Ormond and Blackett-Ord, Winterhalter, 52.}\]
nearly the same size as her head, falls right in front of her breasts and hides what otherwise might have been an exposed bosom. However, as much as it covers her breasts, the knot also draws attention to them. The alluring textures of Elisabeth’s silken gown, ivory skin, and glossy curls converge at this knot, further emphasizing her femininity.

Winterhalter’s choice of loose hair as a sign of femininity is not without precedent in the history of art. Abundant hair has historically been used to signify sexuality, especially in representations of Mary Magdalene. Renaissance artists used Magdalene’s hair to simultaneously conceal and reveal her nudity, evoking both her former life as a prostitute and her chosen isolation as a hermit. However, in these images, hair can also symbolize piety. As Rona Goffen noted, Magdalene transformed her hair’s erotic symbolism when she used it to wash Christ’s feet. Donatello evoked this conversion in his sculpture The Penitent Magdalene (fig. 97); far from an erotic allure, Magdalene’s hair instead becomes an attribute of her hermetic lifestyle, a hair shirt meant to mortify the flesh. Titian’s Magdalene (fig. 98) also uses her hair as a garment, but she seems to revel in her blond curls; she clutches the hair between the fingers of her left hand and places it over her heart with the palm of her right. Winterhalter’s portrait balances tenuously between these two extremes. As in Titian’s Magdalene, Elisabeth’s hair seems to be an object of pleasure; the empress proudly displays the knot of her hair to the viewer. Yet, while the breasts of Titian’s subject are exposed through her tresses, Elisabeth’s hair completely obscures her body, almost like a breastplate. Its protective

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function parallels the hair shirt of the Donatello sculpture, but Winterhalter’s soft brushstrokes contrast drastically with the coarse texture of the Renaissance work.

Winterhalter’s contemporaries also used hair to suggest sexuality. The English Pre-Raphaelites were especially captivated by the hair of their models, and often depicted erotic literary characters with luminous manes.\(^{264}\) Painted just a year earlier than the Winterhalter portrait, Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *Fazio’s Mistress* (fig. 99) features a redheaded woman plaitsing her hair at a vanity. Pre-Raphaelites models often braided their wet hair and allowed it to dry in this position; once unraveled, the hair hung in soft curls that the artists found irresistible.\(^{265}\) Elisabeth’s hair has a similar quality, suggesting that she may have just loosened her own braided coiffure. Winterhalter highlights Elisabeth’s hair in much the same fashion as Rossetti’s subject, but she has none of the passivity of the Pre-Raphaelite model. While Rossetti’s sitter stares into space, Elisabeth makes eye contact. Elisabeth’s hair covers her neck, but Rossetti’s model has hers pulled behind her shoulders, exposing the loose drapery of her dressing gown. Additionally, the title of Rossetti’s work implies forbidden sexuality on the part of its subject, while a portrait of a married monarch like Elisabeth should contain no such reference to adultery.

Nevertheless, the depiction of Elisabeth with loose hair possessed an erotic charge for nineteenth-century viewers. Carol Rifelj notes that within literature of the time, fallen hair indicated a fallen woman: “As hair falls, so do the women.”\(^{266}\) Hairstyles were signs of sexual maturity, as a woman over the age of eighteen would never appear publicly

\(^{264}\) Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Women* (New York: Harmony Books, 1987), 23. Rossetti and his peers often referred to their models as blonde or redheaded “stunners,” equating their particular beauty with their hair color. For more on Rossetti’s use of hair in his female portraits see Griselda Pollock and Deborah Cherry, “Patriarchal Power and the Pre-Raphaelites,” *Art History* 7, no. 4 (1984): 480-95.


\(^{266}\) Rifelj, *Coiffures*, 91.
with her hair unbound.\textsuperscript{267} Indeed, loose hair was only acceptable during times alone with a husband, or during a woman’s toilette. The toilette was an especially private space, where the hair of elite women like Elisabeth would be styled and decorated in preparation for the day’s events, only to be unbound, brushed, and loosely braided for sleeping.\textsuperscript{268} Elisabeth’s appearance in a dressing gown and hair unbraided suggests that the viewer has encountered the empress during this most intimate of moments, the time in between styling.

Comparisons of Elisabeth’s portrait with Winterhalter’s other representations of loose hair reveals the ambiguous nature of this eroticism, for though Elisabeth appears in the most compromising of attitudes, she paradoxically reveals far less of her body than other Winterhalter subjects with unbound hair. In 1843 Winterhalter painted an oval portrait of Queen Victoria with loose hair as a gift for Prince Albert (fig. 15). Victoria leans against a plush red chair and gazes to her left. Her partially unraveled \textit{bandeaux} hairstyle unfolds down her left shoulder, and she lifts her chin to expose her neck and décolletage to the viewer. Though comparable in pose and oval shape, the paintings diverge remarkably in the gestures and attitudes of the sitters. Elisabeth’s hair is completely unbound, heightening its eroticism, yet Victoria exposes far more of her bosom with her partially undone coiffure. Victoria’s representation has none of the psychological force of Elisabeth’s portrait. She gazes passively away, her dilated pupils suggesting little engagement with her viewers. In contrast, Elisabeth stares directly at the viewer, acknowledging this intrusion into her private space.

\textsuperscript{267} Ibid., 83.
\textsuperscript{268} See chapter 4 “Toilettes” in ibid.
Richard Ormond identifies such a depiction of personality as characteristic of Winterhalter’s 1860s commissions; as compared to their predecessors of the 1840s, the sitters from the sixties “are not reticent and reserved, but knowing, alluring and eager for life.”\textsuperscript{269} This approach is also evident in another Winterhalter painting of 1864, the artist’s portrait of Madame Rimsky-Korsakov (fig. 23). Winterhalter features this sitter in a pose very similar to Elisabeth’s. Madame Rimsky-Korsakov’s hair is also unbraided and draped in front of her bosom, but she wears a formal gown rather than an intimate chemise. Though her hair covers the center of her breast, Winterhalter reveals Madame Rimsky-Korsakov’s bare shoulder to the viewer. She gazes away, allowing herself to become an object for viewing pleasure. In contrast, Elisabeth directly engages in this viewing pleasure by meeting the viewer’s gaze – almost as if she is inviting the viewer to join in marveling at her extraordinary hair.

The oval shape of the canvas could even be compared to the format of a vanity mirror. Elisabeth admires herself in her mirror, while we as viewers are granted access to this intimate scene. Such a portrayal of a woman in the process of her toilette also evokes the equivalence of artistic creation and the self-creation associated with cosmetic and hair fashion within eighteenth-century art history.\textsuperscript{270} This reference suggests that Winterhalter portrayed Elisabeth in a moment of self-creation. Gazing into her vanity, the empress is poised to either dress her hair and body in anticipation for the day’s activities or rebind her hair to prepare for sleep. In either case, it is Elisabeth who controls her representation, as well as the level of access to her body offer to the viewer.

\textsuperscript{269} Ormond and Blackett-Ord, \textit{Winterhalter}, 52.
The oval portrait of Elisabeth therefore evades the visual categories of sensual hair in female portraiture both within Winterhalter’s œuvre as well as in historical representations of hair and contemporary depictions of women. The painting might be aligned with Winterhalter’s decade-long interest in portraying the personality of his sitters, but Elisabeth’s direct eye contact with the viewer in spite of her intimate arrangement is far more brazen than any comparable works. Though unbound hair typically suggested an erotic connotation within female portraiture, Elisabeth’s hair undermines such a straightforward iconographic interpretation because of its paradoxical modesty: it conceals her figure rather than suggesting future intimacy, as in Winterhalter’s portraits of Queen Victoria and Madame Rimsky-Korsakov. Whereas in portraits of Mary Magdalene, hair can evoke illicit sexuality, here, the hair gives no clues as to the famous figure beneath its shield. Indeed, the knot forms the center of an X that bars any contact with the empress.

The Apparitional Empress

Romako’s portrait also celebrates Elisabeth’s voluminous hair. Wrapped in a crown of braids upon her head, Elisabeth’s chestnut locks glimmer beside a tiara. The rest of her hair cascades down her back and across her shoulders, further emphasizing its length and glossy quality. Elisabeth’s pale arm silhouettes her waist, accentuating its impossibly narrow profile. In spite of these traditional symbols of beauty, the portrait is curiously unsettling. Though the coat of arms at the upper right demonstrates the aristocratic nature of the portrait, the empress dissolves into the muddy ground of the panel and the mysterious, vegetal environment that surrounds her. Rather than planting
herself firmly at center, her figure slides toward the lower right of the frame, while her hands appear clammy and misshapen. In his catalogue entry on this painting from the 1994 exhibition on Romako at the Belvedere, Gerbert Frodl emphasized that the portrait “does not seem to fit into the framework of the usual “Sisi” stereotypes. On the contrary - it spreads a demonic, imponderable atmosphere, aloof and strange.”271 This mysterious quality isolates the portrait of Elisabeth from all of Romako’s other large-scale representations.

The unbalanced quality is heightened in comparison with another portrait Romako produced of Elisabeth two years earlier (fig. 100). Cornelia Reiter speculates that Romako created this work with the hopes of garnering more imperial commissions, as it was exhibited at the Budapest Kunsthalle in 1881.272 This small bust portrait of Elisabeth offers a nearly photographic likeness of the subject (perhaps based on figure 44). There is no evidence of mental illness here. Though forty-six years old at the time, Elisabeth appears twenty years younger, and her bust is surrounded with an abundance of the wild roses that Romako used in so many of his other portraits from the 1880s.

Romako used vegetation in many of his portraits, usually for a romantic effect. In his bust portrait of the empress, the wild roses counterpoint the soft blush of her cheeks and draw a comparison between the texture of her skin and the roses’ smooth petals. Similarly, in his portrait of Countess Kuefstein (fig. 101), Romako places his subject in a lush floral environment. Though he softens the blue blossoms behind her head, Romako anchors the lower right corner of the portrait with a large arrangement of roses that play off the pink buds that adorn the hair of the countess. In contrast, there are no blooms in

271 Frodl, Aussenseiter, 25, translation mine.
272 Reiter, Romako, 240.
the Belvedere portrait, and the dark brown scratches of vegetation are abstract and insubstantial. Romako includes green highlights in the ground behind Elisabeth’s head, and a handful of green ivy leaves hover beside her left shoulder, but this vegetation suggests dormancy and decay rather than youth.

While Elisabeth’s magnificent figure, her athletic bearing, and inimitable hair were the centerpieces of Winterhalter’s portraits, these features become the means by which Romako destabilizes his representation. Romako emphasized her narrow waist with a dramatic curve on the right side of her bodice; he accents her figure even further with the strong diagonal line of her arm. Wedged between the two arms, and barely indicated behind her right elbow, her waist demonstrates a perfect hourglass. This dramatically tapered waistline actually threatens the stability of the rest of Elisabeth’s figure. Her shoulders pull back, making her figure appear to fall into the muddy space behind her. Simultaneously, the diagonal line of her arm, which is extended by the long fan Elisabeth holds in her right hand, pulls the eye of the viewer to the lower right corner of the panel. This creates a tension between the two extremes of her figure and prevents any vertical stability within the frame.

Elisabeth’s figure is further stretched by her unnaturally extended neck and misplaced shoulders. Wrapped with layers of pearls, Elisabeth’s neck towers entirely too far above the necklace, suggesting that her neck and face are of equal length. Her shoulders emerge from the mass of hair, but their distance from her head makes them appear anatomically incorrect. The effect of this elongation is reinforced by Elisabeth’s long and thin face. Close examination of the painting reveals that Romako initially intended her face to be fuller, but in the lower right quadrant, he narrowed her cheek,
making her appear thinner than her photographs. The overall effect takes Elisabeth’s famous figure and attenuates it to the point of terrible fragility.

Though Romako manipulates his line to create this unbalanced effect, the most dominant feature of the portrait is the brown color palette and its ambiguous relationship with Elisabeth’s chestnut hair. Elisabeth’s hair is indistinguishable from the dark ground of the panel, suggesting that it has extended to encompass the space beyond her figure. Her pale face and creamy arms emerge from the thickly layered hair as if she has stepped through a curtain. A close-up of Elisabeth’s bicep reveals feathery brushstrokes that blend her hair into the skin of her arm (fig. 102). This merging of body and ground extends throughout Elisabeth’s figure, which dissolves as it falls to the base of the painting. Though the burnt-red patch of color to the right of the dog is similar to the fabric of Elisabeth’s bodice, this tint is repeated above the animal, to the left of the empress, thereby preventing the area to the right of the dog from being perceived as a skirt. Her forearms are draped in a black lace stole that wraps around her figure and hangs down below her hands. The abstract pattern on the stole blends into the mottled brown and black ground below her arms, making Elisabeth’s figure increasingly indistinguishable from the ground of the panel.

The ambiguous rendering of Elisabeth’s figure stands in stark contrast to Romako’s usual portrait technique. Though he often blurred the distinction between figure and ground in earlier portraits, the effect was far different. Comparing Elisabeth’s portrait with the 1873/76 portrait La Marchesa Emma Marignoli Torelli (fig. 103), we see a similar ambiguity between the drapery and background of the canvas. However, in Torelli’s portrait, this choice clarifies the soft brushstrokes of the subject’s face. Romako
uses a more painterly line in his rendering of the Torelli’s features, but her three-quarter profile appears precise when compared with the ambiguous area between the fabric of her cape and the background. In contrast, the permeable boundary between Elisabeth’s gown and her surroundings only distorts her figure.

Elisabeth’s portrait is also unique in comparison to the portraits of Romako’s final five years. The 1885 portrait of Isabella Reisser (fig. 104) in the collection of the Leopold Museum, offers a far more legible representation. Other than the lower right corner, Frau Reisser’s figure is defined by the contrast between her plum-colored bodice and the background. While Elisabeth’s bare hands appear unnaturally elongated and stacked on top of each other, Frau Reisser’s are shod in purple gloves whose buttons reveal a delicate opening on the palm of her left hand. Her fan rests elegantly in this hand, while Elisabeth’s grip on her fan only adds more tension to her figure. The aristocratic Gräfin Kuefstein (fig. 101), Romako’s most significant patroness, wears a similar clutch of pearls at her neck in Romako’s 1885/1886 portrait, but these pearls rest upon her décolletage, while Elisabeth’s creep up her neck, unnaturally elongating this body part. Romako renders the lower half of the figure of Mathilde Stern (fig. 105) in a similarly ambiguous format. However, Stern remains firmly distinguished from rest of the canvas, while Elisabeth appears to slip forward and melt into her surroundings.

Perhaps the most disturbing element of Romako’s portrait is the massive St. Bernard who occupies nearly a quarter of the panel. Though Elisabeth was fond of dogs and often photographed with her favorite pets, she did not own any dog of this breed. Furthermore, Romako disrupts many artistic conventions of portraits with dogs, suggesting that this St. Bernard plays an important role in the meaning of the portrait.
Dogs occupy a significant place within court portraiture. Robert Rosenblum noted that dogs could be signifiers of social status; mastiffs and greyhounds indicated a privileged landowner’s right to hunt, while highly bred lap dogs suggested a life of leisure. Hunting was a beloved activity for Elisabeth, who spent the majority of the 1870s participating in hunts across the United Kingdom and Ireland. However, a St. Bernard is not a typical hunting dog, nor does it seem like a breed that would be comfortable in a salon. St. Bernards were renowned for their heroic rescues of Alpine travelers; Edwin Landseer immortalized their bravery in his 1820 *Alpine Mastiffs Reanimating a Distressed Traveler* (fig. 106). The print produced after the painting was among Landseer’s most successful works. As Romako produced his work in Geneva, not far from the traditional home of the St. Bernard, the artist may have been referencing these local celebrities.

Another possibility is that the heroic St. Bernard was meant to rescue Elisabeth, but from what? This interpretation is further undermined by the complete lack of relationship between Elisabeth and the dog. Elisabeth does not acknowledge the dog’s presence beside her. Though a translucent edge of her gown appears to cover the dog just above his collar, no leash links her hands to his neck, as in her photograph with her pet Shadow (fig. 44). Neither does Elisabeth place an affectionate hand on his body, as was conventional, as seen in images such as Bronzino’s portrait *Guidobaldo II della Rovere*

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(fig. 107) or Drouais’ *Lady Holding a Dog* (fig. 108). This complicates our expectations of portraits with dogs, as a relationship between the sitter and the dog is usually implied.276

Visually, the dog and Elisabeth appear to be part of different compositions. While Romako flattens Elisabeth and obscures the boundaries between her body and the ground of the panel, the dog is delicately modeled and three-dimensional. Romako uses soft brush strokes to create a dense coat of fur that offers a tactile contrast to the leather collar. Elisabeth’s face is a caricature in comparison to the more illusionistic details of the St. Bernard’s nose and velvety ear. The contrast between the dog and Elisabeth make the empress appear almost like an apparition. She emerges ghostlike from the curtain of brown, yet the dog is solidly linked to the tangible world.

This otherworldly appearance suggests the ancient interpretation of dogs as companions for the dead.277 Describing this role for dogs, Elizabeth Benson writes, “[Dogs] know what is there in the darkness. Relating to the earth, to dead things, to sounds and smells that are imperceptible to humans, dogs have esoteric knowledge and special connections with the underworld.”278 The Empress was still living when Romako produced the portrait in 1883, so it seems unlikely that the dog is guiding her departed soul to the underworld. However, the dog could be a guide for Elisabeth’s troubled spirit, a melancholic disposition that had gained the empress notoriety both within the Habsburg empire and abroad.

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PART II: BIOGRAPHICAL INTERJECTIONS

Both Winterhalter and Romako’s portraits were produced at pivotal moments in Elisabeth’s life. Winterhalter’s 1864 residence in Vienna coincided with the height of Elisabeth’s beauty and the early stages of her body obsession, while Romako depicted the empress during a decade of increasing mental distress surrounding her physical inability to maintain her athletic regimen and the tragic suicides of her cousin King Ludwig II and her son, the Crown Prince Rudolf. An examination of Elisabeth’s biography during these decades provides information for why she was such a useful template for the visual projection of mental illness.

“I am a slave to my hair”

The carte-de-visite albums of beauty, strenuous exercise regimes, and careful control over her photographic portrait all demonstrate Elisabeth’s investment in the cultivation and preservation of her beauty. This beauty was not only central to her self-identity, but also an instrument of power upon Elisabeth’s return to court life in 1862. Brigitte Hamann includes many anecdotes from the period between 1862 and 1867 that document how Elisabeth used her own beauty to replace Archduchess Sophie as the female head of house and the emperor’s confidante.279 In an August 1865 letter to her husband protesting her son’s military education, Elisabeth wrote: “It is my wish that full and unlimited powers should be reserved to me in all things concerning the children.”280 Franz Joseph relented and granted Elisabeth full control over the children’s education; in

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279 Hamann, Reluctant Empress, 120.
280 Ibid., 121.
return, she agreed to resume marital relations with the hope of producing a second son.\textsuperscript{281} Winterhalter surely perceived these strained family dynamics over the course of his 1864 residence in Vienna, during which he produced portraits of nearly every family member.

In addition to witnessing the personal struggles of his sitters, Winterhalter also observed the elaborate rituals Elisabeth employed to maintain her legendary beauty, especially her hair.\textsuperscript{282} Elisabeth had a gymnasium in every palace and exercised every day on parallel bars and rings; any time her weight rose above 110 pounds, she went on a starvation diet of oranges and raw meat juice.\textsuperscript{283} None of this compared to the rituals she practiced to take care of her hair, which encompassed a significant portion of her life. Combing and styling her hair lasted three hours each morning, and she spent an entire day every three weeks having it washed with a mixture of cognac and egg.\textsuperscript{284} All of Vienna knew that Elisabeth’s favorite hairdresser Fanny Feifalik earned a salary of 2000 Gulden, equivalent then to the income of a university professor.\textsuperscript{285} It was Feifalik who developed Elisabeth’s famous hairstyle. Elisabeth described the style as a “Steckbrieffrisur” or “wanted poster hairstyle,” presumably for the instant recognition it afforded her. The crown of braids became her trademark, for the hairstyle was also difficult to copy. Few women had hair as long or as healthy as Elisabeth’s, which was remarkable in its ability to withstand daily pulling and twisting to achieve the braided crown. The slightest variation in her hair routine greatly upset Elisabeth, who admitted, “I am a slave to my hair.”\textsuperscript{286} Nothing distressed the empress more than strands falling

\textsuperscript{281} Ibid. This anecdote is based on events detailed in Archduchess Sophie’s diary.
\textsuperscript{282} Hamann describes Elisabeth’s hair rituals in her chapter “The Cult of Beauty.”
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid., 127. It should be noted that Elisabeth was 5'7”.
\textsuperscript{284} Ibid., 133.
\textsuperscript{285} Ibid., 134.
\textsuperscript{286} Ibid., 135.
out, and Feifalik developed a trick of hiding the loose hair under her skirt. Any additional casualties were placed in a silver bowl for Elisabeth’s inspection at the end of the styling session.

Winterhalter learned firsthand about Elisabeth’s hair care rituals while he was at work on her portraits, as the sessions with his subject were presumably scheduled around this rigid practice. Consequently, the choice to emphasize her hair in the portraits may have stemmed both from Elisabeth’s pride in her chestnut mane as well as his familiarity with the value she placed upon it. The excessiveness of her hair could be Winterhalter’s own commentary on the priorities of the empress and the idiosyncrasies of her lifestyle.

Elisabeth’s observations about her hair complement this visual choice. In her own writings and speech on hair, Elisabeth vacillated between linking it inextricably with her body and referring to it as a separate entity. Many of her observations were documented by Konstantin Christomanos, Elisabeth’s Greek instructor who tutored the empress during her hair styling sessions. Christomanos recounted an interaction that discloses an understanding of how her hair had come to represent her person: “Your Majesty wears her hair like a crown instead of a crown,” to which Elisabeth replied, “Except that any other crown is more easily laid aside.” In implying that she can never take off her crown, Elisabeth reveals the way in which her role as empress had literally become attached to her head.

Elisabeth was not alone in making hair and crowns equivalent. The famous beauty Lola Montez, whose affair with Elisabeth’s grandfather King Ludwig I of Bavaria cost him the throne, wrote of hair, “Without a fine head of hair, no woman can be really

\footnotesize{287 Ibid., 136.  
288 Ibid., 137.}
beautiful. A combination of perfect features, united in one person, would go for naught without that *crowning* excellence of beautiful hair." Montez emphasized that fine hair was essential to beauty, and that such an achievement was equivalent to a crown. Juliane Vogel described Elisabeth’s hair as being the most famous Habsburg insignia of the nineteenth century – more recognizable than any of the crowns kept in the treasure house of the Hofburg. This elision between Elisabeth’s hair and royal crowns further illuminates the great value Elisabeth placed on her hair. If we view the Steckbrieffrisur as a crown, then her tresses become gold and jewels. This also increases the significance of the hair in the oval portrait. She is wrapping herself in an emblem of royalty and using it as a protection – it is simultaneously her crown, coat, and skin.

On another occasion, Elisabeth described her hair as a “foreign body on my head,” equating the cumbersomeness of her crown-like hairstyle with the responsibilities of being an empress. Her hair is dead weight, a burden from which she cannot relieve herself. No matter how far she traveled, her famous crown of hair tied her to the throne in Vienna. These remarks suggest the multivalency of Elisabeth’s hair; it is simultaneously a jewel and a corpse, both distinguishing her from other women and condemning her to a life of noble responsibilities.

**An Imperial Interest in Psychiatry**

While Elisabeth’s elaborate beauty rituals were topics of gossip, her increasing interest in mental illness was also well documented. It was customary for an empress to

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290 Vogel, "The Double Skin: Imperial Fashion," 229.
291 Hamann, *Reluctant Empress*, 137.
visit asylums and hospitals within the empire as part of her imperial responsibilities, but
Elisabeth also made private visits to asylums during her trips abroad, where there was no
need to represent the crown.\textsuperscript{292} She demonstrated a curiosity in both the facilities as well
as the case histories of patients, suggesting an engagement with a medical discipline that
was in the midst of change. This attention to modern psychiatric treatment is also evident
in her request to Franz Joseph for a name-day gift in 1871: “Since you have asked me
what would give me pleasure, I beg you for either a young Bengal tiger (Zoological
Garden in Berlin, 3 cubs) or a locket. What I would like best of all is a fully equipped
insane asylum.”\textsuperscript{293} Though written perhaps in jest (and with full expectation that the
Emperor would choose the simplest of options – the locket), Elisabeth’s request for the
latest incarnation of an insane asylum reflects a concern with the treatment of the
mentally ill. Though Elisabeth never experienced the extreme mental illness displayed
by her cousins in Bavaria, her unusual behavior was the subject of discussion both
privately within the court and publicly in newspapers and illustrated magazines across the
empire.

Habsburg biographer Brigitte Hamann offers ample anecdotal evidence of the
empress’s nervousness. Elisabeth’s chamberlain Baron Nopcsa wrote of his mistress in
1886, "Unfortunately her mental state is not as I would like to see it. Though there is no
reason for it, she is nevertheless emotionally disturbed.”\textsuperscript{294} Her niece Amélie wrote about
her Aunt Sisi’s “bewildered glance [and] …gloomy, disturbed expression.”\textsuperscript{295} Marie
Larisch, another niece of Elisabeth’s, noted that the empress was aware of her reputation

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{292} Ibid., 190.
\textsuperscript{293} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{294} Corti papers, from Feldafing, June 10, 1886. Quoted in ibid., 273.
\textsuperscript{295} Diary of Duchess Amélie von Urach, 23 May 1887. Quoted in ibid., 273.
\end{footnotesize}
of mental instability, and even joked about it. In a memoir about her aunt, Larisch wrote, "She was wont to say, half seriously, half joking: 'I know that sometimes I am considered mad."\(^{296}\)

The public also knew about Elisabeth’s nervous disposition, both within the Habsburg empire and beyond. The *Berliner Tageblatt* recorded that following the 1886 suicide of her mad cousin King Ludwig II, "the Empress's ailment took a sudden and very grave step forward."\(^{297}\) This report also reveals public knowledge of Elisabeth’s hereditary link to mental illness, a condition that was among the most important considerations in psychiatric treatment of the late nineteenth century.

In the 1870s and 80s, psychiatrists across Europe explored the relationship between “mental degeneracy” and mental illness.\(^ {298}\) “Mental degeneracy” was a hereditary link to mental illness, and physicians would carefully record family health histories in search for alcoholic, epileptic, or violent ancestors. Richard von Krafft-Ebing based his entire opus on the idea of mental degeneracy, as the majority of his cases came from families with psychologically tainted histories. In his writings Krafft-Ebing diagnosed many of his subjects with “constitutional deviation of the instincts,” suggesting that his patients were unable to control their behavior because of their hereditary link to such degeneracy.\(^ {299}\) Mental illness was very common on Elisabeth’s Bavarian side. In addition to her cousin Ludwig and his institutionalized younger brother Otto, Elisabeth’s grandfather Duke Pius of Bavaria was mentally ill, and her brothers and sisters

\(^{296}\) Quoted in ibid., 266.
\(^{297}\) *Berliner Tageblatt*, 21 April 1889. Quoted in ibid., 273.
\(^{299}\) Oosterhuis, 160.
demonstrated melancholic behavior. Consequently, the educated public may have even anticipated that their empress was predisposed to mental illness.

In addition to her own displays of nervous behavior, Elisabeth demonstrated a sustained interest in psychiatric medicine. This is recorded in an 1886 cover story from Das interessante Blatt, an illustrated magazine published in Vienna in the late nineteenth century (fig. 109). The article recounts a surprise visit that Elisabeth made to the Landes-Irrenanstalt auf dem Leopoldifeld in Budapest, during which she witnessed the hypnotizing of a female patient. The cover illustration, a lithograph produced by an anonymous artist, represents this encounter between Elisabeth and the hypnotized patient. Elisabeth is featured at the center of the sheet, her upright figure further elongated by a fashionable bonnet. She stares intently at the hypnotized patient in the bed, who reaches for the gloved hand of the empress. The doctor hovers on the other side of the bed, intent on his practice. The artist emphasizes Elisabeth’s compassion for the patient, and her focus suggests an all-consuming interest in this latest trend in psychiatric therapy. Behind Elisabeth stands lady-in-waiting Countess Festetics, who looks askance at a patient about to touch her gown. The other patients grimace, whisper, and gesticulate, and a nurse rushes to restrain a patient who would speak to Elisabeth, but the doctor, patient, and empress appear unaware of the chaos that surrounds them. This lithograph is also noteworthy for its evidence of the typical representation of mental illness: the surrounding patients cover their faces with their hands, stare blankly into space, or crouch awkwardly. In contrast, Elisabeth appears equal to the doctor in her composure and concern for the patient.

Hamann, Reluctant Empress, 271-272.
This widely circulated image demonstrates a general knowledge of Elisabeth’s interest in psychiatry, further demonstrating that her subjects associated their empress with the treatment of mental illness during this time. However, neither the lithograph, Winterhalter’s oval portrait nor Romako’s larger portrait of Elisabeth depicts any explicitly nervous behavior on her part, especially in comparison with the other patients. Indeed, the suggestion of mental illness within the two paintings is bound up with the very features that are usually deemed her most beautiful. It is here that a tie between feminine beauty and mental instability emerges, a tacit connection that forms the building blocks for the visualization of mental illness within the Viennese art of early twentieth century.

**PART III: VISUALIZING MENTAL ILLNESS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PSYCHIATRY**

The historical context of psychiatric practice in the late nineteenth century is a central component to my understanding of the relationship between these paintings and the artworks of the *fin-de-siècle*. The rising status of psychiatry and the corresponding increase in public interest on this subject provided a new framework for viewers and artists alike. While neither Romako nor Winterhalter overtly referenced psychiatric practice in their images, visual analysis reveals important links between their artworks and later representations of mental illness. These tacit connections can also be tied to a shift away from the visual within Viennese psychiatric practice, a move that provided a greater opportunity and motivation for artists to fill this void.
The Changing Status of Psychiatry in Imperial Vienna

Between Elisabeth’s 1854 marriage to Franz Joseph and her assassination in 1898, attitudes toward psychiatry changed dramatically within both the medical community and the general public. Harry Oosterhuis argues that the position of psychiatry in mid nineteenth-century medical practice was far more precarious than cultural historians like Michel Foucault would have us presume. The authority of the psychiatrist did not extend beyond the asylum, whose patients would have been drawn from only the most chronically insane of the lower classes. Due in part to the lack of anatomical training necessary for its practice, psychiatry was rarely included in medical school examinations, meaning that few students attended its lectures.

Psychiatrists combated the inferior position of their discipline by broadening their patient profile and expanding the definition of mental illness. Edward Shorter notes that an important aspect of this change was the development of new terms for mental illness. To avoid the stigma attached to “psychotic” diseases (Irre), psychiatrists referred to mental illness as “Nervenkrankheit” (“nerve illness”) or “Geisteskrankheit” (“spirit illness”) and the term “Gemüthskrankheit” (“affective disorder”) was perhaps most successful at collapsing the distinction between “nervous” and “psychotic.” In addition to this rephrasing of the treated illnesses, asylums were careful to call themselves “Heilanstalten” (healing asylums) rather than “Irrenanstalten” (insane asylums).

301 Oosterhuis, 153.
In addition to changing their terminology, psychiatrists elevated their status by expanding the definition of mental illness to encompass less chronic symptoms. For example, Krafft-Ebing categorized erratic or immoral behavior that was rarely considered completely mad as a symptom of mental illness. While patients with acute symptoms could voluntarily check themselves into private clinics, this broad definition of mental illness also introduced the possibility that patients could avoid hospitalization entirely and to be treated only periodically by a psychiatric doctor. By treating patients with milder symptoms, Krafft-Ebing was also able to move the practice outside of the often stigmatized asylum and into university clinics, and ultimately, into private practice.

The acceptance of this broader definition of mental illness dramatically changed the profile of psychiatric patients. Formerly composed of the pauper class, by the fin-de-siècle psychiatrists included members of the intellectual and economic elite among their patients. Though members of the aristocracy had previously been treated at private clinics like Svetlin’s and Ober-Döbling, and less significant complaints were addressed at water-cure centers and spas, this expansion of psychiatric practice made it acceptable, even expected, that the elite would turn to society psychiatrists like Krafft-Ebing to treat their nervous ailments. These ailments were no longer conceived of as temporary lapses of rational thought, but also included what Krafft-Ebing termed

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304 See Oosterhuis.
305 Oosterhuis, “Extending the Boundaries,” 163.
306 Ibid., 158.
307 Ibid., 164
308 See, for example Frau Antonia Barone de Bornemiza und Klaubenburg, admitted to Theresia Pabst’s Kost und Pflegeort für ruhige Irre (after 1878, Heilanstalt Svetlin) in January 1851. Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Bestand 2.9.4.2.B3 - Sammlung zu Krankengeschichten: Frauen 1853-1859.
“constitutional deviation of the instincts:” moodiness, emotional states, and behavioral deviance.310

Because of these changes, the number of patients seeking psychiatric treatment increased significantly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Shorter notes that the majority of these patients were women, and that doctors attributed the phenomenon to an increased intimacy of the family circle.311 In his 1859 text on hysteria, French psychiatrist Pierre Briquet blames the excessive emotionality of women on the practice of doting too much upon girls in their “childhood, which led to hysteria later in life when their sentimental expectations of marriage were disappointed.312 The German psychiatrist and clinic director Caspar Max Brosius built upon this thesis in 1881 by suggesting that disappointment in marriage could lead to the “madness of the married woman – Irresein der Ehefrauen.”313 Brosius argued that such a woman could display hysterical behavior, writing, “A married woman who is sexually dissatisfied, offended in her moral views, insulted in her vanity by her husband's neglect, and who sees herself given a lesser place and pushed aside, is capable of becoming the rashest of furies without actually being mentally ill.”314

These texts demonstrate a belief in the prevalence of nervous behavior among married women, and use terms that could be applied to Elisabeth. Disappointed in her marriage and frustrated with the prominence granted to her mother-in-law, Elisabeth spent increasingly little time in her husband’s company, spending as little as two months

310 Oosterhuis, “Extending the Boundaries,” 160.
a year in Vienna. The fluctuations of Elisabeth’s moods and the tensions between her, Franz Joseph, and Archduchess Sophie, must have been evident to Winterhalter while he worked to produce portraits for all three patrons. Elisabeth’s resource in this power struggle was her beauty, especially her hair. With such value placed upon it, the psychoanalytic relevance that it assumes within the oval portrait is unsurprising.

**Psychoanalysis and visualizing mental illness**

The unbalanced quality of Winterhalter’s oval portrait stems from his depiction of Elisabeth’s hair, invoking the insecurities central to Freund’s understanding of fetishism and femininity. While it is an object of marvel within the portrait, Elisabeth appears to be nearly strangled by her winding locks. Examining this ambivalent representation of her hair using a psychoanalytic framework reveals underlying anxieties about femininity concentrated within this image of the Austrian empress.

In Winterhalter’s portrait, hair usurps all other aspects of Elisabeth’s figure; its mass envelopes every sexual element of her body, her neck, breasts, and figure. The darkness of her tresses contrasts dramatically with her skin and chemise, and it appears as removable as a hat or wig. The surrealist photographer Man Ray used hats as substitutes for other body parts in his images; by closely cropping and carefully lighting fedoras and caps, Ray created a visual resonance between the headpieces and female genitalia. Briony Fer describes this effect: “By focusing on the part, the hat stands in for the whole, where the body is substituted by a token or attribute.” Elisabeth’s hair functions very similarly in the oval portrait, where her hair becomes her primary token. From her neck

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down, Winterhalter conceals everything about Elisabeth’s figure, subordinating her entire body to the hair. The only features that emerge are her face and forearms, and even these are relegated to a lower status by their size and lighting. Elisabeth’s face and wrists are far smaller than her hair, and Winterhalter places her face in shadow while the light instead reflects off the highlights in her chestnut locks. As a result, Elisabeth’s hair becomes a substitute for the traditional elements of sexuality that Winterhalter featured in his other portraits of noble ladies. He could have emphasized her slim figure or her exposed cleavage as revealed by the chemise, but instead he concentrated all of her sexuality and identity in her hair.

This substitution of hair for other body parts aligns with Freud’s writing on fetishism, as he mentions hair specifically as a common choice for its disavowal of female castration. The painting’s German title, Die Kaiserin Elisabeth mit verschlungenem Haar, further strengthens this connection. The infinitive of the past participle “verschlungen” is “verschlungen,” which here means “interweave,” but can also be translated as “to gulp or wolf down.” This adjective emphasizes the devouring properties of Elisabeth’s hair, an interpretation heightened by its root verb “schlingen,” meaning “to trap” or “to snare.” Furthermore, the similarity between the words “verschlingen” and “Schlange,” or “snake” equates Elisabeth’s hair with snakes, stylizing her as an imperial Medusa. Indeed, Elisabeth’s hair becomes increasingly snakelike as it moves away from her face toward the lower regions of the canvas.

316 Sigmund Freud, “Fetishism.”
317 This invokes another Freudian discussion of castration, Freud’s “Medusa’s Head,” Freud writes that for a boy, the terrifying sight of the mother’s genitals surrounded by hair is like seeing Medusa’s head. Sigmund Freud, "Medusa's Head (1940/1922)," in Standard Edition, ed. James Strachey (New York City: Basic Books, 1966), 273.
In its devouring and serpentine properties, Elisabeth’s hair undermines the strict controls placed upon female hair in the form of hairstyling fashion. Fanny Feifalik’s expertly wound braids have been loosened and allowed to overrun Elisabeth’s body. The unbound curls run wild across Winterhalter’s canvas, suggesting that even he, the master of female hairstyles, could not control the untamed locks of the empress.

The looseness of Elisabeth’s hair also rejects the technique that Freud called a sign of femininity: plaiting and weaving. Her typically elaborate hairstyling would have elevated her femininity under Freud’s rubric, but depicting her hair unbound and tied in an enormous knot, the portrait denies this skill. However, the depiction evokes a different type of control. Not referring explicitly to styled hair, Angela Rosenthal describes how controlled female hair becomes a symbol of femininity. For all of the wildness of the loose hair, Elisabeth still maintains control over it, holding back the tangled knot at the center while offering it to the viewer with a subtle smile. In addition to concealing her body, the “X” at the center of her hair marks a locus of Elisabeth’s sexuality, reminding the viewers of her breasts beneath the hair and thin chemise.

Here is where the strategy of fetishism has its greatest power. Schor describes fetishism as a technique to keep two oscillating texts simultaneously within view. In the Winterhalter painting, the hair simultaneously insists upon and refuses her femininity; it flickers tenuously between avowal and disavowal. Perhaps it was this tension, even if it was only unconsciously acknowledged, that made the painting unacceptable to Franz

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Joseph. Far from the flattering representation he had intended for the painting, his wife’s famous hair is depicted as dangerously erotic, unattainable, and outside his control.

There remains a difficulty in this application of fetishism to Elisabeth’s portrait, as orthodox interpretations of Freud define it as an exclusively male perversion. However, when Freud does describe castration fears for the woman, this imaginary scenario takes the form of losing a precious object. In Elisabeth’s case, the object she feared losing the most was her beauty. Elisabeth considered her hair a most valued item: its construction as her crown, her despair at losing a single strand, and the elaborate care routine all indicate an excessive valuation. Therefore, in order to disavow this fear of losing her prized possession, Elisabeth endowed her hair with power. She declared herself “enslaved” to it and structured her life around its maintenance. In observing his sitter and her elaborate hair routines Winterhalter transcribed this obsession visually by presenting the hair as an armament and protection of Elisabeth’s body. The painting becomes a visual representation of a fetish: snakelike hair takes on a phallic power that maintains control over the body and its temporal beauty.

This interpretation presumes that Elisabeth would consider her hair to be a phallic substitute, an assumption attacked by feminist interpreters of psychoanalysis. Luce Irigaray condemns Freud’s characterization of female anatomy as lacking, suggesting instead that we understand female sexuality as existing independently from this

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dichotomy with men.\textsuperscript{322} From this perspective, we can view Elisabeth as embracing her hair as another element of her sexuality. Instead of brandishing it as a weapon, Elisabeth cradles her locks like an infant; she revels in its beauty and length, enjoying it independently of the pleasure that it may grant to her viewer. Far from being an object of her husband’s, painter’s, or viewer’s gaze, Elisabeth is pictured here as self-sufficiently sexual, without any need of a man.

This sexual independence coincided with Elisabeth’s newfound interest in Hungarian politics, a sensibility that conflicted with her husband’s interests. Furthermore, at this time, the empress also refused to cooperate with Franz Joseph’s plans to produce another male heir; medical necessity dictated her abstention from sexual activity. Hamann notes that Elisabeth resumed this activity upon the realization of her own goals, whether they were the education of her children or the Great Compromise, under which her beloved Hungary achieved equality with Austria.\textsuperscript{323} Winterhalter’s paintings show her embracing her own interests rather than adopting the role of wife and mother demanded by the Austrian state. She takes the body that is supposed to belong to her nation and claims it for herself.

Elisabeth’s manipulation of hair as an element of power both activates the castration-fears disavowed by a fetish while simultaneously converting them to methods of maintaining control over her body. However, was she controlling her body, or did it control her? Today, we know that under-eating results in hair loss, suggesting her habits may have thwarted her own goals. Nevertheless, this construction of dangerous beauty

\textsuperscript{323} Hamann, \textit{Reluctant Empress}, 116. Elisabeth and Franz Joseph’s fourth and final child, Marie Valerie, was the result of this union in 1868.
and sexuality anticipates the anxieties of Viennese male intellectuals at the fin-de-siècle. Gustav Klimt in particular endowed his female figures with unwieldy and dangerous hair. This is noteworthy in his *Nymphs (Silverfish)* (fig. 110). Here, the artist envelops the two women in their hair and makes their limbless figures appear as phalluses. Just as Elisabeth’s hair protects her body from the viewer, these women are similarly impenetrable, as they skulk across the canvas. Edvard Munch invested many of his female subjects with similarly dangerous hair. In his print *Man’s Head in Woman’s Hair* (fig. 111), the red hair of the woman encircles the disembodied head of a man, a nearly literal representation of the castrating power of female hair. Though Elisabeth’s portrait was produced thirty years earlier, the importance of hair and its overtly dangerous function within these works demonstrates the currency of hair within later representations of female sexuality and mental illness in central Europe. However, it is the knot of Elisabeth’s hair that distinguishes her portrait from these later representations. The knot is simultaneously barrier, display, protector, and means of exposure, a multivalent element that gives the portrait its potency.

**Distorted Anatomy and Mental Illness**

While Winterhalter’s representation of Elisabeth’s obsession with her hair is necessarily concealed, Romako could afford to be more adventurous in his representation. The artist produced this painting outside of the influence of the Habsburg court and was unfettered by the typical constraints of portraiture. Uncommissioned and produced beyond the borders of the empire in Geneva, Romako had no pressure to satisfy a patron, so he could portray the empress however he saw fit. This freedom of expression
creates a parallel with genre painting; here Romako explored what would become a prototypical figure of the *Jahrhundertwende*: the beautiful, nervous woman. Elisabeth thus becomes a site of experimentation for Romako, a space in which he can contrast the cult of personality with the representation of beauty and nervousness.

Profound loss and disappointment in marriage were familiar to Romako, which may have influenced his portrait of the empress. Romako spent much of his career in Rome, where he married Sophie Köbel in 1862. She was known for her beauty, and together the couple hosted a popular salon. The marriage lasted thirteen years and produced five children before Köbel left her husband for a banker and moved to Constantinople in 1875. After her departure, Romako’s success evaporated, and he spent the remaining years of his life moving from city to city, returning finally to Vienna in 1885 after the double suicide of his two youngest daughters. He died a pauper’s death in 1889, which was also rumored to be a suicide.

The confluence of Elisabeth’s reputation as a nervous woman and Romako’s own experiences make the artist’s choice to portray Elisabeth as mentally unstable less surprising. What is noteworthy, however, are the visual means by which Romako communicates mental illness. In this painting, it bears a remarkable similarity to tropes of mental illness featured in artworks produced twenty-five years later. Curators Gemma Blackshaw and Leslie Topp isolated twitchy, misshapen hands as signs of mental illness in the portraiture of artists like Oskar Kokoschka and Max Oppenheimer. In Kokoschka’s portrait of the architect Adolf Loos (fig. 112), the subject sits with his hands clasped together across his lap. His thumbs are grossly over-sized, with the indented and blackened thumbnail appearing almost decayed. Oppenheimer’s portrait of Heinrich
Mann (fig. 113) features the subject’s deformed hand just below the center of the canvas. Mann stares down at his skeletal fingers, which seem locked in a claw-like position.

Elisabeth’s hands are similarly malformed. Close examination of the panel reveals that Romako reworked the hands at least once (fig. 114). We can see the outline of the earlier hands to the right of the final version in this photograph. This suggests that the hands were a particularly challenging aspect for the artist, as such pentimenti do not exist anywhere else on the panel besides the narrowing of Elisabeth’s lower right cheek. In his final version of her hands, Romako elongates Elisabeth’s left thumb, creating an awkward layering and flattening of the hands. Her thumbnail appears almost claw like, while the end of the thumb is too wide for the rest of the digit. Additionally, the thumb appears to be the same length as her other fingers, another willful departure from strict anatomy.

While invoking much of the same visual language of typical representations of mental illness, Romako’s portrait, as well as the portraiture of Oppenheimer and Kokoschka, depart from the typical application of this language. Rather than confine their visualizations to the socially outcast, Romako and his successors used this imagery to animate the Viennese elite. Gilman writes that the popular approach to visualizing madness was to depict individuals as “unable to control their own actions, limbs wildly waving, [and] slavering.”324 In the early nineteenth-century, Francisco de Goya used this imagery to animate his portrayal of Saturn devouring his children (fig. 115). The god’s vicious grip on the torso of his son, his splayed limbs, and maniacal eyes all communicate a psychotic break at the root of this infanticide. However, in most

324 Gilman, Disease and Representation, 11.
representations of the mentally ill, such imagery identifies the subject as a criminal, a member of the lowest stratum of the social sphere. Theodore Gericault’s 1822-23 portrait Insane Woman (Envy) (fig. 116) fits these criteria. His subject is an elderly woman with mottled skin and disheveled hair poking out of her bonnet. Wrapped in thick cloth that appears to bind her like a straightjacket, the woman’s mouth is slightly ajar, suggesting an incomprehensible mumbling. Her eyes channel a more muted wildness than Goya’s Saturn, but still suggest a violent rage that identifies the woman as insane.

Moving ahead fifty years to the publication of the Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière, the subjects of French psychiatrist Jean-Martin Charcot’s practice displayed uncontrollable limbs as evidence of their hysteria. Photographs of these patients, who were drawn from the most economically depressed of Parisian society, proffer the same language of bodily violence that isolate the mentally ill from the healthy. In “Onset of the Attack” (fig. 117), Charcot’s most famous patient, Augustine, flings her arms to the side of the bed, pressing them deeply into the edges of her pillow. Her mouth is open in a disfiguring cry. Of course, Romako exaggerated Elisabeth’s hands and expression far less than the subjects of Charcot’s Iconographie, and he also avoided the dramatic mutations produced by Oppenheimer or Kokoschka, steeped as they were in the context of a different culture that valorized representations of instability. Nevertheless, for Romako to take even subtle visual indications of nervousness and apply them to the most elite woman in central Europe upended the conventional understanding of mental illness as undesirable and pointed to the fascination with this disease at the fin-de-siècle.
Gemma Blackshaw argues that the artists deliberately warped the physiques of their subjects in order to satisfy the current trend for “madness” in portraiture.325 However, Sabine Wieber notes a similar distortion of hands and bodies in Gustav Klimt’s portraits of aristocratic women.326 Though these portraits were intended to celebrate the beauty and composure of their subjects, Klimt included the same subtle details of nervousness that surface in Elisabeth’s portrait. For example, Klimt depicts Fritza Riedler (fig. 118) in an elegant gown; her coif accentuates her high, intellectual forehead, and she sits in a chair upholstered in a Wiener Werkstätte fabric, providing further evidence of her cultural cache. Yet Riedler’s hands bend awkwardly and strain to clasp some unseen object, thereby creating a restless centerpiece to this otherwise static portrait.

Romako’s anticipation of the tropes of Secessionist modernity is evident when contrasted with Klimt’s Adele Bloch-Bauer I (fig. 119). A comparison of both the identities of the subjects and the formal handling reveals many parallels. Like Elisabeth, Bloch-Bauer reportedly suffered from “nervous” afflictions. Her niece Maria Altmann described her as, “Sick, suffering, always with headache …terribly frail, dark…slim, elegant,”327 this description could easily apply to Elisabeth. Similar to the disintegration of Elisabeth’s body into the background of Romako’s painting, Bloch-Bauer’s figure also blends into the surrounding gold-plated abstractions. However, Klimt pushes this ambiguity even farther than Romako, creating a counterpoint between the translucent

327 Tobias G. Natter, Gerbert Frodl, and Neda Bei, Klimt's Women (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 118.
skin and luminous gold ground. Finally, Bloch-Bauer shares the same awkward hand position that we have seen as a sign of mental illness.\textsuperscript{328}

The Viennese modernists also drew a line between their work and Romako’s. Two exhibitions at the Galerie Miethke in 1905 and 1913 characterized Romako as a modern artist and tied his work into the nascent history of the city's early-twentieth-century avant-garde.\textsuperscript{329} Blackshaw suggests that these artists exaggerated the madness of Romako’s paintings in order to promote their own ideas of modernity, but the visual evidence in this painting suggests a closer tie to their work. The portrait of Elisabeth was not included in the Galerie Miethke shows, and was likely unknown within Vienna.\textsuperscript{330} This suggests a common visual language drawn upon by all of these artists, whether painting in the 1880s or the early twentieth century.

**Tacit Knowledge and Visualizing Mental Illness**

The use of distorted anatomy to indicate nervousness throughout these paintings suggests that these artists had a common source to draw upon. Blackshaw identified the French illustrated psychiatric periodical *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière* as visual sourcebooks for the artists of the Jahrhundertwende.\textsuperscript{331} Produced by Charcot’s successors between 1888 and 1918, the journal contained photographic illustrations of symptoms believed to be caused by nerve disorders, especially diseases that disfigured muscles or limbs. However, we see that Romako utilized these same tropes twenty years

\textsuperscript{328} Natter suggests this posture was developed to conceal her crippled finger, but Klimt made no such gesture in his 1912 portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer. Natter, *Klimt's Women*, 118.
\textsuperscript{330} It is possible, though undocumented, that Elisabeth saw Romako’s painting during her many trips through Switzerland in the 1890s.
\textsuperscript{331} Gemma Blackshaw, “The Pathological Body.”
earlier, without any access to these photographs.\textsuperscript{332} While this French journal may have been a fruitful resource for the Viennese artists, an examination of the visual culture of psychiatry within Vienna also provides essential insight into more local imagery of the mentally ill.

In order to identify visual resources within Viennese psychiatric practice, my archival research pursued urban and suburban asylums with a particular focus on photographic patient portraits from the 1870s and 1880s. Searching through Protokoll books and case histories from the Niederösterreichische Landes-Irrenanstalt in Wien, the Obersteiner clinic at Ober-Döbling, and Svetlin’s clinic, I was unable to uncover any systematic campaign of patient portrait photography. While the architecture of local asylums was the subject of extensive photographic documentation, photographs of patients were strangely absent.

This omission was particularly surprising because of the important role photography played in patient documentation during these decades at psychiatric institutions in England, France, and Italy. Furthermore, there seems to be a great emphasis on the visual throughout the practice of medicine in Vienna. Tanja Buklijas chronicled the importance of cadavers for the growth of the medical school, thereby documenting the great importance that professors placed on being able to observe pathological phenomena.\textsuperscript{333} One of the struggles of psychiatrists was their failure to demonstrate such observable physical and anatomical causes for mental illness. Though psychiatrists like Krafft-Ebing combated this failure by introducing more clinical

\textsuperscript{332} Working as he did in Paris and Geneva in the early 1880s, it is possible that Romako may have drawn upon similar imagery from the earlier incarnation of this same journal, the \textit{Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière}, which was published by Charcot from 1875-1880.

\textsuperscript{333} Buklijas, "Cultures of Death and Politics of Corpse Supply: Anatomy in Vienna, 1848-1914."
observations into the psychiatric curriculum, it seems strange that photography or any type of visual documentation would be missing from psychiatric records.

I believe that photography would not have satisfied the uniquely Viennese demand for anatomical diagnosis. In Vienna, the leading center for anatomical dissection, a medical science was not considered legitimate without participating in this pedagogical approach. The absence of psychiatric photography also suggests that Viennese practitioners had a very different attitude toward photography than their peers across Europe and the United States. Daphne de Marneffe examined one aspect of this difference in her comparison of the clinical methods of Charcot and Freud. De Marneffe argues that Charcot depended on a visual mode of inquiry, whereas Freud relied upon a verbal mode. We see a similar reliance on case histories in the work of Richard von Krafft-Ebing. This preference for verbal description may have led practitioners to avoid photographic documentation in their case histories.

If psychiatric photography did not contribute to the visualization of mental illness in Viennese art, we are forced to consider other sources for the common language identified in the works by Winterhalter, Romako, and the Secessionists. I do not wish to suggest that these later artists took their inspiration from Romako or Winterhalter. Romako’s portrait of Elisabeth remained in a private collection in Geneva until 1950, so it is unlikely that the artists ever laid eyes upon it. Furthermore, though the oval portrait of Elisabeth was well known, it was not widely reproduced.

Perhaps it was the wide proliferation of images of Elisabeth, along with Elisabeth herself who provided an impetus for visualizing mental illness. She was known to be

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unusually preoccupied with her appearance, to possess a family lineage of mental illness, and to suffer from anxious, incurable nervousness. Such a perception of her personality and maladies may lead viewers to search her images for visual indicators of her instability: her wasted body, misshapen hands, or excessive hair. What remains unclear is how these visual choices came to be accepted as signs of mental illness without any definitive link to psychiatric practice.

Returning to the idea of tacit knowledge, Polanyi would suggest that the emphasis on quantifiable knowledge, both within clinical psychiatry and iconographic art history, overlooks the unseen nature of knowledge acquisition. Polanyi argues that the human mind develops by making unacknowledged connections between two disparate elements. The first element is a stimulus that a person does not actually perceive, while the second element is the event to which the subject’s attention is most closely tied. In the case of these paintings, the second element is the misshapen anatomy or the extraordinary hair. For reasons incomprehensible to contemporary viewers, twisted and malformed hands became a sign of nervousness, so much so that Viennese patrons of the early twentieth century actually desired to be represented in such a way.

### CONCLUSION

In developing a visual language of mental instability, Winterhalter and Romako achieved something Viennese psychiatrists could not – a visualization of mental illness. Freud famously told the Austrian playwright Arthur Schnitzler, whose work he admired, that “he envied creative writers who discover intuitively what it had taken him years of
tedious research to establish.”

In Winterhalter’s and Romako’s portraits, I observe just such an anticipation of the tenets of both psychoanalysis and psychiatric imagery that would be codified in the early twentieth century. That the artists’ visual choices can be tied to artworks of the early twentieth century only reveals the richness of portraiture as a resource for exploration.

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CONCLUSION

By limiting our understanding of modernism to objects produced in Paris by a specific group of artists, we miss the opportunity to witness how the increased traffic in images allowed for the ideas associated with modernism to percolate and evolve in complementary ways in a variety of sources and locales. Portraits of an empress may appear to have little in common with the painting of modern life, but under my analysis, these objects engage the same tenet of modernism – the representation of individuality – found within modernist artworks of the French canon. Elisabeth’s construction of beauty, power, and sensuality played out through the myriad images produced during her lifetime, both within the portraits where she was able to control her representation, as well as in the many more objects, such as the photolithographs, in which she could not play such an active role. Her images prove a fruitful resource for a deeper understanding of how portraits of women shaped the development of a modern visual culture.

In the future, I hope to analyze more closely how Elisabeth’s model of beauty engages with the female portraiture of Viennese modernists, as well as portraits of women by French and British artists of the fin-de-siècle. Such a study would not only insert aristocratic portraiture into a formalist study of modernism, but also examine how the social history of these paintings intersected with that of canonical modernists. It would be worthwhile to observe whether the patterns I have identified in Elisabeth’s representation also resonate with depictions of Empress Eugénie and Queen Victoria.

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336 This analogy is similar to the parallel drawn by Michael Fried between the historicist paintings of the German artist Adolph Menzel and the more conspicuously modern works by Courbet or Manet. See Michael Fried, Menzel's Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin (New Haven [Conn.] ; London: Yale University Press, 2002), especially page 12.
It has also been my hope to separate the representation of Elisabeth and her nineteenth-century portraiture from its association with the nostalgia of Ernst Marischka’s *Sissi* films (fig. 120). Starring Romy Schneider, these films disregard Elisabeth’s biography to depict a fairy-tale version of her marriage and reign. The films are often interpreted as exemplars of the *Heimat* genre, a film type that represents a pastoral German or Austrian homeland in order to obscure the nations’ painful history. Broadcast on Christmas Eve every year in Germany and Austria, the films perform a feat in the twentieth century analogous to the photolithographs of the 1860s: the replacement of the historical figure of Elisabeth with the fantasy character “Sissi.” Viennese tourism has capitalized on the enduring fascination of Sissi, with nearly every museum offering some type of Sissi/Sisi feature. With such a contemporary association with *Edelkitsch* (noble kitsch), it is unsurprising that historians in the twenty-first century are reluctant to tie Elisabeth to the currents of nineteenth-century modernity.

Anselm Kiefer’s 1988 artwork *Elisabeth of Austria* (fig. 121) offers an antidote to this attitude. This *Elisabeth* could not be more different from the depiction of the empress provided by the *Sissi* films. Gone are the saturated Agfacolor hues, as well as the accoutrement of the Baroque Habsburg furniture, settings, and fashion. Instead, Kiefer enlarges an 1857 *carte-de-visite* of Elisabeth to life-size, and he covers the edge of

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337 These include *Sissi*, 1955; *Sissi: Die junge Kaiserin/Sissi: the Young Empress*, 1956; and *Schicksalsjahre einer Kaiserin/The Fateful Years of an Empress*, 1957.
338 Heidi Schlipphacke offers an alternative to this interpretation, suggesting that the films instead reflect an anxiety about fixed locations and stable notions of home. Heidi Schlipphacke, "Melancholy Empress: Queering Empire in Ernst Marischka’s *Sissi* Films," *Screen* 51, no. 3 (2010): 232-55.
340 The *Sissi* films incorporated furniture used by the actual Habsburg monarchs in the nineteenth century. This practice is chronicled in a permanent exhibition at the Imperial Furniture Depot in Vienna.
it with crushed lead. He manipulates the photograph such that while her head remains in focus, Elisabeth’s body appears as a film negative, its limbs dissolving into the gray backdrop of the image.

The object suggests an encounter with Elisabeth’s ghost, and can be interpreted as part of Kiefer’s campaign to visually mediate the relationship between his post-war German viewers and their deeply traumatic history. Rather than the romantic heroine of the *Sissi* films, Kiefer presents the twenty-year-old Elisabeth as a decaying photograph, threatened from all sides by encroaching lead. The photograph offers the type of nostalgia described by Barthes in his analysis of the photograph of Joseph Bonaparte: when we look into Elisabeth’s eyes, we experience the indexical trace of eyes who saw the Habsburg empire before its fall. However, in bringing forward the negative element of the photograph within Elisabeth’s body, Kiefer emphasizes the hollow nature of such nostalgia and the impossibility of ever returning to that world. For Kiefer, Elisabeth is a figure through which he historicizes and visualizes the lost Habsburg legacy. She is both a product of the Habsburg world and an object through which he can analyze its relevance in post-war Germany.

My dissertation positions Elisabeth as a similar lens at the opposite end of the history of modern art. Elisabeth served as an exemplar of beauty, a subject of innumerable representations, and a constructor of feminine identity in the nineteenth century. By identifying the complex network of intersections between her images and paintings that are at the heart of the nineteenth-century canon, I offer a touchstone through which we can understand the role of female portraiture in modernism.

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341 This analysis is informed by the interpretation of Kiefer’s career offered by Lisa Saltzman, *Anselm Kiefer and Art after Auschwitz* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
Figure 1: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Empress Elisabeth of Austria/ Kaisrin Elisabeth mit verschlungenem Haar*, 1865, oil on canvas. Private Collection.
Figure 2: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Empress Elisabeth of Austria*, 1865, oil on canvas. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.
Figure 3: Anton Romako, *Empress Elisabeth of Austria*, 1883, oil on panel. Vienna, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere.
Figure 4: Alois Löcherer, Duchess Elisabeth in Bavaria, ca. 1852/53, hand colored photograph. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv.
Figure 5: Friedrich Hohe, *Duchess Elisabeth in Bavaria*, 1853, lithograph. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv.
Figure 6: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Empress Elisabeth of Austria with Unbound Hair*, *Elisabeth von Österreich mit gelöstem Haar*, 1865, oil on canvas. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.
Figure 7: Leopold Fertbauer, *Portrait of the Imperial Family Around the Duke of Reichstadt*, 1826, oil on canvas. Vienna, Wien Museum.
Figure 8: Friedrich von Amerling, *Emperor Franz I in His Coronation Robes*, 1832, oil on canvas. Vienna, Schönbrunn Palace.
Figure 9: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Empress Eugénie*, 1854, oil on canvas. Private collection.
Figure 10: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Empress Eugénie*, 1855, oil on canvas, 240 x 154 cm. Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.
Figure 11: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie Antoinette en Chemise*, 1783, oil on canvas. Germany, private collection.
Figure 12: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *The Empress Eugénie Surrounded By Her Ladies-in-Waiting*, 1855, oil on canvas, 300 x 420 cm. Château de Compiègne.
Figure 13: Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Portrait of Louis XIV*, 1701, oil on canvas, 277 x 194 cm. Paris, Louvre.
Figure 14: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Prince Albert*, 1843, oil on canvas, 274.3 x 162.6 cm. London, Collection of Her Majesty the Queen.
Figure 15: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Queen Victoria*, 1843, oil on canvas. London, Collection of Her Majesty the Queen.
Figure 16: A.A.E. Disdéri, *Napoleon III and Eugénie*, 1862, *carte-de-visite*.
Figure 17: John Jabez Edward Paisley Mayall, *Victoria and Albert*, 1861, carte-de-visite.
Figure 18: Marcello (Adèle d’Affry), *Empress Eugénie*, 1866, plaster, 87 cm high. Fribourg, Fondation Marcello.
Figure 19: Attributed to Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Queen Maria Sophia of Naples*, ca. 1860, oil on canvas. Minneapolis, Minneapolis Institute of Arts.
Figure 20: Unknown photographer, *Queen Maria Sophia of Naples*, ca. 1860, carte-de-visite. Cologne, Museum Ludwig.
Figure 21: Detail of Figure 19.
Figure 22: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Queen Caroline Murat*, 1814, oil on canvas, 92 x 60 cm. Private collection.
Figure 23: Franz Xaver Winterhalter, Barbe Dmitrievna Mergassov, Madame Rimsky-Korsakov, 1864, oil on canvas. Paris, Musée d’Orsay.
Figure 24: Unknown photographer, *Queen Marie of the Two Sicilies*, 1861, *carte-de-visite*. Cologne, Museum Ludwig.
Figure 25: Emil von Hartitzsch, *The Imperial Family*, 1875, photolithograph. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv.
Figure 26: Ludwig Angerer, Sample Album, plate 1. Vienna, Albertina.
Figure 27: Ludwig Angerer, Sample Album, plate 2. Vienna, Albertina.
Figure 28: Ludwig Angerer, Sample Album, plate 65. Vienna, Albertina.
Figure 29: Ludwig Angerer, *Empress Elisabeth of Austria, carte-de-visite*, ca. 1860. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv.
Figure 30: Ludwig Angerer (?), *Empress Elisabeth on Horseback with a White-Feathered Cap*, ca. 1860s, collodion print. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv.
Figure 31: Ludwig Angerer, *Empress Elisabeth with a Poodle*, 1864, carte-de-visite.
Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv
Figure 32: Josef Albert, *Empress Elisabeth at the Window*, ca. 1865, carte-de-visite. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv.
Figure 33: Emil von Hartitzsch, *The Imperial Family*, ca. 1860, photolithograph. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv.
Figure 34: Unknown photographer, *Corpus Christi Procession in Vienna 1894*. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Bildarchiv.
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