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Empire of Horror: Race, Animality, and Monstrosity in the Victorian Gothic

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Introduction

The end of the nineteenth century and the final years of the Victorian era brought with them fears and uncertainties about England's role in the world and its future, fears that the Victorian gothic sought to grapple with. The gothic novel became immensely popular in this era, and many of the tropes it established continue to pervade gothic texts. Patrick Brantlinger introduced the term "imperial gothic" to refer to this genre, and he avers that "no form of cultural expression reveals more clearly the contradictions within that climax [of the British empire] than imperial Gothic" (228). The British empire had enjoyed unparalleled dominance throughout the nineteenth century, but it began to encounter more resistance as the twentieth century dawned, and attendant on these changes were fears about societal regression. As Brantlinger explains, it became "increasingly difficult" for Victorians "to think of themselves as inevitably progressive" (230). The imperial gothic functioned as a mode for externalizing and negotiating cultural fears, by demonstrating "individual regression or going native; an invasion of civilization by the forces of barbarism or demonism; and the diminution of opportunities for adventure and heroism in the modern world" (Brantlinger 231). The fears that the imperial gothic sought to mediate included fear of the Other, whether a racial, sexual, or cultural other; fear of degeneration, as conceptualized in the Darwinian sense; fear of the desecration of established boundaries; and a fear of the "'civilized' world…being overrun by 'primitive' forces" (108). As Jack Halberstam explains, these anxieties were externalized onto the horrific, foreign bodies of the monsters in Victorian gothic texts: "The monster itself is an economic form in that it condenses various

racial and sexual threats to nation, capitalism, and the bourgeoisie in one body" (3). Crucially, he also notes that "monsters are meaning machines" (21) whose horror stems from their ability to signify multiple forms of otherness and deviance in one body. However, importantly, monsters "inspire fear and desire at the same time" (Halberstam 13), and the fear engendered by these bodies is tinged with fascination.

In this project, I analyze the imperial gothic using Bram Stoker's novels *Dracula* (1897) and *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903/1912) and Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897). As I demonstrate in this project, the concept of the "meaning machine" helps to explain the generative potential of Victorian monsters, but the machine also breaks down when these novels reveal that monstrosity inheres in English bodies as well as monstrous ones. Halberstam characterizes Gothic monsters as "remarkably mobile, permeable, and infinitely interpretable" (21), and he describes the idea of the meaning machines in terms of the physical body: "the monster's body, indeed, is a machine that, in its Gothic mode, produces meaning and can represent any horrible trait that the reader feeds into the narrative. The monster functions as monster, in other words, when it is able to condense as many fear-producing traits as possible into one body" (21). Both Dracula and the Beetle, the monsters of their respective novels, embody all that would be objectionable and horrific to a Victorian audience, in terms of racial, sexual, and creaturely otherness. As Halberstam suggests, these two texts do attempt to cast off horror onto the monstrous body, but they also reveal that these "horrible trait[s]" do not only exist within the monsters. Rather, they force England to "see its own imperial practices mirrored back in monstrous form" (Arata 108). The ostensible monster in *Jewel*, Queen Tera, further demonstrates this malfunction of the

meaning machine, as the text fails to conclusively demonstrate her monstrosity and instead turns a critical lens on the English.

To unravel the interwoven themes that the Victorian gothic addresses, critics have asked questions of the genre in regard to sexuality and gender, science and technology, disease, mesmerism, and imperialism. Julian Wolfreys sums up these questions in his introduction to *The Beetle,* asking, what happens when "late-Victorian modernity, science, parliamentary democracy, imperial identity, and…the nineteenth-century investment in the attainability and efficacy of knowledge as a form of power and control are confronted by the non-rational, the inexplicable, the archaic, *the other"* (12)? These are ostensibly the elements of "the uncanny, the disorder, the alien-ness that [the] Gothic appears to *express,*" but in fact seeks "to control" (Bronfen and Putner 2002). However, despite the multiplicity of critical perspectives on the imperial gothic, considerations of race have often been overshadowed by the focus on these other aspects of the genre. Though race has not been entirely occluded from Victorian studies, when critics do write about race, they "have largely focused…on texts that rely thematically or structurally on racist premises or expressions" (Betensky 2). Thus, texts that center on whiteness and not racial "otherness" often escape scrutiny.

In their essay "Undisciplining Victorian Studies," Ronjaunee Chatterjee, Alicia Mireles Christoff, and Amy R. Wong address the lack of significant attention given to race and they call for a shift in the field of Victorian studies. My project was inspired by their essay, which they wrote in 2020, amidst the rise of white supremacy following the 2016 election. These three critics hoped to spark an ongoing conversation about how to incorporate racial theory into the field of Victorian studies. In this essay, they make a broad

appeal to Victorian scholars to "undiscipline" the field by breaking down the boundaries that have henceforth governed it and perhaps even by "un-mak[ing] Victorian studies itself" (371). The field of Victorian studies, they claim, has been resistant to "centering racial logic" (370), and though it has embraced postcolonial studies, as well as gender and sexuality studies, the field as a whole is uncomfortable with the topic of race (374). This article recalls Edward Saïd's injunction, in *Culture and Imperialism,* to read cultural products as "manifestly and unconcealedly a part" of the imperial process and his claim that "what we learn about this hitherto ignored aspect actually and truly *enhances* our reading" (Saïd xiv).[1]

According to Chatterjee, Christoff, and Wong, whiteness has indeed remained one such "hitherto ignored aspect" (Saïd xiv), whose occlusion has had dangerous consequences for the field as a whole. As such, I chose to foreground race and whiteness and to consider the similarities between these monsters and their English victims. In doing so, it became clear to me that "otherness" resided in the heart of fin-de-siècle society. In "Undiscipling Victorian Studies," the three authors write that "the whiteness in and of the field's most treasured literary texts has a long history of being read right through – treated as a kind of 'neutral universe'" (379). In other words, the predominant whiteness of the Victorian novel world and of Victorian characters is taken for granted, and thus race often goes unremarked in analysis of these texts. This understanding of whiteness as neutral connects to Richard Dyer's discussion in "The Matter of Whiteness," where he notes that "to say that one is interested in race has come to mean that one is interested in any racial imagery other than

[1] *Culture and Imperialism* was instrumental to the development of postcolonial studies, as I believe "Undisiciplining Victorian Studies" will be for the study of race in Victorian literature.

that of white people" because white people "function as a human norm" (1). Whiteness is often not even considered to be a *race,* thus accounting for the absence of racial theory in discussing Victorian novels, which primarily feature white, British characters. Certainly, critics have discussed the race of the monsters in Victorian texts because they are often coded as foreign and racially other, but this only serves to further solidify their ostensible otherness and exteriority to English society. This focus on otherness also strengthens Victorian England's paradoxical project to simultaneously "avow and disavow its empire," both claiming imperial possession of it and maintaining that it was subordinate to England and "beyond the boundaries of Englishness" (Baucom 6). As I will argue, monstrosity and otherness were not alien to Englishness, but rather interior to England and its citizens.

In this project I also focus on animality because, like race, it became a crucial tool in the imperial gothic's project of constructing the Other. Animality figures prominently in a number of Victorian gothic texts, from the three novels I have chosen to focus on, to *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), to *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and many more. Creatureliness had particular resonance in Victorian society because of its connection with Darwinian science, which sparked anxiety about regression and degeneration. Victorians feared that the result of their imperial expansion and urbanization was not progress, but rather individual regression and societal pollution that would eventually lead to England's descent into primitivism and its return to an atavistic, animalistic state. Like non-white, foreign bodies, animal bodies became the ultimate site of otherness and corruption, against which Britons could establish their normality and morality. As Keridiana Chez writes, "for centuries animality and all that it was thought to represent (irrational, uncontrolled

passion), was externalized onto the body of the nonhuman animal so that the human could conceive of himself as rational against the animal Other" (*Gothic Animals* 4). It became essential to establish a firm boundary between the animal and the human, not only to prevent degeneration, but because the Victorians feared the animal within, which had to "be controlled and repressed, even if it [could not] be ejected" (Heholt and Edmundson 6). Moreover, according to Cyndy Hendershot, "fin-de-siècle racial theories…displaced the animal within to the imperial Other" (5). In many ways, animality became synonymous with racial otherness, as a signifier of difference and a biological truth that could be seen on the body, but also, as this project reveals, as a dormant trait lurking within normative, white, English bodies. The efforts of the three texts I examine to externalize all undesirable qualities onto a monstrous body ultimately fail.

I chose *Dracula, The Beetle,* and *The Jewel of Seven Stars* for this project, because they have interesting connections that allow for new considerations of Victorian gothic tropes. In addition, their differences reveal the various ways that imperial gothic texts sought to establish and externalize otherness. While many Victorian texts, such as H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and *She* (1887), or Rudyard Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King" (1886), are set in imperial spaces, all of the novels I have chosen are situated in familiar spaces, thus making them an interesting mode through which to examine monstrosity and race within England, itself. Both *Dracula* and the *Beetle* were published in 1897, as the twentieth century approached, and Queen Victoria's reign drew to a close. *Dracula* holds an important place in the English literary canon and has proven to have a uniquely generative capacity in popular culture. *The Beetle,* though decidedly less popular with

contemporary readers, offers an interesting point of comparison for Stoker's novel of the same year, and it reveals much about Victorian society's relationship to the Orient and the animal world. *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, another of Stoker's novels, is useful because it strikes a markedly different tone towards the prowess of the British empire and the perceived colonial others than the other two works and because it offers a retrospective view on them, given its publication in 1903 and its revision in 1912.

In chapter one, I consider the monster's own whiteness in *Dracula*, a whiteness which both links him to Englishness and marks him as horrifically other. I also examine the whiteness of the English women he attacks and how this whiteness mutates throughout their own vampiric transformations. Furthermore, I discuss the animality of Dracula and the animalistic transformations of his victims, in order to elucidate the connections between whiteness and animality and to understand what these connections ultimately expose about the fears of degeneration that pervaded Victorian society at the fin-de-siècle.

In the second chapter, I turn my attention to Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*, and I delve into the connections between the Beetle's invasion of London and the historical Colorado beetle scare, which captured England's attention in the late 1870s and 1880s. Using various reports and records of this invasion scare, which I believe partly inspired Marsh's novel, I examine how the Beetle's animality relates to their[2] Egyptian origins and the threat of invasion they pose. I also discuss the importance of Egypt to the British empire at the time, and how Britain and Egypt's imperial relationship informed the characterizations of Marsh's

[2] Throughout my discussion of *The Beetle,* I will use the pronoun "they" to refer to the central monster, for reasons that I elucidate in chapter two.

monster. Finally, I suggest a number of explanations for *The Beetle*'s lack of popularity with modern readers in comparison to its contemporary, *Dracula.*

In the epilogue, I use Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* to conclude my analysis and to chart the changes that occurred between the publication of *Dracula* and *The Beetle* and that of *Jewel.* I look at how the English characters exhibit monstrosity, rather than the Egyptian Queen Tera. I also consider how the rise of Egyptomania contributes to a different attitude towards Egypt and Egyptians in *Jewel* than in *The Beetle,* and I analyze the significance of the mummy as an imperial figure. This chapter focuses on the themes of liminality, race, animality and gender, each of which plays a crucial role in all three of these imperial gothic novels.

Ultimately, as this project will demonstrate, these three imperial gothic texts reveal that the boundaries between the self and the Other, between morality and monstrosity, and between mainland England and its empire, were dangerously porous. Many of the monsters, and even some of the British characters, are liminal figures who trouble boundaries. This ambiguity engendered terror in the British reader precisely because the British empire relied on the establishment of a physical and moral boundary between itself and the colonized Other, in order to justify its imperialism. The imperial gothic has the uncanny ability to reveal the "supposedly coherent subject position" of the English empire "as one frequently incoherent and plagued by insecurities" (Hendershot 5). The very texts that attempt to assert the rationality of the British empire inevitably betray its innermost vulnerabilities.

Chapter One: The Monsters Inside: Whiteness, Animality, and Fears of Declining Empire in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Introduction

Bram Stoker's 1897 gothic novel, *Dracula,* features an eponymous vampiric monster who terrorizes Britain with his fiendish, bloodsucking schemes. Many considerations of Dracula's monstrosity center on his racial otherness. Numerous critics[3] have read *Dracula* as a novel of reverse colonization, a story about what happens when England, itself, is threatened by a foreign power and when the white Britons become the colonized, instead of the colonizers. Rhys Garnett writes that the threat of reverse colonization posed by Dracula reflects England's concerns about the "moral validity of imperial expansion," particularly an expansion "justified by racial superiority" (33), and that the Count thus represents a "nightmare of the logic of imperialism" (38). According to Garnett, the horrific outcome of Dracula's sojourn in England indicates a growing ambiguity about the legitimacy of British imperialism. Given that England justified its imperialism largely on the basis of racial superiority, the logic of this reverse colonization reading is predicated on the notion that Dracula exemplifies the racial Other, who has come to invade a white nation.

Indeed, Dracula does occupy a space of racial otherness, but perhaps not in the way many critics have suggested. Jack Halberstam and Jimmie Cain, among others, have theorized Dracula as Jewish. Both critics note his "singularly Jewish features" (Cain 128), which derive from nineteenth century anti-Semitic stereotypes. Cain also remarks upon the

[3] Stephen Arata was the first to theorize *Dracula* as a reverse colonization narrative, in his essay, "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization." He has been cited by many critics writing on the novel, including Raphaelle Delores Gomez, Anjuli Fatima Raza Kolb, Lindsey Kurz, and Tim Youngs.

Victorian associations between Jewish immigrants and disease, asserting that "in his conception of Dracula, Stoker undoubtedly includes attributes of the dangerous, pestilential Jewish immigrant" (128). Halberstam goes even further, arguing that Dracula's Jewishness is integral to the horror he engenders: "The vampire merges Jewishness and monstrosity and represents this hybrid monster as a threat to Englishness and English womanhood in particular. In the Jew, then, Gothic fiction finds a monster versatile enough to represent fears about race, nation, and sexuality, a monster who combines in one body fears of the foreign and perverse" (14). Dracula does indeed represent a myriad of threats, and particularly a threat to English womanhood and whiteness, as I will discuss later on in this chapter.

However, contrary to other critics, I want to argue that Dracula's multifaceted monstrosity comes primarily from his horrific whiteness and his animality, rather than from his Jewishness, or his otherness, more broadly. As opposed to embodying the threat of reverse colonization, Dracula presents a monstrosity from within whiteness itself. Dracula's ability to pervert normative whiteness makes the danger he poses incredibly pervasive and particularly problematic for English identity if we take into consideration Patrick Brantlinger's assertion that British imperialism was predicated on moral supremacy as much as racial supremacy, thus rendering fears of declining morality and the "degeneration of [British] racial stock" all the more acute (232). By corrupting normative whiteness and producing a new, horrific category of whiteness, Dracula threatens to tarnish Britain's moral supremacy and "racial stock." The Count's whiteness is opposed to fin-de-siècle notions of

morality, thus calling into question the morality that England saw as inherent to its whiteness and national identity.

Raphaella Delores Gomez provides another understanding of Dracula as the racial Other, in this case as an Orientalized, Eastern European figure. Similar to Brantlinger and other critics, she notes how Dracula exploits fears of declining empire, which particularly troubled the British population at the fin-de-siècle. In the wake of such events as the Crimean War (1853-1856), Eastern European countries like Russia, she argues, came to be seen as an alternative imperial power who threatened to take England's place on the world stage. Given that he hails from Transylvania, a location of "racial strife" that heightened England's "vexation over the 'Eastern Question'" (71), and that his bloodline is a "'whirlpool' of Eastern European races" (75), Dracula, Gomez purports, "marks a threat of counter-colonization and de-racination of the Western blood" (75). Gomez's point about de-racination elucidates the threat of miscegenation that Dracula presents, and the Count's Eastern European identity certainly marks him out as different and contributes to his Otherness. However, I would argue that his horrific whiteness identifies him as racially other, or perhaps more aptly, racially similar, more so than his Eastern Europeanness does. It is also more threatening, because it emerges from inside of whiteness and Englishness, rather than outside of them.

Furthermore, as Richard Dyer points out, the "examination of [white ethnicities] tends to lead away from a consideration of whiteness itself" (4). Critics often focus on subtle forms of difference within Dracula, such as his Eastern European ethnicity or his Jewishness, in order to identify him as the ultimate embodiment of otherness in the novel.

However, in doing so, they inadvertently reproduce the logic of empire that equates monstrosity and otherness with racial and colonial others, rather than with whiteness and Britons. Thus, the danger of continuing to read Dracula as the racial Other is that the monstrosity of whiteness and its centrality to the text remain unexplored. In focusing on Dracula's unsettling brand of whiteness, rather than his Jewishness or Eastern Europeanness, I hope to re-center whiteness, a concept which has remained almost entirely unexamined in studies of Stoker's popular novel. As Chatterjee, Christoff and Wong discuss in "Undisciplining Victorian Studies," this preclusion extends beyond criticism of *Dracula,* to the field of Victorian studies, at large.

Lending Horror to Whiteness

Whiteness in the novel manifests itself as alternately normative and horrific, and it produces horror when it is examined and made visible. Nearly all of the characters in this novel are white, and they inhabit a space of normative, privileged whiteness. Richard Dyer writes that "as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people" (Dyer 1). Given that whiteness does not function as a race but rather as a state of normality, it often remains unexamined, with dangerous consequences. Dyer also notes the privilege that this affords to white people, in general, because "there is no more powerful position than that of being 'just' human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity" (2). Whiteness draws its power from its normativity, which gives white people the privilege to occupy the position of human, instead of racial other. However, *Dracula* demonstrates that whiteness can

produce horror when it no longer functions as the human norm or as the mere background of the text.

The monster's own whiteness forces readers to consider whiteness through a new lens. In this novel, as in many other texts, the whiteness of the characters goes unremarked, because it is assumed. In fact, none of the characters are introduced as white, and they are only described as such when their whiteness becomes exceptional, such as in reaction to shock or fear. Instead, for example, Lucy describes Dr. Seward as the man "with the strong jaw and good forehead" (Stoker 56), and Mina pens a paragraph-long description of Dr. Van Helsing where she describes him as having a "neck well balanced on the trunk as the head is on the neck" and a "hard, square chin, a large, resolute, mobile mouth, a good-sized nose, rather straight, but with quick, sensitive nostrils" (170). In fact, she seems to describe every aspect of his appearance, apart from his skin color. This omission indicates that his race does not define him, because, like all the other characters, he is presumed to be white. Neither Lucy nor Mina is described as white, either, but words like "sweet" and "lovely" function as stand-ins for their normative whiteness. It is only after Dracula enters the scene that their whiteness becomes horrific and thus worth mentioning.

In contrast to the unremarkable whiteness of most of the characters in the novel, Dracula's particular brand of whiteness provokes copious attention. He embodies an alternate racial category of horrific whiteness, which simultaneously signifies his otherness and his commonality with the other white characters. Throughout the novel, whiteness bespeaks his presence and figures into most of his physical descriptions. When Jonathan Harker first introduces us to the Count, he notes that "the general effect was one of

extraordinary pallor" (20). From the beginning, Dracula's whiteness defines him and marks him out as "extraordinary," as abnormal. Throughout the novel, he is described as having white teeth, white hands, a white moustache, and a "deathly pale" complexion. Interestingly, he even bears a resemblance to normal whiteness, and some of his descriptions are remarkably similar to those of the white characters. For example, when Jonathan finds him asleep in his coffin, he writes, "There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath" (51). Here, the Count has just consumed human blood, so the horror comes from the unnatural transformation and animality this produces. As I will examine later on, animality also lends horror to whiteness. Yet, this description also mirrors one Mina gives of Lucy to indicate her returning health, in which she writes, "her pale cheeks were really more rosy" (94). Instead of conveying health or normative whiteness, Dracula's appearance in this instance is horrifying and animalistic, making him look "like a filthy leech, exhausted with his repletion" (51). While he is clearly associated with whiteness and even exhibits similarities to the charming Lucy, his whiteness is a horrific, animalistic one, which the text takes pains to distinguish from the normative whiteness of characters like Mina and Lucy.

In addition to Dracula being described as white, whiteness, particularly atmospheric whiteness, often signals his presence. Jonathan Harker's arrival in Dracula's home region of Transylvania is accompanied by a white, powdery snow, which surrounds and blankets the Count and Harker, augmenting the Englishman's sense of terror and helplessness (15). This eerie snow returns when Mina, Van Helsing, and the rest of the band return to Transylvania,

and this time it brings with it the three terrifying, vampiric women who live in Dracula's castle (340). Later, Dracula's initial arrival in England is presaged by a violent, white storm, which brings "white crested waves" which "beat madly on the level sands," "white, wet clouds which swept by in ghostly fashion, and "mighty masses of white foam" (74). While this storm seems, in part, to be a normal, natural manifestation of whiteness, it also has a supernatural quality and becomes horrific when it brings Dracula to British shores. The monster materializes directly out of this storm, not unlike the way he materializes out of the white mist that he himself creates. This mist, which appears on the night of the storm, allows Dracula to transgress spatial boundaries and enter into British domestic spaces, where he would otherwise be unwelcome. One night, Mina notices "a thin streak of white mist, that crept with almost imperceptible slowness across the grass towards the house, [and] seemed to have a sentience and a vitality of its own" (240), before she imagines "a livid white face bending over [her] out of the mist" (Stoker 241). The mobility of this white mist provides numerous possibilities for boundary transgression, and, like the white storm, the mist abruptly transforms from natural and innocuous to horrific and threatening, when Dracula materializes from it. Furthermore, the description of his "livid white face," livid meaning unnatural paleness (OED, 1c), indicates the horror of his own whiteness. Later, the mist enters directly into Mina's bedroom and overwhelms her with a "vague terror" (Stoker 266), which directly precedes Dracula's sexually charged attack and his consumption of her blood. Dracula transforms these overpowering manifestations of atmospheric whiteness from naturally, normatively white, to horrifically, uncannily white.

Dracula endows the white women he attacks with this same monstrous whiteness, corrupting their normative, pure whiteness. Lucy and Mina embody the kind of wholesome, white femininity that was considered sacred and essential to protect in fin-de-siècle Britain. Both women are described as sweet and gentle, and they are beloved by all of the men in the novel. Anne McClintock writes, in *Imperial Leather*, that women acted as "the boundary markers of empire" (24) and that "controlling women's sexuality, exalting maternity and breeding a virile race of empire-builders were widely perceived as the paramount means for controlling the health and wealth of the male imperial body politic" (47). As the "angel(s) in the house," white women functioned as the moral safeguards of the nation, who were responsible for upholding the boundaries of empire. Thus, Dracula's attacks on British women and his attempts to corrupt their whiteness threaten not only the women themselves, but the nation as a whole. Mina embodies the roles of angel in the house and moral safeguard in many ways, as she remains ensconced in the house while the men risk their lives to protect her, and she acts as their moral compass when they stray too far down the path of hatred and revenge (287).

Similarly, when Lucy is first introduced, she perfectly exemplifies such charming, pure, white femininity. Mina describes her as "looking sweeter and lovelier than ever" (61) and then as "looking sweetly pretty in her white lawn[4] frock" and having a "beautiful color" (63). The word "sweet" encapsulates Lucy and marks her beauty and whiteness as safe and innocent. She embodies the morality that Britain deemed imperative for maintaining its

[4] In this case, lawn refers to a lightweight, cotton fabric, which was popular in the Victorian era. Interestingly, it was often used to make clothing or robes for clergy, which further associates it with purity and chastity (OED, 1).

imperial superiority (Brantlinger 232). Interestingly, she is also described using the language of pregnancy. After Dracula has already begun taking Lucy's blood, Mina writes, "Lucy frets at the postponement of seeing [Arthur], but it does not touch her looks; she is a trifle stouter, and her cheeks are a lovely rose pink. She has lost that anaemic look which she had" (70). She has the rosy glow that is often associated with pregnancy, and she also looks stout, another trait commonly used to describe pregnant women. Despite the "anaemic look," which results from Dracula taking her blood, she presents a picture of vivacious health. Even later on, as Dracula continues his gradual draining of her blood, Lucy writes to Mina, "Arthur says I am getting fat" (101), another detail that seems to indicate pregnancy. Not only does Lucy epitomize white femininity in these portrayals, but she seems to exhibit the "exalting maternity" that functioned as the "means for controlling the health and wealth of the male imperial body politic" (McClintock 47). Even more so than the average British woman, the white mother secures the boundaries of the British empire by ensuring the continuation of the race. In this instance, Lucy's appearance is reassuring, and her whiteness is normative. [5] Yet, ironically, the process of vampiric transformation has already begun, as Dracula takes her blood and imbues her with his own. In fact, rather than an expression of normative white femininity, her pregnant appearance seems to be a result of her encounters

[5] In her essay, "Delivering Lucy," Ann Kibbie theorizes "Lucy's gradual, hidden transformation as constituting a perverse form of monstrous, unproductive pregnancy" (208). She explains that the often horrific transformations of Victorian women during pregnancy were resolved by their "successful re-inscription in the maternal," but that Lucy's monstrous pregnancy leads, instead, to "vampiric reproduction" (197). Given that Lucy's pregnancy is so monstrous, she, herself, must be "delivered" from her vampiric state with a violent staking which, Kibbie argues, represents a caesarian section. In this context, perhaps Lucy's appearance does indicate pregnancy, but an unproductive, vampiric one. While pregnancy was necessary for the continuation of empire, it also has monstrous, threatening potential.

with Dracula, which points to the threat of miscegenation between regular whiteness and monstrous whiteness.

Lucy's vampiric transformation effaces her normal whiteness and produces a monstrous one, which acts as a marker of her transition. Furthermore, her body becomes the mechanism through which Dracula's presence becomes known. The first sign of Lucy embodying an eerie, unnatural whiteness comes from the parallels Stoker creates between her and the myth of the White lady in Whitby, the town in which all of Lucy's meetings with Dracula occur. This legend is introduced directly after Mina's first encounter with Lucy, which sets up an initial link between the two. According to Mina, "there is a legend that a white lady is seen in one of the windows" (61). The fact that this ghostly woman is specifically described as a "white lady" indicates that her whiteness is a defining factor which comprises the horror she presents. Shortly after Mina hears this story, she discovers Lucy with Dracula, on the same cliffs the white lady supposedly haunts. Much like the white lady, Lucy's whiteness specifically marks her out in this passage. Mina describes her as a "half-reclining figure, snowy white" and a "white figure" that "shone" (86). Although she does not exhibit an entirely horrific whiteness here, she certainly has an eerie aura about her. Notably, this is the only explicit description of Lucy's encounters with Dracula, and she appears to be willingly submitting to his intimate advances. Mina recounts, "there was undoubtedly something, long and black, bending over the half-reclining white figure. I called in fright, 'Lucy! Lucy!' and something raised a head, and from where I was I could see a white face and red, gleaming eyes" (87). Both Lucy and Dracula are described as white, though Dracula's whiteness is made monstrous by his unnaturally red eyes. Additionally, Lucy

appears to be relaxed, and she reclines while Dracula bends over her; the two are in close proximity. Although he has evidently hypnotized her, Lucy's seemingly willful compliance marks this moment as the beginning of her vampiric transformation and her descent into horrific whiteness, which brings with it an immoral sexuality. The normatively white Lucy, with her rosy cheeks and motherly figure, would consider this an act of impropriety, but this mysterious white figure allows Dracula to enter into intimate contact with her. Once again taking into consideration McClintock's assertion that exerting control over women's sexuality was seen as a vital method for safeguarding the boundaries of empire, we see that Lucy's monstrous whiteness is beginning to threaten the nation.

After this first encounter, Dracula no longer appears in his human form, but instead his presence reveals itself through Lucy's increasing whiteness, which not only marks her sickness, but also her monstrosity. While her pallor elicits concern from her devoted friends, it also has a horrifying quality. Dr. Seward, though he is accustomed to dealing with illness, writes, "if I was shocked when I saw her yesterday, I was horrified when I saw her to-day. She was ghastly, chalkily pale; the red seemed to have gone even from her lips and gums, and the bones of her face stood out prominently" (113). Lucy has lost her healthy, rosy glow and looks abnormally pale. Dr. Seward feels "horrified" by her appearance and his use of the word "ghastly" to describe her pallor clearly indicates that this whiteness deviates from normality. Part of the horror, certainly, stems from her resemblance to a corpse, both in her deathly pallor and her prominent bones. Shortly after, when Lucy is, indeed, on the verge of death, Dr. Seward describes her as "horribly white," a phrase that recurs a number of times in the novel. In his journal he notes, "There on the bed, seemingly in a swoon, lay poor

Lucy, more horribly white and wan-looking than ever. Even the lips were white, and the gums seemed to have shrunken back from the teeth, as we sometimes see in a corpse after a prolonged illness" (120). Once again, she bears a horrifying resemblance to a corpse, both in her shrunken gums and her "horrible" whiteness. Lucy continues to descend into the realm of horrifying whiteness that Dracula embodies. Moreover, the gums "shrunken back from the teeth" give her an animalistic appearance, like a dog with its teeth bared, which, in addition to her unnaturally white appearance, shows how her transformation brings her progressively closer to Dracula. Notably, Lucy's transformation, itself, produces this dreadful pallor and lends a monstrous quality to it, as she swiftly approaches the monstrous whiteness and dangerous sexuality of the "bloofer lady."[6] Dracula induces Lucy's vampiric transformation, and he endows her with a whiteness that destabilizes notions of white femininity, and, by extension, the British empire.

Part of Lucy's horrific whiteness and the threat she poses to the empire result from her violation of the boundaries of sexual propriety as the "bloofer lady." There seems to be a direct link between her growing whiteness and her lasciviousness. The vampiric Lucy, known to the town's children as the bloofer lady, is described numerous times as a "white figure" (Stoker 196) and the image of the bloofer lady is one of horrific, unnatural whiteness. The first moment where she exhibits the "voluptuous wantonness" (Stoker 196) that decidedly transgresses the bounds of sexual conduct for middle-class English women occurs just moments before her death, and thus at the climax of her vampiric transformation. Dr.

[6] This is the term used to refer to the vampiric Lucy in the novel's newspaper reports of her. The word "bloofer" has no defined meaning, but most readers and critics have assumed that Stoker meant "bloofer lady" to be "beautiful lady" in the cockney accents of children (who are the ones reporting the stories). Dickens also used this term in *Our Mutual Friend,* but without the "l."

Seward first notices her "pale gums" and long, sharp teeth (143), both signs of her vampirism. Then, he observes, "In a sort of sleep-waking, vague, unconscious way she opened her eyes, which were now dull and hard at once, and said in a soft, voluptuous voice, such as I had never heard from her lips:—"Arthur! Oh, my love, I am so glad you have come! Kiss me!" (150). The seductive tactics she employs here are, according to Dr. Seward, not her own. She no longer embodies the sweet, safe sexuality that marked her whiteness pre-transformation. Furthermore, she specifically threatens white masculinity by attempting to contaminate Arthur's virtuous whiteness with her and Dracula's monstrous whiteness. In this moment, she is both a nightmare and a fantasy for the men, who are hypnotized by her beauty and her sexual advances.

In addition to threatening the English men, Lucy menaces British society and empire. McClintock argues that "sexuality, in particular women's sexuality, was cordoned off" and that "increasingly vigilant efforts to control women's bodies, especially in the face of feminist resistance, were suffused with acute anxiety about the desecration of sexual boundaries and the consequences that racial contamination had" (47). As McClintock suggests, women's bodily and sexual boundaries came to function as a stand-in for national boundaries. Proper sexual conduct for women was deemed necessary to uphold the boundaries of empire, the very boundaries that Dracula successfully penetrates, time and time again. Lucy, herself, in all of her horrific whiteness, defies such conduct, thereby weakening the empire from the inside. The unbridled sexuality that Lucy's whiteness produces problematizes the "continual purification" (McClintock 47) of the boundaries of empire and of women's sexuality.

The sanitation of boundaries is also problematized by Lucy's and Mina's "unclean" whiteness, which pollutes normative whiteness and symbolizes the monstrous state of otherness they come to embody. In considering the sanitation of boundaries, particularly those of morality and women's sexuality, I want to consider what happens when whiteness, itself, becomes unclean. When the men encounter Lucy, the bloofer lady, in the graveyard, Dr. Seward writes, "by the concentrated light that fell on Lucy's face we could see that the lips were crimson with fresh blood, and that the stream had trickled over her chin and stained the purity of her lawn death-robe" (196). Interestingly, Lucy wears this "lawn death-robe" earlier in the novel, on an outing with Mina. Mina observes, "Lucy was looking sweetly pretty in her white lawn frock; she has got a beautiful colour since she has been here. I noticed that the old men did not lose any time in coming up and sitting near her when we sat down" (63). Here, she is the picture of loveliness, whiteness, and purity. She exudes an innocent sweetness in her pure white dress, which draws the men to her. Yet, when we next see her in this dress, its whiteness has been stained with the blood of her monstrous activities. This seems to symbolize her moral corruption and therefore the danger she poses to England's racial purity and moral superiority.

Later on in the novel, Mina's whiteness similarly becomes unclean. After her frightful encounter with Dracula, in which the two exchange blood, Mina seeks comfort and safety from Jonathan, only to find that in doing so she has stained his "white night-robe" with blood from her lips and from the wound in her neck. She immediately draws back, saying, "Unclean! Unclean! I must touch him or kiss him no more. Oh that it should be that I am now his worst enemy, and whom he may have most cause to fear" (Stoker 264). The word

"unclean" recalls the language used to vilify those carrying venereal diseases, as does Mina's assertion that she can no longer touch or kiss her husband. Indeed, certain critics have theorized the threat Dracula poses as one of a venereal disease, such as syphilis (Spear 191). In this context, it becomes clear that the intimate contact between Mina and Dracula violates the boundaries of sexual propriety and produces this impure, unclean whiteness. Furthermore, Mina's corrupted whiteness particularly imperils the white, male, imperial body when she becomes a threat to her own husband, as symbolized by the stain she leaves on his pure white robe. Once again, it is useful to consider Brantlinger's assertion that Britain, which saw itself as a white nation, justified its imperialism on the grounds of "moral superiority" (232). If whiteness and the moral purity it symbolizes can become tainted and unclean, as Lucy and Jonathan's white robes do, then how can Britain hope to uphold the sanctity of its empire?

In order to understand what makes Lucy's, and to an extent Dracula's, whiteness so monstrous, I want to elucidate the connection between whiteness and the liminal state of living death that vampirism signifies. In her article "The Undead: A Haunted Whiteness," Annalee Newitz uses the example of *Birth of a Nation* (D.W. Griffith, 1915), the American film about the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, to show how whiteness can become horrific. Interestingly, she contrasts it to *Dracula,* writing, "Rather than placing blacks in the implicitly repulsive position of living death, *Birth* puts whites there. Not only is this an interesting reversal of the *Dracula* narrative—where living whites hunt down a bestial, undead Eastern European immigrant—but it also opens up a way for us to read the film as being about the death, rather than the birth, of whiteness" (252). While Newitz's analysis of the horror living

death engenders can be useful in understanding the monstrosity of Dracula's and Lucy's whiteness, I would argue that the storylines of *Birth* and *Dracula* are more parallel than she indicates. Dracula is othered by the deviant, horrific whiteness he manifests, a horrific whiteness that he passes on to, or exposes, in Lucy and Mina. Therefore, similarly to *Birth, Dracula* places whites in the "repulsive position of living death." Further, while *Birth* can be read as being about the death of whiteness, *Dracula* can be read as being about the death of normative whiteness and the birth of monstrous, undead whiteness.

Newitz's analysis of how whiteness is made horrific by its connection to living death also helps to explain why Lucy's transformation, in particular, makes her horrific and takes her out of the realm of normativity. The further she descends into vampirism, a state which implicitly troubles the boundaries between life and death, the more terrifying her whiteness becomes, particularly to the other white characters in the novel. Dracula corrupts whiteness from the inside, turning it from a safe, normal state, into a signifier of monstrosity. By endowing Lucy with this particular racial brand, he makes her a threat to Britain and the whiteness by which it defines itself. Lucy poses the most sinister threat to the nation when she is at her most white, as the bloofer lady, because, in addition to her lawless sexuality, she then has the power to pervert the whiteness of others and turn British citizens into monstrous living dead. This threat is further heightened by the fact that her victims of choice are children, who represent England's racial futurity and embody the moral purity that the nation saw as critical to upholding the boundaries of its empire (Brantlinger 232). Such anti-maternal activities once again violate the prescribed role for white women as moral

safeguards of England, and they introduce the threat of racial contamination that, as McClintock notes, British women were supposed to protect against.

Although Mina herself never ranks among the living dead, her whiteness possesses a similarly horrific quality, and her child embodies the miscegenation threatened by Dracula's monstrous otherness. Mina's whiteness is made most horrific during an encounter with Dracula which, significantly, also exemplifies an instance of miscegenation. After Renfield informs Dr. Seward and the other men that Dracula has been taking Mina's blood, they burst into her room to find a gruesome scene. Dr. Seward recounts:

> With his left hand [the Count] held both Mrs. Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare breast, which was shown by his torn-open dress…[Mina's] face was ghastly, with a pallor which was accentuated by the blood which smeared her lips and cheeks and chin. (262)

The intimacy of this episode recalls the scene between Lucy and Dracula on the cliffs, yet this scene has much more violent, sexual overtones. The Count forces Mina to drink his blood directly from his breast, an act that is both revolting and intimate, in a way that certainly defies sexual propriety. It also operates as a sort of grotesque breast-feeding, in a horrific parody of motherhood. Mina's participation in this act, coupled with her terrifyingly white, blood-stained face, make her an object of monstrosity as much so as Dracula. Beyond the obvious horror of this encounter, there is the added threat of miscegenation and racial pollution. By forcing Mina to drink his blood, Dracula corrupts her normative, virtuous

whiteness with this own, horrific brand of whiteness. Furthermore, as Rhys Garnett notes, throughout this scene, "Harker lies unconscious – inert and impotent – on the bed beside [Mina]" (40). White masculinity is rendered powerless in the face of Dracula's menacing otherness, powerless to counter the imminent threat of miscegenation or to protect white womanhood from moral corruption. Harker perfectly exemplifies what Anne McClintock refers to as the "fallibility of white male imperial potency" (47). Mina's desire for Dracula, or at least her unwillingness to resist him, renders white masculinity all the more powerless and recalls Lucy's earlier surrender to the Count on the cliffs of Whitby. As Mina says in her own recounting of the events, "I was bewildered, and, strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him. I suppose it is a part of the horrible curse that this happens when his touch is on his victim" (267). Although she dismissively ascribes her willful participation in the blood exchange to Dracula's vampiric powers, this seems to be a hollow attempt to justify her behavior, and it does not erase her desire for Dracula. The fear of racial contamination that plagued British society and spurred attempts to control women's sexuality is realized in this moment, and it is augmented by Mina's cooperation in the contaminating act.

Mina does eventually reclaim her normative whiteness, as symbolized by the disappearance of Dracula's mark from her stainless, snowy white forehead (Stoker 350). However, her child, as an extension of herself, embodies living death and racial hybridity, and therefore monstrous whiteness. Although the mention of Mina's son is shunted into Harker's closing note at the very end of the novel, he inadvertently suggests a link between the infant and Dracula, himself. Harker writes, "his mother holds, I know, the secret belief that some of our brave friend's spirit has passed into him" (351). Although he refers to

Quincy here, if Quincy's spirit has passed into Mina's son, Dracula's spirit would have done so as well, particularly given the intimate contact between Dracula and Mina and the mingling of their blood. Newitz writes that "racial hybridity is a form of living death" (243), and if Mina and Harker's son possesses some of Dracula's spirit, and even some of his blood, then this child inhabits the liminal state of living death that turns whiteness from normative to monstrous. Thus, he could be read as racially mixed and as the product of the miscegenation scene between Dracula and Mina. This child presents a threat to the nation, both because he exemplifies the contamination of England's racial purity, and because his existence allows Dracula's spirit and his horrifying whiteness to linger on. Even while Dracula, himself, seems to have died, his ability to pass on his blood and to be reborn in the form of a child reinscribes him in the dangerous, unstable category of living dead. Furthermore, as Lucy's attacks on children do, the child's racial ambiguity undermines the sanctity of white motherhood as the mode of ensuring the continuation of the white race.

Animality

While Dracula's presence primarily manifests itself in the monstrous whiteness of white women's bodies, he has a different effect on his male victims. In particular, Renfield responds to his presence by eating animals. Interestingly, many of the episodes in which Dr. Seward recounts his patient's consumption of various creatures directly follow Mina's accounts of Lucy and her intensifying whiteness. Even the narration of Lucy's final demise and transition to vampirism is interrupted by an account of Renfield (Stoker 145). Although these inclusions seem random at first, in a novel that requires the reader to act as a detective

and connect multiple narratives, Stoker's paralleling of these two storylines is undoubtedly purposeful. Moreover, it becomes clear that both Lucy and Renfield are experiencing the effects of Dracula's presence, if in different ways. At one point, Dr. Seward describes Renfield as "a sort of index to the coming and going of the Count" (210), similarly to the way that Lucy's shifting whiteness tells of Dracula's presence. While Lucy becomes gradually whiter, Renfield undergoes fits of passion and continuously embarks on new schemes involving animal consumption. Furthermore, when Lucy begins to consume the blood of Whitby's children, Renfield returns to consuming flies and spiders; both consume life, in various forms, under Dracula's influence (Stoker 177). Dr. Seward explains the motivation behind Renfield's behavior as a desire to "absorb as many lives as he can" (69). Thus, Renfield's consumption of animals allows him to inhabit a state of living death similar to that which defines vampirism and makes Lucy's whiteness horrific. Dracula endows his female victims with a monstrous whiteness that represents living death, and he compels Renfield to consume life. Both are processes of horrific transformation, processes that, in and of themselves, produce monstrosity.

In addition to inhabiting the unstable category of living dead, Renfield exists in the liminal space between animal and human. He often exhibits animalistic behaviors, and the text repeatedly likens him to a wild beast or a dog, an animal linked particularly to Dracula and Lucy. This is significant given the proliferation of animals in the novel and the fact that animality, like whiteness, allows Dracula, Mina, and Lucy to occupy spaces of liminality and transgress the boundaries that uphold the British empire. Dracula's numerous animalistic transformations throughout the novel permit him to enter spaces from which he would

otherwise be barred. This has obvious parallels to the privileges afforded by regular whiteness. One significant example of this ability to enter otherwise restricted spaces occurs with Dracula's arrival in England. The article from the local newspaper detailing the arrival of the *Demeter* on English soil notes that "the very instant the shore was touched, an immense dog spang up on deck from below" (76), and later that "a good deal of interest was abroad concerning the dog which landed when the ship struck, and more than a few members of the S.P.C.A…have tried to befriend the animal" (78). Evidently to the readers, this dog is Dracula, the monster who terrorized and killed the crew of the *Demeter*. However, his transformation into a dog, a domesticated, beloved animal, allows him to enter undetected into England to begin his monstrous activities. In fact, he even earns the sympathy of the British townspeople. According to Ortiz-Robles, this sympathy for domesticated animals arose from animal rights movements at the fin-de-siècle, "the Victorian predilection for and sentimental attachment to pets" (16), and even a recognition of animals' human-like sentimentality. Thus, the animal, particularly domesticated animals like dogs, came "to occupy a space of indeterminacy" (Ortiz-Robles 16), a liminal space between human and animal. Dracula's all too easy transgression of England's national boundaries reflects anxieties about declining empire and the incursion of the Other, but the fact that he appears as a domesticated animal also exposes an uncomfortable affinity between the Count and his would-be British victims.

Aside from crossing national borders, another way in which Dracula's animality allows him to transgress boundaries is in entering British domestic spaces. Many of his attacks, specifically on Lucy and Mina within their own homes, are preceded by one of his

victims hearing the sounds of a bat or a wolf. For example, in one of Lucy's memoranda, she writes, "I went to the window and looked out, but could see nothing except a big bat, which had evidently been buffeting its wings against the window" (134). Once again, Dracula's innocuous appearance belies his monstrous otherness and allows him to enter into the intimate space of Lucy's bedroom. Consequently, he can then violate bodily boundaries and the limits of sexual propriety by drinking her blood and, in Mina's case, compelling her to drink his. Anne McClintock notes how Victorian anxieties about the decline of the British Empire were particularly expressed in the language of blood, contagion, and bodily boundaries. She writes, "Panic about blood…expressed intense anxieties about the fallibility of white male and imperial potency and "body boundaries were felt to be dangerously permeable and demanding continual purification" (McClintock 47). Thus, Dracula's ability to use his animal transformations to enter into domestic spaces and contaminate English blood makes him a danger to imperialism, to the English body, and to white masculinity. Furthermore, Dracula's vampirism has been interpreted as rabies by critics such as Keridiana Chez, an analysis which makes his animality all the more central to the process of contamination.

Both Dracula and Lucy are clearly and strongly associated with the wolf throughout the novel, which reveals the link between the two, as well as the link between whiteness and animality. The wolves appear at Dracula's first encounter with Jonathan (16), he can call them to him (45-46), and many of his attacks are preceded by the howling of wolves. Furthermore, many of the descriptions of Dracula note his canine-like features. When Jonathan first encounters the wolves while in Transylvania, he notes, "I saw around us a ring

of wolves, with white teeth and lolling red tongues" (Stoker 16). This description parallels one of Dracula shortly before, where Jonathan observes his "very red lips and sharp-looking teeth, as white as ivory" (13). Lucy, too, bears similarity to the wolves, especially as she descends further into vampirism and horrific whiteness. At one point during her transformation, Dr. Seward observes both her whiteness and her wolf like-teeth in the same journal entry, as he writes that her face was "almost whiter than the lawn" and that "her teeth, in the dim, uncertain light, seemed longer and sharper than they had been in the morning. In particular, by some trick of the light, the canine teeth looked longer and sharper than the rest" (148-149). The sharpness and whiteness of the teeth act as benchmarks for tracking Lucy's and Mina's transformations, and such descriptions almost always coincide with a reference to their whiteness. Even Mina, though she does not get quite so far in her transformation as Lucy, is described by Jonathan as being "very, very pale—almost ghastly, and so thin that her lips were drawn away, showing her teeth in somewhat of prominence" (273). While Jonathan feels pity for his wife, her whiteness and animality also make her an object of horror which cause his "blood [to] run cold" (273).

The most striking parallels between Lucy and the wolf occur when she is the "bloofer lady." At one point she is described as holding a child and "growling over it as a dog growls over a bone" (197). Although describing her as a dog instead of a wolf somewhat neutralizes the terror of this image, this domesticated animality places her in the liminal space between animal and human, even as she occupies the liminal category of undead. This is also a disturbing reversal of the maternal, as Lucy clutches the child like a dog with a bone, rather than a mother with her baby. Another particularly wolf-like description of Lucy occurs right

before her vampiric demise at the hands of her former fiancé. As Arthur drives a stake into her, Dr. Seward writes that Lucy's "sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam" (Stoker 201). Numerous critics, including Eltis Sos and Jeffrey Spear, have noted the phallic, sexual undertones of this staking (Sos 456, Spear 186), but it is also interesting to note how animal-like she becomes at this moment. The "crimson foam" on her lips evokes the "red jaws" (49) of the wolves and the exact same phrase of "champing teeth," used here to describe Lucy, is also used to describe the wolves when they are threatening Jonathan at Dracula's command (49). Lucy's animality cements the horror of her whiteness and provides the impetus for the men to destroy her. She has become a threat to whiteness and white masculinity, and her own whiteness becomes most horrifying when linked to animality, and thus to Dracula.

Degeneration

The parallels between whiteness and animality in this text foreground the uncomfortable connection between whiteness and degeneration, which, in conjunction with the collapse of empire, frightened fin-de-siècle British society. In his article "Corruption of the Blood and Degeneration of the Race," Eltis Sos elucidates the theory of degeneration that took hold of imperial England at the fin-de-siècle:

> The last decades of the nineteenth century, with their unavoidable evidence of urban overcrowding, extreme poverty, and industrial pollution, together with challenges to religious belief, moral codes, attitudes to class and sexual roles, resulted in the erosion of any easy optimistic belief in progress. A new discourse grew up, based on an

> inverted interpretation of the Darwinian science of evolution, which portrayed civilization as degenerating. It diagnosed a social decay in which it was the "unfit" who were surviving…and their defects were being genetically transmitted and exaggerated from generation to generation. (Sos 454-55)

As Sos explains, numerous social factors contributed to the belief that Britain, which had once justified its imperialism on the basis of morality, saw that morality slipping away. In this case, "unfit" refers to those who were seen as morally corrupt or inferior in terms of race or class. The nation was undergoing a crisis of self-definition. As Brantlinger notes, British society specifically began to fear "the degeneration of their institutions, their culture, [and] their racial 'stock'" (230). Dracula, with his horrific whiteness and animality, clearly exemplifies the type of "unfit," or perhaps superiorly fit, body that threatened England's futurity with its resilience and ability to multiply; he demonstrates the capacity to effectively pass on his undesirable traits. Additionally, with his ability to instantly infect British citizens with his vampirism and create a race of "undead," Dracula expedites the process of degeneration and "hereditary decay" (Sos 455). He threatens England's "racial stock" with his monstrous whiteness and racial otherness, which pollutes the normative whiteness of his victims. This threat to Britain's racial stock is augmented by Dracula's choice of white female victims, who function as the reproductive means for ensuring the continuation of the British "race." After Dracula infects both Mina and Lucy, they undergo a process of rapid moral degeneration, as evidenced by their deviant sexuality and impure whiteness. Horrific whiteness in this novel exemplifies the degeneration that seemed to permeate British society at the fin-de-siècle.

The threat of degeneration posed by Dracula's whiteness is augmented by his animality. As evolutionary theory indicates, animality represents total regression, the most extreme state of degeneration. Dracula's and Lucy's animality, therefore, reveals their own personal regression, which they have the ability to pass on through their infectious vampirism. In his article "Liminanimal," Ortiz-Robles explains a discursive link between race and animality:

> "Racism functions by biologising the threshold between human and animal as a division internal to humanity, understood not as an individual body but as a population. In this context, the monstrosity of the monster in [the late Victorian Gothic] can be said to function as a racial marker insofar as the animality of the monster makes its monstrosity a biological – or, better, biologised – category" (21).

Like racism, which seeks to create an artificial hierarchy based on biological factors, the biological distinction between human and animal seeks to separate the two and thereby to disavow humanity's atavistic potential. Through such "biologising," animality itself becomes a racial marker. Monsters like Dracula, however, present the unsettling reality that the divisions between animal and human, or between whiteness and racial otherness, are not as stark as Victorian England might have liked to believe.

Yet, if the British empire could not uphold these unsettlingly tenuous categories and porous boundaries, how could it hope to prevent the degeneration of the individual, much less of society? In the context of the novel, both whiteness and animality point to a moral and racial degeneration of the individual, which cannot be contained and thus threatens to permeate throughout the British Empire. In their whiteness and animality, both Dracula and

his victims, Mina, Lucy, and Renfield, evince their capacity to transgress boundaries and their resistance to categorization. They occupy the liminal spaces between animal and human, between living and dead, and between normative whiteness and horrific whiteness. The ambiguous ending of the novel, with Dracula's materialization into mobile dust particles, and the birth of Mina's potentially racially hybrid son, indicates that the boundaries of empire remain tenuous and thus that the threat of degeneration has not been eradicated.

I began with an endeavor to foreground Dracula's whiteness, and the threat he poses from within whiteness, rather than outside of it. Stoker's novel ultimately reveals that whiteness and animality, which together comprise the threat of degeneration, are not exterior to the empire, as England would like to believe, but decidedly interior to Victorian society itself. In my next chapter, on Richard Marsh's *The Beetle,* I will explore how the Beetle's distinctive animality and racial identity are also products of British society. These texts create multifaceted monsters to encapsulate the various forms of otherness and undesirability they wish to repudiate, but such monsters are ultimately products of Englishness and whiteness who end up revealing the horror lurking within the very bounds of empire.

Chapter Two: Imperial Insects, Creaturely Consternation, and Unknowability in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*

Introduction

In 1897, Richard Marsh published *The Beetle,* his tale of insect horror, in which an Egyptian priestess turned beetle comes to England seeking revenge and wreaks havoc on London in the process. Notably, this novel emerged the same year as Stoker's now canonized *Dracula.* While *Dracula* has proved to have more longevity with readers through the years, *The Beetle* significantly outsold this vampiric tale at a rate of six to one in the first year after the novels' publications. By 1913, *The Beetle* had gone through fifteen publications, but the novel abruptly fell out of print in 1960 and thus has received much less critical attention (Wolfreys 11). Both *Dracula* and *The Beetle* detail the evil machinations of a foreign, animalistic monster that comes to destroy England. However, the two novels present two very different models of invasion. *The Beetle* is not concerned with an intrusive, alternate whiteness, as *Dracula* is, but rather with an animalistic, biological model of invasion.

The Beetle is told by four different narrators, the first of which is Robert Holt, an unemployed former clerk, who wanders into the Beetle's seemingly abandoned mansion to gain shelter from the rain. The Beetle, whom Holt presumes to be a man, accosts him in a series of sexually charged attacks, and they[7] then hypnotize him and order him to help them destroy Paul Lessingham, a young politician, and the object of their vengeful vendetta. Next, Sydney Atherton, a cynical philanderer who invents weapons of mass destruction for the

[7] I will use the pronoun "they" to refer to the Beetle, throughout this chapter. I explain this choice in more detail later on in the chapter but given the Beetle's ambiguous gender and their alternate use of male and female pronouns to refer to themselves, I believe "they" to be the most apt and all-encompassing pronoun.

British government, takes over the narration. He begins by taking readers on a whimsical tour of the social life of London's elite, as well as detailing his love for Marjorie Lindon, the secret fiancé of Paul Lessingham and the daughter of a Tory politician. His story soon intersects with the Beetle's when Lessingham comes to ask him about Egypt's children of Isis and their purported ability to transform into beetles. Shortly after, when the Beetle, whom Atherton refers to as Lessingham's "Oriental friend" and whom he initially perceives to be a man, arrives in human form, and entreats Atherton to help them kill Lessingham, capitalizing on their jealousy of Marjorie and Lessingham's engagement. Atherton refuses, and he instead threatens the Beetle with his weapons and advanced British technology. Marjorie, too, becomes intertwined in the Beetle's schemes through the reappearance of Robert Holt, who turns up, half-dead, outside her home one morning. After taking him in to nurse him back to health, she suffers a nightmarish attack by the Beetle, which prompts her to enlist Atherton's help. With Holt leading the way, Marjorie and Atherton embark on a quest to find the Beetle's dwelling and to uncover their connection with Lessingham. However, once the detective party arrives at the house, the Beetle exploits their hypnotic control over Holt to lead Marjorie and Atherton astray and to trick Atherton into leaving Marjorie alone in the house, where the Beetle lurks in waiting.

The final section of the novel is related by Augustus Champnell, a confidential agent. Lessingham goes to Champnell in desperation and tells him the story of how he met the Beetle. As a young man, Lessingham traveled to Egypt, where he was entranced by the Beetle, then the young and beautiful "Woman of the Songs." This woman hypnotized him and held him prisoner in the lair of the children of Isis, forcing him to submit to their sexual

advances and to witness their "mysterious rites" and "orgies of nameless horror" (243), including the immolation and sexual violation of white, British women. He eventually escapes by breaking the hypnotic trance and strangling the Woman of the Songs, who turns into a Beetle and scurries away. Towards the end of Lessingham's recounting of this bizarre tale, Atherton bursts in to implore Champnell to help him find the recently disappeared Marjorie. Lessingham, now sure that the Beetle has indeed followed him to London, becomes furious with Atherton for letting the Beetle take Marjorie. The three men race back to the Beetle's house, only to find it empty, except for Marjorie's clothes and her hair, which appears to have been ripped out by the roots. As we later learn, this is part of the Beetle's ploy to disguise Marjorie as a lower class, vagrant man, in an attempt to escape unnoticed. While Atherton and Lessingham are distraught by the horrible death they imagine Marjorie to have suffered, Champnell believes she is alive and commences his search for the Beetle. In their search, they receive various accounts of an "Arab bloke" or an "Arab party," which ultimately lead them to a disreputable lodging house, where they find a nearly dead Holt, who appears to have been attacked by the Beetle. The men proceed to track the Beetle across the British railway system as they escape, and the party is finally aided by a railroad explosion, which apparently destroys the Beetle and allows them to find Marjorie, who is dressed as a man and has been severely traumatized. The novel ends with Marjorie and Paul's marriage and with Champnell's ambiguous conclusion that the Beetle's whereabouts and their fate remain a puzzle.

As the very title of this novel suggests, and as its events demonstrate, the animality of the monstrous main character figures prominently in their identity and in the horror they

engender in their victims. While most critics have noted this aspect of the Beetle's monstrosity, none have connected it to the 1877 invasion of the Colorado beetle, which gave rise to the Destructive Insects Act (Clark 144) and contributed to what has been dubbed Victorian "beetlemania," by Cannon Schmitt (Effinger 253). This beetle, also known as the potato beetle, fed on potato plants and had the potential to wreak havoc on an entire potato crop. As its name suggests, it originated in Colorado, but it soon began to travel beyond North America. Although these incidents occurred at least fifteen years before Marsh published his novel, the Colorado beetle inspired such terror in the British public that it would not have been soon forgotten. I argue that Marsh uses this particular insect, by no means a common object of horror, to call to mind the fear around the 1877 invasion. Not only would this have heightened the dread his monster inspires, but it would have mapped the xenophobic, even racist, language used to describe the Colorado beetle, onto Marsh's Beetle. Marsh's model of biological invasion would have been both familiar and horrific to readers, precisely because of the influence of the 1877 Colorado beetle scare on the British public. Furthermore, while *The Beetle* aligns with certain specificities of the Colorado beetle scare, it also departs from this historical event and embodies numerous forms of unknowability.

An Imperial Menace

Beetles figured prominently into Victorian scientific pursuits and into the popular imagination, more broadly. As Elizabeth Effinger writes, "Insects, and in particular beetles, occupied dual registers within the nineteenth-century cultural imagination as both novel

objects of beauty and fashion, and as parasites and pests" (253). Schmitt's "Beetlemania" refers to an increasing Victorian institutional interest in the study and collection of beetles, a practice otherwise known as entomology. In *Bugs and the Victorians,* John Clark connects this rising interest to urbanization:

> "The proportion of the British population living in cities increased from 20 to 80 per cent between 1801 and 1911. As more people left the countryside, they showed an increasing propensity to collect bugs, to place beetles and butterflies under glass. Insect collecting was part of a nostalgic bid to capture lost nature in an increasingly urban Victorian Britain" (10).

In somewhat paradoxical fashion, while England became a more urban, industrial society, nature attracted more fascination, and insects like beetles turned from objects of casual interest to objects of serious, scientific study. Furthermore, he argues that "Nineteenth-century entomology was part of the systematization of nature that underpinned the emergence of modern Britain" (12). The Victorians sought to institutionalize nature, to control it and subsume it under the banner of progress and modernity. Beetles were studied, preserved in glass cases, and even sold for large sums of money (Clark 8). However, the Colorado beetle inspired no such reverence from the British public, only a desire to contain and eradicate it.

Since rumors of the Colorado beetle's westward movement reached England, the British public lived in constant fear of its arrival. It became ubiquitous in British culture and in the contemporary imagination. For example, "the Bishop of Manchester preached a sermon in which he identified the Colorado beetle as one of the four tokens of God. And

when the Christmas pantomime opened at the Prince's Theatre in December, the Colorado beetle appeared as the Demon in Chief in the first scene of a reworking of Babes in the Woods" (Clark 140). Evidently, the threat of the Colorado beetle took on monstrous proportions, such that not only farmers, but also members of high society, recognized and feared the insect. A variety of local and national newspapers from 1876 and onward, including *The Spectator*, *Punch,* and *Journal of the Society of Arts,* demonstrate an almost paranoiac obsession with the noxious creature. One such alarmist report, a letter from Dr Hollick of New York to J. E. Mayall of Sussex, reads, ""They are no joke, I tell you. I saw them this morning on the Docks falling into the sea by thousands and all heading due east; so look out" (Clark 139). This hyperbolic, apocalyptic description certainly paints a vivid and terrifying picture. Such panic about the infamous insect's arrival stemmed, in part, from the then all too recent Irish potato famine, which led to between one and one-and-a-half million deaths, and one million emigrants (Clark 143). Great Britain worried about the Colorado's beetle's potential to destroy their potato crops and about the irreparable consequences of another attack on Ireland's potatoes. Potatoes, both homegrown and imported, were a staple food and crucial for feeding England's burgeoning population (Clark 143). Although the British government remained unwilling to ban the importation of American potatoes, they did eventually pass the "Destructive Insects Bill," a legislative act that allowed the Privy Council to destroy any crop that might house the beetle, as well as to prevent the importation of any crops suspected of harboring it. The Privy Council only once invoked this act (Clark 147), because only two Colorado beetles were ever found in mainland

England. Nonetheless, its nearly unanimous approval demonstrates a consensus about the severity of the danger this beetle posed.

In addition to the pervasiveness of the Colorado beetle as an object of horror in Victorian popular culture, xenophobic language was mobilized to further demonize it. As I will discuss later, this has a particular relevance for the characterization of Marsh's Beetle. Most of the periodical references to the Colorado beetle refer to its arrival in London as an "invasion" of some sort, often a foreign invasion or the invasion of a "dangerous race." These characterizations have a xenophobic charge and also endow the beetles with almost human agency. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, in a statement to the House, asserted that "an invasion from the Colorado Beetle was much more to be feared than an invasion from Germany or France" (*The Spectator,* 1876). This presents the beetle as a foreign, militaristic threat, greater than that of England's foremost enemies. The same article goes on to note that the beetle "would probably have an excellent chance of landing successfully on our shores from the very Navy which defends them against a less formidable foe." The beetles, despite their diminutive size, had the power to overcome England's robust defenses. According to Lawson, the very security of the empire was at stake here. As I note in the previous chapter, fear of a deteriorating empire pervaded British society at the fin-de-siècle, and British military failures, such as the one alluded to in this article, exacerbated this fear.

Another article, from the *East Anglian Times* in 1881, demonstrates how xenophobic discourse around the Colorado beetle was wielded for political purposes, to vilify both the beetle and non-Britons. It reported that "the Board of Customs had instructed its officers to be extra vigilant because intelligence had been received that the Fenians were collecting

Colorado beetles in the United States with the intention of releasing them on English crops" (Clark 142). The term "Fenian" referred to any member of a variety of subversive, nationalist, Irish political organizations. Although Ireland existed as part of Great Britain at the time, the Irish occupied a liminal space between English and foreign, and, as this somewhat absurd claim of sedition demonstrates, they were often thought of as enemies to England. This warning bespeaks the disturbing notion that the empire could be attacked from within, by its own citizens. However, another quote referencing the Fenians claims, "an invasion of Ireland by the Colorado beetle would be resisted even by the Fenians" (*The Spectator*, 1877). This article exhibits concern for an invasion in Ireland and, though it acknowledges their erstwhile disloyalty, credits them with a willingness to prevent the beetle's entrance into the larger empire. These two differing references to the Fenians, in relation to the Colorado beetle, demonstrate anxiety about the boundaries of the Empire and the security of those tenuous boundaries. Evidently, mainland England feared that the peripheral parts of its empire would be more vulnerable to the incursion of this foreign insect, and that the loyalty of non-English imperial citizens could not be trusted. Once again, this fear expresses more widespread concerns about the empire in decline, concerns exacerbated by the Colorado beetle's impending invasion.

The xenophobic language used to portray the Colorado beetle as a foreign invader and to liken it to enemies of the empire often became entangled with the racialized language used to further inscribe the beetle in the category of imperial other. One such racialized description, reported in *The Spectator*, reads, "There was an alarm on Thursday that the Colorado beetle had landed on the quays in Dublin…Another beetle, twice his size, and not

of any allied species, had been found on the quays in Dublin; and no doubt he lost his life at once, in consequence of being mistaken for a member of this more dangerous race" (*The Spectator,* 1877). Referring to the beetles as members of a "dangerous race" brings both a xenophobic and racist charge to the crusade against the beetle. Such terminology resonates with the term "savages" to describe the people of colonized nations. Furthermore, the use of "race," rather than "species," humanizes the insect, as does the use of "he" in writing "he lost his life at once." The use of this pronoun, coupled with the matter-of-fact description of violence enacted on the animal, suggests a troubling blurring of the line between animal and human. The beetle seems to be considered as human in terms of its threatening agency, yet its life is accorded little import. The equation of beetles with humans, though savage ones, is also made explicit in an article that refers to the Colorado beetle as the "new-found enemies" of civilized man. While civilized man had conquered "savages and wild beasts of the more visible and tangible kind" (*The Spectator*, 1876), these beetles were savages of a different kind. Such a comparison takes on greater significance if we consider Darwinian theory, which, as I mention in the previous chapter, became entangled with racial theory in nineteenth-century England. Clark explicates the relationship between the Colorado beetle and evolutionary theory when he writes, "Wielding Darwinian theory, emergent experts equated Colorado beetles with 'savages.' According to accepted theory – which neatly wed 'conquest, dispossession, and civilization' with science – plants and animals would suffer the same fate as 'primitive' native Americans and Australasian Aborigines and Maoris" (Clark 140). The British Empire justified its colonial expansion, in part, by using evolutionary theory. They viewed non-white, non-European peoples as less evolved, savage, and atavistic, and

therefore necessitating colonization. Clark's explanation suggests that Britons sought, through subjugation, to bring the Colorado beetle into their colonial word order, as well. The beetles were as racially othered as any non-European peoples.

Another racialized comparison was made in an 1878 article between the Colorado beetle and the Bashi-Bazouks. *The Spectator* reported:

> "It may well turn out that the successful landing of this expeditionary force on the coast of Wales will…be more disastrous for England than the landing of any naval or military force which we could rationally expect. Indeed, the beetle may prove far more formidable in Wales than even the Bashi-Bazouks in Thessaly. It is not so cruel, but it is even more rapacious; and the law of the increase of its population is in itself only too formidable. (*The Spectator*, April 1878).

The specific comparison to the Bashi-Bazouks marks the beetle as not only foreign and invasive, but as evil and racially other. The Bashi-Bazouks were mercenary soldiers in the Ottoman army, who came from various ethnic groups and were often enslaved peoples from Europe or Africa. They were known for their lawlessness and brutality. One well-known painting from 1869, by Jean-Léon Gérôme, depicts a Bashi-Bazouk as a black man wearing a silk tunic and turban, and holding a gun (fig. 1). The portrayal of the silk tunic and turban would have signified Orientalism to a Victorian audience. Regardless of his exact racial or ethnic identity, this man, and the Bashi-Bazouks in general, were clearly marked as racially other. Another painting, by Frederic Borgella, depicts a Bashi-Bazouk holding a white woman who kneels at his feet in chains (fig. 2). This depiction of white slavery would have been incredibly threatening and unsettling to a European audience.

Aside from the xenophobic and racist characterizations of the Colorado beetle, which marked it as an enemy of dire proportions, its horror came from its potential to destroy the empire and to use the empire's own technology against it. Periodic reports revealed the uncertainty surrounding the movements of the beetle, such as one that alleged, "The insect is supposed to have travelled by a vessel now in port with a large cargo" (*The Spectator*, April 1978). First, the significance of this beetle arriving on a British cargo ship should not be overlooked. This entry points to the disturbing notion of British technology and empire working against themselves. The very tools and methods the empire created to promote globalization and expansion became the methods of arrival for this dangerous pest. Another particularly paranoid article warns that the beetle "would take its passage just as cheerfully on our own ironclads as on any other craft by which it could cross the Atlantic" (*The Spectator*, November 1876). This article marvels at the audacity of the beetle and its lack of attention to national borders or to the rules of civilization. Though it is likened to the French or German army, the beetle has the distinct advantage of traveling surreptitiously, aided and abetted by England's own technology. Interestingly, because of the Colorado beetle's threat, new technology, such as pesticides, were devised, as if to counter the technology that had brought the beetles in. The British empire's own expansion schemes threatened to occasion its downfall. As Clark explains, "In Britain, the Colorado beetle became a harbinger of the dangers of free trade and laissez-faire government. Free movement of persons, plants and animals, and increasing democracy, threatened to vitiate decent society with lower forms of human and insect life" (142). The "free movement of persons, plants and animals," and thus urban degeneration, was a direct consequence of imperial expansion. As the Canadian

minister of Agriculture said, the idea of preventing the incursion of the beetles, while creating a global empire, was "perfectly chimerical" (*The Spectator,* 1876). England had to face the reality that, if they wanted to control such a large, disparate empire, they would also have to welcome in foreign, racially othered persons, or insects.

The way the Colorado beetle was characterized as an invasive foreign body, a savage, racial other, and an exploiter of British technology paints a picture of reverse colonization. An 1877 parody in *Funny Folks* sums this up well: "We recognize in him the pioneer of an army who will soon attempt to ravage our fields, bringing desolation to our hearths, and comport itself generally like a conquering force in a subjugated country" (132). This article ironically depicts the Colorado beetle as not only evil and destructive, but also as a colonial, imperial power: "a conquering force in a subjugated country" (132). British periodicals took pains to other the beetle, and its otherness only made its potential invasion more terrifying. The Colorado beetle threatened to do to England what England had been doing to the rest of the world for the entirety of the nineteenth century and earlier.

Historical Resonances and Animal Ambiguity in *The Beetle*

As I have demonstrated, the Colorado Beetle left an indelible mark on Victorian society. Fears of its ever-impending invasion continued to be represented in a variety of periodicals, though a large-scale incursion of the insect never manifested. The fact that only two beetles were ever discovered in England, after all the paranoia surrounding the invasion, gave Marsh the opportunity to imagine the potential of this invasion and create his own terrifying narrative. He begins with the same model of biological invasion and reverse

colonization presented by the Colorado beetle, and he even mobilizes similar racialized language to other his monstrous Beetle. Then, drawing on the ubiquity of the Colorado beetle in British popular imagination and the paranoia surrounding it, he opens up this novel to creaturely, racial, and gender ambiguity.

From the very outset of the novel, the Beetle's foreignness plays an integral role in its identity. Upon first encountering the Beetle, Holt thinks, "There was a quality in the voice which I cannot describe…It was a little guttural, though whether it was a man speaking I could not have positively said; but I had no doubt it was a foreigner" (52). Although he cannot ascertain anything about this mysterious person, Holt immediately recognizes them to be foreign. He goes on to say that the voice has "a reminiscence of some foreign land" (55), as if the voice itself carries the Beetle's racial background within it. Throughout the novel, Marsh draws on these ambiguous, xenophobic characterizations, which resemble the characterizations of the Colorado beetle. For example, the Beetle is described as a having a "queer foreign way" (307) and as a "dirty foreigner, who went around in a bed-gown through the public streets" (274). The term "dirty" has a xenophobic charge that would have resonated with Victorian readers. As the Colorado Beetle is a threat from the West, Marsh's Beetle is a threat from the East. The Beetle is alternately referred to as an Arab (103, 263, 282), an Algerian (103),[8] and an Egypto-Arabian (138). These terms do not provide a racial identity for the Beetle, but they do affirm that they are Oriental, a signifier of ultimate foreignness and otherness. Though the Beetle is never conclusively identified as Egyptian by

[8] As Julian Wolfreys notes in the Broadview edition of the Beetle, Atherton does not mean to suggest that the Beetle is actually from Algeria, but rather he intends "Algerian" as a "derogatory and racist" phrase "referring to any itinerant travelling vendor of North African origin" (103).

any of the novel's characters, Paul Lessingham's story indicates that they are an Egyptian priestess of Isis. This Egyptian-ness is important given England's political relationship with Egypt at the time. Consternation over the fraught political situation in Egypt and its tenuous place in the British Empire was summed up as "The Egyptian Question." Although the British empire did not claim it as an official colony, they assumed control over Egypt in 1873, in order to protect their interests in the Suez Canal. However, this proved challenging, and the empire suffered a humiliating defeat in 1885 with the death of General Gordon, who was sent to defend the Sudan against the Mahdist rebellion. Then, in 1896, one year before Marsh published his novel, the empire launched a revenge campaign led by General Kitchener, to reconquer the Sudan and avenge Gordon's death (Bulfin 139, Harris and Vernooy 368). A number of critics note how Marsh's novel explicitly identifies the Egyptian campaign as one of its central concerns, by connecting the Beetle to crucial sites of the British offensive in Egypt.[9] This connection to Egypt is acutely intertwined with the fears of declining empire depicted in the novel, because, as Ailise Bulfin explains, Egypt was both the sight of England's "greatest colonial success" and its "gravest colonial danger" (435), and the twentieth-century Suez Crisis "is often considered the symbolic moment of the death of the British Empire" (438). The notion of the Beetle coming to England to seek revenge for British colonial actions in Egypt recalls a paranoid *New York Times* article on the Colorado Beetle, which "speculated that the insect had been driven by manifest destiny to reverse the course of empire by marching west to east" (Clark 142). In many ways, British imperial failures in Egypt had already begun to "reverse the course of empire," and the idea of the

[9] These critics include Ailise Bulfin, W.C. Harris and Dawn Vernooy, Bradley Deane, and Rhys Garnett.

Beetle marching west in a vengeful campaign is a direct reversal of Kitchener's Eastern expedition. As the Beetle themselves say of Lessingham, perhaps echoing the sentiments of Britons in regard to Gordon's death, "On his hands is the blood of my kin. It cries aloud for vengeance" (146). This parallel, between Kitchener's campaign and the Beetle's vengeful project, forces British readers to recognize their own desire for vengeance in the Beetle's quest.

Marsh Orientalizes and racializes the Beetle with many of the same signifiers used to alienate the Colorado Beetle. As I discuss above, the Colorado Beetle was compared to Bashi-Bazouks, soldiers who were usually represented as non-white and as wearing oriental markers, such as colorful silk fabrics and turbans. The Beetle is also associated with such "eastern curiosities" (Marsh 260), including a "marvelous carpet" that turns out to be covered with beetles and a "heap of rugs" on the floor, instead of a European bed. They are also described, multiple times, as wearing a "dirty-coloured bed-cover sort of thing," wrapped around their head, as "them there Arabs wear" (273). Depictions of the Bashi-Bazouks, ambiguously foreign but distinctly dangerous and racially othered soldiers, call to mind Sydney Atherton's description of Marsh's Beetle.

> The fellow was oriental to the finger-tips,—that much was certain…So far as looks were concerned, he was not a flattering example of his race, whatever his race might be. The portentous size of his beak-like nose would have been, in itself, sufficient to damn him in any court of beauty. His lips were thick and shapeless,—and this, joined to another peculiarity in his appearance, seemed to suggest that, in his veins there ran more than a streak of negro blood. (140)

Atherton relies on stereotypical signifiers to guess at the Beetle's race, and he inevitably reveals the xenophobia inherent in British society at the time, one that is also reflected in the accounts of the Colorado beetle. Atherton does not elucidate what is so distinctly "oriental" about the Beetle, but he sufficiently demonstrates their racial otherness. He even suggests that the Beetle is Black, which, in conjunction with other descriptions of the Beetle as Arab or Oriental, demonstrates a conflation of Blackness with Orientalness under one ambiguous category of racial otherness. The Beetle is also referred to as a "mysterious Egypto-Arabian" (138). In addition, Atherton's prejudiced descriptions recall the language of the article on the Colorado Beetle that refers to the insects as "members of a dangerous race." As is the case for the Colorado beetle and the Bashi-Bazouks, the Beetle's foreignness and ambiguous racial otherness comprise the menace they present. Furthermore, Atherton's description "would be immediately recognizable to many late Victorian readers as the face of a criminal or degenerate" (Wolfreys 17). Like the Colorado beetle, the Beetle is coded as savage and atavistic.

This connection between the Beetle and the Bashi-Bazouks takes on even greater significance, in terms of reverse colonization, if we consider Borgella's painting of a Bashi-Bazouk soldier holding a half-naked white woman in chains at his feet (fig. 2). This soldier is decked out in luxurious "Eastern" garments, and he wears a sword on his waist. A white woman with red hair and European features kneels on the floor at his feet. She is unclothed from the waist up, and her hands are bound in chains. The soldier looks down at her with a lecherous expression, while he holds the chains taught. This painting alludes to the notion of white slavery, one of the threats presented both by the Beetle and by the concept of reverse

colonization. White slavery, specifically white sexual slavery, was an imperial myth and trope that figured prominently into late Victorian society and was largely inspired by W.T. Stead's sensationalist newspaper article, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon."[10] This specific scene, of the helpless white woman at the mercy of an Oriental captor, recalls the occult Eastern rituals Lessingham remembers seeing while in the Beetle's clutches. He recounts, "in each case the sacrificial object was a woman, stripped to the skin, as white as you or I," and he remembers one specific incident: "A woman—a young and lovely Englishwoman, if I could believe the evidence of my own eyes, had been outraged, and burnt alive, while I lay there helpless, looking on. The business was concluded. The ashes of the victim had been consumed by the participants" (244). Beyond the absurdly grotesque details of this sacrifice, much of the horror and shock stems from the fact of the victim's whiteness and Englishness. Lessingham cannot even trust "the evidence of [his] own eyes," because the thought of such atrocities being committed on a white Englishwoman are too shocking to bear. The implication of the sexual violations of these women also contributes to the horror of these attacks, as it threatens the supposed purity and unassailable morality of English women. Moreover, Marsh creates a disturbing affinity between the reader and these victims when he describes the woman as being "as white as you or I." He seems to be asking his Victorian readership, can you believe what modern Egyptians, what Oriental people, would

[10] On July 4th, 1885, W.T. Stead published a sensational, and largely exaggerated, article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* about prostitution in London. In her book *City of Dreadful Delight,* Judith R. Walkowitz focuses heavily on "Maiden Tribute," which she dubs "one of the most successful pieces of scandal journalism of the nineteenth century" (81). As she explains, Stead's article portrayed prostitution in London as a "slave market." He "document in lurid detail how 'poor daughters of the people' were 'snared, trapped, and outraged, either when under the influence of drugs, or after a prolonged struggle in a locked room'" (81). He also "exaggerated the role of children in the social economy of prostitution and misrepresented the way young girls were recruited for the streets" (83). In many ways, "The Maiden Tribute" prompted a "moral panic" (121).

do to a white person, to one of us? Of course, this was precisely why reverse colonization was such a terrifying idea. Victorian society may have implicitly accepted that such atrocities would be enacted on non-white, non-European peoples by white Britons, as an unfortunate but necessary facet of the imperial project. However, the idea that white English people could become the victims of those same vicious acts terrified Victorians.

In addition to partaking in gruesome, sexually charged attacks on British women, the Beetle specifically engages in white slavery, like the kind insinuated in Borgella's painting of the Bashi-Bazouks. The Beetle passionately declares to Holt, "But it is well that you came through the window,—well you are a thief,—well for me! for me! It is you that I am wanting,—at the happy moment you have dropped yourself into my hands,—in the nick of time. For you are my slave,—at my beck and call,—my familiar spirit, to do with as I will,—you know this,—eh?'" (62). Victorian readers would certainly have been disturbed by this foreigner confidently, hysterically claiming a white, British man as their slave. Simply because he wandered into the wrong house, and because he is recently unemployed and homeless, Holt must now obey every wish of his Oriental, insect captor. Additionally, the Beetle refers to Holt as their "familiar spirit," which was an animal spirit associated with Satan, witches, and occult practices. This reference augments the Beetle's unsettling connection to the occult and the primitive. In threatening white slavery, the Beetle "uncannily reproduce[s]" the actions of English colonizers, such that, as I discuss in the introduction, "British culture sees its own imperial practices mirrored back in monstrous forms" (Arata 108). With their exceptional powers of hypnotism, the Beetle has the ability to enslave all of England. In this

way they could conduct an invasion of Britain, like the invasion modeled by the Colorado beetle.

The Beetle signified degeneration and atavism to the Victorian public, in addition to being described with the same racialized language used to describe the Colorado beetle. Holt disturbingly describes his captor as having "blubber lips," an unusually small skull that is "disagreeably suggestive of something animal," and a face without a chin (53). These animalistic features clearly speak to a certain atavism and a physical degeneration that consequently implies a moral one, as well. In the context of Darwinian social science, these features would also have implied a racial otherness. This description of the Beetle makes sense given their oriental, Egyptian identity and Kelly Hurley's assertion that "Present-day Egypt...is a living reminder of the West's prehistory, of that state of animality, or liminal humanity, from which the West has managed to evolve" (196). The Beetle's human-animal hybridity, in conjunction with their Egyptianness, marks them as a prime example of degeneration. Though the West, as Kelly Hurley writes, may wish to believe it has evolved, the example of the Egyptian Beetle disturbingly reveals how quickly the return to an atavistic state can occur. Interestingly, this liminal state between human and animal is perfectly illustrated by an 1877 *Punch* cartoon, which depicts a woman wearing an elaborate dress, the bustle of which has been made to look like the back of a Colorado beetle (fig. 3). This cartoon, accompanied by the caption "No mistake this time!", was created in response to an investigation into an alleged Colorado beetle sighting, which revealed the insect to be merely a ladybug. This cartoon plays with the idea of deception as well as liminal humanity. The woman in the cartoon seems to be in the process of turning into a beetle, in the midst of a

descent into atavism, much like the novel's Woman of the Songs transforms into the Beetle before Lessingham's eyes. Furthermore, in the cartoon, the woman's façade belies her grotesque animality, which can only be seen from behind. Similarly, the Beetle can transform their appearance to suit their maniacal plans and to obscure their depravity and animality, an ability that makes them all the more dangerous.

Finally, just like the Colorado beetle, the Beetle threatens the destruction of the British empire, in part by exploiting England's own technology. Although they enter Britain through unknown methods, we can surmise that their arrival is a product of the "free movement of persons, plants, and animals" (Clark 142) that came along with imperialism. They also might likely have come as a beetle, the form they took after Lessingham tried to murder them, which would have made them harder to detect. Furthermore, as the Colorado beetle supposedly gained passage on British ships, the Beetle exploits British technology by making their ultimate egress on a train. This scheme would likely have succeeded if not for a fortuitous train explosion. While some critics read this explosion as the end of the Beetle, others imagine that, like the Colorado Beetle, Marsh's Beetle may be more difficult to kill. The Colorado beetle can only be eliminated by the new pesticide England has to produce to fight it, and its tenacity allows it to "subsid[e] into a kind of inert life when it cannot get food suitable for it, or…[get] enough food to sustain life in all sorts of situations where we should suppose that it could get none, and then [return] to full activity and vigour whenever it finds itself in the neighborhood of suitable nourishment" (*The Spectator*, 1876). This beetle thrives where other insects would perish, and it does so in a most unsettling manner. Similarly, Marsh's Beetle, the priestess of Isis, survives Lessingham's attempt to murder them by

transforming into the Beetle. According to Lessingham, they sustain themselves on the ashes of the Englishwomen they burn alive. They remain in what could be called an "inert life," immobile in bed, until Robert Holt, one of their unlucky victims, wanders into their house.

In addition to exploiting British technology to occasion the downfall of the British empire, the Beetle manipulates English people and their moral weaknesses. First, as I discuss above, they use Holt in an alarming manner, to carry out their dastardly plans. Holt, as an unemployed vagrant wandering the streets of London, exemplifies the kind of urban degeneration that England feared was corrupting its empire from the inside. Victoria Margree writes, "One of the many anxieties with which [*The Beetle*] engages has to do with the changing nature of the social fabric of Britain, especially as this is experienced in urban areas" (64). Tim Youngs expands on this, arguing that Holt, specifically, represents "urban degeneration" in the novel, and that his entrance into a "moral wilderness" leads him directly to the Beetle (87). Thus, the Beetle not only exploits Holt by making him their slave, but they take advantage of urban degeneration, a weakness that generated much anxiety in fin-de-siècle England. They can enslave and eventually murder Holt with no consequences, because he is a man who has slipped through the cracks of Victorian society, sinking from a respectable clerk to a wandering tramp. The Beetle's manipulation of Holt confirms Victorians' fears about the perils of urban degeneration.

However, not only does the Beetle threaten to enslave and execute the likes of Holt, but they also threaten to do the same to Paul Lessingham, who embodies the virility, strength, and whiteness of the British empire. As a progressive statesman, he also stands as a pillar of hope for the future of the empire. Robert Holt declares that there is a "great

multitude which regards Paul Lessingham as the greatest living force in practical politics; and which looks to him, with confidence, to carry through that great work of constitutional and social reform which he has set himself to do" (63-64). Evidently, the British public of Marsh's novel sees Lessingham as a man of the people, a hero working to uplift the downtrodden. Even the Beetle, though they ultimately seek his destruction, lauds Lessingham in an impassioned, frenzied manner, which Holt regards as an expression of homoerotic desire. They profess, "He is straight,—straight as the mast of a ship,—he is tall,—his skin is white; he is strong—do I not know that he is strong—how strong!—oh yes!" (64). He has all the qualities of the ideal British man, qualities that the Beetle both envies and lusts after. Notably, the Beetle praises his white skin. This lends credence to Kelly Hurley's assertion that, "The Beetle's crimes – the sadistic but unspecified perversities to which [they] subject [their] victims – are represented as sexually executed but racially motivated, as if [their] Egyptian hatred of a white skin only masked a frustrated longing to 'possess' a white body [themselves], in any sense of the word" (195). While the Beetle's monologue on Paul certainly has a lustful quality, it also betrays a desperate jealousy. The desire both to possess and destroy him threatens Englishness for the same reason that the Beetle referring to Holt as their "slave" does. They seek to disrupt the imperial world order by hijacking whiteness and sabotaging England's political future. With his white skin, his strength, and his goal of constitutional reform, Paul Lessingham portends one future of the British empire, as a beacon of morality and a fortress of imperial strength. The Beetle, on the other hand, betokens a much more disturbing future, one with political destruction, "white

slavery and genocide at its end" (Hurley 197). Once again, the empire projects its own, destructive imperial actions and desires onto the Beetle.

Despite the numerous ways in which Marsh's text maps onto the Colorado beetle invasion scare, the Beetle is also unknowable and manifests multiple forms of ambiguity. This particular combination of specificity and ambiguity makes the Beetle a uniquely terrifying monster, one that cannot be contained by the text. The Beetle cannot be placed "under glass," as urban Victorians sought to do with bugs, in an attempt to contain the natural world (Clark 10). As Jack Halberstam explains, "monsters are meaning machines" (22) that the gothic novel employs to embody various forms of otherness, which allows "for the invention of human as white, male, middle class, and heterosexual" (22). In creating monsters, gothic texts seek to externalize indeterminacy and disavow otherness. Marsh does this with the Beetle, in both their creaturely and gender ambiguity, and, as Hurley explains, "what largely accounts for the horror [the Beetle] induces is indefinable, for it has to do with [their] bodily indefinition – [their] abjectness" (202).

One source of ambiguity is the Beetle's gender identity and sexuality, which is the subject of much criticism on *The Beetle*. For example, Harris and Vernooy note how the text plays with gender in ways that would have disturbed a Victorian audience: "A sort of shape shifter, Marsh's creature is capable not only of shifting between or occupying multiple racial categories but being either young or old, and either male, female, or some combination of both" (378). They go on to describe the scene in which Atherton sees the Beetle naked, which causes him to believe that they are a woman, instead of a man, as he had initially thought. Harris and Vernooy write that this would have unsettled Victorian readers because

of "the suggestion not just of gender indeterminacy but of gender *mutability,* the inference that gender could, under certain conditions, be subject to transformation, if not multiple (re)transformations" (378). The Beetle not only defies gender categorization but disrupts the notion of gender as a stable category. Many critics hesitate to gender the Beetle, often referring to it simply as "the Beetle"[11] or "he or she," or "it/him/her" (Wolfreys 17). Then, other critics simply choose either "he" or "she" to refer to the creature, often without explicating this choice. Kelly Hurley navigates this difficultly by referring to the Beetle definitively as "she," and viewing the "oriental mesmerist" who visits Atherton as an entirely different body, a man sent as an emissary of the Beetle. In many ways, all of these readings are valid, given that the Beetle's gender does remain ambiguous throughout the novel. Despite moments like the one in which Atherton sees the Beetle naked, and presumes to ascertain their gender, the monster continues to elude determinacy. The text, itself, refers to the Beetle alternately as "he" and "she."

In this chapter, I have chosen to use the pronoun "they" for the Beetle, because of the fluidity of their gender identity, particularly in the way they refer to themselves. Most characters initially refer to the Beetle as "he," but Lessingham clearly refers to them as a "she" when he relates his time in Egypt. Champnell, meanwhile, refers to them as "she" when speaking with Atherton and Lessingham, but then uses "he" when relating the Beetle's criminal activities and sexual violation of Marjorie (285-86). Essentially, the text does not attempt to decisively gender the Beetle, though numerous characters in the text do.

[11] In Kristen Davis's article "Colonial Syphillophobia," she avoids gendered pronouns and refers to the Beetle alternately as "the Beetle" or "the Priestess," despite the fact that much of her argument revolves around the Beetle as "the contaminating colonial woman" (144).

Interestingly, the Beetle can be both male and female, at once, and the text uses this mutability to heighten the horror they engender. For example, as many critics have noted, the disturbing nature of many of the sexual attacks comes from the implications of homosexuality inherent in them. Yet this implicit homosexuality remains present even after Holt has seen the Beetle naked and thus determined them to be a woman. This fact should negate the homosexual charge of the attack, but it does not. Thus, the text seems to contradict itself and further obscures the Beetle's sexuality and gender. Additionally, in describing the horrifying sexual attacks of the children of Isis, Lessingham refers to the Beetle as a "she," but the text simultaneously evokes the racist trope of the non-white man violating white women. The same is true of the sexual violations of Marjorie. Though, at this point, many of the characters refer to the Beetle as "she," the attacks on Marjorie are implied to be committed by a man, a fact which allows a Victorian audience to read this as a more straightforward sexual assault narrative.

The unknowability of the Beetle's gender is compounded by their creaturely ambiguity, which opens up the possibility of multiple foreign identifications. Although the title of the novel denotes a definitive insect identity for the Beetle, they simultaneously elude categorization. Holt describes the Beetle's first, unseen attack, writing,

> It was as though it were some gigantic spider,—a spider of the nightmares; a monstrous conception of some dreadful vision. It pressed lightly against my clothing with what might, for all the world, have been spider's legs. There was an amazing host of them,—I felt the pressure of each separate one. They embraced me softly, stickily, as if the creature glued and unglued them, each time it moved. (51)

This description engenders abject horror in the reader, as it evidently does in Holt. The vivid, bodily narrations of the sticky embrace and the "amazing host" of legs conjures an image of an intimate, uncomfortable attack. Yet, much of the horror stems from the fact that it is clearly some sort of nightmarish creature, but one whose identity cannot be ascertained. The soft, sticky legs being "glued and unglued" from Holt's body evoke octopus tentacles. Holt also describes the creature as a spider, which has very little in common with a beetle, besides the numerous legs. Later, Holt also hears "the scratching of claws" and a squeaking noise (59), which connote a rodent more so than a beetle, or any other type of insect. The characters in the novel most often refer to the Beetle as a "creature," or an "insect," or even a "beast." In fact, for much of the novel, only the Beetle identifies themselves as "the Beetle." What does it mean for a novel titled "the Beetle" to obscure the animal identity of its eponymous monster? While there are certainly strong associations between this monster and a beetle, by allowing for multiple identifications on the creaturely level, Marsh allows for multiple foreign identifications, as well.[12] The Beetle is an Egyptian, an Egypto-Arabian, an Arab, an Algerian, and much more. It defies categorization on numerous levels, and this unknowability, above all, makes it horrifying.

Conclusion

The body of Marsh's monster, an Oriental, Egyptian, racialized, insect body, is crucial to the horror they engender. As Elizabeth Effinger argues, criticism of the novel largely

[12] The beetle is an apt choice for a monster in this case, as it was ambiguously defined in the Victorian era. *The Oxford English Dictionary* notes how beetle was a term applied "especially to those of black color, and comparatively large size," such that many insects were either incorrectly included in or excluded from the category of beetle (OED, 2). For example, cockroaches, which are not beetles, were often referred to as such.

privileges "the human side of the Beetle's bifurcated human-nonhuman identity" (252). However, Marsh's choice of a beetle to embody the fears of fin-de-siècle Britain is critical for the novel. Halberstam emphasizes the importance of the monstrous body in the Victorian gothic (2), and nowhere does that prove truer than in Marsh's novel. The body of the beetle became an object of horror to the British public due to the Colorado beetle scare and its link with reverse colonization, such that beetles of all species became possibly dangerous foreign invaders. However, the body of Marsh's Beetle also spawns terror because of its unknowability; it is a body that defies categorizations in terms of gender, animality, and race. Marsh certainly drew on the Colorado beetle scare, an event which incited much panic yet never materialized, and in making the Beetle ambiguous and unknowable he opened up the possibilities of what such a biological invasion could look like.

The ambiguity of the Beetle, as well as its specific historical link to the Colorado beetle, may explain its inability to gain traction with modern readers. Many critics have noted the similarities between *The Beetle* and *Dracula*, particularly in terms of the monsters' ambiguity, racialization, and creatureliness. So why have the two novels received such dramatically different receptions from contemporary audiences? The vampiric monster of Stoker's novel has been reimagined in countless forms, from twentieth-century plays, to ballets, to TV shows, to the *Twilight* franchise. *The Beetle,* on the other hand, inspired only one reinvention: a silent film released in 1919. The novel's particular connection to the 1877 Colorado beetle scare would have been more legible to Victorian readers than to contemporary ones. Globalization, the development of pesticides, and the genetic modification of crops, inventions spurred by such invasion scares, have mitigated, though

not eradicated, the threat of insect invasions to agricultural production. In addition to the historical specificity of the novel, the Beetle's unknowability and resistance to categorization might make it less relevant for modern audiences. Despite his horrific, foreign whiteness, Dracula is ultimately a more familiar, knowable monster. Moreover, much of the ambiguity of the novel, such as liminal humanity and disturbance of gender norms, is located in Dracula's victims, rather than in the monster, himself. Although Dracula does not fit strictly within the bounds of heteronormativity, he also does not have the same gender fluidity and sexual fluidity that the Beetle does. This makes Dracula and the figure of the vampire much easier to represent, both textually and visually, than the Beetle. As the characters in the novel cannot even give a definitive description of the Beetle's appearance or identity, it would be difficult for a modern reimagining of the novel to do so. Furthermore, on the level of narrative form, Stoker's novel has an ultimate orderliness that eludes Marsh's novel. In *The* Beetle, the characters' various narratives run together and omit crucial details, and none of them offers an authoritative account of the events or of the Beetle. This textual turbulence can be attributed to the unknowability of the Beetle, a creature that confounds everyone it encounters and even causes confusion within the text itself. The very ending of the novel refuses to provide clarity, as Champnell narrates, "I am quite prepared to believe that the so-called Beetle, which others saw, but I never, was—or is, for it cannot be certainly shown that the Thing is not still existing—a creature born neither of God nor man" (322). The numerous qualifiers in this sentence, the reference to the Beetle as "the Thing" and "a creature," and the hesitant acknowledgment that the Beetle may still be alive, create more questions than they answer. And while, as I note in the previous chapter, the ending of

Dracula also frustrates attempts at a neat conclusion, the text itself achieves some narrative closure with the staking of Dracula. On the other hand, the mysterious train explosion, in which the Beetle may or may not die, does not make for a satisfying, or particularly reassuring, ending. Although this inexplicable explosion does, at least temporarily, vanquish the Beetle, what does it suggest about the fallibility of British imperial technologies?

In the epilogue, I will conclude by discussing *The Jewel of Seven Stars,* a novel that, according to some critics, drew its inspiration from *The Beetle.* Like the Beetle, it features an Oriental, Egyptian figure, but unlike the Beetle, Queen Tera is an alluring ancient Egyptian queen, who inspires lust and admiration, as well as terror. Given that this particular Stoker novel was published in 1903, it serves as a valuable point of reflection on *Dracula* and *The Beetle*.

Figure 1

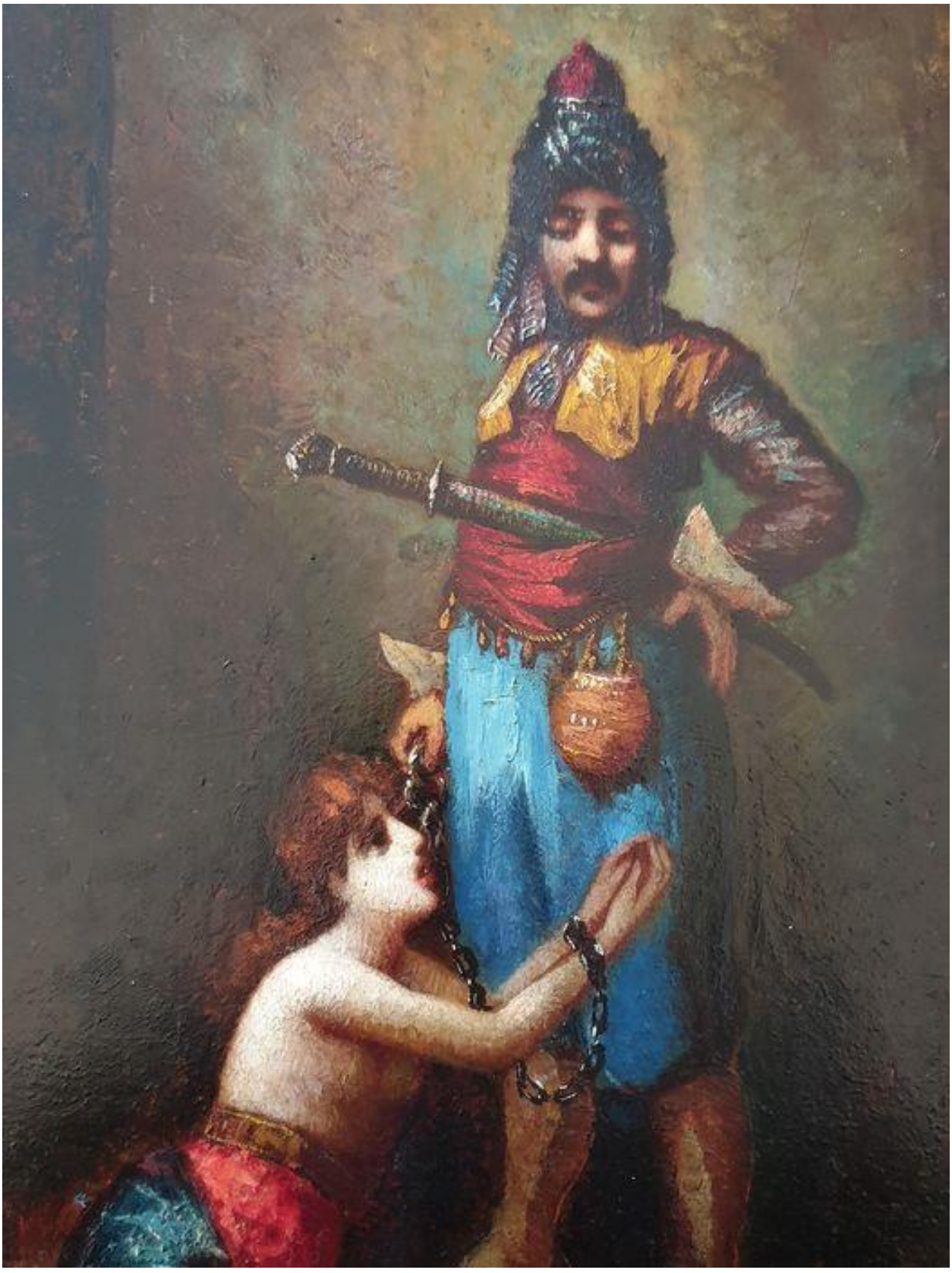

Figure 2

Figure 3

Epilogue: Explosive Monstrosity

The genre of imperial gothic, to borrow Patrick Brantlinger's term, demonstrates how monsters and the gothic can be productively mobilized to express and navigate a society's collective fears. Victorian gothic novels generally try to dispel these fears by vanquishing the monster, but the monsters often rupture the boundaries of the text and end up reflecting England's own monstrosity back to itself. I end my analysis of the Victorian gothic with Bram Stoker's novel *The Jewel of Seven Stars,* because it exhibits many tropes of the imperial gothic, particularly those of reverse colonization and the triumph of British technology. However, it also betrays the monstrosity of the English and exhibits a pessimism about the future of British society and empire. Furthermore, it has two vastly different endings, which allow it to simultaneously reproduce and shatter the conventions of novels like *Dracula* and *The Beetle*.

In many ways, Bram Stoker's 1903 novel typifies the tale of the vengeful mummy, one prevalent in late Victorian literature. Critics, including Bradley Deane, have even said that this novel has "proven most influential in the subsequent mummy film tradition" (Deane 404). However, the 1903 ending of this novel does something unlike most Victorian gothic novels: it ends with the foreign monster's triumph over British technology and the sudden death of all but one of the white English characters. This peculiar ending, in addition to signaling a pessimism about England's future, suggests a discomfort with the potential parallels between Ancient Egypt and early twentieth-century England. However, the ending of the novel was revised in 1912, and critics debate whether or not Stoker, himself, wrote this second ending. Curiously, this version of the ending reverts to a more conventional

marriage plot and the more or less complete vanquishment of the Egyptian mummy, Queen Tera. This ending seemingly attempts to reassert the dominance of the British empire by resorting to a conservative trope, though it does allude to the possibility of Queen Tera's reincarnation in the novel's central white woman. Also, unlike many of its precursors, this Victorian gothic story disturbingly suggests that Victorians, rather than foreign, oriental invaders, were the monsters. Thus, Stoker forces his English readership to reckon with themselves and with the fate of their nation. *Jewel* provides an interesting lens through which to view *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, given that it was published six years after these two novels and just after the official end of the Victorian era. As I will examine later on, it deals with many of the same themes as these two predecessors, including liminality, animality, race, and gender.

This novel begins when a young lawyer named Malcolm Ross, the narrator, receives frantic summons from Margaret Trelawney, a recent acquaintance, and the daughter of a renowned Egyptologist. Margaret enlists him to help watch over her father, who has fallen into a deep sleep and has suffered mysterious injuries, while lying comatose in his bedroom. Malcolm and a few others attempt to watch over him but find themselves similarly stupefied and unable to identify the source of Trelawney's wounds. They soon connect these mysterious events to the plethora of Egyptian objects housed in Abel Trelawney's museum-like room, and the noxious odor they emit. Amongst these objects is the mummy of Queen Tera, an ancient Egyptian ruler. Shortly after, Trelawney's friend and fellow Egyptologist, Mr. Corbeck, arrives and relates the story of his and Trelawney's treacherous Egyptian adventure to recover this mummified woman. He tells of how her seven-fingered hand came

to life and murdered the men who tried to take her precious jewel of seven stars, and how the two of them barely escaped after waking from a three-day long trance in the queen's tomb. Throughout the novel, Margaret exhibits a curious sympathy for Tera, whom she is said to resemble, and we are also told that she was born during her father's mysterious three-day sojourn in Tera's tomb, a fact that heightens their connection. The novel culminates in the "Great Experiment," in which the Egyptologists unwrap Tera's mummy and attempt to bring her back to life. In the 1903 version, this leads to the death of everyone but Malcolm Ross and the resurrection and escape of Queen Tera. In the 1912 version, the experiment fails but the British characters survive, and Queen Tera supposedly disappears, leaving behind a pile of dust. This ending also concludes with Malcolm and Margaret's marriage.

The Jewel of Seven Stars evokes the ambivalence Victorians felt towards Egypt, as both an advanced ancient society, not unlike modern Victorian England, and a regressive Oriental country with occult, primitive practices. This multifaceted portrayal differs somewhat from *The Beetle,* which primarily represents Egypt as savage and Oriental. However, as I allude to in the previous chapter, Egypt had a complicated status as a British imperial territory. As Bradley Deane writes, "The Victorians never intended Egypt to be just another imperial possession; the occupation was characterized from the outset by a marked hesitancy and tentativeness" (392). While England did seek to occupy Egypt and control its natural resources, Britons also had a level of respect for Egypt as an ancient civilization that occasioned different treatment towards it than towards other African colonies. Deane goes on to discuss the feminization of Egypt and how the country was politically represented as a blushing Oriental maiden "cower[ing] for protection" from English generals, or as an

alluring, ancient temptress (381). As I discuss in the previous chapter, Egypt was the sight of a few major British imperial defeats, but it continued to hold significant political appeal for England, and it was seen as an asset to be protected and controlled, rather than conquered. Much of this treatment is due to Egypt's status as a respected ancient civilization and to the popularity of Egyptology among Victorians.

As opposed to *The Beetle,* which represents Egypt as a primitive land and draws on generalized racist stereotypes of Egyptians, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* exhibits a different type of Orientalism, in the form of a reverence for ancient Egyptian society and even Egyptians, themselves. As Meilee Bridges explains, Stoker thoroughly studied Egypt and ancient Egyptian customs in preparation for writing this novel (139). By participating in this academic Orientalism,[13] Stoker draws his narrative accounts of Egyptian history and artifacts mostly from fact, rather than from popular myths, as Marsh does. The novel provides copious descriptions of the proliferation of Egyptian relics in Trelawney's room and of the burial practices of ancient Egyptians. Furthermore, Mr. Corbeck, Mr. Trelawney's friend, and fellow Egyptologist, acts as the resident expert on Egypt, both for the other characters in the novel and for readers. Stoker contrives numerous moments for Corbeck to relate his knowledge of Egypt. For example, at one point during his narration of his and Trelawney's archaeological adventure, he pauses to say, "The serdab, I may perhaps explain…is a sort of niche built or hewn in the wall of the tomb. Those which have as yet been examined bear no inscriptions, and contain only effigies of the dead for whom the tomb was made" (140). The

[13] As Edward Saïd explains in the introduction to *Orientalism*, "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient…is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism" (10).

copious amount of detail about this specific ancient tomb adornment is ostensibly for the benefit of Malcolm Ross, but Stoker also uses it to give his readers context and perhaps to inspire a reverence for ancient Egyptian handiwork. This is interesting given Aviva Briefel's assertion, in *The Racial Hand in the Victorian Imagination*, that "Ancient Egyptian artworks seemed endowed with a remarkable resilience that taunted modern Western viewers with their own creative lack" (78). Although Victorians generally considered England to be a model for progress and advanced civilization, the impressive, lasting craft of Egyptian artifacts demonstrated Egypt's prowess and challenged England's dominance. Artistic objects like the tomb and even the mummy, itself, were both awe-inspiring and threatening.

The preferential colonial treatment, and even reverence, towards Egypt and Egyptians also stemmed from the perceived racial kinship between Europeans and Egyptians. Queen Tera occupies a position of liminality because, as an Egyptian, she is both white and foreign, much like how Dracula monstrous whiteness places him simultaneously inside and outside of whiteness. In *The Mummy's Curse,* Roger Luckhurst explains how Britons thought of ancient Egyptians as "Caucasian in origin," rather than Black, like other Africans (101). *The Jewel of Seven Stars* exemplifies this strange racial myth in its characterizations of Queen Tera. Malcolm Ross repeatedly describes her hand and arm as white and Corbeck describes it as "white and ivory like" (127). Ross also likens her to Margaret throughout the narrative, creating an explicit connection between this foreign, mummified queen and his own, English love interest. As I discuss in reference to *Dracula,* given the pedestal upon which white, upper-class women were placed as the custodians of British morality, this comparison establishes Tera in a venerable, symbolic position. Indeed,

the characters in the novel clearly respect and admire her. Corbeck tells Malcolm and Margaret, for example, "she must have been a girl of extraordinary character as well as ability, for she was but a young girl when her father died" (128) and "though a Queen, [she] claimed all the privileges of kingship and masculinity" (129). Interestingly, Corbeck specifically admires her for her masculine qualities and her adoption of male privileges, attributes that English women would more likely have been condemned for. The men see Tera as a powerful and intelligent queen, and Margaret feels a strong kinship with her. They do not attribute to her any of the negative stereotypes that Victorians often associated with "Oriental" people or foreigners, such as those used to denigrate Marsh's Beetle. She is even described as "no mean artist," a descriptor that links her to Egypt's advanced artistic production. Stoker's representation of Tera, the supposed monster in the novel, demonstrates the feelings of admiration, kinship, and even enchantment that many Victorians felt for ancient Egypt and Egyptians. Thus, unlike *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, this novel exhibits some ambiguity about the monstrosity of the liminal monster.

However, despite the approbation for Queen Tera in this novel, the figure of the mummy and its liminality also evoked ambiguous feelings toward Egypt. The mummy was at once a physical embodiment of ancient Egypt's impressive technologies of preservation that allowed for the society's continuation, and a relic of the past that stood as a reminder of a once-great civilization whose people had become merely museum curiosities for Western spectators. Mummy displays, and subsequently mummy unwrappings, proliferated in Victorian society and museums, and they inspired a mixture of awe and disgust in European museumgoers. Simply by the fact of their existence, mummies testified to Egypt's advanced

embalming techniques, and they also provided a window to the past, to an ancient, Eastern civilization. However, they were also inherently grotesque and unsettling, as manifestations of living death and antiquity, come to haunt the present. For example, one horrified Victorian spectator wrote, "not only the skeleton but the very entrails are exposed to the gaze of the tourist!" (Bridges 153). The very body of the mummy was seen as monstrous and macabre. Aside from their grotesque bodies, mummies also disconcerted spectators by serving as guilty reminders of the desecration of Egyptian tombs that was required to retrieve them. As Meilee Bridges explains, mummy curse fictions like *Jewel* draw on the idea of the ancient Egyptian resurrected in order to exact revenge for the outrages committed on its resting place (138). In the novel, Corbeck echoes the apprehension of many Victorians when he declares that there very well may not "be any graves for us who have robbed the dead!" (135). Here, Stoker points to Victorians' ambivalent feelings about disrupting Egyptian graves, even in the pursuit of knowledge. In doing so, he calls into question the imperial project, which placed England's quest for knowledge above all else.

As Bridges elucidates, un-rollings, specifically, though they held a morbid excitement for Victorians, heightened this uncertainty and guilt (151-152). H. Rider Haggard expressed his qualms with these un-rolling spectacles in a newspaper column: "Should not we English shudder if some seer told us that within a given number of years, say 3,000,…those who rest in Westminster Abbey were destined to be treated in just this fashion, to satisfy the curiosity of men unborn? I think so. Yet where these Egyptian departed are concerned we hear no voice of public protest" (Bridges 151). Haggard attempts to demonstrate the relevance of this issue to modern Victorians by drawing a parallel between Westminster Abbey and

ancient Egyptian tombs. He paints an unsavory future in which England takes the place of ancient Egypt and becomes a once great civilization consigned to antiquity, with its dead forced to suffer indignities at the hands of a foreign people. Finally, he forces the English to consider themselves, rather than the Egyptian mummies, as the monsters and savages, in a reversal of traditional imperial logic.

Jewel speaks to such a reversal of monstrosity in describing the unwrapping of Tera as a sexual violation. Margaret, who we are told many times resembles Queen Tera and who even seems to have a spiritual kinship with her, expresses great alarm on the subject of the unrolling: "Father, you are not going to unswathe her! All you men…! And in the glare of light!...Just think, Father, a woman! All alone! In such a way!" (230). Margaret reminds her father, and readers, of Tera's humanity and womanhood. Although Mr. Trelawney tries to reassert her objecthood by saying, "Not a woman, dear; a mummy!" (230), Tera's womanhood and her kinship with Margaret has already been established. A Victorian audience can no longer view her as a mere object of scientific study; they are forced to see her as a woman. This unwrapping, now characterized as a sexual violation, thus reverses the trope of a foreign, racially othered man sexually assaulting a white woman. The English men are committing this atrocity against an Egyptian woman. This seeming condemnation of English men follows along the lines of R. John Williams's discussion, in *The Buddha and the Machine*, of the West's attempts to "turn to the culture and tradition of the East in order to recover the essence of some misplaced or as-yet-unfulfilled modern identity" (6) and to "redeem [its] corruptive…inheritance and relationship with modern technology (4-5). Although Williams specifically refers to the West's relationship with technology, in this case,

his argument elucidates how Stoker lauds ancient Egyptian practices to critique modern English ones. Stoker overtly critiques the practice of mummy unrollings, the lack of English reverence for the dead, and the sexual violation implied in this scene.

The two entirely different endings of this novel perfectly exemplify the ambiguity that Victorians felt towards Egypt and the concerns that its example generated about their own monstrosity and imperial decline. Throughout the novel, Stoker explicates Tera's occult powers and her connection to ancient Egyptian mysticism. We learn that she "was ruled in great degree by mysticism" (202) and that she was "a Wizard" (165) who may have "had power to compel the Gods" (129). All of this knowledge comes from the two Egyptologists, Trelawney and Corbeck, who believe they have unlocked the key to Tera's mysterious plan for resurrection and that they understand her desires. They demonstrate an imperial arrogance about their knowledge. While their interest in Egyptology demonstrates a certain reverence for the Queen and ancient Egypt, it is also tinged with a desire for imperial control, which becomes evident in Trelawney's stated purpose for the "Great Experiment." He scoffs at Malcolm's suggestion that the goal is merely to resurrect one woman, and he passionately declares his desire for England to be "placed on the road to the knowledge of lost arts, lost learning, lost sciences, so that our feet may tread on the indicated path to their ultimate and complete restoration" (212). He goes on to assert that Queen Tera "can set the mind back to the consideration of things which to us now seem primeval" (212). Trelawney seeks to possess ancient Egyptian knowledge and practices, to mobilize them for the advancement of British imperial knowledge and technologies. Trelawney believes his plan to

be foolproof, and only Malcom expresses his concern that Queen Tera might exact revenge on those trying to resurrect her (211).

In the 1903 ending, this concern is realized, as Tera thoroughly overpowers most of the English characters and affects her own resurrection. Malcolm carries Queen Tera, whom he believes to be Margaret, from the cavern, which is ironically intended to resemble a tomb. He returns to find everyone else, including Margaret, "sunk down on the floor…gazing upward with fixed eyes of unspeakable terror" (244). The narration ends with Malcolm's dark declaration: "It was merciful that I was spared the pain of hoping" (244). Queen Tera renders the Egyptologists' knowledge useless, and their arrogance leads to their downfall. Corbeck's earlier declaration, that Tera possesses "a bewildering…power outside ourselves or our comprehension" (135) takes on a particular prescience. Her mysticism, her occult, primitive powers, and her sorcery soundly defeat modern British science. This ending demonstrates a pessimism about the power of British imperial technology and knowledge that is heightened by its contrast with ancient Egyptian technology. Perhaps this pessimism stemmed from Queen Victoria's recent death and, with it, the end of the Victorian era. In addition, the empire was struggling to maintain its imperial holdings, experiencing defeats like that of the Second Boer War. Using Williams's framework, we could read Stoker as advocating for England to adopt ancient Egyptian practices as a restorative alternative to redirect English society in the new era. After all, what if England, instead of Egypt, was the great civilization in decline, one whose powers were being rendered ineffectual? Furthermore, though Tera ostensibly becomes the monster by causing the death of the

Englishmen and Margaret, their deaths can also be read as a punishment for their own monstrosity in desecrating her tomb and subsequently subjecting her to sexual violation.

The 1912 ending, conversely, ends with Queen Tera's mysterious disappearance and a marriage, a common trope employed in Victorian literature. The English characters presume Tera to be decisively annihilated, based on the pile of dust that she and her familiar, a mummified cat, leave behind. Her demise means that the Great Experiment fails in its ultimate goal of resurrection, though unlike in the 1903 version, it does allow the English experimenters to survive. Although the novel seeks to present this ending as happy and optimistic, it still provokes doubts about the prowess of the British empire and its ability to rival the powers of ancient Egypt. The Egyptologists ultimately fail to harness Tera's occult power, despite their confidence in their knowledge of her designs. The second piece of this ending, the marriage between Margaret and Malcolm, is hastily included in the last pages of the novel and serves to reinscribe normalcy and heteronormative conventions, much like the marriages in *Dracula* and *The Beetle*.

However, the author of this ending (whether Stoker or an unknown party) includes an interesting twist by suggesting that Tera has not entirely disappeared, but rather been reincarnated in Margaret. After Malcom laments the failure of Tera's resurrection to Margaret, she tells him, in a dreamy voice, "Do not grieve for her! Who knows, but she may have found the joy she sought? Love and patience are all that make for happiness in this world; or in the world of the past or of the future; of the living or the dead" (250). Margaret seems to be speaking both for herself and for Tera in this moment, and her pronouncement that Tera may have found the love and "joy she sought" seems to be founded on an intimate

knowledge of Tera's desires and emotions. The rest of the novel includes many allusions to a spiritual connection between Margaret and the Queen, and this ending suggests that the ancient Egyptian woman's spirit has now been incorporated into Margaret, rather than disappearing. As if to bolster this reading, the author for this ending describes Margaret as wearing "the mummy robe and zone and the jewel which Queen Tera had worn in her hair. On her breast…she wore the strange Jewel of Seven Stars (250). During the ceremony the jewel "seem[s] to glow like a living thing," (250) as if to suggest Tera's presence. If we read this woman as a hybrid of Margaret and Tera, her marriage to Malcolm allows Tera to possess Englishness, in a reversal of Egyptologists' attempts to possess Egyptianness. It could also allow her to indirectly affect her "resurrection" through her potential children with Malcolm, as I argue that Dracula is resurrected through Mina's child. This transgressive union becomes even more significant in terms of Deane's analysis of England's political relationship with Egypt as translatable into a marriage plot, "in which each partner receives as a dowry the most desirable traits of the other: Egypt receives British industry and protection, while Britain claims not only Egypt itself, but its associations with mystery and permanence, both of which would be particularly appealing in an occupation of 'uncertain extent and indefinite duration'" (Deane 393). If Margaret does embody some of Queen Tera's spirit, then the novel's concluding marriage represents a union between England and Egypt and an instance of miscegenation.

As I discuss above, *Jewel* provides an interesting context to understand both *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, and the Victorian gothic, more broadly. First, like Dracula and the Beetle, Queen Tera is a liminal figure, by virtue of being a mummy. As Aviva Briefel asserts, "there

is no question that mummies were treated as commodities during [the Victorian] period" (84). As pieces of art stolen from Egypt by the British empire, mummies could be bought, sold, and displayed by Britons. However, they were also human bodies that had been well preserved throughout thousands of years, and their artistic value rested on an acknowledgement of their humanity. Thus, mummies implicitly troubled the line between human and object and forced spectators to question their humanity. In many ways, Queen Tera occupies the same liminal category of living dead as Dracula does. When her body is revealed, Malcolm describes that she looks "not dead, but alive" (236), as Dracula and the vampiric corpses do. Moreover, her "astral body" (Stoker 130) allows her to travel to different worlds and to occupy different physical forms. For example, we learn that her seven-fingered hand comes to life to murder the raiders of her tomb (133). She can also act through her familiar, the mummified cat, not unlike how Dracula and the Beetle can turn into animals, themselves, or how Dracula can compel wolves to do his bidding. Thus, like the monsters in the other two novels, she troubles the line between living and dead, and between human and animal.

Furthermore, as I have alluded to above, Tera occupies a liminal racial category. Stoker characterizes her as a beautiful white English woman, with an uncanny resemblance to Margaret. Despite her mummification, she appears to have "long, black, curling lashes…full red lips" which show "the tiniest line of pearly teeth within" and a "white forehead" (236) adorned with "curling tresses" of black hair. These descriptions recall the monstrous, foreign whiteness of Dracula and Lucy, particularly the red lips with the conspicuously white teeth. Tera has a similar, ghostly beauty to the vampiric Lucy. However,

the comparison to Margaret simultaneously neutralizes her whiteness, identifying it as a safe, English whiteness. Interestingly, the queen's racial characterization differs significantly from that of the Beetle, despite the Egyptian origins of both monsters. Marsh mobilizes Egyptianness to cast the Beetle as a dangerous Oriental other, who comes to embody multiple racial and foreign identities. Stoker, on the other hand, almost entirely disavows Tera's foreignness by asserting her whiteness. These two authors employ Egyptian racial identity to two very different ends. These differences seem to stem, in part, from the fact that the Beetle is a modern Egyptian, and thus a prime example of degeneration. As Ailise Bulfin explains, "modern Egyptians, while avoiding the bottom of the nineteenth-century racial hierarchy, were despised as the fallen offspring of their pharaonic forebears" (426). Tera is merely a well-preserved example of the revered ancient Egyptian leaders, with practically English whiteness, while the Beetle is a disgraceful example of ancient Egypt's decline and perhaps a fearful omen of the future of Englishmen if the empire continued to decline and degenerate. These varying racial descriptions also seemingly speak to a change in attitude toward Egypt between 1897 and 1903. When Marsh published his novel, General Kitchener had just launched his expedition to reconquer the Sudan, but by the time Stoker published *Jewel,* England had successfully re-established Anglo-Egyptian rule in the Sudan. Thus, Egypt could be seen as less of a threat and more as a protectorate, a reality reflected by Tera's blushing beauty and allure.

Despite the parallels between *Jewel*, *Dracula,* and *the Beetle, Jewel* paints a more complicated portrait of monstrosity and invasion. While *Dracula* and *The Beetle* conclusively identify the superiority of the British empire, Victorian society, and English technology, or at

least attempt to, *Jewel* demonstrates significant doubts, by admitting to powers outside of the empire, as well as to the fallibility of Victorians. Queen Tera cannot be strictly read as monstrous and horrifying, because of her sexual appeal to the men and her artistic value as a mummy. Additionally, Stoker forces his readers to consider what determines monstrosity and whether righteous English heroes can indeed become villains. While *Dracula* and *The Beetle* tell the tale of a monstrous body come from abroad to invade England and enact violence on its inhabitants, *Jewel* centers on a wholly interior threat. Dracula and the Beetle transgress boundaries to enter English spaces and bodies, against the will or knowledge of their English victims. Queen Tera enters England by the efforts of Corbeck and Trelawney, the latter of who brings the mummy into his own home.

Ultimately, all of these novels express numerous fears of fin-de-siècle Britain and contain much ambiguity. In particular, they reveal an anxiety about England's seemingly imminent decline. Each successive novel exhibits less and less narrative closure and more doubts about the absolute power of the British empire. In *Dracula* and *The Beetle,* the endings feebly assert the power of British imperial technology to destroy threats to the empire, but they leave open the possibility for the return of monstrous forces. As I have discussed, Dracula seems to live on even after his staking by the band of British men, and the Beetle's death only occurs as a fortuitous byproduct of the failure of imperial technology. *Jewel*'s 1912 ending contains similar ambiguity about the power of the British to decisively eradicate threats to their empire, and the 1903 ending takes this uncertainty around imperial technology to the extreme by presenting a complete failure of empire. It confirms the worst

fears of Victorians, that their empire will be destroyed by powers that are simultaneously interior and exterior to their society.

In defining the imperial gothic, Patrick Brantlinger discusses the tensions and oppositions inherent in the genre, such as the outward movement of British citizens coupled with the inward movement and incursion of imperial subjects, and the simultaneous collapse and redefinition of boundaries. Each of these three monsters disturb various boundaries and occupy a liminal space of interiority and exteriority. Once again, *Jewel* helps to illuminate this unique position. These monsters occupy a space which, like Cornwall, where the climax of *Jewel* unfolds, is "not quite detached from the nation…neither home nor elsewhere, but rather part-way between the two" (Shelley 200). The monsters of *Dracula, The Beetle,* and *Jewel,* like many other Victorian gothic monsters, are at once entirely unknowable and uncategorizable, and disturbingly familiar, in that they reflect unsettling truths about the weaknesses of the British empire. Though the novels ostensibly attempt to assuage Victorians' fears by externalizing all forms of degeneration, as inherent to monstrous, foreign, racialized bodies, they inevitably reveal more about those within the empire than those outside it. Degeneration and otherness, these gothic texts demonstrate, already pervade England, whether in individuals or in the very fabric of the nation. Thus, the Victorian gothic ultimately fails to contain the fears it presents, instead allowing the monsters to explode the boundaries of the text.

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