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The "Nightmare" of Collecting Egyptian Antiquities in Late-Victorian Gothic Fiction

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines a selection of Gothic fiction published in Britain between roughly 1880 and 1910 that portrays the collection of Egyptian antiquities. Using the methodologies of new historicism, Gothic literary criticism, and critical museum studies, I argue that these late-Victorian representations of collecting Egyptian objects dramatize displaced cultural anxiety about the Empire during the phase of New Imperialism. The mummies and antiquities in these texts are threatening, supernaturally live, and dangerous; I read their violence against British collectors and museums as a strategy of negotiating late-century imperial anxiety about the longevity of Britain's Empire and the strength of "Britishness" as represented through Gothic house-museums, knowledge production, immunity to foreign "contagion," and sexual dominance and "purity." Ultimately, I suggest, these texts together demonstrate an intense fictional expression of Victorian cultural disenchantment.

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Introduction

The "Nightmare" of Egypt: Collecting, Objects, and Literary Survivals

During the first few decades of the nineteenth century, the British Museum vastly extended its collections of Egyptian antiquities and made them available for viewing to the public. The Museum had begun collecting Egyptian mummies, shabtis, sarcophagi, stela, and small sculptures in the 1750s, and acquired most objects at that time through private donation.[1] Following Lord Nelson's defeat of Napoleon in the Battle of Aboukir in 1798, and subsequent British military confiscation of the French trove of Egyptian antiquities, the British Museum, as well as smaller civic museums and individual collectors, began to collect the objects of this ancient civilization in earnest. Britain was in the grips of a new 'Egyptomania,' a craze for all things Egyptian, one that would intensify throughout the century. By 1840, visitors to the British Museum could view such Egyptian statuary as the seated statue of Seti II and the colossal bust of Ramesses II, and such colourful sarcophagi as those of Hornedjtyitif and Denytenamun.[2] Egyptian-inspired architecture and interior design came into vogue, best shown by William Bullock's Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly Street, which opened in 1812, and was modeled on the tombs discovered at Dendera (Curl 260).

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[1] Mummies are embalmed corpses; shabtis are small statues customarily buried with bodies; sarcophagi are stone or wooden coffins, usually intricately carved or detailed; stela are inscribed pieces of stone.

[2] These statues and antiquities were purchased from Henry Salt between 1823 and 1835.

Yet the sudden appreciation for the goods of Egypt was mixed with an intense trepidation. In an 1826 guide to the British Museum, an anonymous author describes the statuary in the Egyptian exhibit:

> The forms of Egyptian sculpture are, in their general character, like those which we see in feverish dreams, and which haunt us in that nervous affection called the *night-mare;* and these latter are [...] more unlike anything belonging to the real world than we could possibly *imagine* in our waking hours. In a word, Egyptian sculpture, properly so called, like the annals of the country which produced it, and the associations which we are accustomed to connect with those annals and that country, more resembles a phantasma and a dream than a reality. (30-31)

More than the anthropomorphic statuary of Classical ancient civilizations like Greece and Rome, the objects of Egypt were received by museum-goers in the nineteenth century as examples of the nightmarish and strange, the supernatural and fantastic. Similar attitudes towards imported Egyptian antiquities appear in numerous print sources during this period. An article in the *Times* in 1802, announced the disembarkment of "a number of monsters and heads" taken from the French by the "Conquerors" ("About"), and in a review article, Marguerite Gardiner, Countess of Blessington, reported that a female visitor to the British Museum felt "so queerish" at the sight of Egyptian mummies (qtd. in Moser 122).

Modern scholarly analysis of the reception of Egyptian antiquities has suggested that the Victorians perceived in the objects of Egypt inherent links to

the subconscious, the monstrous and strange, and the past. Stephanie Moser, in her exhaustive reception study of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum, notes that:

> the arrangement of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum played a key role in constructing an identity for such objects as 'wondrous curiosities' [....] Presented as examples of the strange and unusual amid larger collections of cultural and natural material, curiosities were often used to signify something that was unknowable and mysterious. [... They] were deemed appropriate for superficial consumption rather than deeper intellectual contemplation [....] they existed as timeless, isolated examples of the strange. (51-52)

Set apart from scientific study and artistic appreciation, Egyptian artifacts captured the fascination of the Victorians even as they 'haunted' them with their intrinsic strangeness. Egyptian antiquities never escaped their association with the fantastic and strange, even as Egyptology emerged as a science later in the century.

This dissertation argues that these representations of Egyptian objects as supernatural, fantastic, and threatening re-emerge in Gothic literature at the *fin-de-siècle* as a way of negotiating, through fiction, newly emergent anxieties about British progress and stability during the phase of New Imperialism. Even though by the 1880s Egyptian objects were the province of scientists and scholars, not magicians or curiosities traders, a significant number of Gothic texts were

published at that time that played up the supernatural, 'evil' connotations of Egyptian antiquities. The texts from this small subgenre offer a unique representational history of monstrous, ambulatory mummies and enchanted Egyptian antiquities that go beyond Victorian xenophobia. The ancient objects of Britain's new imperial protectorate, Egypt, became ideal mediums for staging a fantastic re-interpretation of imperial anxiety on the pages of fiction. Instead of imagining Egyptian antiquities as trophies of Britain's imperial conquest, late-century Gothic fiction imagines these objects as nightmarish reminders of Britain's inevitable decline. This project, then, ultimately traces the representational history of ancient Egyptian objects in Gothic fiction at a particular historical moment; through the modes of imperial Gothic and museum Gothic, I suggest that these objects' representations at the *fin-de-siècle* dramatize an intense imperial anxiety about survival, one which, by appearing on the pages of fiction, will stay in the realm of fantasy rather than become a reality. By portraying Egyptian objects, particularly mummies, as Gothic 'survivals' of a dead Empire, these texts also suggest new ways of understanding how the museum, imperialism, and Gothic were ideologically inter-related at the end of the nineteenth century. To this end, my dissertation ties together, into a nexus of representational influence, a host of late-Victorian cultural forces: imperial collecting and the development of the civic museum; the emergence of archaeology and Egyptology as legitimate sciences; the British invasion of Egypt in 1882 and the rise of the New Imperialism; late-century discursive articulation

of cultural loss and degeneration; and the representation of Egyptian mummies and antiquities as sources of imperial conflict and cultural decay in Gothic fiction.

This dissertation is centred on a reading of a small group of fiction, published during an eleven year period (1897-1908), which has been largely forgotten by contemporary readers and scholars. This constellation of texts is exemplary of the primary concerns about imperial longevity that arose in late-century Gothic fiction about ancient Egyptian objects. By returning to these forgotten texts, I offer new insights into a historical period fraught with change and transformation, and I rethink scholarly assumptions about the role of fantasy in late-Victorian imperialism. Ultimately, this project opens up room for alternative readings of the *fin-de-siècle* period in Britain through the dreams and nightmares writers created around objects of the Empire.

I begin the first chapter of this dissertation with an analysis of mummies who 'rise up' against their collectors in three short stories: "The Nemesis of Fire" (1908) by Algernon Blackwood, "The Story of Baelbrow" (1898) by E. and H. Heron, and "Lot 249" (1894) by Arthur Conan Doyle. Each of these stories portrays domestic collections, that is, museum-like collections housed in private dwellings, and in each collection the mummy comes to life and threatens the safety of British citizens. This chapter analyses representations of domestic "museums" and the foreign signification of objects. By outlining how museums were intricately bound up in the imperial project by storing the 'treasures' of the Empire and its colonies, I suggest that these Gothic stories portray the fragmentation of museal control. These collections fail to 'domesticate' the

Egyptian mummies they hold, and thus, I argue, these texts hint at a larger degeneracy of the Empire and British nationhood through the decline of the museum. The civic museum, a bastion of rationality and the sciences, is transformed into a Gothic 'survival' of past forms of superstitious and occult knowledge.

My second chapter delves deeper into issues of knowledge-production and domestic collection in representations of Victorian science in Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903). This novel, which has recently begun to attract new critical attention, features an attempt to resurrect the mummy of Queen Tera, an ancient Egyptian 'scientist' and ruler. Egyptologist Abel Trelawny, who excavated Tera's sarcophagus and who now wishes to perform a ritual to raise her from the dead, hopes that she will impart lost knowledge to him. However, Trelawny is seemingly blind to Tera's malevolence, and he (and his team of researchers) pay the price for his shortsightedness. I examine how Stoker's novel portrays the collection of Egyptian artifacts as part of a (failed) quest for knowledge in the burgeoning fields of Egyptology and archaeology. Trelawny fantasizes about creating a comprehensive archive of scientific and occult knowledge through Tera; however, the text reveals this fantasy to be, in fact, a nightmare of reverse colonization. *The Jewel of Seven Stars* ultimately suggests that gaining lost, ancient, and foreign knowledge is impossible, as it is antithetical, and thus dangerous, to British epistemologies.

The third chapter continues to analyse the collapse of fantasies about Egypt, this time in a forgotten novel by Guy Boothby: *Pharos, the Egyptian*

(1899). In this novel, an un-dead mummy, Pharos, uses Cyril Forrester, a collector and artist of ancient Egyptian scenes, to spread an ancient Egyptian plague across Europe, killing hundreds of thousands of people. Rather than simply re-iterating conventional scholarly readings of a connection between the East and contagion, this chapter analyses disease as a metaphor for Forrester's gradually deteriorating fantasy of Egypt. Gradually, Forrester understands that imperial collecting is a dangerous endeavour. Also, Pharos's retribution for Europe's 'crimes' against Egypt adds another dimension to this chapter's analysis of collecting. The mummy curse narrative is a site through which Boothby opens up contemporary questions of colonial guilt, the dangers of tourism, and xenophobia.

The final chapter looks to how imperial knowledge and fantasies of Egypt were, in select fictional cases, re-cast through sexual or romantic desire. Beginning with Theo Douglas's *Iras, a Mystery* (1896), this section of the dissertation sets up fantasies of exposure and unwrapping through the body of the female mummy. Finally, I turn to Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897), a tale of a gender-shifting beetle who commits sexual assault; my analysis reveals how Marsh's novel inverts the eroticized fantasies set up in *Iras,* creating a truly horrifying nightmare of ancient Egypt. The conclusion of the dissertation synthesizes the issues of collecting, imperial mobility, and the intersection of desire, fear, and fantasy, at play in this small subgenre of late-Victorian Gothic fiction about Egyptian antiquities. Together, these texts repeatedly return to representations of *fin-de-*

siècle cultural disenchantment, offering persistent and ubiquitous images of regression, loss, and decline.

Because the overarching argument of this dissertation ties together literary representation with cultural development, I would like to outline the cultural environment during this period of British governmental and cultural interest in Egypt. The British were tied economically and politically to Egypt throughout the nineteenth century, from their defeat of Napoleon in 1798 at the Battle of Aboukir, through their building of the Suez Canal in 1869, to their invasion in 1882. The 1882 invasion was ostensibly to support the Egyptian government, which was subject to a revolt at that time, but more likely to preserve British economic interests in the Suez Canal and India. Egypt became a British protectorate until 1922 (de facto between 1882 and 1914); after 1882 it was much easier for British Egyptologists to enter the country, excavate antiquities, and export them. Amelia Edwards, a writer and amateur Egyptologist, spearheaded efforts to establish the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1882, and employed famous archaeologist William Flinders Petrie in 1884 to lead excavations. Antiquities excavated by Flinders Petrie were displayed in museum galleries and private exhibitions across London. During the British occupation of Egypt, the popularly termed "scramble for Africa" began, where Britain, Germany, Belgium, France, and Portugal attempted to lay claim to the last 'blank spaces' in Africa. The British occupation in Egypt, then, was intimately tied to imperial endeavours in Egypt, India, and Africa, and took place at a historical moment when jingoism and imperial critique developed simultaneously.

The tension that resulted from such competing views of imperialism, and such intense foreign expansion, resulted in what scholars generally perceive to be an anxiety over the health, and perceived longevity, of the British Empire during the late-Victorian period. In order to account for this imperial anxiety, let me gloss briefly the cultural environment at this historical moment. Scholars of the *fin-de-siècle* have customarily identified this period as self-reflective and preoccupied with perceived triumphs and losses. This period, between roughly 1880 and 1905, was marked by social upheaval, revolutionary scientific theories, urban development, and imperial expansion, all of which prompted intense deliberation in a variety of forums over whether or not Britain was progressing or regressing. The emergence of The New Woman destabilized gendered power in urban centres, while the rise of Socialism called into question the existing social order. London expanded tremendously during the nineteenth century, and the overwhelming number of immigrants and poor changed the cityscape. New scientific theories about human sexuality, human brains, and human evolution collided with both existing scientific ideas and religious doctrine, and impacted relations between the imperial centre and its margins. A new phase of foreign expansion, popularly called "The New Imperialism," a period marked by unprecedented competition with other nations to occupy new territory, redefined Britain's imperial goals and methods. 88 million new 'subjects' came under British rule, and the Empire was suddenly composed of peoples of all colours, not just white emigrants (Ledger and Luckhurst *The Fin de Siècle* 133). While this New Imperialism was not without its critics, it also prompted an intensified jingoism at

home. What results, as Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst have written, is an "excitingly volatile and transitional period," where "assertions of the limitless generative power of the British nation were haunted by fantasies of decay and degeneration" (*The Fin de Siècle* xiii). It is this haunting, as articulated by ambulatory mummies and enchanted antiquities in fiction, that I examine in my dissertation. Gothic literature, with its preoccupation with the past and transgression of boundaries (especially of the past), becomes a stage upon which these hauntings are dramatized. What results is a melancholy, violent, paranoid, and elegiac representation of perceived cultural loss, a disenchantment with the potential or inevitable regression of Britain.

While in much pro-imperialist discourse, ancient Egyptian antiquities spoke to imperial strength and progress, and of Britain's rightful inheritance of the goods of ancient civilizations, in Gothic fiction, ancient Egyptian antiquities promise the inevitable decline of even the British Empire. The debates between proponents and critics of the New Imperialism played out in the literature of the day using images of ancient Egypt. For example, a poem by John Davidson entitled "St. George's Day" (1895) from *Fleet Street Eclogues* depicts a conversation between the pro-imperialist Basil and the skeptic Menzies:

> Basil:
>
> And England still grows great,
>
> And never shall grow old ;
>
> Within our hands we hold
>
> The world's fate.

Menzies:

We hold the world's fate ?

The cry seems out of date.

Basil:

Not while a single Englishman

Can work with English brains and bones !

Awaiting us since time began,

The swamps of ice, the wastes of plane !

In Boreal and Austral zones

Took life and meaning when we came.

The Sphinx that watches by the Nile

Has seen great empires pass away,

The mightiest lasted but a while ;

Yet ours shall not decay. (14)

The Sphinx outlived its Egyptian creators, and remained in the late-nineteenth century a survival of antiquity. The ability of Egyptian objects to survive their civilization spoke to the Victorians of the passage of time; although for some authors these objects offered evidence that the British Empire was the pinnacle of history, other authors viewed these objects as the promise of an inevitable fall of even the most powerful Empires. Gothic literature certainly follows the latter trend, perceiving in these objects the decay of Empire. The seemingly alien

antiquities of Egypt constitute, in literature, a portentous mirror in which the Victorians forsaw their own imperial death.

Even though this pattern is intensified at the end of the century, there are precursors in the early- and mid-century, including Percy Bysshe Shelley's sonnet "Ozymanidas" (1818) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poem "The Burdens of Nineveh" (1856).[3] "Ozymandias" uses the image of a crumbling Egyptian statue to communicate the melancholy message of inevitable decline. Thought to have been inspired by the bust of Ramesses II, Shelley writes of the passions communicated by the visage of the statue "which yet survive" (7) into the present day, even though "nothing beside remains" (12). The turn of the sonnet, the message that imperial decline is inevitable, derives from the contrast between the epigraph on the bust, which exhorts viewers to "look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!" (11), and "the decay / of that colossal wreck" (12-13). Shelley uses the image of the material remains of Egypt to speculate upon the fate of Empires. Rossetti's poem similarly uses the objects of an ancient Empire to speculate on the fate of Britan, but this time, the objects have been imported to England, not left mouldering in a foreign desert. Speaking of an Assyrian winged bull as "the mummy of a buried faith" (16), a "corpse" that has been "swathe[d]" in "cerements" (19-20), Rossetti muses:

> So may he stand again; till now,
>
> In ships of unknown sail and prow,

[3] Although these poems are not characteristically included in the Gothic Canon, I would suggest that they manifest intensely Gothic concerns, thus supporting my reading (outlined later in this Introduction) that Gothic is a mode that cannot be limited to particular generic 'waves.'

Some tribe of the Australian plough

Bear him afar - a relic now

Of London, not Nineveh! (176-180)

The idea is striking that, in the future, the bull might be 'excavated' by an explorer from a current colony (Australia) from a ruined London as a relic of British culture. Not only does this comparison speak to Rossetti's recognition that Britain appropriated the objects it 'collected' from foreign cultures, but it also indicates that the antiquities of the Near East were sites at which writers pondered the fate of their own Empire. This analogy is particularly striking when considering the speaker's reaction to Greek art in the museum, which fills him with joy (5). Andrew Stauffer, in his excellent article "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and The Burdens of Nineveh," speaks to how "the winged bull became an imperial *memento mori*" (372): "once British archaeologists began hauling the strange, half-mute remnants of these elder empires to the center of their own modern one, the melancholy comparisons began in earnest: as Assyria and Ancient Egypt are now, so shall we be" (370).

These comparisons in literature, I suggest, only intensify during the phase of New Imperialism, which co-incided with what has been termed the Gothic Revival. What I discovered in my analysis of a wide range of texts written between roughly 1890 and 1910 is that representations of the material goods of Egypt become sites for working through *fin-de-siècle* anxieties that attended this new imperial phase: fear of a fractured Empire, concern over the appropriation of

foreign antiquities, and apprehension about the effects on British science and knowledge that would emerge from contact with colonies. Differently from other literature about India, Rome, Greece, or Africa, late-Victorian fiction about Egypt uses the mummy to articulate British fears of cultural loss, portraying the imperial collection as a site where nationhood was not built and sustained, but instead fractured and destroyed. At a historical moment marked by imperial expansion and a new aggressive foreign policy, British Gothic literature expresses doubt that the Empire can continue to progress, instead offering persistent images of decline, decay, and degeneration.

The critical aims of my dissertation are: to contribute to current scholarly readings of Gothic literature; to offer a reading of one literary expression of cultural decline as part of a larger pattern at the *fin-de-siècle*; and, as the key critical intervention of this project, to participate in the ongoing discussion about materialities in Victorian imperialism. In the Winter 2008 issue of *Victorian Studies*, Erika Rappaport wrote that "more, not less, work on imperial things will help us uncover the value of empire in Victorian Britain" (292). By analysing commonly used commodities and rarified antiquities (the focus of this project), Rappaport suggests, we can understand imperialism as a process of acquisition and consumption (289) and also "argue more forcefully about the domestic impact of imperial conquest" (290). Recent scholarship is this field is on-going; for example, John Plotz published *Portable Property* in 2009, a study (with which I engage later) of how objects that Britons took with them overseas became signifiers of 'Britishness.' This dissertation also takes part in a sudden surge of scholarly

interest in Egyptian culture in the Victorian *fin-de-siècle,* even though at the time of this project's conception such studies were few and far between. Roger Luckhurst is currently writing a book entitled *The Mummy's Curse: A New Cultural History,* in which he discusses the Edwardian trend of the British Museum mummy's curse.[4] Aviva Briefel, Bradley Deane, and Karen MacFarlane have all written articles in the last few years on mummy fiction; most recently, in the 2011 issue of *English Literature in Translation,* Ailise Bulfin published an article entitled "The Fiction of Gothic Egypt and British Imperial Paranoia: The Curse of the Suez Canal," which interprets the wave of *fin-de-siècle* fiction about Egypt in light of political concerns around the Suez Canal. I view my project as filling a crucial space in this network of ongoing research; through a reading of Egyptian antiquities and imperial collecting, I locate representations of material culture, particularly, artifacts, within a larger cultural anxiety about parts of the Empire 'returning home' to Britain.

Re-thinking Gothic: Imperial Gothic and Museal Gothic

At this juncture, it becomes important for me to define what I mean as "the Gothic," since what Gothic 'does' both forms a critical backbone for my project and is one of its key critical interventions. This dissertation participates in a critical trend that situates Gothic literature within the cultural and historical conditions in which it was produced, an approach that is distanced from readings of Gothic as an ahistorical genre with recurring tropes. I read Gothic texts as

[4] Current information on Luckhurst's forthcoming project is from his website, http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/our-staff/full-time-academic-staff/luckhurst/research.

embedded within the cultural ideology of the period in which they were produced, and in turn, analyse how these Gothic texts re-produce dominant or subversive cultural elements. As I state above, Egyptian antiquities in Gothic literature register historically specific anxieties about imperialism, Britishness, and degeneration, all part of a larger late-Victorian cultural ideology. Gothic scholarship, however, has not always approached Gothic as historically defined; Gothic criticism is a highly diversified field, incorporating such theoretical perspectives as psychoanalysis, deconstruction, feminism, queer theory, and historicism. As Anne Williams asserts in *Art of Darkness* (1995), defining Gothic is highly problematic even though the term appears in numerous scholarly and popular texts (14). Definitions can be sketchy or ill-defined. Gothic seems to have many different "informing principles" (16) often related to tone or mood, which are then used to define the genre retroactively; in other words, "'I can't define it, but I know it when I see it'" (qtd. in Williams 14). An example of this trend is Markman Ellis's *A History of Gothic Fiction* (2000), in which he states that "gothic is [...] a tone or mood" (8). Such atmospheric definitions of the genre are reductive, and do not point to how Gothic engages with significant cultural, historical, and political concerns.

In my historicist approach to Gothic I have used as a starting point Robert Mighall's *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction*. Mighall focuses exclusively on Gothic's relationship to history in this study, and recuperates many non-fiction documents that he reads alongside both Canonical and non-Canonical Gothic fiction. I chiefly borrow Mighall's suggestion that Gothic horror originates from

literary representations of "survivals" (xiv), someone or something that seemed to belong to the past that lives into the present.[5] These survivals, which represent the unenlightened and barbaric past, threaten or compromise the present's self-definition through modernity, reason, and enlightenment. What embodies 'the past' changes throughout time, making Gothic, and its villains, historically-specific. Perhaps one of the most controversial statements Mighall makes is that "the supernatural is not 'essentially' a defining component of Gothic" (xix), but that the supernatural has, at various moments since the eighteenth century, been allied with the barbaric and superstitious past and thus makes an appearance in Gothic fiction as a 'survival.' Egyptian antiquities' literary portrayal represents another type of 'survival': a survival of imperial decay, one which exists into the present to 'haunt' the imperial present with the spectre of imperial death.

I have avoided referring to Gothic as a genre, though it has often been labelled so. While a generic approach seems valid within certain critical contexts, for the purposes of my project, approaching Gothic as a "mode" instead of a genre is more useful. Gothic is concerned with 'survivals' rather than ahistorical tropes and characters, as its "principal defining structure [...] is its attitude to the past and its unwelcome legacies" (Mighall xix). Gothic is more productive as a mode, as it transcends historical pigeonholing and exists a mode of literary expression for larger cultural concerns:

[5] Mighall suggests that the history of the word 'Gothic' even suggests historicity. The word originated with the Romans, who used it to refer to the Germanic Goths; during the eighteenth century 'Gothic' evolved to denote style in opposite to Classicism or Neo-Classicism, or in other words, barbarism.

> For when we speak of a mode, what can we mean but that this particular type of literary discourse is not bound to the conventions of a given age, nor indissolubly linked to a given type of verbal artifact, but rather persists as a temptation and a mode of expression across a whole range of historical periods, seeming to offer itself, if only intermittently, as a formal possibility which can be revived and renewed. (Jameson 142)

Speaking of Gothic as a mode, rather than a genre, allows reading connections between the conventional 'waves' of Gothic fiction. Traditionally, Gothic has been read as having three or four waves: the first beginning with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764 and ending in the early-nineteenth century; the second, the Gothic 'revival,' beginning in the early 1880s, climaxing with Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and ending sometime in the early-twentieth century; and the third wave, beginning sometime in the late twentieth century and persisting into our own contemporary moment. Scholars have read these waves as having in common particular interests and tropes. However, more recently critics suggest that important examples of Gothic existing outside these time periods, such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), have been overlooked due to the chronological boundaries of generic 'waves.' Also, suggesting that Gothic texts published decades or centuries apart can act similarly detracts from historical readings of this mode. We can now reclaim texts from the mid-nineteenth century which exist without ties to the waves of Gothic, and we can understand a longer trajectory of influence from the eighteenth century onwards.

By referring to Gothic as a mode, we can read Gothic less as a genre with defining "tropes" like atmosphere and castles, and more as a method which performs a particular task.

Reading Gothic as a mode allows me to consider the literary qualities of texts in conjunction with cultural and historical contexts.[6] My reading of this mode emphasizes that Gothic's location within the larger literary landscape, and in particular the landscape of fantasy, cannot be ignored. All literature is, in some ways, imaginative and fantastic, but Gothic, as a form of fantasy, is particularly so. Rather than represent things the way they are, Gothic *elaborates,* producing representations that are at once indicative of 'the real' and removed from it. As David Punter suggests in *The Literature of Terror*, "within the Gothic we can find a very intense, if *displaced*, engagement with political and social problems," when beginning in the 1790s the "literary marketplace was flooded with a mass of fiction which rejected direct engagement with the activities of contemporary life in favour of geographically and historically remote actions and settings" (54, emphasis mine). Gothic 'displaces' cultural anxiety into the realm of fantasy, a space that is able to stage violent conflict that has not come to pass in reality. It is this displacement which is most intriguing about the Gothic, as it allows us to read metaphorically Gothic fiction's literary trappings of horror, terror, the supernatural, and the fantastic, for evidence of 'real-world' engagement. We must read literature not necessarily alongside history, but in counterpoint to it.

[6] A common critique of Mighall's book is that it is overly historicized (see Cannon Schmidt's review in *VS* 2002), and ignores other cultural influences (such as gender–see Susan Morgan's 2000 review in *SEL*).

Thus, the reason that the Gothic mode is so important to my project is that it achieves something that realist fiction, and historical documents, do not. Gothic is "a *language* to describe certain areas of human experience for which no other then existed" (Prickett 74), not merely the opposite of the prevailing nineteenth-century mode of realism, "but in addition to it" (1) as an alternative mode of expression. This reading counters the centuries of criticism leveled at Gothic texts for their 'failure' to match mimetic potential of realism through their unabashed use of sensationalism and the fantastic.[7] Yet Gothic's imaginative potential, its sometimes wild, unrestrained, excessive, improbable, or supernatural characteristics are precisely its most productive elements. Just because the sensational elements of Gothic fiction have banished it to the margins of 'serious' literature does not mean Gothic doesn't have 'anything to say.' By paying attention to the register of fantasy, we can unearth the polysemy of Gothic's imaginative re-interpretation of cultural anxiety.

This re-interpretation of cultural anxiety, this re-imagining of fears in new guises, is, as Stephen Arata has claimed, a way Gothic "effectively manage[s] unruly anxieties by rearticulating them [...] or at least redirecting much of their troubling energy" (132). It is Gothic's business to 'redirect' this energy, for "one can argue that it is precisely the business of gothic fiction to articulate anxieties as a prelude to mastering them" (Arata 126). Even if the text never portrays a 'return'

[7] There are many famous examples of such criticism, but here are two of my favourites. Coleridge wrote a review article of *The Monk* in 1797 proclaiming that "the horrible and the preternatural have usually seized on the popular taste, at the rise and decline of literature" (qtd. in Clery 185). Only a year later, an anonymous review article in response to Ann Radcliffe called Gothic novels "the distorted ideas of lunatics" (qtd. in Clery 184).

to normalcy, or a reversal of Gothic evil, once represented, the threat is exorcised, expunged from reality, or reversed. I suggest that Gothic texts present anxious, troubling, or terrifying possibilities because writers hope that by articulating them, they restrict them to paper.[8] Rosemary Jackson's *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* frames this function more psychoanalytically:

> In expressing desire, fantasy can operate in two ways... it can *tell of,* manifest or show desire (expression in the sense of portrayal, representation, manifestation, linguistic utterance, mention, description), or it can *expel* desire, when this desire is a disturbing element which threatens cultural order and continuity (expression in the sense of pressing out, squeezing, expulsion, getting rid of something by force). In many cases fantastic literature fulfils both functions at once, for desire can be 'expelled' through having been 'told of' and thus vicariously experienced by author and reader. (3-4)

I adapt this 'desire' and 'fear' to the historical and cultural rather than the psychological, that is to say, as a way of understanding British 'desire' and 'fear' of colonial countries. The simultaneous expression of desire, and expulsion of fear, compellingly underscores representations of ancient Egypt in late-Victorian Gothic literature. Ancient Egypt so entranced the Victorians, prompted an architectural and aesthetic movement, and flooded homes and museums, yet also

[8] Kathleen Spencer suggests that by violating reality Gothic reaffirms the status quo (208); after reading novels like *The Beetle,* I disagree. Gothic explodes anxieties, restricting them to paper, but allowing "reality" to run amok there without the promise of re-establishing normalcy.

functioned in literature as a symbol of imperial panic. By inverting imperial power dynamics, and portraying Egyptian antiquities run amok and out of imperial control, Gothic "points to or suggests the basis upon which cultural order rests, for it opens up [...] that which is outside dominant value systems" (Jackson 4).

This larger understanding of Gothic enables me to identify two hybridized, more particular modes that react to particular Victorian anxieties about Empire: the imperial Gothic, and its closely-related counterpart, the museal Gothic. These modes are first articulated during the nineteenth century in reaction to the Empire-building that took place within the newly-emergent civic museum in Britain. I will outline the critical history of these terms in order to explain how I draw them together. In the texts I examine in this dissertation, the museum, and the imperialism it sustained for the Victorians, are gothicized, and the museum emerges as a site where foreign objects run amok, British collectors are threatened, and the Empire is symbolically fractured and, in some cases, destroyed.

Imperial Gothic

Imperial Gothic texts produce dark visions of the imperial project, ones in which power between colonizer/colonized is inverted, in which conventionally insoluble boundaries are broken or penetrated, and in which the development of Empire brings not progress, but regression, to Britain. The nightmarish vision of imperialism finds articulation in the pages of fiction, where "the space of imagination and fantasy" is a "discursive mode where both the utopian and dystopian sides of imperial relations can be elaborated" (Kaplan 192). Imperial

Gothic texts imagine an imperial dystopia, and present the Empire as a catalyst of regression rather than a force for progress. This understanding of imperial Gothic emerges from Patrick Brantlinger, who first coined the term "imperial Gothic" in his foundational overview of Victorian imperialism in literature, *Rule of Darkness* (1990). In this book, Brantlinger outlines "the imperial Gothic" as a late-century subgenre of texts that similarly represented occultism, primitivism, and imperialism as intertwined. Brantlinger suggests that the anxieties that attended imperialism during this period prompted a literary interest in progress's opposite, as represented by a return to the occult and the barbaric. "Apocalyptic themes and images are characteristic of imperial Gothic," Brantlinger writes, "in which, despite the consciously pro-Empire values of many authors, the feeling emerges that 'we are those upon whom the ends of the world have come'" (230).

One principal theme through which this sense of despair emerges is "invasion fantasies" (235), which portray the inversion of the outward movement of imperialism, bringing the "demonic" forces (234) of the imperial margins back to the core of civilization, the imperial centre (Britain or London). Brantlinger's definition illuminates how anxiety about late-century imperialism, and the aggressive new foreign expansion policy, found expression in Gothic texts through representations of the penetration of Britain. Read in one way, the texts I analyse in this dissertation depict this type of invasion: Egyptian mummies 'invade' British museums–with the help of unwitting British collectors–and then break free from their display cases. In these texts, the invasion of the museum is tantamount to the invasion and destruction of the British Empire, or at least,

heralds its imminent collapse. "Invasion scare stories" (233) suggest that the strength of the Empire exists only when its borders are maintained and the outward trajectory of its influence is not halted nor reversed.

Stephen Arata builds on Brantlinger's definition of the imperial Gothic in his book *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle* (1996), offering a nuanced re-interpretation of this mode. Moving away from Brantlinger's discussion of the links between primitivism and the occult, he reads *Dracula* as an example of how the individual's descent into the primitive mirrors larger anxieties about the regression of civilization. Arata calls these stories narratives of "reverse colonization," suggesting that his approach moves away from the idea of 'invasion,' which expresses the unprovoked actions of an aggressor, and refocuses on how Britain's "destructive imperial practices" (109) were "mirrored back in monstrous forms" (108). Reverse colonization, then, is intensely self-reflective, and ultimately offers a displaced representation of imperialism. I borrow from Arata's reading his insistence that this representation is part of a larger pattern of cultural decline. Arata traces "mutually implicated" representations of national, biological, and aesthetic "decline" in late-Victorian literature and cultural texts (1-2). Many periods, Arata suggests, have been rich in stories of "abiding loss," yet the ways in which these stories are told are always historically specific (1). Arata uses degeneration theory as a basis for his reading of various types of decline, and connects together the body and the Empire, for "anxieties about the decay of the individual body were inseparable from anxieties about the decay of the collective 'body' figured in national or racial terms" (6). Arata's argument is most compelling

in his reading of *Dracula,* which he suggests "articulates, in distorted but vivid fashion, some of the culture's more harrowing anxieties" about imperialism (126). Imperial Gothic, I suggest, offers various visions of 'haunting' always accompanied by images of decline and decay, and apocalyptic questions about nationhood, racial stock, and the fate of Britain.

Because of the way in which they manifest fantasies about the East, imperial Gothic texts trace their roots to the larger discourse of Orientalism. Orientalism, one manifestation of imperial ideology and the colonial discourses that supported it, created fantasies of 'knowability' around the 'Orient'. Orientalism has long since been the predominant lens through which scholars have viewed European interactions with Egypt, beginning with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. When he invaded, Napoleon brought with him over a hundred scientists and artists to document the monuments, antiquities, and history of Egypt. These 'savants' comprised the *Commission des Sciences et Arts d'Égypte*. Even though Napoleon's primary goal in invading was to thwart British interests in India, the knowledge of ancient Egypt that emerged from his expedition 'revealed' Egypt to Europeans, enabling them to know, to fantasize about, and to mimic the aesthetic of this ancient civilization. Knowledge about Egypt spread across Europe from Britain and France; after Napoleon's defeat in August of 1798, the British forces confiscated many of the French scientists' findings, but the French succeeded in smuggling many antiquities, and most of their notes, back into France. Years later, these notes were published as part of an exhaustive, massive document, *Le Description de l'Égypte*, published between 1809

and 1829. The mummies and antiquities of Egypt were prominently displayed in both the British Museum and the Louvre; also, a new Egyptomania swept across Europe, primarily influencing architecture and interior design. Egyptomania itself is a form of Orientalism, as it is primarly a fascination with Egyptian culture that prompts speculation about, and copying of, Egyptian culture. Thus scientific discourse, museum displays, and aesthetic design were all Orientalist manifestations of the West's desire, and its ability, to 'know' Egypt by appropriating its culture.

In my dissertation, I define Orientalism through Edward Said, as a fantasy of knowing and controlling the Orient articulated through European literature and art, which constructs the Orient (and its subjects) through a rigid set of binary oppositions (East/West, Orient/Occident) based on Western assumptions and fantasies. Orientalism and its many tributaries, particularly exoticism (desire for the strange) and xenophobia (a fear of the Other), thus form the foundations of my understanding of Western fantasies about the East, and the basis of my reading of imperial Gothic. Indeed, imperial Gothic texts about Egypt continually balance exoticism and xenophobia, a paradox of desire and fear that naturally finds articulation in Gothic fiction; these texts bring the mummy close to home, representing Victorians' desire to see the antiquities of Egypt in museum displays, but also represent an intense fear of the mummy coming back to life. The ambulatory mummy is not within British power; it is frequently out of control, running amok inside the walls of an institution built upon imperial power: the museum. Gothic invents new fantasies and assumptions about the objects of

Egypt that both place them outside the realm of knowledge and power, and invert the traditional binaries associated with East/West.

Museal Gothic

The "museal Gothic," or museum Gothic, is another type of fantasy about Egypt that 'writes back' to Orientalism and, through its links to the Victorian civic museum and the Empire, is intertwined with imperial Gothic. Museal Gothic is preoccupied with Orientalist fantasies of knowledge and power, as manifested by colonial control of foreign objects, but ultimately texts within this mode deny, invert, or disrupt the traditional trajectory of imperial power/knowledge. Ruth Hoberman is the lone other scholar to use the term "museal Gothic"[9]; however, my definition counters her own. Hoberman, in her article "In Quest of a Museal Aura: Turn of the Century Narratives about Museum-Displayed Objects," analyses several *fin-de-siècle* texts in which objects display uncanny cognisance, or come to life, or experience a keen connection with an observer. Hoberman, drawing on Walter Benjamin's reading of aura, suggests that these texts dramatize a desire for an intimate connection between viewer and an 'auratic' object, that is, an object that possesses 'aura,' an authenticity which, in the age of mechanical reproduction, creates an inaccessible and reverent quality. Viewers desire a connection with the auratic, or authentic, object, and these texts portray viewers breaking through the museum-display-case glass that normally prevents such a connection. My analysis of museum Gothic contradicts

[9] Hoberman adopts this term from Theodor Adorno, who writes that "the German word 'museal' ['museumlike'] has unpleasant overtones. It describes objects to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship and which are in the process of dying" (175).

Hoberman's reading. Museum Gothic texts, I suggest, play between desire and fear, as do imperial Gothic texts, where the foreign object may be initially desired, but ultimately is pushed away in fear. These texts do not dramatize the desire for an intimate connection with auratic objects; rather, they dramatize the fear that objects in the museum might be possessed of more meaning, more life, or more energy, than their curators thought they had.

My definition of museum Gothic draws heavily on a school of museum theory, critical museum studies, sometimes called the new museology. As Lianne McTavish outlines in her article "Thinking Through Critical Museum Studies," several studies in the last thirty years now approach the museum "as a site for the production of knowledge, rather than a passive container" (6). Rather than insisting that museum displays elucidate essential truths about cultures and their objects, critical museum studies analyse how museums are epistemological institutions, responsible for creating meaning out of objects rather than simply reflecting already-created meaning. Everything from the process of excavation, to acquisition, to creation of displays, to viewing objects in the museum, is part of the larger production of meaning carried out by the museum through objects. I draw on this school of theory to better understand how literary representations of museums, as well as of smaller object collections, are able to create widely divergent meanings, sometimes reflecting dominant (imperial) ideology, and sometimes, for example in Gothic fiction, reflecting an alternate approach. In other words, my project assumes that a central tenet of critical museum studies is true: that object meanings are mutable and created. By understanding how

museums create meaning, we can begin to interpret how the rise of the civic museum in Victorian England was implicated in the larger imperial project. The museum participated in the Orientalist project by staging British control over, and knowledge about, colonial objects; by asserting mastery over colonial objects, British museums metonymically asserted mastery over the colonies and their people.

Late-Victorian Gothic texts seize upon the museum as a site of representation where Orientalist representations of control and knowledge over objects break down, and use this space to articulate cultural anxiety about imperial boundaries. Objects, in a new space but imbued with old meaning, are represented in Gothic literature as "survivals," as a type of haunting: their old meaning survives, despite the present's best intentions to eradicate it. The museum seeks to create new meanings, but ancient, foreign meaning still clings to imperial objects from ancient Egypt. Museum objects, in a sense, are continually haunted, or haunting, as within them live a myriad of meanings from the past. This reading of object "haunting" provides a literary point of entry for Critical Museum Studies, in particular, its understanding that although viewers bestow a "secondary" meaning onto displayed objects, "traces" of "earlier meaning" might remain (Hooper-Greenhill *Museums* 50). "Earlier signification may, therefore, still be dug up, evoked, made visible," even though "it is never possible to reconstruct the past entirely" so "the older meanings reinvigorated cannot take exactly the same form as they did previously" (50). These objects are survivals of the past, bearing with

them into the present, and into the British Museum, foreign and ancient signification.

Thus I first approach Egyptian antiquities as bearing complex, plural meanings, assigned from within imperial discourse; I then trace how this meaning transforms further on the pages of late-Victorian fiction, to provide a space within which these objects can stage a reverse colonization, and a survival, from the past. Yet there is one more layer of meaning which I must ascribe to these objects: that of loss and cultural disenchantment. This signification is specific to the relics of Egypt; as I suggested in my comments on Rossetti's "The Burdens of Nineveh," the objects of Egypt were received as melancholy, whereas the objects of other ancient civilizations were received with joy. Jonah Siegel, in his anthology of Victorian museum sources *The Emergence of the Modern Museum,* offers an insight that can begin to account for this difference. He writes that

> Objects tend to enter the museum when their world has been destroyed, and so they are relics and witnesses of a loss [....] The museum creates wholes that speak of fragmentation; it houses hostages or refugees that can never really be sent home because their native land has ceased to exist in a way that can welcome them back as they were. (5)

In other words, museum objects are able to 'haunt' us because their multiple meanings remind us of loss. Egyptian mummies epitomize this transformation; as "relics and witnesses" not only to the decay of the Egyptian Empire but also to the passage of millenia, they enter the museum not as embalmed corpses of ancestors,

but as morbid, spectacular examples of a dead civilization, one which might eventually mirror the decline of Britain itself.

We can read Egyptian objects in fiction not as 'survivors,' but as 'survivals,' as Gothic traces of an imperial decay that, for the Victorians, conjured intense self-reflection. In reading ancient Egyptian objects this way, I am reminded of Jean Baudrillard's dictum: "for what you really collect is always yourself" (91). In his book *The System of Objects,* Baudrillard devotes a section to antiques and collecting, suggestively titled "The Marginal System." He notes that the act of collecting, and antique objects, are special, and marginal, examples of the human-object bond. Although my project does not adopt a strictly poststructuralist approach to reading objects, several of Baudrillard's comments about the importance of antiquities shed light onto reading Egyptian objects as 'survivals,' suggesting once more that Gothic scholarship cannot be limited to particular theoretical lenses. Baudrillard asks, "what is the reason for the strange acculturation phenomenon whereby advanced peoples seek out signs extrinsic to their own time or space, and increasingly remote relative to their own cultural system?" (75). In answer, Baudillard suggests that antiques have ceased to possess any practical function, and as a result simply 'signify' (74). What they signify, specifically, is time: the passage of time; the suppression of time; the mastery of time; the origins of time (74-76). An antique is "beautiful," he insists, "*merely because it has survived*" (83). In Gothic fiction, the antiquity is an object of desire and fear because of its ability to survive, to continue into the present and haunt Victorians with the spectre of loss. The Victorians, then, sought out "signs

extrinsic to their own time" and "remote relative to their own cutural system" precisely because these objects communicated imperial survival; the museum, through its archival function, becomes a site in fiction where object 'survival' raises dark questions of imperial longevity, the strength of nationhood, and the importance of culture.

Why Egypt?

The answer to this question of "why Egypt?" lies in how the Victorians used representations of this ancient culture to work through their own, contemporary concerns about imperial power. Perhaps the most telling difference between *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and, for a contemporary example, Stephen Sommers's 2001 film *The Mummy Returns,* is their endings. In Stoker's novel, Tera is indeed 'resurrected,' but her body vanishes in a cloud of smoke that kills the team of scientists standing nearby. She is never recovered, and presumably disappears into Britain to carry on with the quest for knowledge and power that motivated her three thousand years earlier. Conversely, in Sommer's film, Imhotep and his minions battle stalwart British and American scholars and adventurers who would banish the mummy back to the underworld. At the finale of the film the Western adventurers triumph, and Imhotep falls into a hell-like chasm of fiery souls who ferry his body back to the afterlife. The conclusions of these 1903 and 2001 narratives are thus inversions of each other. Tera kills Western scholars and is resurrected; Imhotep is 'killed' by Western scholars and returns to the underworld. The film proclaims Anglo-American, hyper-masculinized triumph over the foreign, ancient, and feminized mummy, and

reasserts Western cultural dominance. The novel speaks to a British *fin-de-siècle* cultural disenchantment, and suggests Western cultural decay in the face of an exotic, more powerful, Egyptian Queen. The answer to the question of "why Egypt," I believe, lies in contemplating and understanding the British *fin-de-siècle* worldview of cultural disenchantment, anxious imperialism, and intense self-reflection.

Chapter 1

The Victorian Gothic Museum in Short Fiction: "The Nemesis of Fire," "The Story of Baelbrow," and "Lot 249"

The majority of Victorians who did not work or travel abroad paradoxically experienced the colonies 'at home,' in their dwellings and their museums, spaces that housed the nation, its subjects, and its objects. As interconnected spaces that both individually and collectively created and sustained imperial nationhood, the house, the museum, and the nation shaped Britons' attitudes towards the Empire through collecting. This chapter investigates, through a reading of three texts, how late-Victorian Gothic fiction re-imagined the project of imperial nation-building that took place within the museum's walls. I read into the multifarious ways in which the museum is reproduced, revised, and rebooted in these texts in order to uncover how imperial collecting in the museum is re-imagined as detrimental to British nationhood.

I have selected three Gothic short stories about Egyptian antiquities from the late-Victorian period that question the merit of imperial collecting and generate unease and danger around representations of collecting Egyptian mummies. These stories, "The Nemesis of Fire" by Algernon Blackwood (1908), "The Story of Baelbrow" by E. and H. Heron (1898), and "Lot 249" by Arthur Conan Doyle (1892), exemplify a larger cultural anxiety over the foreign signification attached to Egyptian mummies imported into English museums. Together, these texts offer a nightmarish re-imagining of reverse colonization, a

cautionary tale that warns against stockpiling objects laden with foreign signification in the 'heart' of England. In order to emphasize the inherent threat in Egyptian antiquities, these texts dramatize bringing foreign mummies 'home' to the middle-class house, the museum, and the nation, by amalgamating these spaces into a nexus of imperial nationhood.

Despite the fact that these texts are, today, relatively marginal, they remain indices to the representation of the museum in literature during the late-nineteenth– and early-twentieth–century period. Although Doyle's story has begun to creep back into the canonical fold, as, recently, it has been more frequently anthologized, these three texts are largely forgotten by contemporary readers and scholarship. Yet, during their first publication runs they were fairly widely distributed. "Lot 249" was published in *Harper's Magazine* in 1892, and was re-issued as part of Doyle's *Round the Red Lamp* in 1894. "The Story of Baelbrow" was published in *Pearson's Magazine* and, in 1899, in a collection of Flaxman Low stories. Algernon Blackwood's John Silence stories received considerable publication runs in various collections, including *John Silence, Physician Extraordinary* (1908), and several subsequent reprints through the 1940s. Thus, although these texts are relatively marginal today, they received enough ink during the period of 1895–1910 to be read side-by-side as exemplars of the (relatively small) group of texts that offered Gothic literary representations of mummy collections.[10]

[10] These texts also participate in a popular genre, namely, detective fiction. Both "The Nemesis of Fire" and "The Story of Baelbrow" feature 'psychic' or 'occult' detectives, and, although "Lot 249"

Interestingly, in order to build this argument, I must move backwards chronologically through publication dates, from 1908 to 1898 to 1892. What this movement suggests to me is that these mummies become less, not more, dangerous after the *fin-de-siècle,* possibly hinting at a shift in cultural attitudes towards British museums and the body of the mummy. Cultural anxiety towards the imperial museum, and the imperial domestic collection, as sites that house dangerous foreign signification, is most intense at the height of the phase of New Imperialism, in the 1890s, and decreases, though is still palpable, in the early-twentieth century. This anxiety counters dominant cultural attitudes during this period that read the museum and the home as bastions of British imperialism. Just as Jasmine Day has suggested that owning a mummy extended the grasp of Empire to individual citizens (21), Victorian museums (and, within my reading of the museum-house-nation triad, domestic imperial collections) created a microscopic Empire within their walls through the arrays of foreign objects they amassed, catalogued, and displayed for British viewers.[11] In much contemporary discourse the museum's role as bastion of imperialism was received with pride. For example, a statement in *Chambers's Journal* in January of 1860 attests to the breadth of the Victorians' imperial collecting enterprise:

> England seems destined to become the depository of the relics of the grandeur of the departed Empires of the world. Already exceedingly

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does not feature Doyle's most famous sleuth, the protagonist is a stalwart British medical student who solves the 'mystery' of the invisible assailant on campus.

[11] Numerous Critical Museum scholars have similarly read the imperial prerogative of the Victorian Museum in this way, including Barbara Black, Jonah Siegel, and J.M. Mackenzie.

> rich in the possession of the artistic glories of Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome, Xanthus, and Carthage, our national museum could boast a finer collection of antiquities than the rest of Europe combined. (49)

The Victorians who nurtured the symbiotic relationship between imperialism and collecting conceptualized the museum as the natural final destination for the treasures of foreign places and peoples. Numerous people collected on behalf of the museum and Empire, including travelers, private collectors, scientists, archaeologists, excavators, curators, academics, museum visitors, and patrons. The objects ensconced in museum exhibits and private homes by these agents of Empire greatly solidified Victorians' perception of the Empire and their role in it as guardians of the world's objects.

The critical intervention staged by this chapter of my dissertation is a re-reading of this discourse of 'beneficial' imperial collection through the pages of late-Victorian Gothic fiction. The texts I examine parry the popular image of the museum in the Victorian imagination as "the fantasy that collecting brought all the world home and thus domesticated all the world to home" (Black 150), instead imagining a nightmare of failed domestication. The etymology of "domesticate" prompts a polysemic interpretation that is very productive, highlighting the domestic character of the museum and middle-class home as spaces that 'house' the nation, and drawing attention to the ideology of 'taming' foreign objects by trapping and displaying them in museums.[12] The process by

[12] In her chapter on *Jane Eyre,* Barbara Black suggests that Rochester's extensive domestic collections of foreign goods demonstrate both mastery of, and mastery by, exotic locales (79).

which Britons imported imperial objects into Britain was a form of domestication, both by establishing these objects in the 'house' and by symbolically taming their colonial nature. In these Gothic stories, irremovable foreign signification does not enable collectors to 'domesticate' these objects within the British 'home,' but instead, allows the objects to come to life and rebel against the imperial power of their collectors and the epistemological power of the museum.

As evidence of the trend in popular discourse against which I position Gothic fiction, I briefly offer Moncure Conway's *Travels in South Kensington*,[13] an oft-cited example of pro-imperial museal discourse, and one which illustrates the perceived 'benefits' of imperial collecting. This pseudo-fictionalized museum guide is full of "raptures" over Britain's ownership of the treasures of ancient and foreign peoples. The narrative begins in the most intriguing way; the aptly-named Professor Omnium suggests that he and his friend, the narrator, take "an excursion around the world!" (21). When the friend proclaims such a plan to be impossible, Professor Omnium scoffs that he does not propose to even leave London. He says that "we can never go 'round the world, except in a small limited way, if we leave London" (22). Instead, he suggests visiting the South Kensington Museum, which contains all the objects of the world that anyone might wish to see. Omnium declares that travelling to see "Objects of Interest" is obsolete when "ten thousand people and a dozen governments have been at infinite pains and expense to bring the cream of the East and West to your own doors" (22-23).

[13] Conway was an American who travelled and lived in Great Britain. "South Kensington" refers to The South Kensington Museum, renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899.

Conway highlights this imperial endeavour as a collaborative effort and a project consciously undertaken by the British government. The archive created by imperial agents is worth the 'pain,' he implies, because having a comprehensive archive of the world's goods at the imperial centre will benefit Britons.

Rather than rhapsodizing Britain's collection of foreign objects, Gothic fiction criticizes it. Britain is not the natural home for these objects; these objects can never be domesticated and the foreign signification they retain threatens British subjects and the boundaries of imperial nationhood. My reading of this nightmare of failed museal domestication is founded on a larger analysis of the object meaning assigned to mummies that are imported into Britain in "Lot 249," "The Story of Baelbrow," and "The Nemesis of Fire." Rather than collectors assigning meaning to mummies, as is 'natural' in the process of imperial collecting, these mummies retain their own, foreign meaning. The imperial domestication and control of the Victorian museum is inverted in Gothic fiction, and re-emerges in a space where imperial control is ruptured and the unruly mummy breaks free to threaten the health of British subjects and the boundaries of imperial nationhood. Ultimately, in this chapter I argue that the mummy's physical and epistemological violence disrupts the imperial house/museum at multiple levels: its site of display, its creation of artifacts, and its epistemological backbone.

"Reverse Portability" in "The Nemesis of Fire"

Algernon Blackwood's short story "The Nemesis of Fire" (1908) portrays the Gothic museum, a space that fails to contain, or 'domesticate,' its mummy.

This mystery is one of the larger collection of stories featuring the heroics of Dr. John Silence, a psychic detective who uses supernatural beliefs and means to solve his cases.[14] "The Nemesis of Fire" raises anxieties about the collection of mummies in Britain, specifically, that they bring with them foreign signification that makes them ill-suited to domestication in British museums. The denouement of the story, in which Miss Wragge is revealed to have taken a jewel from the mummy's corpse as an ornament, thus provoking its violence towards the Wragge family, dramatizes the threat to British nationhood inherent in Egyptian artifacts.

The narrative strongly asserts from the beginning that the Wragge mummy symbolizes ancient Egypt and possesses the foreign and supernatural signification attached to that culture. This assertion first emerges at the end of Silence's lengthy interview with Colonel Wragge, in which the detective observes the numerous scorch marks on the ground and buildings of the estate, and hears the particulars of each outbreak of fire. Silence tells Hubbard that he has an inkling of the truth of the case. Hubbard asks Silence "You know what it is?" as they retire for the night, and Silence answers, "Egypt! Egypt!" (151). Rather than blaming an individual, malevolent mummy, with its own motives and actions, Silence implies that 'Egypt' is responsible for the destruction at the Wragge estate. This "Egypt" is not the modern nation in the Middle East, but instead the "Egypt" of Victorian Gothic literature, signifying ancient Egypt and its ties to the

[14] The narrative style, and methods, of John Silence, obviously links these stories with Sherlock Holmes, although, interestingly, whereas Holmes disproves the supernatural, Silence validates its existence in each case.

supernatural. The malevolent force at work on the Wragge estate, nestled in the heart of England, is imbued with the vitriol of a vengeful, unruly colonial nation.

The mummy's attacks are a result of the inefficient imperial control of the Wragge's domestic museum. Wragge tells John Silence about the house collections:

> My brother [...] was a great traveller, and filled the house with stuff he brought home from all over the world. The laundry - a small detached building beyond the servants' quarters - he turned into a regular little museum. The curios and things I have cleared away - they collected dust and were always getting broken - but the laundry-house you shall see tomorrow. (138)

The Wragge estate has thus been a repository for the "stuff," "curios," and "things" of the Empire, on view in the home until they became aesthetically unpleasing. This is not a didactic space, but one defined by its attractiveness, and by the purposes of imperial display. The location of the museum also seems significant, as it is a highly domestic site, one that oversees the cleanliness of the household. By locating the museum within a room dedicated to cleanliness, the Herons create a loaded image of the museum, one that draws on the connection between the British imperial project and national health and hygiene. The laundry-museum also suggests that objects are 'cleaned' of their dirtiness here, implying that, ideally, they do not retain their unclean foreign signification once they enter the museum. However, as Colonel Wragge tells Silence, the museum becomes a place of 'dust' and broken artifacts, a site that fails to uphold the

standards of cleanliness and display required of the museum. This space of collection, then, fails to domesticate and guard the objects of the Empire, and, through this failure, the mummy breaks free to threaten British subjects.

The importance of the mummy stems from its stubborn retention of foreign signification, which is not stamped out by its collection into the imperial museum.[15] My reading of this retention of foreign signification is adapted from John Plotz, who analyses the movement of imperial objects in his book *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move.* Plotz analyses the idea of 'portability,' the literal notion that particular objects that were portable, or able to be moved from space to space, but also figuratively "c[a]me to be endowed with cultural value" that was portable (21). He focuses on objects that, in fiction, retained specifically English or British signification for Victorians who travelled abroad. These objects were thus implicated in imperial expansion, as metonymic extensions of Englishness that, in turn, maintained their owners' Englishness. I borrow specifically from his understanding of "reverse portability" (42),[16] a process by which objects laden with foreign signification travel to England. He explains the "logic" of reverse portability as "simple":

[15] My reading of object meaning draws extensively on Critical Museum Studies (see the Introduction to this dissertation), and in particular, on Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's argument, articulated in *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture,* that object meaning is created by the framework of ideas and meanings within which it is displayed.

[16] Plotz's concept of reverse portability seems influenced by Stephen Arata's reading of reverse colonization narratives in *Fictions of Loss*. Plotz identifies the same type of imperial panic associated with these narratives that Arata does, even though the objects Plotz analyses do not have the same agency as the villains of reverse colonization narratives, like Stoker's *Dracula.*

> if British expansion to India and elsewhere brings with it items like a 'portable Bunyan' or the collected works of Shakespeare that, for Carlyle, make an empire, then what is to stop other objects making the journey in reverse? (42-43)

Plotz stresses that Britain's status as an imperial superpower was dependent upon asymmetrical portability, where "the flow of culture-bearing objects from [imperial] core to periphery is not counterbalanced or interrupted by a flow in the opposite direction" (2). Although his focus remains on objects that moved from Britain to the colonies as caches of Englishness, Plotz identifies fictions of "imperial panic" (22) that represent objects arriving in Britain "still freighted with foreign meaning" (22) or with "colonial character still attached" (21). His analysis of Collins' *The Moonstone* (40-44) unravels the complexities of reverse portability, in particular the ominous meaning attached to Rachel Verinder's Indian jewel, a "culturally resonant traveling object" (42) that arrived in England with the essence of India attached. *The Moonstone* is a unique mid-century example of Indian reverse portability, Plotz argues, for Anglo-Indian writers after 1820 tended to deny that Indian objects could transport Indian signification to England.

I adapt Plotz's reading of reverse portability through a reading of "The Nemesis of Fire." Like Rachel Verinder's moonstone, the Wragges's mummy, newly arrived in England, bears foreign signification that cannot be erased. Plotz's theory of reverse portability, while useful and intriguing, is not fully fleshed out in his book, which tends to focus on objects traveling in the other direction, from the imperial centre outwards. I suggest that reverse portability is a compelling lens

through which to read the importation of Egyptian antiquities in late-Victorian Gothic fiction. It explains how imperial objects in Gothic fiction become sites for working through imperial panic, and by identifying their traces of foreign signification, this theory also explains why these objects are so threatening.

The mummy of "The Nemesis of Fire," with its eruption out of the house-museum still bearing the signification of "Egypt! Egypt!" (Blackwood 151), bears the threat of reverse portability. Indeed, the mummy's connection to its original home is so strong that it transforms part of the Wragge estate into a dream-like vision of ancient Egypt. The mummy now lies in an underground cavern under the fields of the estate, which is symbolically still linked to both Egypt and the museum. Silence tells Hubbard that "any one of [these patches of scorched earth] will tap the tunnel that connects the laundry - the former Museum - with the chamber where the mummy now lies buried" (193). This story literalizes the implicit connection between the excavation site and the display site by connecting the laundry/museum with the mummy's new 'tomb.' The mummy's fire spirit-demon has traveled from the burial site through the museum and onto the Wragge estate, implying that the museum is a gateway to the middle-class home for the vengeful mummy. The excavation site and the former museum are connected by more than just a tunnel; they are both spaces of display and imaginative projections of ancient Egypt. This 'tomb,' located in an English garden, is a hybrid space of excavation and display, where as an artificial excavation space it becomes the ideal display site for the mummy and evokes images of ancient Egypt in 'gallery visitors.' The excavation site and the former

laundry-museum are thus connected by more than just a tunnel; they reproduce and perpetuate similar strategies of display and imaginative creations of ancient Egypt.

When Silence, Hubbard, and Wragge dig into one of the scorched circles and enter the tunnels to the mummy's new tomb, their experience prompts fantasies of excavations in Egypt.[17] The 'tomb' underground even looks like it belongs in Egypt: Hubbard notes that the wooden pillars holding up the tomb are etched with Egyptian hieroglyphics; the ground is sandy; the tomb is dark, cramped, and "charged with faint yet pungent odours" of embalming (196); and they feel an "indefinable sensation of awe" from "something that was mighty with the mightiness of long past ages" (195). The men's experience searching for the new burial site in England thus imaginatively transports them to Egypt, mapping this more recent excavation attempt upon a Victorian fantasy of excavation in the Egyptian desert. Hubbard notes that:

> it was almost necessary to persuade myself forcibly that I was only standing upright with difficulty in this little sand-hole of a modern garden in the south of England, for it seemed to me that I stood, as in a vision, at the entrance of some vast rock-hewn Temple far, far, down the river of Time. The illusion was powerful, and persisted. Granite columns, that rose to heaven, piled themselves about me, majestically uprearing, and a roof like the sky itself

[17] An excavation scene would be a touchstone for early-twentieth-century readers. The Victorians staged excavations or 'discoveries' as ways of 'experiencing' Egypt; for example, the Prince of Wales attended a staged 'discovery' of thirty mummies in Thebes in 1869.

> spread above a line of colossal figures that moved in shadowy procession along endless and stupendous aisles. This huge and splendid fantasy, borne I knew not whence, possessed me so vividly that I was actually obliged to concentrate my attention upon the small stooping figure of [Silence], as he groped about the walls, in order to keep the eye of imagination on the scene before me. (196)

This is a vivid fantasy scene, one which imaginatively collapses both time and geographical distance to allow Hubbard to experience ancient Egypt. From a hole in an English garden that is so small he cannot stand up fully, Hubbard conjures a vision of colossal architecture, a "vast" Temple. Hubbard evokes the sublime in this passage to communicate his pseudo-religious appreciation.

Hubbard experiences another fantasy of Egypt when he sees the mummy in the 'tomb.' As Silence reverently whispers "The mummy! The mummy!" in the tomb, Hubbard expresses "so prodigious an emotion of wonder and veneration" (197). He states that the sight of the mummy "breathing its own spice-laden atmosphere even in the darkness of its exile in this remote land [...] touched the root of awe which slumbers in every man" (197). The terror and wonder that Hubbard feels is an evocation of the sublime, an expression of awe and horror in the face of extreme antiquity. At this moment, his fantasy of history turns into a fantasy of the occult.[18] He claims to experience visions brought on by a shared

[18] Hubbard suddenly admits at this point that he has "had not a little to do with mummies" and has even "experimented magically" with some (197). This admission unexpectedly positions Hubbard as a sort of Egyptological expert, even though he demonstrates no other expertise about Egypt in the narrative. However, Hubbard's admission paints this underground scene as exemplary

memory of human antiquity with the mummy. "A kind of whirling storm came over [him], rising out of [he] kn[e]w not what utter deeps of memory," prompting him to hear magical chanting from the Book of the Dead, and see the Egyptian gods as his soul wandered briefly in the afterlife (197). As Hubbard gazes upon the sarcophagus, "so dreadfully staring with its painted eyes," he feels that "time fled backwards like a thing of naught, showing me in haunted panorama the most wonderful dream of the whole world" (198). The mummy's gaze provides Hubbard with an unobstructed chance to witness ancient Egypt. Yet, his use of the adjective 'haunted' to describe this panorama, and 'dreadful' to describe the mummy's eyes, hints that he finds something unsettling about experiencing this occult fantasy, something he did not feel when having his vision of time.

Indeed, this "dream" quickly turns into a nightmare of Egypt, where visions and fantasies fade away and are replaced by the spectre of the walking dead. As they discover the corpse of the mummy in the 'tomb,' and realize that Miss Wragge has taken a sacred scarab-shaped jewel from the mummy's wrappings,[19] Hubbard now feels as if he is in a "nightmare" (200). As they stand over the corpse of the mummy, they hear Miss Wragge coming down the tunnel. Petrified with fear, Hubbard has "thoughts of being buried alive, of being smothered like rats in a trap, of being caught and done to death by some invisible

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of the larger body of Gothic fiction about mummies, which usually revolve around the character of the (amateur) Egyptologist and feature excavation narratives.

[19] The scarab, or more particularly *scarabaeus sacer,* is a species of dung beetle that was sacred to the Egyptians. The scarab is featured in the eponymous novel *The Beetle,* but would also be a touchstone for Victorians and Edwardians because of the numerous examples of scarab art in the British Museum, including the giant sculpture of a scarab, purchased in 1816.

and merciless force we could not grapple with" (199-200). As she leans over the mummy, the men watch in "ultimate horror" as it writhes and rises from its sarcophagus (201). A sudden cloud blocks their vision, but when it settles, the men see the mummy back in its coffin, with the jewel securely at its throat, and the body of Miss Wragge lying over it. Hubbard's fantasies of Egypt are disrupted by the appearance of Miss Wragge and the sudden life-like nature of the mummy. When the men return from the 'tomb' to the surface they bear with them, as in most excavation tales, a body, however, it is not the body of the mummy but of Miss Wragge.

The fact that Miss Wragge is both the tomb's "violat[or]" (202) and the victim of the mummy's curse is highly significant in terms of the text's imperial-gender politics. Miss Wragge is a grave robber; she entered the mummy's new tomb in England and stole a green jasper scarab jewel from its wrappings. She uses the jewel to adorn herself. John Silence notes upon first seeing her that she wears at her throat a "large scarab of green jasper that made a very handsome brooch" (135). As Piya Pal-Lapinski notes in her book *The Exotic Woman in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction and Culture,* it was common for British women at the turn of the century to wear jewelry that was either taken from archaeological sites or was designed to look so. Jewelers like René Lalique, Pal-Lapinski attests, created numerous Egyptological pieces of jewelry between 1890-1905, and "the form of the scarab was to become crucial to several of [Lalique's] most phantasmagoric pieces" (99). Lalique was famous for creating spectacles out of the bodies of women bejeweled with ancient insects and monsters. For

example, for Sarah Benhardt's performance in *Cléopâtre* in 1890, he designed a corsage arrangement in which two women morph into scarabs (Pal-Lapinski 99). The bodies of white women who wore the jewelry of imperial archaeology destabilized the boundaries of imperial display, and exoticized British femininity. Where, for example, Queen Victoria wore the Kohinoor diamond to stress her imperial dominion over modern India, Pal-Lapinski suggests that British women who wore Egyptianized jewelry were vampirized by these foreign and ancient civilizations, and their exoticized bodies dangerously tread the boundaries of life/death, foreign/domestic, imperial power/subjugation.

Miss Wragge, proudly wearing a distinctly Egyptian jewel stolen from a mummy, defies the mummy's curse out of a desire to exoticize and ornament her own body. In mimicking the Egyptian style of the mummy, Miss Wragge not only awakens the mummy's curse, but also transforms her own body into that of the monstrous Other. The sound of her coming down the passageway into the tomb awakens in the men the an extreme "horror," and they prepare with trepidation to encounter the unknown. The being coming down the passage "shuffl[es]" (200), conjuring the image of the ambulatory mummy, and Hubbard remarks that he was prepared for "some Egyptian monster, some god of the tombs, or even of some demon of fire" (200). What he sees is "more distressingly horrible" (200): it is Miss Wragge, looking "more like a gargoyle than anything human" (200). In adorning herself with the jewel of the mummy, Miss Wragge has herself become both the exoticized Victorian woman and mirror of the imperial monstrous Other, a body that destabilizes boundaries of humanity, race,

nationality, and gender. As a Victorian woman, a symbol of nineteenth-century domestic femininity, Miss Wragge's transformation emphasizes the danger posed to British nationhood by the importation and attempted domestication of foreign antiquities in museums and homes. Her body becomes the body of the mummy, suggesting that foreign signification is transferable and dangerous. She ultimately cannot live due to her transgression in robbing the mummy of its jewel. We can read her death as both the culmination of the mummy's curse and the only possible consequence to her subversion of such crucial boundaries.

The mummy's ability to possess the body of Miss Wragge indicates the dangerous penetrative potential of the mummy's foreign signification in "The Nemesis of Fire." This is a tale that dramatizes the imperial anxiety inherent in Plotz's idea of "reverse portability," in which collectors transport mummies to England still 'freighted' with foreign meaning and fail to domesticate them within the home/museum/nation. The reverse portability of the mummy in this story contaminates the English museum, the English house, the English landscape, and an English woman, penetrating both spatial and corporeal markers of British domesticity and imperial health. "The Nemesis of Fire" is a cautionary tale that feeds off imperial panic over the penetrative capacity of the colonial Other; it suggests that by bringing objects freighted with foreign meaning into England, collectors (and museum curators, agents of Empire, and women) open themselves up to the possibility of invasion. Collectors are deceived by these objects, the texts imply, for these objects are not as controllable as they might initially appear.

This analysis of "The Nemesis of Fire" sets up many of the critical issues I will develop further in my discussion of E. and H. Heron's story "The Story of Baelbrow." This text is, in many ways, similar to "The Nemesis of Fire." Both short stories feature occult detectives who attempt to solve attacks against British citizens stemming from the importation of an ancient Egyptian mummy into a house-museum. Both create anxiety over the myriad meanings attached to the body of the mummy, and how these meanings impact British museums and their collecting practices. However, whereas "The Nemesis of Fire" presents a mummy laden with only foreign signification, "The Story of Baelbrow" presents a mummy that, between the Egyptian desert and the English museum, mixes its already-fraught foreign signification with other, less predictable, meanings.

"Artefaction" and the Victorian House-Museum: "The Story of Baelbrow"

This little-known late-nineteenth-century short story is from a larger collection called *Ghost Stories* about the adventures of occult detective Flaxman Low, written by E. and H. Heron, pseudonyms for Hesketh and Kate Prichard, a mother-son writing duo. The stories about Flaxman Low were written at the behest of Cyril Pearson, who wanted a series for his *Pearson's Magazine* (Parker 45). Low investigates strange occurrences from an occult perspective, and in each case, ultimately proves the existence of the supernatural. The introduction to *Ghost Stories* claims that Low is "the first student in this field of inquiry who has had the boldness and originality to break free from old and conventional methods, and to approach the elucidation of so-called supernatural problems on the lines of natural law" (vii-viii). Low's cases take place all over England, from

Hammersmith to Devon, and involve an array of supernatural beings, from leprous ghosts to a murderous, spirit-possessed tree.

Flaxman Low's visit to Baelbrow proves that the mummy cannot be domesticated within the Swaffam's house/museum. He is first summoned to the Swaffam family home of Baelbrow where some supernatural entity attacks members of the household, and kills a servant girl. Each of the victims bears two small wounds under their ear. After a short investigation, Low concludes that a vengeful, vampiric spirit of one of the long-dead bodies from a nearby barrow has possessed the corpse of a mummy, recently arrived at the house from Egypt. Aided by Harold Swaffam, Low traps the mummy's corpse, Swaffam shoots it several times in the head, and then the two men send it out to sea in a burning pyre, thus ending its 'life' and the attacks at Baelbrow. The mummy's escape from its domestic collection, its violence against the Swaffam family, and Low's explanation of the case all dramatize the failure of imperial collections to properly domesticate imported imperial artefacts within Britain.

The "Museum" at Baelbrow, a room specially set apart from the rest of the house to house the "treasures" of Mr. Swaffam Sr, is the site where domestication fails (63). The room is near the back of the house, off a passageway behind the staircase in the main hall. The room possesses a small amount of the grandeur of the civic museum, as its entryway has several steps, giant wooden doors, and a large archway. The word "Museum" is always capitalized in the text, further suggesting that this is a privileged space of collection, not a random selection of bric-a-brac. The architectural space of the Museum marks it as an interstitial

space, one which is both part of the house and separate from it, an in-between space where antiquities escape imperial domestication. The heavy, wooden Museum door, which both connects and sunders the Museum to/from the house, is featured in descriptions of the mummy's attacks. Low hears the "scraping of wood on wood" during one attack, the ominous sound of the Museum door opening. A female servant reports that the creature "leapt out at her from the embrasure of the Museum door" (63), and later, another female servant is fatally attacked while changing hall lights outside the Museum door. The first real glimpse of the assailant comes after the final attack on Harold Swaffam, when Low "glance[s] up" to see "a face and bony neck" "half extended from the Museum doorway" (73). The mummy lingers at the Museum's door and haunts the edges of the English home and the museum, linking these two interconnected domestic spaces and also providing a site of violent rupture at their connection. The Museum door is the mummy's place to wait for victims, either springing forth at them to attack, or retreating back inside the museum to hide. The door is a threshold space that separates and links the Museum from the house, and it is also a space of transformation that turns an inanimate object into a live menace. Rather than remaining shut to contain the Museum's antiquities within one designated part of the house, it provides a portal for the mummy to escape and cause harm to members of the Swaffam family. The penetrability of the door is the source of this Museum's failure to domesticate its objects.

The mummy, like the museum, occupies a threshold space by refusing to fit within definable categories of 'subject' or 'object.' Its escape from the restraints of

the museum's glass cases, and the authority of the colonizer's home, defies its object/artefact status. This is most clearly articulated after the final attack, when Low and Swaffam pursue the mummy into the museum. When Harold Swaffam, a representative of imperial collecting, subdues the mummy and punishes it for its transgression, the violence he unleashes on its body goes beyond destruction of a mere object. Upon viewing it half in-and-out of its sarcophagus, Harold, with "deliberate vindictiveness" shoots the mummy multiple times in the face and shatters the head with the butt of his gun (77). Low compares Harold's acts to "murder," a revealing choice of words which implies that the mummy occupies subject, not object, status (77). Yet, as Low and Harold prepare to get rid of the final remains of the mummy's corpse, they call the mummy "it" and "thing" (78). "We must rid the earth of it" (77), Swaffam tells Low, and the two men send the remains of the remains out to sea on a burning pyre; the mummy is so undomesticatable that it cannot remain within the borders of England, and they send it East, back towards the land from which it came. By expelling the body of the rebellious imperial subject/object, Swaffam and Low protect and preserve the boundaries of 'home.' An object entered England at the beginning of the tale, and though it briefly morphed into a subject, it leaves England once more an object. The agency of the mummy indicates its troubling reverse portability; its former status as a human is not forgotten, but must be erased for the mummy to become an object. The language Low and Harold use to describe the mummy reflects its instability between the designations of inanimate and animate, subject and object, domestic and foreign, and its reverse portability. The shifting subject/object status

of the Swaffam's mummy is a marker of its rebellion against the domestication of the house-museum, and indicates that it cannot be contained within any of the interlinked spaces of Victorian domestic nationhood.

The shifting meaning and subject status of the mummy is more complicated in "The Story of Baelbrow" than in "The Nemesis of Fire." In Blackwood's short story, the mummy retains its foreign signification as it travels into Britain, though its collectors would wish to eradicate it; in the Herons' short story, the mummy's foreign signification mixes with new, British signification, creating a monstrous antiquity with national hybridity and sliding object/subject status. This mummy is not only a mummy; after coming to England it also assumes the identity of an English vampiric ghost. The mummy's shifting meaning is explicitly linked to its mobility across boundaries. The trouble started when Swaffam Sr "sent home a mummy" (75) during his travels in the Near East, implying that the mummy's mobility across national borders prompts a change from docile corpse to vengeful villain. Once in England the mummy provided a suitable "physical medium" for possession by the "elemental psychic germ" of a ghost, buried in a barrow nearby the house (76). In other words, the mummy began to attack members of the Swaffam household because it was possessed by an English vampiric ghost. Traveling from Egypt to England changes Baelbrow's mummy; en route to its final display location in the Museum, it becomes something else, something more than an object and different from an Egyptian mummy. Its new 'identity' fuses together its former 'life,' its reverse portability, as an inanimate Egyptian corpse with new signification picked up during its travels through Britain. The identities

of several late-nineteenth-century Gothic monsters become located in one corpse—mummy, ghost, vampire—creating a body rife with myriad Gothic signification.

I suggest that this Gothic transformation mimics how real museum-bound objects take on new signification in transit from excavation site to display space. Reverse portability creates hybrid identities and signification in this story, rather than an opposition between two separate and stable identities. I read this mummy's transition into a new, hybrid monster as mirroring a particular aspect of imperial-museal collecting: the process by which the object/relic, once excavated, becomes an "artifact" of the museum, imbued with new didactic, scholarly, and museal meaning. Elliot Colla provides a useful foundation for understanding how objects take on new meanings in transit from excavation site to museum exhibit, a process he coins as "artifaction" (28), the creation of the artifact. Colla seeks to understand how objects become possessed of the special designation of 'artifact,' a quality that is not innate but is instead conferred upon it by 'experts' at a particular point during its 'lifetime.' He asks "at what point did the colossal antiquity become that modern object peculiar to the institutions of art history and archaeological sciences [the artifact]? [... When] it was elevated on a pedestal at the museum? [...] Or was it already an artifact in its ancient resting place?" (28). Understanding the process of creating (or perhaps designating) an 'artifact,' Colla suggests, enables us to read how particular objects were part of a discourse that privileged museo-imperial control over objects from around the globe. Artifact discourse enabled British imperialists to discuss control of all the material goods

of Egypt (28), and to metonymically extend their control over Egyptian artifacts to Egyptian people and territories. The term artifact thus has significance beyond economic capital or value. Colla states that "it is most precise to define the artifact not in terms of its intrinsic qualities, but rather by way of the tensions and contradictions which permeate and link it to intense political, social, and cultural conflicts" (29). All artifacts therefore may be defined slightly differently, and within shifting terms which make it hard to pin down an overarching definition.

What all artifacts *do* have in common is a shift in meaning as a result of collecting. Artifacts are objects of imperial and epistemological significance that collectors attempt to 'domesticate' as passive objects of study in the museum, thus changing their use from functional object to museum object. Colla reads the emergence of the artifact as due to the rise of nineteenth-century Egyptomania; he states that "Egyptology's object, the artifact, came into being somewhere between Egypt and London" (16). As his exemplar, Colla offers an analysis of the history and reception of The Younger Memnon, the colossal bust of Ramesses II installed at the British Museum by Giovanni Belzoni and Henry Salt in 1817. "The moment in which the Memnon head was collected," Colla states, "marks the beginning of a new era of treating Egyptian antiquities, one deviating significantly from older antiquarian habits" (28). Around the excavation, transportation, and installation of the Memnon Head (the practices which constitute 'collecting') emerges the discourse of the artifact, one which simultaneously confers scientific power and authority to collectors and the museum, and creates tacit laws of appropriation and ownership to those who have the artifact 'in hand.' Those

agents of the museum involved in collecting the Memnon head never officially laid claim to it; Colla reminds us that "according to artifact discourse" the artifact "belongs to civilization or humanity in the abstract" so that "the British Museum claims to be not the owner of the piece but merely its custodian" (63). This custodianship is conferred to Britain by its imperial occupation of Egypt.

The artifact is thus located squarely at a nexus of museum and imperial control. As Colla observes, travelers, politicians, and archaeologists "recognized that to know ancient Egypt, one needed to gain control of as many artifacts as possible. To reach this end, they might need to control modern Egypt" (9-10). The discourse of the artifact is thus also the discourse of museo-imperial control, one which legitimates British possession of the world's ancient objects at the same time as it legitimates British control over modern colonial territories and peoples. The mummy in "The Story of Baelbrow" gothicizes the process of artifaction; instead of turning from inanimate corpse into an artifact, an object of control, the mummy turns into a rampaging vampire, an object *out* of control. Colla acknowledges this briefly in his discussion of artifacts: "even though the processes of artifaction and figuration attempted to construct antiquities as inert matter, the stuff itself often did not obey this command. The proliferation of mummy fictions in England and French literatures attests to the anxieties that attended this" (19). The foremost anxiety is, as we observe in "The Story of Baelbrow," the fear that the artifact is an object of transience and interstitiality that defies domestication rather than respects it. This is an object that, during artifaction, becomes not a museum artifact, but a rebellious monster. "The Story of Baelbrow" thus literalizes

the Gothic potential of artifaction; the mummy, in transit from the desert to the museum, picks up British signification that makes it more, not less, dangerous and unpredictable. This is an object that transforms into a subject, defying the interlinked museal processes of artifaction and domestication.

Baelbrow's mummy proves that domestication of mummies in the 'house' of the nation is not possible when it morphs from buried corpse to rebellious, violent mummy/ghost/vampire. It defies the power of the museum to confine and control objects, breaks free through the Museum door, and attacks members of the Swaffam family in their home. Its new identity defies conventional binaries of East/West, subject/object, and live/dead, and through its shifting signification, gothicizes the process of artifaction, becoming not a passive museum object but an uncontrollable monster. Even though Harold Swaffam stops the mummy's rampage in the most palpable and violent way possible by shooting and clubbing its head, his actions do not tame the mummy and enable him to return it to the museum. Even burying the mummy, as in "The Nemesis of Fire," will not contain it. "We must rid the earth of it," Swaffam tells Low, and they send it into transit once more, this time, on a pyre into the ocean east of Britain, back towards Egypt. Burning it is not enough; as an object of failed museal domestication, the mummy must be pushed back outside the boundaries of 'home'–the house, the museum, and the nation–in order to negate the damage that it has wrought.

In "The Nemesis of Fire," the mummy destabilizes imperial boundaries by demonstrating that object meaning is not defined by the imperial collector or museum; in "The Story of Baelbrow," the mummy gothicizes artifaction, turning

into an object out of control. The next text to which I turn, Arthur Conan Doyle's "Lot 249," continues this pattern of disrupting the imperial domestication of objects. However, this short story goes further, and questions the larger epistemological structures of the Gothic house/museum. Doyle's short story reveals that it is not only the mummy that resists incorporation into the imperial collections of the Victorian museum, but also it is the knowledge attached to the body of the mummy that cannot be domesticated within the Empire's 'home.' This text raises complex issues of museal knowledge-production within the boundaries of Victorian science through its portrayal of Edward Bellingham's house museum. Bellingham's collection of Egyptian antiquities subverts the categorizing principles of the Victorian museum, offering a representation of a collection that fuses pre-nineteenth century styles of collecting with Eastern knowledge. The mummy, invested with foreign meaning, corrupts the British systems of science and meaning that form the cornerstone of the Victorian museum.

Knowledge and Collecting: Doyle's "Lot 249"

Whereas in "The Nemesis of Fire" and "The Story of Baelbrow" mummies' foreign signification survives despite the efforts of their collectors, in "Lot 249," Egyptologist Edward Bellingham actively cultivates a new Gothic identity for his acquired mummy, much to the distress of medical student Abercrombie Smith and Bellingham's enemies. This mummy retains no foreign signification other than what Bellingham gives to it; its outer sarcophagus is missing and thus Bellingham cannot decipher its name. In fact, the mummy has

only the name "lot 249," given to it at auction, which emphasizes the corpse's status as British collectible rather than Egyptian mummy. The mummy's new name also demonstrates the attempt to erase, epistemologically, the mummy's former signification; however, "lot 249" belies the fact that the mummy in fact retains its former signification in a nightmare of reverse portability. Unlike collectors in other tales, Bellingham has an active hand in creating the rebellious mummy. As a representative of Eastern knowledge, Bellingham assists the mummy both in becoming active and in escaping the confines of the domestic collection, and shows no colonial guilt for his role in allowing a mummy to terrorize Oxford.

Smith and Bellingham, though both Englishmen, create overlapping binaries of West/East, masculine/feminine, active/passive that run throughout the text. Smith is a medical student, an "open-air m[an]" interested in "all that was manly and robust" (246). He rows and boxes, enjoys Scottish whisky, and is described as having a "Saxon" temperament (250). Bellingham, on the other hand, is described as fat and wrinkly, with a "reptilian" (247) countenance. He is a "demon" at Eastern languages, and is described as being a native amongst Arabs, Copts, Jews, and Bedouins, that it is "as if he had been born and nursed and weaned among them" (247). Bellingham, though physically the opposite of the strangely tall and thin mummy, is perhaps the mummy's affective double. Hastie, Smith's equally uber-British friend, states that his "gorge always rises" whenever he encounters Bellingham (247), a reaction that Smith later has upon first viewing the mummy (252). Their physical repulsion to the collector and his mummy

emphasizes the disconnect between East and West. This geographical/imperial binary is further emphasized through Smith's activity, shown when he confronts Bellingham and forces him to burn his papers, and Bellingham's passivity, shown as he prefers to let the mummy attack his enemies.

The text shows the difference between the two men most convincingly through the men's areas of study at Oxford. Smith is a medical student whose studies are firmly located within the realm of modern British science, and Bellingham is an Egyptologist who studies foreign, ancient knowledge. An intriguing description of an anatomy textbook as "a formidable, green-covered volume, adorned with great, coloured maps of that strange, internal kingdom [ie, the body] of which we are the hapless and helpless monarchs" (248) seemingly links Smith's medical studies with geographic exploration and monarchical rule, suggesting the connection between British medical science and imperial expansion. This textbook layers national signification over the study of bodies, a connection that is emphasized by Smith and Bellingham's differing study of corpses. Although both men house body parts in their private rooms, they do so for very different reasons. Bellingham keeps the mummy in his rooms, ensconced in an open upright sarcophagus. Yet Smith also has various human remains scattered in his apartment, part of his studies in human anatomy. Hastie even borrows a skull and several ear bones from Smith while visiting him late one night. This conflict reaches a climax when Smith confronts Bellingham in his rooms at the denouement of the tale. Smith forces Bellingham to dismember the mummy with his amputating knives before burning its remains, and in doing so,

forces Bellingham to use the tools of British medical science to destroy the object of Egyptology. This contrast between the two men's studies in corpses is significant because it creates a binary between legitimate and English, and non-legitimate and foreign, knowledge. Smith's medical pursuits are admirable and supportable, where Bellingham's must be suppressed.

The setting for this story, the University at Oxford, emphasizes the text's preoccupation with the acquisition of knowledge. Oxford, a quintessentially British institution, hosts studies in both medicine and Egyptology, suggesting that it provides equal opportunity for study in all areas. This unrestricted allowance of studies makes Oxford the ideal site at which Doyle can muse upon the larger questions of nineteenth-century knowledge. Doyle opens the story by musing on this "centre of light and learning," and how "for all our lamps of science" the "devious" and "dark" paths of nature remain unknown (246). He re-iterates this sentiment in the last lines of the story, in which he describes how Bellingham returns to the Sudan, presumably to continue his studies. Doyle writes that "the wisdom of men is small, and the ways of nature are strange" (273). Doyle is also entranced by spectres of lost and undiscovered knowledge. He writes of the grooves in the steps of the towers at Oxford, left by the feet of "Plantagenet" scholars who now occupy graves in the nearby cemetery (246). These scholars, long dead, were part of the trajectory of learning in which Smith and Bellingham now participate, and also represent the spectre of lost information. The larger question raised in this text is: shall we retrieve this lost information? Is this dangerous to modern knowledge? Thus these seemingly peripheral considerations

of lost or 'dark' knowledges in fact form the crux of the text: the way in which the (failed) domestication of unruly antiquities in literary house museums produces equally unruly foreign epistemologies, ones which do not fit within the boundaries of conventional English knowledge.

The domestic collection, located in Bellingham's rooms, is the site of failed domestication. As in the other stories discussed in this chapter, the text explicitly refers to this collection as a "museum." Bellingham's museum is a fantastic collection, and its lengthy description bears repeating here:

> It was a chamber as [Smith] had never seen before–a museum rather than a study. Walls and ceiling were thickly covered with a thousand strange relics from Egypt and the East. Tall, angular figures bearing burdens or weapons stalked in an uncouth frieze round the apartment. Above were bull-headed, stork-headed, cat-headed, owl-headed statues, with viper-crowned, almond-eyed monarchs, and strange, beetle-like deities cut out of the blue Egyptian lapis lazuli. Horus and Isis and Osiris peeped down from every niche and shelf; while across the ceiling a true son of Old Nile, a great, hanging-jawed crocodile, was slung in a double noose [....] These varied objects had all been heaped together in order to make room for a mummy case, which had been conveyed from the wall, as was evident from the gap there, and laid across the front of the table. The mummy itself, a horrid, black, withered thing, like a charred head on a gnarled bush, was lying half out of the

> case, with its claw-like hand and bony forearm resting upon the table. Propped up against the sarcophagus was an old yellow scroll of papyrus. (250)

Bellingham's museum is extremely cluttered; "every niche and shelf," including the ceiling and table, has been used to house Egyptian antiquities. The objects seem uncatalogued and arranged miscellaneously, giving Smith the impression of a "thousand" objects surrounding him. Most significantly, the objects are described as "strange," "uncouth," or "horrid," and the description of the multitude of statues, bearing resemblances to varied animals and gods, and carved from bright stone, does suggest that this collection would be unusual and out of place in an English home. The objects are also personified, described as "stalk[ing]" and "peep[ing]" down at the humans in Bellingham's rooms. Even the mummy, stretched out upon the table, seems frozen mid-movement, prefiguring its eventual resurrection. The mummy might seem to be the central piece of this collection; however, it is the object described last, the papyrus, which truly forms the backbone of Bellingham's museum. He quickly locks this papyrus away in his desk when Smith enters, and, by interrogating Smith, ensures that his guest could not have read the writing. This papyrus, burned at the conclusion of the story, contains the knowledge that defines Bellingham's museum as a space not of imperial control, but of imperial rebellion.

Bellingham's bric-a-brac museum interestingly resembles less a modern, late-nineteenth-century public museum, than the *wunderkammern* or curiosity cabinets popular earlier in the century. These were the collections of amateurs and

private collectors, precursors to the Victorian museum; they contained strange and unique specimens rather than, as in the museum, perfect models of a larger type, and their purpose was to amaze, rather than instruct, their visitor.[20] Bellingham's collection, with its unorganized abundance of strange Egyptian relics, resembles this type of collection more than the organized, didactic civic museum. It contains an unsorted array of visually remarkable objects, bejeweled and arranged in a jumble that overwhelms the viewer with their unusualness. It is a mis-match of *naturalia* and *artificialia,* natural objects (like the crocodile) and human-made objects (like the unhuman statues of the gods). Even the description of the mummy emphasizes the *wunderkammer*-like style of this collection. It is not carefully displayed behind glass, lying in its coffin, but rather splayed haphazardly across the table, its outstretched arm coming into near direct contact with Smith and Bellingham. Its very position stresses that it has broken free of the confines of the Victorian museum. Furthermore, it is not a pristine example of its type, but a "charred" and "horrid" thing, an object of horror rather than of education. Bellingham's questionable 'expert' status also characterizes this collection as a curiosity cabinet. Although Bellingham is called an "Egyptologist" (252) and is presented as extremely knowledgeable about ancient and modern Egypt, he still carries the stigma of the dilettante and independent scholar, a man whose "hobby" (251) is Egypt and carries no ties to public museums. Like the gentleman scholar

[20] Many museum historians account for the shift from curiosity cabinet to museum. For a further history of the *wunderkammern,* see Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge,* which traces epistemic shifts in collecting, Jonah Siegel's *The Emergence of the Modern Museum,* an anthology of nineteenth-century sources, and Stephanie Moser's *Wondrous Curiosities* for how Egyptian antiquities were perceived as 'curiosities.'

of the *wunderkammer,* Bellingham treads the boundaries of scientific respectability.

The retreat back to the *wunderkammer* undermines the modern scientific epistemologies of the civic museum. This pre-scientific space of collecting emphasizes how the strange, the foreign, and the supernatural are not naturally situated in the civic museum. Why, if the civic museum was such a marker of scientific development, return to a representation of the curiosity cabinet? In "Lot 249" the pre-museal space of collecting provides a fitting site at which to stage both the wonder of Egypt, and to allow antiquities to evade the confines of scientific collecting. In place of didacticism and scientific investigation of the *naturalia* and *artificialia* of the world, this collection preserves the rare, the exotic, and the bizarre, from the imperial margins of the Egyptian desert, creating a monument not to Britain's power over the globe, but to lost and foreign knowledge which still evades Britain's scientific grasp. Here, Bellingham is free to study Eastern knowledge and apply it to his objects.

In this house/museum, the Eastern knowledge gained by Bellingham allows the mummy to come to life and run riot, escaping the confines of the collection and endangering British subjects. It might be slightly misleading to define this space as one of failed domestication, because there is little evidence that this *wunderkammer*-like space ever attempted to control, display, and domesticate its antiquities. Bellingham purposefully unleashes his mummy in his house-museum. Using the untamable mummy, Bellingham stages a conflict between East and West, between himself and Smith, and between Egyptology

and British medicine. This is portrayed most strongly in comparing Smith's studies with Bellingham's. Smith does not characterize Bellingham's knowledge in positive terms. When he first confronts Bellingham, he sneers that "they have given up on burning folk like you" but that "you'll find that your filthy Egyptian tricks won't answer in England" (266). He firmly couches Bellingham's knowledge within a fraudulent ancient Egyptian epistemology, but also links it with occult knowledge in England; by evoking the image of execution through burning, Smith links Bellingham with Britons in centuries past whose knowledge deviated from conventional religious and 'scientific' dogma. When explaining his suspicions to a professor at the university, Smith calls Bellingham's knowledge of raising mummies from the dead an "infernal secret" (268), once again situating Bellingham's studies in the realm of the dangerous and unknown. Thus, the text centres on what Smith knows, or rather, what he "learn[s]" (264) about the dangerous power of Egypt. What he first believes to be "vague, fantastic conjecture" that Bellingham uses the mummy to attack his enemies soon becomes undeniable "grim fact" (265). Smith, representative of British medical science, is forced to confront the dangerous knowledge of Egyptology.

The conflict between their duelling epistemologies peaks at the denouement of the story, in which Smith confronts Bellingham in his museum with the amputating knife and pistol. Warning Bellingham that he'll have no more of his "devil's tricks" (272), Smith orders him, on pain of death, to cut up the mummy and burn it, and to unlock the drawer which holds the secret papyrus with incantations and burn that too. At first, Bellingham protests using the

proprietary tone of the collector; he asks Smith, "why should I destroy my own mummy? It is valuable property" (272). However, when he is commanded to burn the papyrus, he objects due to its rarity, and speaks on behalf of the institution of Knowledge, of which the museum and Oxford are part. He believes that by appealing to Smith's participation in the search for knowledge, he might prevent the destruction of this Eastern spell. Bellingham appeals to the civic museum's archiving impulse of amassing and controlling all knowledges, especially those that, though foreign or dangerous, have been lost and regained. Bellingham accuses Smith that "you don't know what you do! [The papyrus] is unique; it contains wisdom which is nowhere else to be found" (273). What Smith recognizes is that the knowledge represented by the papyrus has no place in a British museum. It represents Eastern epistemology, and despite the civic museum's prerogative to collect information from the imperial margins, Smith knows that it, like the mummy, cannot be domesticated and contained within the museum and its scientific epistemologies. The text ends with a note that Bellingham returns to the Sudan, presumably to resume his recovery of lost Egyptian knowledges. Smith returns to his own studies, never regretting that he forces Bellingham to destroy the mummy and papyrus.

Ultimately, Doyle's short story speaks to the undomesticatable nature not only of foreign objects, but also of foreign epistemologies. The museum, this short story suggests, cannot properly house knowledge which stems from Egypt; this knowledge is antithetical to the museum, and is only at home in the *wunderkammer*. As in "The Story of Baelbrow," the rebellious mummy must be

destroyed, and so must the papyrus that brought it to life. As in both Blackwood's and the Herons' short stories, the mummy in "Lot 249" is raised from the dead in the process of domesticating its corpse to an English house-museum; the foreign signification (this time represented through an Egyptian papyrus containing a forgotten spell) animates the object, allowing it to break free from any museo-imperial constraints or agents that might attempt to domesticate it.

Conclusion: The Failed Domestication of Egyptian Mummies

What emerges from a reading of these texts side-by-side is that they portray the reverse portability of Egyptian mummies, and the foreign signification that survives the objects' transport to England, as threats that counter dominant discourse about imperial collecting. These texts suggest that England might be unable to domesticate the objects that wend their way to its shores from the imperial margins. What also emerges from these stories is a re-writing of the Victorian fantasy of domesticating foreign objects as a nightmare of reverse portability. These works of fiction dramatize a larger cultural anxiety about the ability of objects to retain cultural signification, particularly, foreign signification, and imagine what might happen to the strength of British nationhood should these objects penetrate too deeply into the heart of the Empire. These are, then, cautionary tales about the Egyptian subject/object that emerge at a historical moment that was keenly anxious over the future of the Empire. If Victorian museums, and homes where collecting occurred, created microcosmic Empires that metaphorized Britain's control over the world's peoples and objects, then the

Gothic house-museums of these late-Victorian texts presage the failure of the imperial project, the inability of the Empire to control Egypt's subjects or objects.

It is my intention to use a reading of Gothic fiction to intervene in Critical Museum Studies, and show how these texts reconceptualized how object meaning is created within museum space. I have drawn much of the theoretical foundation of this chapter from the tenets of Critical Museum Studies, namely, that objects derive meaning not from intrinsic values but from the larger cultural forces at work around them. I hope that this chapter elucidates how late-Victorian mummies, collected and displayed in literary museums, were, as Siegel has put it, "relics and witnesses to a loss" (5). These were objects whose meaning was eradicated once they were exhumed from the Egyptian sand, and were given new meanings and new interpretations, by those who collected, exported, and displayed them. This process, termed artifaction by Elliot Colla, is still at work in fiction. However, this is the process in these texts by which the imperial monster emerges from the passive corpse. The rise of this monster is the basis for my definition of the Gothic museum: a space 1) that, though called "museum," retains only the imperial motivations of the Victorian civic museum, and rejects its scientific principles in favour of Eastern epistemologies and pre-museal styles of collecting, and 2) that dramatizes the rebellion, or colonization, of the imperial subject, providing an entry point through which the Egyptian mummy penetrates into England only to threaten or kill English subjects. This museum could only exist in the space of fiction as a cautionary tale about the power of foreign signification.

Chapter Two

Mummy Run Amok: Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and the Fantasy of Knowledge

The Jewel of Seven Stars (1903) is a novel unique to Bram Stoker's oeuvre; unlike Stoker's other novels that feature the "invasion" of Britain by foreign forces (namely, *Dracula* (1897) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1912)), *The Jewel of Seven Stars* ends with the triumph of "evil" over Britain. This "evil" is an Egyptian mummy, Queen Tera, who rises up against her would-be resurrector, Egyptologist Abel Trelawny, murdering him, his daughter, and his team of scientists and researchers. In this chapter, I investigate how Stoker's novel portrays the collection of Egyptian artifacts as part of a (failed) quest for knowledge. Trelawny weaves a fantasy of knowledge around the body of Tera, whom he seeks to bring back to life in order to gain the lost knowledge of the ancients. He erroneously believes that Tera is controllable and willing to impart her knowledge, despite much evidence to the contrary, and her disappearance at the end of the novel reads as an intense scene of personal, professional, and national loss.

Stoker's novel makes explicit issues of knowledge production that are at stake more implicitly in the larger body of fin-de-siècle mummy fiction. By exemplifying the futility of knowledge-production through imperial antiquities, this novel is worthy of critical attention as a text about imperial loss and late-

Victorian cultural disenchantment. *The Jewel of Seven Stars* is a Gothic re-writing of Orientalist fantasies of "knowing" Egypt and the imperial control that emerged from these fantasies of knowledge.[21] Instead of portraying an Empire sustained by collecting knowledge about Egypt through its antiquities and ancient history, Stoker's novel portrays an Empire endangered by it. Gathering knowledge about imperial spaces and subjects through collecting is not a means of sustaining Empire, but rather, of fracturing it.

The rise of the Victorian civic museum was intricately tied to the larger project of imperial knowledge production. Indeed, changing attitudes towards knowledge prompted the shift in British collecting practices from the *wunderkammer,* with its seemingly haphazardly arranged objects, to the civic museum, with its didactic displays. The overarching project of the Victorian museum space was thus to arrange objects into exhibits which disseminated information to visitors, and in doing so, museums created a miniature model of British control over objects, and by extension, the colonial subjects who made them. As Tony Bennett argues in his seminal book *The Birth of the Museum,* "museums produced a position of power and knowledge in relation to a microcosmic reconstruction of a totalized order of things and peoples" (97). The "totalized" microscopic worldview created by the Victorian museum was part of the all-encompassing imperial project of knowledge production. Museums perpetuated a fantasy of comprehensive knowledge based on an early-nineteenth

[21] In *The Imperial Archive* Thomas Richards theorizes how imaginary constructions of imperial relationships, based on the collection of information, shaped (or even supplanted) other imperial discourses during the nineteenth century.

century idea "that a complete and unified corpus of knowledge was possible" (Hooper-Greenhill *Museums* 17). This fantasy of encyclopedic knowledge motivated both Empire-building and the development of the civic museum during this period.

The Jewel of Seven Stars uses the fantasy of comprehensive knowledge to portray imperial decline; the novel repeatedly offers tantalizing promises that this fantasy could be achieved by resurrecting Tera, but ultimately denies its fulfillment. Trelawny invokes the image of the comprehensive archive as he makes an impassioned speech about the knowledge he hopes to gain by resurrecting Tera:

> Imagine what it will be for the world of thought—the true world of human progress—the veritable road to the Stars, the *itur ad astra* of the Ancients—if there can come back to us out of the unknown past one who can yield to us the lore stored in the great Library of Alexandria,[22] and lost in its consuming flames. Not only history can be set right, and the teachings of science made veritable from their beginnings; but we can 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 [....] We may yet achieve a knowledge beyond what our age has ever known. (212-213)

[22] The Library at Alexandria (founded ca. 305-285 BCE) was one of the first influential collections of documents in the ancient world. It was destroyed in the first centuries AD, but exactly when (and by whom) remains a heated scholarly debate.

Trelawny uses Tera to fantasize about a comprehensive and complete system of knowledge, one that not only fills in missing gaps in current systems of knowledge like history and science, but also links together all of these systems into one large philosophy. Trelawny's vision of knowledge is significantly fantastic, taking place in the imagination. He rallies his listeners to "imagine" a new world of knowledge, a word that accentuates the novel's repeated representations of fantasy, dreams, and reverie. For Trelawny, such a fantasy of comprehensive and unified knowledge is necessary to halt what he perceives to be the present age's decay. He envisions the recuperation of loss through Tera, or more specifically, the recuperation of "knowledge of *lost* arts, *lost* learning, *lost* sciences" (emphasis mine). Trelawny invokes a powerful symbol of such loss: the Library at Alexandria. The library was a (notably) Egyptian collection which, for the Victorians, served as a symbol of the loss of knowledge and the decline of Empires. The Library is a fantasy, one onto which Trelawny projects his longing to erase the losses of the present by recouping the knowledge of the past. He draws a lineage between the Library's destruction and the West's experiences of deterioration. He also links the reclamation of ancient knowledge, lost in the Library, with the suspension of Western loss and decay, as a way of interrupting and reversing the degeneration of the West. Egypt, in Trelawny's vision, is intricately tied to a much-needed rejuvenation of Western knowledge.

Trelawny describes this fantasy of knowledge he attaches to Tera in both sweeping terms and with specific examples. He lists several examples of the information he imagines she might be able to impart to him, including light rays,

astrology, hypnotism, astral bodies, resurrection, and acoustics, all of which are mysteries to modern scientists. "Many new phases of old wisdom will appear in the light of fresh discovery" (186), Trelawny claims, including the "spark of life" which is revealed in Egyptian hieroglyphics (186), the secrets of light and electricity, the purposes and properties of radium and granite, and the life-giving secrets of Coprophagi (beetles). He promises that "many new phases of old wisdom will appear in the light of fresh discovery, and afford bases for new reasoning" through their Experiment (186). For example, he notes that "the time may not be far off when Astrology may be accepted on a scientific basis" (186), suggesting that a 'science' of the ancients, which had long been out of vogue by the late-nineteenth century, could be regained and validated. This pattern of 'recovering' occult research is not without historical precedent, Trelawny reminds Ross. He tells the team that "within but a few years we have made such discoveries as two centuries ago would have sent the discoverers to the flames, [including] the liquefaction of oxygen; the existence of radium, of helium, of polonium, of argon; the different powers of Röntgen and Cathode and Becquerel rays" (181).[23] He reminds his listeners that the mysteries of the natural world, which were only beginning to be explained by science, had long since been viewed as supernatural or inexplicable; he dreams that the same recuperation may occur in

[23] Louis Paul Cailletet and Rauol Pictet both experimented with liquefying gases in the late 1870s; radium and polonium were discovered by Marie Sklodowska-Curie and Pierre Curie in 1898; Sir Joseph Norman Lockyer and Pierre Janssen observed helium in a solar eclipse in 1868; Sir William Ramsay and John William Strutt, Lord Rayleigh, isolated argon in 1894; Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovered X-rays in 1895; "cathode" was coined in 1834 by William Whewell; Henri Becquerel discovered radioactivity in 1896.

time with phenomena that even now seem unfathomable. He ties his fantasies to Tera, an ancient Egyptian whose knowledge might help to recuperate the validity of these seemingly supernatural phenomena. He reminds his listeners that "we know as yet so little of natural forces, that imagination need set no bounds to its flight in considering the possibilities for the future" (181). Trelawny imagines that Tera has stored in her memory many answers to questions about the natural and supernatural world which modern science has yet to tease out from their research. Trelawny is able to project this fantasy of knowledge onto Tera because of her antiquity and her exoticism. She knows, Trelawny believes, lost and marginalized knowledges, and can validate them for the contemporary scientific community.

Yet traversing the boundary of science and pseudo-science is anxiety-provoking in the novel. Ross requires "sooth[ing]" after hearing Trelawny's theories, and says that his anxiety is displaced from "brooding on the mysteries of the occult" to "attracting it to the wonders of nature" (189). Where the occult evokes anxiety, the 'wonders' of nature are cause for celebration; by re-defining pseudo-science as wonderful and natural, Ross strips it of its alarming power. Yet even at times Trelawny, the champion of pseudo-science, feels "nervously anxious" (186) when contemplating his Experiment. In moments of worry, Trelawny "turn[s] over in his mind all the phenomena: all the possible causes; all the possible results" (186). These moments of anxiety begin, and grow in frequency, after he decides to conduct the Experiment. For example, his first testimony as to the merging of "powers - old and new" (184), is during a period when the tension among the group has started to grow. "The more I thought over the coming

experiment," Ross muses, "the more strange it all seemed; and the more foolish were we who were deliberately entering upon it. It was all so stupendous, so mysterious, so unnecessary!" (184). Representations of Trelawny's fantasy, therefore, continually oscillate between fear of and desire for knowledge.

One of the primary causes of anxiety inherent in Trelawny's fantasy is its merger of dominant and subjugated discourses. Tera mediates knowledge that circulates in discourses at the limits of the Empire: the knowledge of colonial peoples, and of the supernatural. The types of knowledge that Trelawny fantasizes about are theories of spirituality and spiritualism, the existence of the supernatural, the occult, and astrology; all these "sciences" are decidedly "pseudo," and are marginalized by dominant Victorian scientific discourse. *The Jewel of Seven Stars* envisions a redemption and legitimation of marginal sciences, that is, scientific theories and disciplines that during the nineteenth century were widely explored but had yet to gain the respect of the dominant scientific community. Such marginal sciences included spiritualism, involving the use of seances and mediums, phrenology, and psychical research. These are either knowledges of the East that the West is not cognizant of, or knowledges of the supernatural world that exist outside of current Western dominant scientific discourse. The very fact that Tera is privy to these marginalized knowledges is what makes her so fantastic to Trelawny. He seeks a way to subvert hierarchies of knowledge and re-integrate subjugated knowledges into dominant scientific discourses. Tera carries the germ of both dominant and subjugated scientific discourses within her, and thus treads the boundaries that separate scientific orthodoxy and heterodoxy in the nineteenth

century. She was "a scientist of her time" (167) who also dabbled in occult magic and religion, and thus, in Trelawny's fantasy, is perfectly situated to bring subjugated knowledges from the imperial margins to the imperial centre.

Trelawny fantasizes about using Tera to recuperate subjugated, semi-legitimate knowledge for modern, orthodox science, and through her he dreams of creating a comprehensive archive of knowledge. Such fantasies are motivated by the "nostalgic allure" of a conventional Victorian myth, that the "forgotten 'supernatural' powers of a now degenerate Egypt or Indian subcontinent hinted at lost plentitude" (Luckhurst 203).[24] Trelawny fantasizes about the untapped, abundant possibilities of the forgotten, the marginalized, and the supernatural, and sees the potential to prove the legitimacy of these sciences by studying ancient Egypt, an archaeological discipline that was still in relative infancy. In the gaps of information about ancient Egypt he sees possibilities for new knowledge emerge. His call for his fellow researchers to "imagine" the recuperation of lost knowledges through Tera, such as those at the Library of Alexandria, speaks to this fantasy. This flow of semi-legitimate information from the imperial margins to the imperial centre is turned into a fantasy in *The Jewel of Seven Stars.* Rather than view an influx of occult knowledge as a source of anxiety, Trelawny fantasizes about re-integrating it with modern, rational science.

[24] Roger Luckhurst, in his essay on the circulation of information between the imperial margins and centre, argues that during the nineteenth century pseudo-scientific researchers found "accumulating evidence of pre-modern powers 'lost' to the Enlightenment, but which could be recovered with sufficient study of primitive society" (204).

This fantasy of a comprehensive knowledge that unifies science and magic may not be out of place at the fin-de-siècle, for 'boundary wars' over defining the scope and limits of 'science' were constantly fought by different camps during this period. Alison Winter has noted that quasi-scientific investigations flourished during the nineteenth century under the larger umbrella of 'scientific research', indicating that the "definitions of science itself were very fluid" (24);[25] these debates raged because "most scientists did not think it was possible to scientifically investigate the non-material world" (Lyons 174).

Stoker, who was "aware of the scientific and cultural developments that were taking place around the turn of the century" (Senf 92), may have been influenced by his contemporaries who were debating this issue in non-fiction. For example, Alfred R. Wallace, a famous biologist and anthropologist whose most famous work was on natural selection, wrote in 1905 that the "neglect of phrenology" and "opposition to hypnotism and psychical research" were "extremely discreditable to an age of such general research and freedom of inquiry in all other branches of human knowledge" (194). Frank Podmore, a member of the Society for Psychical Research, wrote *The Naturalization of the Supernatural* in 1908 recommending that seances be included in a general understanding of the laws of the natural world. Stoker's early-twentieth-century contemporaries, and fellow investigators of science and the occult, read *The Jewel of Seven Stars* as participating in these 'boundary wars.' Noted author of many books on witchcraft,

[25] For an informative study of the evolution of various sciences, such as geology and evolutionary theory, from their semi-legitimate beginnings to their incorporation in the scientific canon, see Sherrie Lyons's *Species, Serpents, Spirits, and Skulls: Science in the Margins in the Victorian Age.*

and leader of the Edinburgh chapter of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, J.W. Brodie-Innes praised the novel's investigation of these supernatural issues in a letter to Stoker (Glover 81). The contents of Stoker's private library demonstrate his vested interest in Egypt's connection with science and the supernatural; when auctioned at Sotheby's in 1913, his library included Wallis Budge's *Egyptian Magic* (1899), *The Book of the Dead* (1895), and *The Mummy* (1893), among other current, popular tomes on Egypt and the occult (Senf 78).

The Jewel of Seven Stars offers Stoker's vision of a fantasy of re-integrating subjugated scientific knowledge from the ancient world, imperial margins, and the occult, into a dominant discourse. Thus, in reading this novel within the contemporary context of these debates, I disagree with scholars like Carol Senf who suggest that Stoker "*confuses* science, pseudo-science, and magic" (80 emphasis mine), instead reading the novel as a fantasy of re-integrating these knowledges. Karen Macfarlane has read the merging of "Egyptian knowledge" and modern science as a "hybrid epistemology" which is ultimately "too monstrous to contemplate" (22). When Tera disappears at the end of the novel, Macfarlane suggests, Stoker refuses to privilege one system of knowledge over another, instead opting out of any "epistemological blending" (22). Rather than reading the endings as Stoker's strategic refusal to choose one epistemology over another, I instead read Tera's disappearance as evidence that the fantasy of knowledge woven around her cannot withstand testing. Trelawny attempts to actualize his fantasy, but Stoker collapses it, revealing its illusory nature. The supernatural cannot, perhaps, exist within dominant discourse. By disappearing, Tera resists

incorporation into the fantasy of knowledge Trelawny has created, and refuses to participate or be contained by the parameters set up by the Experiment.

Interestingly, it is not only the boundaries between science and pseudo-science that are unstable in the novel. The internal boundaries separating legitimate scientific disciplines are also fraught. In *The Jewel of Seven Stars,* Egyptology and archaeology are portrayed as more useful forms of knowledge than other branches of science, specifically, medical science. This hierarchy of scientific disciplines is made clear during the treatment of Trelawny's illness in the first half of the novel. Dr. Winchester is the perfect doctor to treat Trelawny because he is open to an Egyptological diagnosis. He admits to Ross that "this disease, or condition, or whatever it may be called, from which Mr Trelawny is suffering, is in some way connected with Egypt" (106). He is even willing to defer to an Egyptologist in medical matters, reaffirming archaeology's dominance over medicine in the novel's hierarchy of scientific disciplines. Winchester feels unequal to the task of reviving Trelawny alone because he lacks "knowledge! I am completely ignorant of Egyptian matters, language, writing, history, secrets, medicines, poisons, occult powers - all that go to make up the mystery of that mysterious land" (106). The type of knowledge that receives preference in diagnosis is not medical, but Egyptological, and not about illness, but about mysteries. Such a preference is part of the novel's larger fantasy of knowledge, as it privileges the fantastic over the rational, and projects into Egypt's blank spaces of 'mystery' fantastic possibilities for medical knowledge as well as occult knowledge.

In pursuit of this knowledge, Winchester seeks advice from Dr. Corbeck, Trelawny's associate who has brought Tera's lamps to London from Cairo. Corbeck's own education establishes a hierarchy of scientific disciplines; he is an archaeologist by profession, but introduces himself as a man with degrees in medicine, literature, science, philosophy, and oriental languages. He claims that he is "sufficiently feathered with diplomas to fly into even a sick-room," but that he "fell in with Egyptology" early in life, and "learn[ed] some things that you can't get out of books" (80). Corbeck implies that out of all his training in various disciplines, his first-hand knowledge of Egypt has been, and will continue to be, the most useful and beneficial he has gained. Corbeck's chief area of knowledge is Egypt and its antiquities, a knowledge that does seem to somehow cure Trelawny's illness. It is only after Corbeck arrives in London, and relates to the team his history of research with Trelawny in Egypt, that Trelawny inexplicably awakens from his coma and begins to recover. Winchester and medical knowledge seemingly have no effect upon Trelawny's illness or recovery, and Egyptological knowledge, or rather, the revelation of secrets about Egypt's history by Corbeck, is what awakens the comatose Egyptologist.

Scientific experts and professionals, including Winchester, Trelawny, Ross, Sergeant Daw, Corbeck, and Nurse Kennedy, are ubiquitous in the text; each 'expert' in this text believes, or comes to believe, in the power of Egyptological knowledge save one: Dr. James Frere, a brain surgeon from King's College. Suggestively, Frere is a figure of ignorance in the novel, and represents popular, not educated, attitudes towards Egyptian antiquities. Winchester

consults Frere early in Trelawny's illness, while he is still exploring medical options for treatment. Frere "best unites theory and practice" (55) of brain specialty, and seems, to Winchester, to be the best man in Britain to offer advice about Trelawny's illness. Frere, the voice of medical science in the novel, initially seems logical and sensible. He stands in opposition to the team's suspicions that Egypt is to blame for Trelawny's coma, and indeed these suspicions seem unsupportable around him, when "all sense of mystery seemed to melt away" (56). Frere himself admits that he does not believe in "strange matters," stating that he "do[es] not take much account of mysteries" (57). Frere "suggests that [the team's] susceptible imaginations are being adversely affected by their morbid surroundings" (Bridges 147). In a moment when Stoker "seems to be winking at his readers," Frere says that the team has been influenced by too many "penny dreadfuls" in imagining Egypt as the source of Trelawny's illness, proposing a literary etiology that "reminds the other characters that stories about vengeful reanimated mummies are the substance of gothic romance rather than reality" (147). The sense of Egypt's mystery disappears to such an extent in Frere's presence that even Winchester seems embarrassed by the team's pseudo-archaeological diagnosis, momentarily disrupting the hierarchy of archaeology over medicine suggested by the rest of the novel.

Frere calls the objects of Egyptology "horrors," a reaction that is strongly reminiscent of the popular opinions found in British Museum guidebooks and the popular press, some of which are outlined in my Introduction. In deriding Egypt's ancient objects, however, he reveals himself to be unsuited to solving Trelawny's

illness. He urges Ross to have Trelawny moved out of the antiquity-laden sickroom, claiming that "it's enough to put any man into an abnormal condition, to have such an assemblage of horrors round him" (58). Frere immediately distances himself from archaeology by referring to the antiquities as "horrors," as he negates their scientific and didactic potential by relegating the antiquities to the status of spectacles in a freak show. He also characterizes the antiquities as antithetical to good health. The antiquities exhale "mephitic odour[s]" (58), Frere insists, and are likely causing Trelawny's catalepsy and the strange trance-like effects suffered by the other inhabitants of the house. He further derides the treatment Trelawny is receiving at the house, quipping that "the day has hardly come yet, I am glad to say, when the British Museum and St. Thomas' Hospital have exchanged their normal functions" (58). What Frere fails to realize is that Trelawny's condition is Egyptological, not medical. Trelawny's home, outfitted like the British Museum, is the ideal place for him to receive treatment. Margaret agrees; after this comment, Margaret says that "if Sir James Frere is a type of the cult of Specialists, I want no more of them" (59). Frere leaves the house, promising only to take on the case if the antiquities are removed, and does not reappear for the rest of the novel.

Antiquities and the Victorian Gothic House Museum

Trelawny's house is an example of the Victorian Gothic house museum that I identified in the last chapter; as a museum of prime Egyptological specimens, it is the ideal location at which the pursuit for ancient knowledge should commence. His private home is the locus of his professional collecting,

creating a hybrid space that is at once domestic and museal. Margaret seems sensitive to this; she quips to Winchester "I sometimes don't know whether I am in a private house or the British Museum" (33) after he comments on the abundance of mummies on display. Both Margaret and Frere seem to view the merger of house and museum into one space as undesirable; from Frere's perspective, this merger is inconsistent with good health, and from Margaret's, it challenges the traditional, intimate, domestic space of the Victorian family that she represents. Antiquities, it is implied, belong in museums and not in homes, and yet, Trelawny's London townhouse is almost over-run with them. There is a subtle but key difference in how Frere interprets these domestic Egyptian antiquities as "horrors," and how the rest of the characters view them. To them, the antiquities are 'strange.' The word is repeated a striking number of times throughout the novel, including in two chapter titles, "Strange Instructions" and "More Strange Instructions," and Ross often notes how 'strange' are various aspects of the case. For example, when they find Dr. Corbeck's missing antique lamps, he exclaims "Strange! [...] Strange! why, it's all the most bewildering, maddening thing I have ever encountered. It is all so strange that one seems to wonder, and simply waits for what will happen next" (101). The novel's fantasy of knowledge is intricately linked with 'the strange,' a word which implies meanings not only of alien, foreign, or unknown, but also of abnormal, surprising, and astonishing. It is because these antiquities are strange that British archaeologists like Trelawny can attach new, fantastic stories and meanings to them.

In Trelawny's house, the strangeness and indecipherability of the antiquities is part of the text's engagement with issues of knowledge and knowledge-production. While the objects seem 'fantastic' to Ross and other visitors to the house, they do not participate in the fantasy of knowledge and communication that Trelawny establishes later in the novel. Instead, they dramatize the strangeness of 'not knowing,' of being confronted with the bizarre and unintelligible. The strangeness of Egyptian antiquities is an element of what allows British characters to weave fantasies around them. In *The Jewel of Seven Stars,* the only person who can 'interpret' the antiquities is in a coma for the first half of the novel, allowing the other characters to experience and comment upon the strangeness of the various antiquities, which seem illegible to them. Thus, when Trelawny awakes, the fantasy of knowledge he has created around Tera seems plausible, for Egypt seems to require deciphering, which in turn requires more knowledge to be accumulated about it. The unintelligible nature of these antiquities also foreshadows the destruction of Trelawny's fantasy of knowledge at the conclusion of the text. Britain can never truly 'know' these antiquities, because true comprehension would destroy the fantasies that have been based upon the antiquities' strangeness.

Ross's reaction to the antiquities in Trelawny's house-collection is influenced by desire, not only the pseudo-sexual desire for possession of the object (a connection that will be explored further in this chapter) but also the desire to fantasize about the mysterious and the strange. During his tour of the house's various cases and storerooms of antiquities, Ross begins "to have some idea of the

vastness of [Trelawny's] enterprise in the world of Egyptian research" due to the extensive collections (90). Ross says that

> the house seemed to be a veritable storehouse of marvels of antique art. In addition to the curios, big and little, in Mr Trelawny's own room–from the great sarcophagi down to the scarabs of all kinds in the cabinets–the great hall, the staircase landings, the study, and even the boudoir were full of antique pieces which would have made a collector's mouth water. (90)

The mouth-watering desire Ross associates with Trelawny's sprawling exhibits marks the house as a fantasy of collecting, a place where objects hint at the rediscovered 'lost plentitude' of Egypt. Ross approaches the collections as an amateur, expressing amazement and bafflement by artefacts from a culture he does not know. He expresses "wonder and awe" (90) at the "bewildering amount and variety of objects" (91), suggesting that he feels overwhelmed by the size and nature of the collection.

Ross's reactions to the various artefacts approximate what Stephanie Moser has reported were average middle-class reactions to Victorian museum exhibits of Egyptian antiquities. His reaction mirrors "the emotions [Egyptian exhibits] generated or the immediate response they elicited from the [average Victorian] viewer - these typically being awe and amazement" (Moser 51). Rather than existing as scientific examples of a "meaningful developmental sequence" of cultural evolution (51), Egyptian artefacts were considered to be curiosities, "timeless, isolated examples of the strange" (51). Egyptian antiquites seemed

particularly intriguing, unsettling, or alien because they were "culturally exotic, strange, and unusual in size" (41). In the novel, Ross marvels at the size of Tera's sarcophagus in Trelawny's bedchamber; he exclaims to Margaret that "this must have been made for a giant!" (92). He also marvels at how innumerable they seem: "for my own part I had had a vague idea that there were a large number of Egyptian objects in Mr Trelawny's house; but until I came to deal with them *seriatim* I had little idea of either their importance, the size of some of them, or of their endless number" (192). The bewilderment Ross feels at being confronted with a plethora of antiquities that he cannot fit into a historical or artistic tradition mirrors the ways in which the British Museum displayed their Egyptian collections. Furthermore, the text repeatedly describes the antiquities in Trelawny's collections as curios, not artifacts. "Presented as examples of the strange and unusual amid larger collections of cultural and natural material," Moser argues, Egyptian "curiosities were often used to signify something that was unknowable and mysterious" (51). Because museum exhibits did not explicitly trace any lineage through the Egyptological exhibits, Moser suggests, the antiquities within them seemed anchorless on the plane of interpretation, as vaguely unsettling and alien amidst other artefacts from more 'serious' cultures. I suggest that *The Jewel of Seven Stars* reproduces this interpolation of Egyptian artefacts on a spectrum of significant cultural art, somewhere between 'curious' and 'strange.'

It is precisely the antiquities' strangeness that makes them fodder for Gothic fantasy. When Ross enters the sickroom, he notes that "the room and all

in it gave grounds for strange thoughts," proclaiming that "there were so many ancient relics that unconsciously one was taken back to strange lands and strange times" (35). The smell of embalming spices causes him to lose touch with reality; he looks around for "shadows of uncanny shape," or for some "strange personality or influence" present in the room" (35). He then shakes himself free from "wild imaginings" (35). He says "all at once I sat up. I had become lost in an absorbing reverie. The Egyptian smell had seemed to get on my nerves – on my memory – on my very will" (35).

The fact that the smell of the antiquites preys on Ross's "will" indicates that they are not merely passive recipients of Ross's reveries. Indeed, the antiquities produce the 'smell' that induces coma-like trances as a method of attack on Tera's behalf. The repeated attacks against Trelawny and his caretakers are an example of Tera's agency. Tera is not a passive object in the house museum. Although she is unlike the examples of ambulatory mummies from the previous chapter in that she is never actually represented physically moving in the novel, she has agency, and uses it to break free from the confines of the imperial domestic collection. For example, three times Tera uses the smell of the antiquities in the room to entrance Ross and Nurse Kennedy, and then her disembodied hand seizes a Kukri knife and attempts to saw off Trelawny's arm. She also uses the spirit of her mummified cat (also in the room) to possess Margaret's pet tabby Silvio, who then claws at Trelawny's wrist. Tera does this to retrieve a key attached to a bangle on Trelawny's wrist, which has been attached with unbreakable triple steel links. The key, we later discover, is to a chest that

contains the jewel of seven stars, a ruby belonging to Tera. Thus, Tera's attacks against Trelawny, using the power of the antiquities in the room, require her to break free of the confines of museal display in an attempt to retrieve a symbolic key to an exhibit from her collector. She makes a bid to usurp the power of collecting, thus undermining the British, male, archaeological authority of the collector. Her repeated demonstrations of agency lie at the heart of the nightmare of collecting, and the failure of knowledge production, in this novel.

The scene where Trelawny unwraps Tera's body is a key moment in the novel that mediates representations of Tera's agency and passivity. This scene, in which the ritual of unwrapping "translate[s] [the] mumm[y] from objec[t] of contemplation or knowledge to objec[t] of perverse and mesmerizing spectacle" (Bridges 149), bears much resemblance to a medical spectacle that gained much popularity during the 1830s and 1840s: staged mummy unwrappings. During that period, a London surgeon named Thomas Pettigrew had become famous virtually overnight for his staged unwrappings of mummy corpses, at first for small, select groups of men, but years later, for public audiences of all genders. The performance consisted of Pettigrew on a stage, divesting the corpse of its wrappings, and making detailed notes of ornamentation and anatomy. While performed under the guise of scientific research, these unwrappings were hugely popular as a spectacle of morbid curiosity to the public. These unwrappings have been theorized by several scholars, including Jasmine Day, Susan Pearce, and Nicholas Daly, as performances of the imperial gaze, a penetrating, scientific, and patriarchal gaze that ruptures the mystery of the veiled, exoticized, Eastern female

body. These ceremonial unwrappings also dramatize the connection between looking and knowing; not only do they create sexualized fantasies of carnal knowledge ('knowing' women's bodies), but they also create a fantasy over the intersection of the archaeological and medical gaze of the collector. To unveil and look is to know the body of the exoticized, feminized, Other. In *The Jewel of Seven Stars,* the unwrapping scene creates a sexualized fantasy of visibility and knowledge, one where Tera's agency is momentarily curbed.

Margaret's reaction to the unwrapping of Tera's body emphasizes Tera's helplessness and the sexually-charged energy of the scene. Margaret recoils at the idea of the team of men unveiling the Queen; she cries to father that "you are not going to unswathe her! All you men....! And in the glare of light! [...] Oh! it's cruel, cruel!" (230). Margaret is repeatedly described as "indignant" in this passage, which suggests her sympathy rather than mere empathy with the situation of the mummy. Meilee Bridges has noted that Margaret's reaction to the unwrapping of Tera's body is highly suggestive of "the histrionic characteristics of the unwrapping ceremony" common in nineteenth-century public theatres (154). Bridges further argues that Margaret's "sexual identity with the Egyptian queen [...] elicits her affective attachment" (155) to the mummified Queen. I read Margaret's shared, gendered reaction as part of what Jasmine Day has called the "figurative rape" of unwrapped mummies (43). Day compellingly links archaeologists' unwrapping of mummies with the gendered power of the gaze, in which the archaeologists (prefigured as male) unwrap (customarily female) mummies for the sexualized pleasure of looking. The unwrapping ritual, Day

suggests, mirrors the excavation process, an equally penetrative and revealing act. Thus both excavation, and unveiling the exotic, orientalized body, become types of ocular rape.

Stoker explicitly draws this connection, Day suggests, through both Margaret and Ross's reactions to Tera's body. Indeed, Trelawny seems aware of the possible sexual overtones, and takes pains to reassure Margaret that Tera is "not a woman [but] a mummy" and that the doctors present, including himself, Corbeck, and Winchester, are imbued with a medical gaze that makes them "accustomed to such things" (Stoker 230, 231). "We are not at a pleasure party," Trelawny reiterates (231). He seems to be trying to distance himself and the other men from the leering gaze that accompanies a sexualized spectacle, replacing it with the detached and scholarly gaze of the researcher. These two types of gaze can be traced to the primary audiences of mummy unwrappings in the nineteenth century. As Warren R. Dawson wrote in his highly informed account of Pettigrew's unwrappings in *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* in 1934, mummy unwrappings began as part of the circle of the scientific community, but soon became appropriated by the larger public. Dawson notes that Pettigrew purchased his first mummy at an auction of Henry Salt's at Sotheby's in 1833 for £23, which he then unwrapped in a lecture theatre in Charing Cross Hospital. In attendance was an all-male crowd of aristocrats, physicians, archaeologists, travellers, and "distinguished persons" (171). A year later, Pettigrew's unwrapping at the Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields had to turn members of the public away due to lack of chairs; this event suggests how "witnessing the unrolling of mummies [had

become] a fashionable pastime amongst antiquaries, dillettanti, and even with the public" (171). In *The Jewel of Seven Stars,* Trelawny obviously tries to separate himself from the latter group of viewers in order to preserve the scientific legitimacy of his gaze. However, Margaret is again offended when she learns that Ross, her fiancé, had planned on participating in the unwrapping. She doubts that these are the actions of "deeply earnest men" and repeats that "it seems a horrible indignity to a Queen, and a woman" (231, 232). Margaret's sense of indignation, and her anger at Ross, suggest not only that she is aware of the sexualized nature of the archaeologists' gaze, but also that that gaze is somehow directed at her own body as well as the Queen's. She seems to feel in particular that Ross's gaze, in the context of a public arena, and as her fiancé, is inappropriate and shameful.

Ross initially seems to also feel this sense of humiliation, although it quickly transforms into sexual excitement. As Tera is laid on the table, Ross says that he "felt low-spirited, and miserable, and ashamed," affected by Margaret's own anxiety; however, as the unwrapping continues, he "grew more and more excited" (233). He steps back from the table, clasps hands with Margaret, and they "held each other hard" (233). Tera soon lies prone on the table, dressed in what are discovered to be not funeral, but marriage, robes, once again casting the tones of a sexual ritual over the event. Margaret takes the robe from Tera's body, and they all gaze upon the Queen's nude body. Ross notes that "the glorious beauty of the Queen was revealed, [and] I felt a rush of shame sweep over me. It was not right that we should be there, gazing with irreverent eyes on such unclad beauty: it was indecent, it was almost sacrilegious!" (235). As the men gaze upon

Tera's "ivory" body, which notably lacks the "wrinkled toughness which seems to be a leading characteristic in most mummies" (236), Margaret becomes angry and embarassed, and puts the robe back over the Queen's exposed corpse. At this moment, Ross notes that Tera looks just like Margaret. He says, "this woman - I could not think of her as a mummy or a corpse - was the image of Margaret as my eyes had first lit on her" (236), suggesting that he links this moment of visual possession with a similar moment when he has captured Margaret visually. Even Trelawny notices the resemblance between Tera and his daughter, as he turns to Margaret, whose pallor has returned as her blush has abated, and murmurs, "it looks as if you were dead, my child!" (236). The unwrapping scene thus suggestively links Margaret with Tera, not only in physical resemblance, but also in Margaret's, Ross's, and Trelawny's reactions to the nude body of the Queen. Margaret feels shame for nakedness in front of so many men, Ross feels a corresponding shame at war with sexual excitement, and Trelawny, who has only been reunited with his daughter for a few weeks, sees the cost of his archaeological excavations foreshadowed in the image of his dead daughter.

During this unwrapping scene, Stoker creates a sexualized fantasy of knowing around looking at the body of Queen Tera, and by extension, looking at the body of Margaret as well. This parallel between scopic possession of the bodies of the two women suggests that 'knowing' female bodies, and by extension preserving the boundaries of nation and race, is accomplished visually. Mummy unwrappings are particularly potent examples of this Saidian paradigm of power between looking and knowing. Nicholas Daly, in a chapter on the

commodification of mummies in his book on late-Victorian culture, has suggested that mummy unwrappings are a "shorthand for the inscrutability of the Orient," but also a way in which that inscrutability is ruptured, allowing for the "scopic possession" of Egypt (88). This "scopic possession" of the exoticized, Eastern subject enables knowing, and is achieved through the penetrating gaze of the Western archaeologist. The relationship between veils, wrappings, and masks, and the knowledge they conceal, have a long history in both Orientalist and Gothic fiction, as Bradley Deane has pointed out. In both traditions 'unveiling' the body of the Other is the surest path to knowledge. Deane has suggested that late-Victorian Britain was suffused with "narrative fantas[ies]" about Egypt that "refuse[d] to conclude [their] endless striptease of veils and mummy unwrappings" (385); he links the garments of mummies, and the continual process of disrobing that accompanies them, to a sexualized striptease that also implies the revelation of knowledge. Looking at Tera's body is imbued with fantasies of sexual and scientific 'knowing,' a way of breaching her inscrutability and assuring the accrual of her knowledge. Yet I read this scene as an example of the tension between Tera's activity and passivity. As an object of sexualized, archaeological spectacle, she is passive; yet, she ultimately destroys fantasies of looking and knowing in the final scene of the novel, in which she escapes from the resurrection chamber.

In the final scene of the novel, as in the unwrapping scene, Tera's body is the object of the researchers' gaze. Up until the penultimate moment, Trelawny's fantasy is maintained by the ritual. The "eager faces" of the team bend forward towards the sarcophagus with "speechless wonder" in their eyes, impatient for a

look at "something white" rising from the sarcophagus (242), possibly Tera herself. Yet just as they are about to catch a glimpse of what may be the Queen herself, thus fulfilling the fantasy of visibility and knowledge, "there came a change" (242). The storm outside the cavern bursts the shutters open, and black smoke begins to pour from the coffer, flooding the whole area with dense, thick, smoke. As Ross frantically tries to find a way to light some lamps, he trips over a female body on the floor on his way, and thinking it is Margaret, carries her from the room. He rushes back into the chamber to find Margaret and the other men dead upon the floor, staring up at him with "fixed eyes of unspeakable terror" (244). The look in the teams' eyes has shifted from wonder to terror only minutes later, for, under the pressure of actualization, the fantasy has been revealed to be a nightmare. Tera has destroyed those who were implicit in the fantasy, leaving alive only one person who could help her escape.

The emphasis upon eyes and seeing during the resurrection scene points to a larger image pattern of visibility in the novel, particularly obvious during discussions of science. In a novel that is marked by claustrophobic, dark, interior spaces, Trelawny frequently refers to his research in terms of light. During his most fervent speech outlining his fantasy of knowledge about Tera, Trelawny states that "if we are successful we shall be able to let in on the world of modern science such a flood of light from the Old World as will change every condition of thought and experiment and practice" (200). When speaking of Tera, or the knowledge that will come with resurrecting her, he borrows from post-Enlightenment metaphors of science as light, figuratively envisioning his research

as illuminating the world. For example, he refers to the hieroglyphics in Tera's tomb as "full of guiding light" (181). In portraying Trelawney's research through images of light, Stoker is reacting to a nineteenth-century trend where "scientific inquiry in general was promoted alongside a fantasy of total, panoramic visibility, with its associated metaphors of revelation, illumination, and enlightenment" (O'Connor 328). Even Trelawny's team of investigators are implicated in this metaphor, for, as Christopher Craft has said, they are "the Crew of Light" (109). Seeing Tera resurrected is the ultimate goal of Trelawny's research, as is suggested by the ritual scene in which the team strains forward to see into the sarcophagus through the green vapour.

References to seeing and light become extremely important during the final stages of the Experiment. Ross, the "guardian of the light" (243), has the most important job during this scene: turning off the electric lights, and lighting the wick of the lamps. Throughout this scene Ross comments upon the "thin light of the lamps" and how Margaret in particular appears "dimly" (240). In the 1903 ending, Ross notes that the body within the sarcophagus became "illumined" (241), and soon after his "own eyes were nearly blinded by the awful, paralysing light, so that I could hardly trust them" (242). The billowing black smoke quickly obscures the vision of all present at the Experiment to the point where Ross accidentally rescues the wrong woman. In the 1903 ending, Tera thus successfully disrupts the fantasy of visibility and knowledge constructed around her mummified body. Her resurrection is not a moment of enlightenment, but rather a moment of blindness and obscurity, which allows her to escape the confines of

the museum forever. These light metaphors are significant because they position Trelawny's research in relation to transparency, and in banishing the forces of darkness; these metaphors distance Trelawny's research from the characterizations of obscurity that prevented pseudo-science from gaining legitimacy, instead turning his research into metaphors of light.

Despite other significant differences between the 1903 and 1912 endings, Tera still disrupts fantasies of looking and knowing in both.[26] Ross waits for the orders to light the lamps, noticing that in the "fading light" (248) Trelawny's and Corbeck's eyes "glare in the light," while Dr. Winchester's "twinkled like stars," Margaret's "blazed like black suns" and Silvio's were like "emeralds" (247). As the last lights go out, Ross notes that the room is so full of black smoke from the coffer that it is like an "Egyptian darkness" (248); this image suggests that the smoke is part of Tera's power. As he opens the blinds to vent the smoke, he rouses the various members of the team from their stupors. Margaret, who was closest to the sarcophagus, says "There was nothing that I could see... all grew so dark that I could not see" (249). The artefacts belonging to the Queen, including the coffer, the sarcophagus, and her own body as mummy, deprive the team of the light that they desperately need, both literally and figuratively, to complete the experiment. By plunging the room into an "Egyptian darkness," Tera denies

[26] The novel was, bizarrely, written with two endings, one published originally in 1903, and the other published with a new edition in 1912. The new ending (which may or may not have been written by Stoker, who was very ill at that time) was devised to be more "upbeat" than its predecessor. Interestingly, subsequent editions were published with the 1912 ending and with "Powers: Old and New" expunged, until very recently, at which time new editions of the novel included both endings.

Trelawny the chance to actualize his fantasy of raising her from the dead. Despite the Experiment's 'failure,' Tera succeeds in escaping from her captors, and, in this ending, every member of the team survives. Her escape from Trelawny's possession is, however, a form of triumph, and despite the novel's 'happier' ending, Tera's power to leave the museum reads as horrifying in its implications. Her escape confirms her agency and denies any remaining passivity as a museal object.

Spiritualism and Fantasies of Communication

In both endings, Tera's escape from museal control accompanies her penetration of the most sacred of imperial spaces: the British white female body. Tera possesses the body of Margaret, resulting in Margaret's death (in the 1903 version) or her possible re-incarnation (in the 1912 version). I read Tera's possession of Margaret as the ultimate fantasy of knowledge that becomes a nightmare of invasion. Margaret's intimate knowledge of Tera, so indisputably shown during the unwrapping scene, is fantasized about as a source of information in the novel. Since her birth, Margaret has demonstrated a keen affinity for Queen Tera. She was born at the exact moment that her father and his excavation team stood in a trance in Queen Tera's tomb in Egypt; Margaret's mother dies during childbirth and her daughter does not resemble her, "but in both feature and colour she is a marvellous resemblance to the pictures of Queen Tera" (Stoker 136). She even bears a scar on her wrist, a thin red line with marks like drops of blood, which matches the mark on Tera's body where her hand was

severed by a Bedouin during Trelawny's excavation. She is very devoted to her cat, Silvio, another double for Tera's mummified cat.

Ross, during his courtship of Margaret, seems the most disturbed by her kinship with Tera. He frequently worships Margaret as a perfect specimen of docile Victorian womanhood, but is also struck by moments when she seems different and more "queenly" (64). Two visions of Margaret during their initial courtship war in Ross's mind: a vision of her picnicking with him on a riverside, when he sees her "sweet and gentle nature," and the first time he met her, at a ball at Belgrave Square, when she wears Egyptian-style jewelry and seems so regal that he "was then afraid of her" (64). Margaret's behaviour seems so varied that Ross later comments she displays a "strange dual existence," and concludes that she might be "compelled to speak or act as she might be instructed," or that "her whole being could be changed for another" (208). He is particularly unsettled by his doubts about Tera's benevolence, and how harm might come to Margaret through Tera. When Margaret is channeling Tera, Ross feels that her thoughts are "veiled" to him "as are the eyes of a caged lion" (215), a foreboding image of violence. In order to chart Margaret's transformation he makes a list of events involving Margaret that support this theory. One in particular that catches his attention is an episode involving Dr. Corbeck's antique lamps. These lamps were obtained, Corbeck admits with compunction, illegally in Cairo; he had been looking for the lamps from her tomb in Egypt, as Trelawny felt that they would be an integral part of the resurrection Experiment. Once Corbeck is safely ensconced at Trelawny's London house, the recently obtained lamps go missing.

Ross and Margaret are astonished to find them in Margaret's rooms shortly after their absence is noted. While Margaret seems to know nothing of how the lamps arrived in her rooms, Ross's suspicions, that Margaret may have been acting unwittingly on behalf of Tera, are further aroused.

The scene in which Ross discovers the lamps in Margaret's chambers is intriguing because it links Margaret's 'stealing' of the lamps with collecting, and links her duality with Tera and familial inheritance. Ross has been marveling at the various antiquities in Trelawny's house and Margaret remarks:

> You will hardly believe that I have of late seldom even looked at any of these things. It is only since Father has been ill that I seem to have even any curiosity about them. But now, they grow and grow on me to quite an absorbing degree. I wonder if it is that the collector's blood which I have in my veins is beginning to manifest itself. If so, the strange things is that I have not felt the call of it before. (90)

Margaret admits that she is beginning to exhibit a preoccupation with the material goods of Egypt, which she attributes to a familial inheritance. She even makes this connection more explicit when she compares the collection of antiquities to a collection of "family pictures" (90); both, she implies, naturally decorate her home. However, her admission begs the question: from whom does she inherit the desire to collect Egyptian antiquities? From her father, or from Queen Tera? The language she uses to describe her growing fascination with Egyptian antiquities implies that this change in behaviour could be due to her

father's illness, which has made her more curious about his life, or it could be due to her gradual possession by Queen Tera. This latter interpretation is supported by Margaret's interest in antiquities associated with Tera. She tells Ross that she had been "attracted" to the sarcophagus of Queen Tera "from the first," but that her father had refused to tell her about it (92). She also (perhaps unwittingly) 'collects' Tera's lamps from Dr. Corbeck and hides them in a curiosity cabinet. Interestingly, the cabinet, and the boudoir in which Margaret keeps her other "pretty things," is not Egyptian (95). She tells Ross that when she first came to the London house she was "frightened with so many records of death and the tomb everywhere" (95), so her boudoir was not decorated according to the aesthetics of Egyptomania. Yet, her collection of Egyptian antiquities is subtly foreshadowed when she tells Ross that her curiosity cabinet had belonged to Napoleon; Napoleon, like Margaret and Trelawny, was an enthusiastic collector of Egyptian artefacts. When Ross opens a drawer in the cabinet, Corbeck's lamps are found rattling around inside. It is hinted that Margaret stole the lamps from Corbeck under Tera's influence and hid them in the curiosity cabinet. Margaret's actions further imply that it might be Tera's "collector's blood," rather than Trelawny's, that has begun to manifest in her veins.

I disagree with Carol Senf that "Stoker leaves open-ended the question of whether Margaret is possessed by Tera" (87). The text clearly implies that Margaret is possessed by Tera, or is her double, which is gradually accepted, though never fully explained, by Trelawny's team. The mental connection that Margaret experiences with Tera becomes more important to Trelawny than their

physical resemblance as he prepares his Experiment. Gradually, he comes to value Margaret's inexplicable insight into the Queen's intentions and wishes. I wish to suggest that Margaret's psychic bond with Tera can be read as a form of channeling, influenced by the late-Victorian spiritualist movement. Trelawny integrates Margaret's mediumship into his fantasy of knowledge; just as he weaves a fantasy of information through the mummified body of Tera, he weaves a fantasy of communication through the live body of Tera's double, his daughter. What he fails to recognize is that Margaret's channeling of Tera could also be understood as Tera's possession of Margaret. Is Margaret, the ideal specimen of Victorian womanhood, responsible for diminishing Tera's power by channeling her, or is she another example of Tera's nightmarish agency?

Margaret's psychic communication with Tera enacts a particularly late-Victorian fantasy about communication related to the rise of spiritualism during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Spiritualism was a popular pseudo-religious, pseudo-scientific movement which experienced its heyday between the 1860s and 1880s, but continued to be influential in British religion, culture, and literature into the early twentieth century. Its major tenet was that the dead could communicate with the living, particularly with gifted individuals (mediums) during psychic events (séances). Although spiritualism was embraced by some branches of the scientific community, like the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), "most scientists did not think it was possible to scientifically investigate the non-material world" (Lyons 174). As Richard Noakes has observed, opinions on the validity of spiritualism ranged along a spectrum, from

those who "believed that the erratic phenomena of the séance could [...] gain scientific credibility" to those who thought that spiritualism threatened "the intellectual edifice on which the scientific profession based its claims for professional authority" (24). The fact that Trelawny, in *The Jewel of Seven Stars,* fantasizes about communication between Margaret and Tera as desirable and possibly beneficial speaks to my earlier argument about how this novel mediates contemporary debates over the legitimacy of pseudo-sciences. Margaret's spiritualist connection with Tera gives credence to the unorthodox science that Trelawny hopes to validate. However, the novel might not follow through with its initial appearance of support for heterodox sciences; like the other fantasies of knowledge shaped around Tera, the fantasy of spiritualist communication and knowledge-sharing ultimately collapses at the finale of the text.

Margaret begins to communicate with Tera as Trelawny begins to prepare the resurrection experiment. When Trelawny suggests that it would have been Tera's own "dream" to be resurrected (177), Margaret enters an almost trance-like state and speaks about the Queen's life in ancient Egypt. The passage that follows is full of highly suggestive descriptions of Margaret as a medium. She claims to be able to see "with my sleeping eyes" the life of Tera on earth, claiming that she can "see" the Queen in "some other land, far, far away under the canopy of the silent night" (178). Ross's recollection of the scene likens it to a séance. He notes that "as she spoke she seemed to be inspired; and her eyes had a far-away look as though they saw something beyond mortal sight [...] The very soul of the woman [Tera] seemed to speak in her voice; whilst we who listened sat entranced" (178).

Not only does Margaret enter a dream-like state where she can "see" the Queen, but the other members of the team, observing Margaret, also enter into the trance-like state necessary for the séance. Ross further states that Margaret's "every word and tone" contained "the conviction of her own belief" and "elemental power" (179), which suggests that Margaret is a convincing medium, and unlike the infamous charlatans of nineteenth-century Britain who faked table rappings and levitations during staged séances. Indeed, this is not a staged event, for the medium appears to have been truly possessed by the spirit of the dead; Margaret's "tone was new to us all; so that we listened as to some new and strange being from a new and strange world" (179). The entire team is seemingly convinced by Margaret's mediumship, for Trelawny cannot continue with his speech until "we had all got back to earth again in our various ways" (179).

Ross's reaction to Margaret's channeling of Tera sexualizes the trance. He remarks that "for myself, I was like one in a trance. Who was this new, radiant being who had won to existence out of the mist and darkness of our fears?" (179). Interestingly, in wondering about this "new, radiant being," Ross does not seem to be talking about Margaret in her new role of medium. Rather, he seems to be referring to Tera, who appears suddenly through Margaret. This moment when the doubleness between Tera and Margaret appears through channeling and psychic communion indicates again how Ross's sexual attraction to Margaret is predicated upon her connection to Tera. Ross's sexual connection to Margaret/Tera compounds the sexuality of the unwrapping scene, in which he

finds himself both excited and embarrassed by the spectacle of the nude female form.

Margaret, as the sole woman of the team, is ideally suited to the role of medium. As Alex Owen has suggested in *The Darkened Room,* her survey of women's roles in the spiritualist movement during the late-nineteenth century, "women's spiritual authority" (6) made them more likely conduits for communication with the spirit world. Women who embodied the quintessential values of the Victorian "womanly woman" were particularly suitable for mediumship, Owen suggests, due to their motherly, loving, moral, and domestic characteristics (8), characteristics which Margaret embodies. Jill Galvan, in her book *The Sympathetic Medium,* also outlines the ways in which the Victorian period experienced the "feminization of channeling" (2). Galvan similarly argues that women were perceived to be more emotionally receptive to communication from the dead, through "sympathetic excess" (16), but adds to this women's ability to transfer private information. The idea of automatic writing, among other ways that mediums transferred information, Galvan suggests, distanced women from authorial intention and gave them the appearance of true mediums, rather than interpreters. *The Jewel of Seven Stars* genders mediumship in similar ways by indicating that Margaret's femininity is what allows her to channel Queen Tera. Margaret's gentle and loving nature, and her domestic roles as fiancée and daughter, make her an ideal medium. Margaret claims that Tera was motivated by love to seek resurrection, and that a similar knowledge of love is what enables her to understand the Queen's motivations: "Oh! I know it! I know it! I am a woman,

and I know a woman's heart! [...] I know the feeling for I have shared it myself. I may speak of it now, since the blessing has come into my own life. I may speak of it since it enables me to interpret the feelings, the very longing soul, of that sweet and lovely Queen" (177-178). Margaret, as an embodiment of the virtues of quintessential domestic Victorian womanhood, feels a natural and keen emotional sympathy with Tera. A knowledge of love, which Margaret implies is shared amongst women, allows her to channel the spirit of the dead Queen.

Trelawny fantasizes about Margaret's affinity with Tera, through her role as medium, as a way to attain knowledge. Ross notes that as Margaret concludes the séance Trelawny's "face was full of delight. I knew now its cause [...] To find in his daughter, whose nature he had never till now known, such a wealth of affection, such a splendour of spiritual insight, such a scholarly imagination, such... The rest of his feeling was of hope!" (179). Trelawny seems captivated by the very characteristics that make Margaret an ideal medium, including her emotional sympathy with the dead (her "affection"), her spirituality, and her imagination. Because she sympathizes with Tera, she can be a spiritual conduit for her thoughts and feelings. Because she 'imagines' the Queen in Egypt, Margaret is a source of knowledge for her father about the Egyptian Queen. He stresses Margaret's importance to him as a medium to Ross, claiming that if "there be the spirit of that great and wondrous Queen [within Margaret], then she would be no less dear to me, but doubly dear!" (215). Although Trelawny believes that through his research he has correctly identified the desires of Tera, he knows that Margaret can affirm his conclusions and offer further, more intimate, knowledge

about Tera. Margaret, as Galvan has suggested of female mediums, is best situated to offer intimate or private information; however, Trelawny's incorporation of her into his 'research' interestingly traverses traditional gender stereotypes about learning and knowledge. Margaret has been accepted, however marginally and specially, into a male-dominated discipline of science and archaeology, and she soon proves her worth as a fellow investigator in Trelawny's research. After moving the team to Cornwall, Trelawny presents them with an astrological chart that he has used to predict the correct date for the resurrection ritual. Margaret examines the charts and exclaims that there could be an alternate interpretation: that the ritual be performed that very night. Trelawny demands to know if Margaret is "sure of what you say! You believe it with all your soul?" (225), to which she answers "I know it! My knowledge is beyond belief!" (225). She asserts to her fellow researchers that her information is no longer based on 'belief,' or spiritual or emotional affinity, but rather on knowledge. Channeling, in this case, is taken out of the realm of feminine sympathy and put into the realm of knowledge, even though Margaret's femininity continues to mark her as the only person on the team who can channel Tera. Trelawny uses Margaret's mediumship to weave a fantasy of furthering his research and knowledge about Tera. Through his daughter, he can hope to attain "knowledge beyond belief," thus bringing him closer to realizing his fantasies about Tera.

The issues of mediumship in the late-Victorian period are also implicit in imperialism. Jill Galvan has suggested that the presence of the female medium in fin-de-siécle horror literature shows "how much the menace of another culture is

interwoven with issues of communication, the conveyance of knowledge and feeling" (61). This fear, Galvan proposes, stemmed from anxiety about "the Oriental talent for telepathy" (70), the fear that imperial subjects were sharing information using channels that were not open to agents of the British Empire. Galvan's argument intersects with one made by Roger Luckhurst here. In his article "Knowledge, Belief, and the Supernatural at the Imperial Margin," he suggests that telepathy and psychic communication were anxiety-provoking forms of communication perceived by British imperial agents to exist at the margins of the colonies. The fear of reverse colonization arises from these narratives of Oriental telepathy due to anxiety about networks of communication that were unavailable for imperial surveillance. Using occult knowledge networks, including telepathy and trances, the exotic Other had the ability to either infiltrate or bypass dominant and British systems of knowledge. Galvan suggests that as a "a master of occult communications, the Oriental can initiate feminine trance and encroach on Occidental culture through it, transforming the heroine into figuratively or literally disputed ethnic terrain" (71). Margaret, as a medium in Stoker's novel, thus becomes an invaded and disputed terrain, neither fully a domestic, Victorian woman, nor an exotic, ancient, Egyptian Queen. Trelawny, in envisioning Margaret as a fantasy of spiritualist, and subjugated, knowledges, in her ability to communicate with Queen Tera, does not account for the nightmare of invasion that is attached to this fantasy. By envisioning the Victorian woman as a source to knowledge, and in allowing her to come too close to the exoticized Other, Trelawny dooms his daughter.

Trelawny fails to see how, in his effort to raise Queen Tera, he enables her invasion of his daughter's body, and, through her, England. He states several times that he is eager to fulfill Tera's desires regarding the resurrection, mistakenly thinking that he is helping a willing ally in a quest for knowledge. He first realizes that Tera seems interested in "the North" when he visits her tomb in Egypt, and notices that "in every picture [hieroglyph] where hope, or aim, or resurrection was expressed there was the added symbol of the North" (129). He concludes that she "had intended her resurrection to be after a long time and in a more northern land, under the constellation whose seven stars had ruled her birth" (130). "All her aspirations were for the North," Trelawny says (166), suggesting that Tera's voyage to England is as much by her design as by Trelawny's. Even Margaret, when channeling Tera, "sees" the Queen dreaming of "a land under that northern star, whence blew the sweet winds that cooled the feverish desert air. A land of wholesome greenery, far, far away" (178). Thus, what Trelawny fails to understand is that his fantasy of resurrecting Tera to gain knowledge is actually a nightmare of imperial reverse colonization. Tera has agency and a plan; she uses Trelawny and his daughter to set the stage for her invasion of England. This 'invasion' is reminiscent of the threat of another undead Queen of late-Victorian literature: H. Rider Haggard's Ayesha from *She*. Meilee Bridges has suggested that "Tera's bloodless massacre of Trelawny's household and her frightening disappearance suggest that she will go on to accomplish what Haggard's Ayesha does not–to 'assume absolute rule over the British dominions, and probably over the whole earth'" (141). Whereas Ayesha threatens to invade England, but is

deterred by two British stalwart adventuers, Horace Holly and Leo Vincey, Tera has British agents enable her invasion, but succeeds. In this light, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* appears as one of the most threatening novels of imperial Gothic to surface at the turn of the twentieth century. Tera's agency, her refusal to grant knowledge to Trelawny, and her success at escaping the confines of the museum turn Trelawny's fantasy of knowledge into a nightmare of imperial rebellion.

What I find most intriguing about the two endings of the novel is that Tera's triumph is even more pronounced in the more optimistic 1912 ending. Although the 1912 ending concludes with a marriage instead of a mass murder, it implies that Margaret has survived only to be fully, finally, possessed by the spirit of Queen Tera, in an invasion of the mind and soul that ultimately dramatizes a paranoia of reverse colonization. The text first hints at possession through Margaret's wardrobe at the wedding; she wears the actual robe and hair ornaments Tera had been buried in. Margaret also wears the Queen's most prized Jewel of Seven Stars as a brooch, and during the wedding ceremony, it "glow[ed] like a living thing" (250), implying that through her jewel, and in Margaret, Tera lives on beyond death. The final conversation between Ross and Margaret proposes a similar interpretation. When Ross remarks that he was "sorry [Tera] could not have waked into a new life in a new world," Margaret gets a "far-away eloquent dreamy look" and tells Ross not to grieve (250). "Who knows," Margaret says, "but she may have found the joy she sought," implying perhaps that Tera did not disappear during the resurrection, but lives on in the body of Margaret (250). Margaret's "dreamy" look and talk of dreams harkens back to the novel's repeated

image patterns of dreams and trances, further suggesting that Margaret, as medium, is still channeling Tera. This wedding scene indicates that it is Margaret who "has been laid to rest" and has been "compulsively replaced" by Tera (Byron 60). This is not a reversal of the 1903 apocalyptic ending, but rather, an enhancement of it. Tera not only escapes into the world, but adopts the form of a non-threatening, and thus non-suspicious, Margaret, a model of Victorian femininity.

The ways in which Tera possesses Margaret imply a reverse colonization of the female British body by the female Egyptian body. Margaret is the lone female British character in the novel, and stands as a symbol of idealized Victorian womanhood through her modesty, her compassion, and her resilience, and as a symbol of British domesticity: she is the keeper of her father and his home. Margaret's body, as "disputed terrain" between East and West, as Jill Galvan calls the spiritualist's body (71), stands as a reminder of the dangers and costs to the home and nation from contact with Egyptian antiquities. In bringing Tera and the treasures from her tomb home to England, Trelawny puts his daughter in grave danger. He opens her up to "absor[ption]" by Egyptian antiquities, and he makes her body and mind available for penetration by a foreign agent. By possessing Margaret's body, Tera poses a great threat to British domesticity, and thus also to British nationhood. The 1912 ending, then, is not less depressing or more conventional but instead more threatening and radical. In this ending, Tera colonizes Margaret's body, successfully penetrating the most sacred of Victorian domestic spaces: the female, white, body. Neither Trelawny

nor Ross seem to be even aware that this has occurred, or could be a threat, and so Tera's occupation of Margaret, and the British domestic space, will continue to be her final triumph over those who fantasized about her. Trelawny's fantasy of knowledge about Tera is shown to be so flawed that he cannot even recognize Tera in another body: he truly does not, and can never, know her.

The representation of imperial loss in the pages of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* happens both through the elusive archive as well as the penetrated and invaded body of Victorian womanhood. Stoker uses Tera to articulate a particularly virulent attack on British imperial nationhood, where the mummy not only succeeds in escaping the confines of the imperial museum, but evades re-capture by killing her collectors. Not even the violent mummies of "Lot 249," "The Nemesis of Fire," or "The Story of Baelbrow" achieve such a body count. Tera represents a successful invasion of Britain by the forces of ancient Egypt; brought willingly into the museum because of Trelawny's mistaken belief that he has control over his antiquities, he unleashes a powerful foreign threat into England. Thus, although the novel has a dire ending unique in Stoker's invasion fiction, it sustains the larger representational pattern of Egyptian antiquities in Gothic fiction at the turn of the century through representation of a mummy that threatens Britain and signals its inevitable imperial decline.

Chapter Three

The Plague of Egypt: The Mummy's Curse in Guy Boothby's *Pharos, the Egyptian*

In the third chapter of my dissertation, I turn to Guy Boothby's nearly forgotten novel, *Pharos, the Egyptian* (1899). This novel is a quintessential example of the 'mummy curse narrative,' a type of narrative about Egypt that emerged in America and England during the nineteenth century, and became more popular during the twentieth century. Simply put, the mummy curse narrative is a revenge story in which a mummy rises from the dead in order to avenge his (or her, infrequently) disturbed 'slumber' in the tomb by European archaeologists. There are numerous examples of this type of narrative beginning in 1869 with Lousia May Alcott's "Lost in a Pyramid, or, the Mummy's Curse," and continuing into the late-nineteenth century with Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Ring of Thoth" (1890), the "Curse of Vasartas" (1889), and Theo Douglas's *Iras, A Mystery* (1896).[27] *Pharos, the Egyptian* is a unique example of using the mummy curse narrative to portray the imperial weakness of Britain. Through the mummy Pharos's devastating retribution against Europe for the pillaging of Egypt's tombs, the novel offers a meditation on the melancholy fate of Empires, and portrays the violent and hazardous risks inherent in British contact with Egyptian antiquities.

[27] Roger Luckhurst's article "The Mummy's Curse: A Study in Rumour" provides thorough examples of other curse narratives after the turn of the twentieth century, and analyses their surge in popularity at that time.

This novel operates at the intersection of fantasy and nightmare, as do other texts I examine in this dissertation, but it also opens up questions of xenophobia, tourism, and imperial guilt. The novel implies that the East was both literally and metaphorically 'contagious' or 'infectious,' and that Britons should not travel there or collect antiquities from Egypt; it metaphorizes contact between Egyptian and British subjects as a contagion of British masculinity, but also represents a literal outbreak of plague as Pharos's retribution against Europe. Also, through its representation of Pharos's 'curse' and vengeance against Europeans for collecting Egyptian antiquities, the novel delves into historically relevant questions of imperial guilt over the invasion and appropriation of goods. Ultimately, *Pharos, the Egyptian* uses apocalyptic visions of plague, and questions the moralistic implications of collecting, to portray the degeneracy of modern imperial British society.

The emergence of the mummy curse narrative in the nineteenth century warrants discussion here, as it is a sub-genre 'made up' by the Victorians. In fact, the mummy's curse has no basis in ancient Egyptian history; no examples of sarcophagi or tombs inscribed with curses exist as they appear in the pages of Gothic fiction. Yet, the idea of the mummy's curse persists into the twenty-first century, despite such assertions by Egyptologists like Donald Redford, who wrote in his book *Akhenaten, the Heretic King* that "Let it be said once and for all that such notions [that Tutankhamen was able to impose a curse on violators of his tomb], by whomsoever voiced, or undeservedly honoured by whatever screed, are unadulterated clap trap with no support at all in the meagre evidence we possess"

(215). In fact, we can thank authors of sensational and Gothic fiction for the perpetuation of the curse 'myth.' In an April 6, 1923, article in the *New York Times,* Arthur Conan Doyle told the press that it was "probable" that "a spirit had killed Lord Carnarvon for invading the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen" (3); Marie Corelli is cited in the same article claiming that she read about the "malignant spirit" that killed Carnarvon in an ancient book of Arabic she owned (3). However, Egyptologists throughout the article ridicule any idea of a curse. Given that curse rumours seem so persistent despite their lack of evidence in the historical record, Roger Luckhurst thus asks the key question in his article "The Mummy's Curse: A Study in Rumour": "where do these stories come from?" (15). Luckhurst provides an exhaustive account of the rise of the early–twentieth-century curse narrative and its connection with the British Museum, and a cultural history of the rise of the curse narrative. Luckhurst links the rise of the curse narrative to imperialism, namely, to discourses that "demonis[e] Arabic superstition, fanaticism, vengeance, and cruelty" (19). He attributes the emergence of curse narratives, which exist "somewhere between truth, fiction, and urban folklore" (9), to the of the semi-legitimate discourses that developed at the fringes of the imperial margins. What I find most compelling about Luckhurst's argument is that he links the rise of the curse narrative to expressions of colonial guilt:

> Wherever there is imperial occupation, there is a reserve of supernaturalism, an occult supplement to allegedly enlightened rule that becomes one of the popular currencies for acknowledging and

> perhaps even beginning to negotiate the consequences of colonial violence and guilt. (17)

In *Pharos, the Egyptian,* I read the curse narrative as imbued with colonial guilt, and as a warning that is surprisingly xenophobic, even for the Victorians, about contact between subjects, and exchange of objects, of different ethnicities and cultures; in other words, about the collecting industry in Egypt.

In addition to Luckhurst's 2010 article, there has been a flurry of recent scholarship that reads into the significance of the curse narrative. In *The Mummy's Curse: Mummymania in the English-Speaking World* (2006), Jasmine Day argues that "guilt at the rape of Egypt is a theme usually associated with curses" (43), where the metaphor of rape is a "critique of Europeans' control of Egypt" (63). She differentiates between different types of curse narratives in twentieth-century film, suggesting that the mummy's curse is not constant or ahistorical (9). "The curse," she suggests, "is a generalizing term for a series of conflicting ideas that resolved, at their polar extremes, into an ethical argument against digging up the dead (the Pre-Classic curse) and a condemnation of opposition to archaeology and colonial conquest (the Classic curse)" (62). Meilee Bridges, in her 2008 article, also reads the "deleterious treatment of the dead" as the "significance of the mummy's curse narrative," but more specifically links the curse to "acquiring knowledge about an ancient civilization" (138). In her 2010 article Karen Macfarlane limits arguments about the treatment of the dead to *Pharos, the Egyptian* and the quest for knowledge, stating that Pharos's curse "strategically evoke[s] anxieties about the exhumation and study of the ancient dead [....

Pharos] insists that the mummy is a 'body' stolen from a grave, not an artefact to be collected and studied" (18). I wish to contribute to this on-going discussion about the importance of the curse narrative, and how it appears in Boothby's novel, by directing our attention towards the act of collecting. In this novel I read the curse narrative as a means by through which Boothby articulates cultural degeneracy and loss. The issue here is not the treatment of bodies or strictly the plunder of Egypt, but rather, that all Empires are doomed to die and Britain is no different; collecting Egypt's antiquities is a form of contagion which 'infects' Britain with imperial decline and hastens its death. The mummy's curse is not only vengeance: it bequeaths imperial death.

In my analysis of *Pharos, the Egyptian,* I trace how Pharos's curse is both a literal and metaphoric plague. Pharos literally infects Cyril Forrester and millions of Europe's population with a deadly disease as retribution for perceived crimes against Egypt, but also metaphorically 'infects' Forrester's fantasies of Egypt. Thus, the novel demonstrates the progression from fantasy of Egypt to nightmare of Egypt, which reproduces and sustains the pattern I have traced throughout this dissertation. I turn, for the first time, to a discussion of tourism to Egypt, and suggest that what 'comes back' from Egypt to Britain with travellers is the nightmare of Egypt, which is both literally contagious in that people are infected, and metaphorically contagious in that it figuratively destroys Britain's Egyptomania. Finally, I trace this discussion of contagion through repeated images of decay in the text. The plot, which seems entirely focussed on going to and from Egypt, lingers strangely in Italy for a while. I suggest that the scene in

the city of Pompeii, crucial to the development of the conflict between Pharos and Forrester, is purposefully set outside Egypt but *inside* another site of cultural decay. The Valley of Kings, Pompeii, and London form a nexus of decayed–or soon-to-be-decayed–cities in the text, ones haunted with ghosts of the ancient dead or recently departed. Ultimately, Forrester's own (unwitting) complicity in spreading the plague throughout Europe opens up a discussion of colonial guilt, and Boothby's possible admission that the devastation in Britain is (at least partially) deserved if not predictable.

Collecting and Curses in *Pharos, the Egyptian*

Like Margaret from *The Jewel of Seven Stars,* Forrester inherits his collecting, and "singular attraction" for Egypt (14), from his father. Forrester is an artist of historical scenes, particularly of Egypt, and one of his paintings of a scene from the Biblical Exodus hangs in the Royal Academy. Pharos attests to the accuracy of Forrester's fantasy of ancient Egypt, expressed through the painting, stating that "the knowledge it displayed of the country and the period is remarkable in these days" (28). Forrester's deceased father "was one of the greatest authorities upon the subject [of ancient Egypt] the world has ever known" (14), and leaves Forrester his collection of Egyptian artifacts, which Forrester has installed in his studio. Forrester fantasizes about the original occupant of the prized sarcophagus of the collection:

> Once more I stood looking at the stolid representation of a face before me, wondering what the life's history of the man within could have been, whether his success in life had equalled his

> ambition, or was commensurate with his merits, and whether in that age, so long since dead, his heart had ever been thrilled by thoughts of love. (30)

For Forrester, the objects and antiquities of Egypt prompt poetic or emotional flights of fancy about the extreme passage of time. For example, his fantasy about the sarcophagus and its mummy is prompted by "the changes that had taken place in the world during the time [the sarcophagus] had laid in its Theban tomb" (30). This passage is full of poetic references to the passage of time, including his father's "ancient cabinet" full of "yellow, time-stained pages" of archival material, and the chiming of St. Jude's clock in the background, "solemnly and deliberately, as though it were conscious of the part it played in the passage of time" (30). Because this fancy is prompted by the passage of time, and the longevity of Egypt's objects, Forrester's reaction might be called the 'artifactual sublime,' a literary outpouring, in his role as narrator, prompted by an emotional reaction to the passage of time represented by Egyptian antiquities. He desires to connect with the past in some 'real' way, even though that is not possible, by conjuring images of the past. The artifactual sublime prompts all of Forrester's fantasies about Egypt in the novel. In the example above, Forrester uses the cartonnage[28] of the sarcophagus to fantasize about the life of its original inhabitant.

Forrester does not heed the expression on the sarcophagus's face, one which foreshadows the reaction its actual inhabitant, Pharos, will have when he

[28] Funerary mask.

suddenly appears. Forrester states that it suddenly "wore an expression that I had never noticed before," one that seemed to say "my nineteenth-century friend, your father stole me from the land of my birth, and from the resting-place the gods decreed for me; but beware, for retribution is pursuing you, and is even now close upon your heels" (30). In a way that prefigures twentieth-century curse narratives that are literally inscribed on sarcophagi, like 1999's *The Mummy,* Forrester's sarcophagus is metaphorically inscribed with a curse that promises revenge for disturbing its 'rest.' Indeed, vengeance is 'close upon Forrester's heels,' for Pharos, the actual owner of the sarcophagus, suddenly appears in the studio. Pharos is the re-incarnation of the priest Ptahmes, advisor to the Pharaoh of the Exodus.[29] Pharos is hostile, violent, and proprietary, not at all like the corpse inside the sarcophagus that Forrester had imagined, a passive body onto which he projected his fantasies. Pharos flies into a rage when he glimpses his sarcophagus, and cries "Oh, mighty Egypt! hast thou fallen so far from thy high estate that even the bodies of thy kings and priests may no longer rest within their tombs, but are ravished from thee to be gaped at in alien lands. But, by Osiris, a time of punishment is coming" (34). The word 'ravished' here implies a type of rape, where the personified Egypt reads as a feminized embodiment of the East. If Egypt is feminized and penetrated, Britain is masculinized and portrayed as the 'ravisher.' Such an analogy is strikingly similar to an analysis Jasmine Day makes

[29] Ailise Bulfin notes that a cache of mummies was discovered in March of 1898, during Boothby's trip to Egypt, one of which was immediately called the Pharaoh of the Exodus. She also notes that the story of revenge between Moses and the Pharaoh may be a source for this novel's theme of colonial revenge.

about twentieth century mummy curse films, in which the tomb is represented as a vagina and the sealed tomb door the hymen (79); "sacrilege and rape represent each other," and archaeology is metaphorized as a type of sexual violation (Day 79).

Pharos promises 'a time of punishment' as retribution for the physical and ocular ravishing of Egypt. He seems particularly concerned that the sarcophagi are being "gaped at" by "alien[s]"; Karen Macfarlane has read this as "conflat[ing] the titillation of public display with the crimes of sacrilege and grave robbing" (18), suggesting that Pharos perceives multiple layers of British invasion of Egyptian tombs, bodies, and objects. Pharos uses metaphors of visuality and penetration again when describing Forrester's father as

> an ardent Egyptologist, one of that intrepid band who *penetrated* to every corner of our sacred land, digging, delving, and bringing to light such tombs, temples, and monuments as have for centuries *lain hidden from the sight of man*. For my own part, as you may have gathered from my tirade just now, my sympathies do not lie in that direction. I am one who reverences the past, and would fain have others do so. (34, emphasis mine)

Pharos placates Forrester by characterizing Forrester's father as "bringing [antiquities] to light" rather than 'stealing' them, framing archaeology within Enlightenment metaphors of knowledge and bringing the past to light to soften his earlier accusations of ocular rape. Yet his suggestion that archaeologists do not respect the past carries weight. Forrester's use of the objects of Egypt to fantasize

about communing with the ancient past seems suddenly exploitative. It is unclear from this exchange whether Boothby's sympathies lie with pillaged Egypt or pillaging Britain. Pharos's position on the invasion and excavation of ancient Egypt seems empathetic, even though he himself is clearly villainous. Should Forrester, on behalf of his father and his nation, feel guilt for penetrating Pharos's "sacred land" and taking away antiquities? Pharos counters the position of contemporary proponents of archaeology like the EEF, who argued that they only excavated in Egypt to save the monuments for posterity. When Forrester refuses to return the sarcophagus from his father's collection to Pharos, he comes across as naive and unjustly proprietary. Even though, as I have suggested, Pharos is clearly villainous, Forrester also seems unscrupulous in this moment when he refuses to return the objects of Egypt.

This encounter with Pharos marks a change in the text. Prior to this encounter, Forrester revels in the artifactual sublime, and his collection of Egyptian objects, and his paintings, are sources of fantasy for him. After this encounter, his fantasies of Egypt, especially those framed around objects, turn into nightmares. His vivid vision of the murder of the curiosity shop owner (at Pharos's hands) particularly turns collecting into a nightmare. Forrester imagines the scene at the curiosity shop as if he had been there. He envisions a Gothic archive "overflowing with bric-a-brac" (42), and Pharos, seizing an Oriental dagger from the table, stabbing the curiosity dealer through the shoulder and killing him. In Forrester's "mind's eye" (42), Pharos then turns to a secret compartment and draws forth a ring set with a scarabaeus of Egyptian design.

This scene cedes control over Eastern objects, like the Oriental dagger and the Egyptian ring, from British collectors to the harbinger of the mummy's curse. This is, of course, the same night that he knocks Forrester unconscious and seizes the sarcophagus by force; locks and the authority of collectors no longer prevent Pharos from obtaining the 'stolen' goods of Egypt. This scene is the first example of Pharos's curse, his violence against Europeans who traffic in ancient antiquities. His vengeance against Forrester, who remains alive, is not finished. Excavating, importing, and owning Egyptian antiquities is now an offense, one for which Pharos is exacting revenge.

At the ruins of Pompeii, Pharos and Forrester once again debate the rightful ownership of the sarcophagus and mummy. In a symbolic gesture of goodwill, and also of colonial guilt, Forrester agrees to not only let Pharos keep the mummy, but also agrees to accompany him on a journey to Egypt to repatriate it. Once again, Pharos's argument is persuasive; when Forrester asserts that the sarcophagus "is not your property," Pharos counters, "by what right did your father rifle the dead man's tomb? [...] And since you are such a stickler for what is equitable, perhaps you will show me his justification for carrying away the body from the country in which it had been laid to rest, and conveying it to England to be stared at in the light of a curiosity" (65). Forrester, upon deliberation, concedes that it is "only natural" that Pharos would wish to have the mummy, and that his claim to the mummy "was undoubtedly a much weaker one" (65). Yet Pharos's own description of his need to own the mummy makes him sound like a collector too; he states that he first felt "mere desire," then "fixed determination," and

finally "a craving [...and] feverish longing" which prompted him to search "Europe from end to end, visiting all the great museums and private collections of Egyptian antiquities" (65). Pharos's greed to have the mummy in this scene forshadows the scene at the end of the novel when he sits with piles of Egyptian 'treasures,' truly a collector at last. Forrester believes that in yielding to Pharos he is honouring the stronger claim; however, he does not realize that he is in competition with another collector, one who, in making Forrester give up the sarcophagus, has only just begun his revenge.

The Plague of Egypt: Disease and Egyptian Antiquities

Pharos's revenge takes the shape of a deadly plague. He infects Forrester and tricks him into infecting the rest of Europe. Pharos injects Forrester outside the Great Pyramid of Gizeh, which Forrester enters with Pharos through doorways as-of-yet-unknown to European archaeologists. This is another moment when Forrester's fantasies of Egypt are shattered by Pharos. Standing before the sphinx, he says that "for fully thirty years I had looked forward to the moment when I should stand before this stupendous monument [...] Looking down at me in the starlight, across the gulf of untold centuries, it seemed to smile disdainfully at my small woes" (110). However Forrester does not feel ill until after he emerges from the second site he visits with Pharos days later, the Temple of Ammon. During this time he experiences visions of ancient Egypt; in the first, he envisions Pharos 3000 years ago, walking in disgrace down the streets of Thebes after all the first-born Egyptian children have been killed, and in the second, he envisions the funeral of Pharos. This seemingly insignificant detail of

the incubation period is actually very symbolic. During this period, in which Forrester 'experiences' Egypt in a way unique from other Europeans, he is incubating the virus that will exact Pharos's revenge upon Europe for imperial collecting.

Boothby directly correlates witnessing and contagion, both literally and figuratively. Literally, Forrester is infected because he visits these monuments with Pharos. Pharos injects Forrester with a virus, one which leaves a vaccination mark on his upper arm. This image of the vaccination mark is laden with imperial signification. In penetrating Forrester's British body, Pharos reverses the penetration inflicted by British 'ravishers' upon Egyptian tombs. He also 'scars' Forrester's body, in a reversal of the "digging and delving" of British archaeologists that scars the landscape of Pharos's "sacred land" (34). The virus transforms Forrester into a mummy-like creature, which also strips him of his imperial power by turning him into a colonial object. As he succumbs to the plague, Forrester feels that he is "more dead than alive" (142). He thinks that the landscape around him looks as if it is covered by a "red mist" (142), as if his body's fluids are being removed during an embalming process and sinking into the sand around him. He awakens three days later, swaddled in blankets like a mummy, and his is flesh "white and emaciated" (142). Figuratively, Forrester's fantasies are 'polluted' by the virus, which destroys any admiration he had for Pharos or Egypt. Forrester says : "how I longed to be in England, no one can have any idea. [...] As for the land of Egypt, the liking I had once entertained for that country had given place to a hatred that was as vigorous as I had deemed the [former] sincere" (179).

In destroying Forrester's fantasies, Pharos both gains revenge, and ensures that Forrester will no longer collect antiquities from Egypt or wish to visit again.

Although Forrester's arm bears a vaccination scar, Pharos describes what he does to him as "inoculat[ion]" (220), another type of immunological procedure that is similar to vaccination in that it prevents disease, but different in that it involves a living, not dead, form of a virus. These references to illness and inoculation would, for Boothby's audience, carry particularly imperial connotations. Alison Bashford analyses the inter-related Victorian discourses of disease and colonialism, and she argues how a "fantasy of controlling contagion" (*Contagion* 2) was implictated in Victorian immunology and regulations about colonial mobility. She reads inoculation as a type of immunizing procedure that is particularly charged with anxiety over cross-cultural contact between healthy, domestic bodies, and infected, foreign bodies. Inoculation required skin-to-skin contact between a healthy and infected person, where, for example, a person with smallpox would press their infected skin against a healthy person's, transmitting a small enough amount of the virus that the healthy person could fight it off. Inoculation, she suggests, was perceived to be distinctly Eastern in cast, as it was popular amongst the Turkish peoples who first introduced the idea to Western Europeans ("Vaccination" 41). For example, Lady Wortley Montague, after seeing the benefits of inoculation in her travels in the Near East, allowed the procedure to be practiced on her own children ("Vaccination" 50). The deliberate skin-to-skin contact between foreign and domestic bodies during inoculation repudiates Orientalist narratives that required the strict separation of foreign and

domestic bodies ("Foreign" 50). Bashford argues that the Victorians treated with suspicion the seemingly paradoxical assertion that infection provided good health. Thus, Forrester's infection of Europe stages this cultural anxiety about the seemingly counter-intuitive logic of immunization. The circulation of a virus through a cured body, the text protests, is a form of contagion, not inoculation. Certainly, the fact that Forrester almost dies after being 'inoculated' supports this reading of contagion, as does his ability to infect a large portion of Europe's population after he is 'cured.'

Forrester infects "millions of [his] fellow-creatures" (16) by fleeing across land from Cairo to London. He travels with Pharos from Cairo, to Constantinople, to Vienna, to Prague, where, after convincing Pharos's ward, Valerie, to elope with him, he flees westward with her towards Great Britain. He learns, just before leaving Prague, that "one of the most disastrous and terrible plagues of the last five hundred years has broken out on the shores of the Bosphorus, and is spreading with alarming rapidity through Turkey and the Balkan States" (152). The virus has, according to the local German newspaper, an alarming death rate of eighty percent (152). Forrester and Valerie only stop their westward progress in Hamburg when she falls ill from the plague. Forrester is still unaware of the part he plays in disseminating the virus, and desperately searches for a cure; he is unexpectedly helped by Pharos, who has secretly tracked the couple to Hamburg to ensure that the infection of all Europe goes as planned. Pharos does not wish for Valerie to die, and gives Forrester a recipe for a strange potion, which he must have made at a "quack['s]" office, which will cure her

(171).[30] More ominous than Pharos's sudden appearance is his warning to Forrester: "disease travels fast - faster even than you do when you run away from me, dear Forrester" (185). This ominous statement highlights the speed and ease with which foreign bodies move across modern Europe.

The movement of diseased bodies across Europe raises concerns about "technologies of isolation, containment, barriers, [and] the policing of spaces" ("Foreign" Bashford 39) that are part of regulating colonial movement and health and preventing the spread of diseases between the margins and centre of the Empire. What ultimately halts Forrester's progress in Hamburg is the quarantine of Great Britain, which is government-enforced to prevent the spread of plague. When Pharos, Valerie, and Forrester break the quarantine by sneaking into a port in Norfolk on a small boat, Forrester unknowingly brings the plague to England as well. The scene in which Forrester finally discovers his complicity in Pharos's revenge dramatizes the novel's preoccupation with mobility across boundaries. Forrester is at his club in London, and sees two men tracking the plague on a European map. He visually follows the track of the virus across Europe, marked with a red line, mapping the movement of the virus and his own body. As he realizes what has happened, Forrester remarks that it was "as if a bandage had been removed from my eyes" (216), an image that draws on both the language of disease and the language of mummification. Forrester realizes that the virus has been able to travel throughout Europe only because he, himself, was able to move

[30] This is the recipe Forrester ultimately gives to the British government to halt the spread of the plague.

so quickly across the continent and bypass boundaries of quarantine. The red line, drawn across the map, scars the landscape of Europe just as Forrester's own body is scarred by the inoculation mark. Pharos wounds Europe, drawing a bloody line that bisects every major city between Turkey and Scotland.

Forrester's trip to Egypt, and what he unwittingly brings back to England with him, dramatize contemporary anxieties about tourism to the Near East. As Alan Bewell has pointed out, "colonialism may not have created new pathogens, but it did bring people who had previously been isolated into contact with each other and diseases that were new to them" (3). Boothby was writing at a cultural moment when travel between the imperial centre and margins was more popular than ever, and when for half a century Britons had been excavating and importing antiquities and mummies from the Near East in increasing quantities. During the late 1870s and 1880s, companies like Thomas Cook and Sons had expanded their tours and made them more financially accessible for the middle class. In the 1850s, for example, travel to Egypt for two travellers for two months by dahabeeyah cost £200, a sum that was beyond the reach of even most middle-class Britons. By 1897, Cook offered four-week tours from London to Egypt for under £35. From 1872 to to 1890 numbers of Cook's annual tourists to Egypt rose from about 400 to 1500 (Hazbun 8, 14, 20). By the last decade of the century, Britons from all classes were traveling to Egypt like never before, at the same time that archaeological organizations like the Egypt Exploration Fund had expanded their operations and intensified their importation of Egyptian antiquities, including mummies, into Britain. The circulation of bodies between Britain and Egypt was

thus fraught with the threat of contagion; contact between Eastern and Western bodies allowed diseases to spread from one end of the continent to the other, diseases which certain populations might be ill-equipped to fight. Boothby's novel capitalizes on this threat of contagion encoded in circulating, foreign bodies, and locates it within the larger context of immunology and imperial travel. It contributes to contemporary debates about how "the British experience of disease raised questions about where colonial contact begins and ends as the imperial metropole with its heterogeneous, impoverished, and anonymous populations seemed more and more to be a simulacrum of the periphery" (Bewell 12).

Pharos thus punishes European bodies not only for collecting the antiquities of Egypt, but for traveling to and from Egypt. Tourism, especially to the monuments of ancient Egypt, is portrayed in the novel as an invasion of the sanctity of ancient Egyptian sites, and one for which Pharos is eager to enact revenge. Pharos anticipates destroying Forrester's fantasies of visiting Egypt from the beginning. Forrester comments that he "had all [his] life long had a craving to visit that mysterious country" (81), and looks forward to "join[ing] hands with the Immemorial East" (99). He refers to Egypt as if it were a fantasy, as somewhere "mysterious" and ancient, somewhere that he could truly "join" or commune with. Pharos negates this fantasy with an ominous prediction, that Forrester will "learn something of the wisdom of the ancients" (111) in Egypt. This knowledge appears to Forrester as dream-like visions of Egypt, ones which appear at first to be fantastic and rare opportunities to witness ancient Egypt, but reveal themselves as nightmarish lessons about the present. At the Temple of Ammon, Forrester, a

"son of an alien race" (135), is offered a unique chance to see the "mysteries of this holy place, the like of which not one of [his] race or people has ever yet beheld" (131). In his vision, Forrester witnesses the ruined Temple "restored to its pristine grandeur" (136) and a procession of the Pharaoh, with Pharos in attendance. He extols the reader to "picture" an Egyptian scene with blue sky, the Nile, and an avenue of sphinxes, colouring this scene with the language of artistry and painting in a manner reminiscent of his earlier painted visions. This vision quickly disappears, and is replaced by a darker one: a vision of the funereal procession of the now-disgraced Pharos, his dead body lying on a bier. He then witnesses the unwrapping of a mummy, which bears an "unmistakable" (139) likeness to Pharos. However, realizing that Pharos and the mummy are one and the same is so traumatic that he faints; he later cannot remember whether this unwrapping scene is a dream or not (139). This dream informs Forrester that he is in the company of a reincarnated mummy, one who has ulterior motives for wishing to return the sarcophagus to Egypt.

The scene at the Temple of Ammon once again reveals the differences in Forrester's and Pharos's attitudes towards imperial collecting. Pharos leads Forrester into a secret subterranean court in the the Temple of Ammon, where "mighty pillars carved with hieroglyphics" and "walls covered with paintings, every one of which was in a perfect state of preservation," surprise him (130). He says that he

> wondered how it was that these rooms had never been discovered by the hundreds of Egyptologists who, since the time of Napoleon,

> had explored the temple. [...] I had studied my guide-books carefully on our voyage up the river, and was quite convinced that no mention of such places had been made in any one of them. (133)

Forrester views this ancient site through the eyes of a European archaeologist, insisting that the authority over ancient Egyptian ruins comes from the long lineage of European Egyptologists and the European tourist industry. He remarks that he appreciated the court's "immense value, and could well imagine the find they would prove to any Egyptologist who, in days to come, might discover the secret of the stone and penetrate into this mysterious place" (134). Even though he is in awe of this fantastic place, he only estimates its value to modern archaeology; he seems to appreciate only making it available for "penetrat[ion]" by Europeans other than himself. Thus, even though Forrester has a unique opportunity to witness ancient Egypt, his thoughts suggest that he is not quite worthy of it.

Pharos, on the other hand, disparages the very sources of European archaeological and tourist authority that Forrester values. He bemoans the "indignit[ies]" against Theban mummies, crying:

> Where are these mighty ones now? Scattered to the uttermost parts of the earth, stolen from their resting-places to adorn glass cases in European museums, and to be sold by auction by Jew salesmen at

> so much per head,[31] according to their dates and state of preservation. (127)

The very practices of archaeology which Pharos criticizes, and from which he wants to save other mummies and ancient sites, are the same which Forrester views as an authority on ancient Egypt. Forrester cannot witness ancient Egypt without thinking of the benefit it would have to modern archaeology; his complicity in this system of systematic pillaging of Egypt is why Pharos has selected him for the "work" of infecting Europe.

This is another scene in which Forrester 'experiences' Egypt as a European pseudo-explorer, and is definitively punished for his curiosity. Forrester should perhaps feel guilt at invading the private spaces of Egypt. When Forrester follows Pharos into the Pyramid of Gizeh through a secret entrance, he remarks that he cannot return to Cairo "without learning all there is to know" about Pharos's purposes and the inside of the Pyramid (108). Yet he soon becomes lost and trapped within a chamber from which he cannot find an exit. He cries:

> how bitterly I repented having ever left the hotel! For all I knew to the contrary, I might have wandered into some subterranean chamber never visited by Bedouins or tourists, whence my feeble cries for help would not be heard, and in which I might remain

[31] The anti-Semitism of this comment may refer to nineteenth-century attitudes towards Jews, or may perhaps be Boothby's attempt to convey Ptahmes's attitude towards the people who 'ruined' him.

until death took pity on me and released me from my sufferings. (109)

Forrester fears that, like the mummies who inhabit the tomb, he too will become trapped in this room by death. The image of the excavator trapped in the deceptively labyrinthine tomb seems appropriate for a mummy's curse narrative, in which the tomb wishes to deter, trap, or even kill the intruder.[32] This scene is also reminiscent of eighteenth-century Gothic narratives of entrapment and claustrophobia. Forrester thrashes on the floor and cries out for help, until "the horrible silence, the death-like atmosphere, the flapping of the bats in the darkness, and the thought of the history and age of the place in which I was imprisoned must have affected my brain, and for a space I believe I went mad" (109). This passage is particularly intriguing because it turns the artifactual sublime, a fantasy that so influenced Forrester at the beginning of the novel, into a nightmare. No longer does the passage of ages inspire poetic musings on architectural ruins; instead, "the thought of the history and age of the place" makes him go momentarily insane.

Compare this scene to one earlier in the novel, when Forrester first meets Pharos. Forrester is in London, and has finished painting his soon-to-be-famous picture of ancient Egypt. He walks from the Strand down towards Cleopatra's

[32] Jasmine Day notes that this image becomes more popular in mummy's curse films of the twentieth century, as well as other adventure films like *Indiana Jones: The Raiders of the Lost Ark* (117).

Needle[33] on the Thames Embankment, drawn to this spot because he had "been thinking of [his] picture, and of the land and period which had given [him] the idea" (15). "The ancient monument [...] affected me as it had never done before," Forrester remarks, and while staring at it he ponders "the centuries that had passed since those hieroglyphics were carved upon the stone, [and] the changes the world had seen since that giant monolith first saw the light of day" (15). In this moment of the artifactual sublime, Forrester intentionally seeks out this Egyptian monument to meditate upon the passage of time. Like the objects of his father's collection, Cleopatra's Needle allows Forrester to conjure fantasies of communion with the past. However, there is another Egyptian on the Thames Embankment that night: Pharos. Forrester witnesses a man committing suicide by jumping into the Thames, and while he rushes forward to help, he sees Pharos standing by the river's edge, laughing cruelly and pulling his robes out of the reach of the dying man as he washes past. Forrester is angered by Pharos's cruel indifference to human life, an indifference that is mirrored later, and to much greater degree, during the plague. This encounter with Pharos disrupts the fantasy of Egypt Forrester has created in his mind.

This scene also foreshadows Pharos's infecting of Forrester with the plague. When he looks upon Pharos, he shakes "like a man with the palsy" and is overwhelmed by "an indescribable feeling of nausea" (16). The encounter leaves him with a forehead "clammy with the sweat of real fear," and with nerves

[33] An obelisk from the reign of Thutmose III that was transplanted to London in 1878.

"strained to breaking pitch" (17). He is suddenly overcome with illness simply from proximity with Pharos, a sensation that passes as soon as he leaves Pharos's side. Forrester is repulsed by Pharos's old and decrepit body, which has "the complexion of a corpse [that has lain] in a hermetically sealed tomb for many years" (17). It is interesting to compare the body of the mummy with the 'body' of the obelisk in this scene. Although both the obelisk and Pharos's mummified living corpse are Egyptian 'bodies' ravaged by decay and age, the obelisk makes Forrester ponder the weighty rise and fall of empires, while the body of the mummy disgusts him with its senescence. The obelisk conjures fantasies of the past, and Pharos 'infects' him with nausea. He feels as if Pharos's gaze is "eating into his brain" (16), a metaphor that implies penetration, parasitism, and infection.

Interestingly, Forrester reacts similarly to Pharos when he meets him, months later, 'at home' at Lady Mendenham's. He is overcome by the "same sense of revulsion," and feeling "sick and giddy," in a "clammy sweat" and about to faint, he runs from the room (26). When later he returns to Lady Mendenham's to find a forwarding address for Pharos, she comments, prophetically, about his wild appearance: "we shall hear of your being seriously ill" (46). Yet Forrester claims that his "ailment was not of the body but of the mind," and that he is "beyond the reach of any doctor's science" until he can locate Pharos (46). His physical reaction to Pharos seems to be related to the curse. Every time he is in Pharos's presence he feels, looks, or threatens to be ill, up until the point that Pharos decides to use him for the larger purpose of infecting Britain. Pharos is both the

cause and the cure for Forrester's 'mental' ailment, and his close connection with its onset, and its disappearance, suggest that the curse is the catalyst for Forrester's feelings of nausea.

Forrester's nauseated reaction to Pharos is mirrored later in the text by another British collector, George Legrath; the similarities between their reactions suggest that Pharos seeks revenge upon all British collectors. Sir George Legrath is an Egyptologist and family friend of the Forresters. He is the Director of the fictional Egyptian Museum in London, and is the "most competent authority the world possesses at the present day on the subject of ancient Egypt" (46-47). His museum is a storehouse of captured treasures from the Egyptian desert. It contains "huge monuments and blocks of statuary" (46), and is "covered from ceiling to floor with paintings, engravings, specimens of papyrus, and the various odds and ends accumulated in an Egyptologist's career" (47). Like Forrester's studio and the curiosity shop, Legrath's museum is overcrowded with Egyptian antiquities, too large, varied, and superfluous to form a coherent collection. The superfluousness of his office is a testament to the excesses of British collecting. Legrath, like Forrester, has been made ill by his collecting and his association with Pharos. Legrath's face changes from "the ruddiness of perfect health" to "ashen pale" at Forrester's inquiries about Pharos, and he shakes "as if with the palsy" (48) at mention of Pharos's name. Yet, whatever terrible experience he has had with Pharos, he is unwilling to share with Forrester, cryptically protesting that "to do so would bring upon me - but no, my lips are sealed" (49). The unfinished phrase evokes the threat of the mummy's curse, and suggests why

Legrath cannot impart information about Pharos, or Egypt, to Forrester. When Forrester meets Legrath again, after returning from Egypt, Legrath still cannot discuss Pharos, stating that he "know[s] too much already" (213); his reference to 'knowing' perhaps implies that he too 'knows' something of the wisdom of the ancients that Pharos taught to Forrester outside the Great Pyramid of Gizeh.

Legrath meets an untimely end due to his entanglement with Pharos's curse. In the final scene of the novel, Forrester confronts Pharos, who sits in an armchair surrounded by "Egyptian curios [which filled the room] from floor to ceiling. So many there were, indeed, that there barely remained room for Pharos's chair" (228). Pharos himself is physically altered, shrunken so that he looks like a "mummy more than a man" (228). Forrester editorially comments that he later learned how Pharos gained possession of these artifacts based on Legrath's "confession, written shortly before his tragic death by his own hand" (228). This confession puts Pharos in an even more "unenviable light" (228), which implies that he obtained Legrath's collection of antiquities at the cost of the Egyptologist's own life. Pharos now sits, a mummy-collector, surrounded by his own archive, in London, of stolen and pillaged goods. Because Pharos is himself, to a certain degree, an object, and has sought to reclaim objects throughout the novel, his sudden shift into collector is a betrayal of his purpose and principles. Forrester, Valerie, and Pharos share a vision of the Temple of Ammon, where Paduamen, one of the Egyptian gods, has come to judge Pharos's actions. Paduamen says to Pharos: "thou hast used the power vouchsafed thee by the gods for thine own purposes and to enrich thyself in the goods of the earth. Therefore

thy doom is decreed" (229). The gods of Egypt emerge at the close of the text as the ultimate moral judges of the virtue of imperial collecting, and they judge Pharos as harshly as he judged other British collectors. "Enrich[ing]" onself is the ultimate crime, the novel implies at its conclusion, and one for which all of Europe, and Pharos himself, ultimately pay.

The catalyst for Pharos's death in, ironically, a vision of his sarcophagus being removed, again, from its tomb in Thebes. Valerie says that she "see[s] a rocky hillside and a newly opened tomb. [She] see[s] three white men and five Arabs who surround it. They are lifting a mummy from the vault below with cords" (229). Representations of collecting have come full circle in the novel; the theft of Pharos's mummy by white collectors motivated Pharos to revenge Egypt on Europe; however, even the death of millions of Europeans cannot halt the excavation of mummies in the Egyptian desert by white men. After hearing about this new excavation of his mummy, Pharos flails wildly, and tears "at his throat with his skeleton fingers till the blood spurted out on either side" (230). Pharos claws his own throat out, dying in a pool of blood in his chair surrounded by antiquities. There are few images of blood in the novel, but the claw-marks in Pharos's throat recall the red slash across the European map that marked the trajectory of the plague, and the spurting blood recalls the "red mist" (142) present during Forrester's illness. In death, Pharos takes revenge upon himself, seemingly punishing himself for his appropriation of Egypt's treasures.

Cultural Decay: The Mummy's Curse and British Decline

Into representations of collecting and mummy's curses, then, are written late-Victorian anxieties about cultural loss and decline. Forrester's transmission of the plague, and Pharos's revenge against Europe, fundamentally challenge the dominant pro-imperialist discourse during New Imperialism. Britain is, in Pharos's eyes, a nation of people too decayed to revere the past, a nation too depraved, overcrowded, and degenerate to be the rightful inheritors of Egypt's material goods; Boothby, potentially, supports this position. After arriving in England, Pharos leads Forrester through more than a dozen London spaces which are inhabited by various classes; in other words, he parades Forrester throughout London in order to spread infection across the class landscape of London. In one night, they go to: the Antiquarian Club, a posh upper-class club; the Renaissance Theatre, with mostly boisterous middle-class attendees; the Charing Cross Music Hall, with a staid middle-class audience; a fancy dress ball at Carlton House Terrace, with aristocrats; and multiple lower-class spaces, including the Seven Dials, a gambling den, the Salvation Army Shelters, cheap lodging and doss houses, public parks, and darkened railway arches. Just as Forrester moved easily across national and immunological boundaries of quarantine with Pharos's help, he now moves easily and freely throughout different class spaces.

Each place is what Pharos calls a "sid[e] of London life" (201), and in each place, Pharos finds "evil" (207). He remarks repeatedly on the overcrowding, the opulence, and the degeneration which pervades the city, and "hint[s] always at the doom which was hanging over London" (207). He is particularly outraged at the Antiquarian Club, which Pharos admits is one of the four finest places to dine in

Europe. Despite that, Pharos says, over a glass of port, this is "one side of that luxury and extravagance which is fast drawing this great city to its doom" (202). Pharos points out several men at the club to Forrester and tells compromising stories of them all. One, he implies, is a spy for Russia, and betrays his own country, another, a freeloader who lives extravagantly with his beautiful wife on credit. Another "peer" of the realm "whose name is as old as that of England itself" is "little more than a titled blackleg" (203). Pharos quips that "they make an interesting study [...] but [are] scarcely edifying from a humanitarian point of view" (203). The degeneracy that Pharos implies is inherent to the privileged upper classes is part of London's impending 'doom.'

At the Renaissance Theatre, Forrester notes that the play was "nauseating," and "ten years before would have been impossible," implying that it has a questionable moral tone (204). Pharos watches "with an expression of fiendish rage" as if he would "destroy every man and woman within the building" (204). He remarks that it is a "curious age" that can admit such "indecency" into its art (204). At the other places the two men visit, everyone is crowded and clustered around, some women are scantily dressed, and Pharos's comments are "far from being complimentary" (205). There seems to be, in Pharos's eyes, very little difference between the sordid lives of aristocrats, the middle class, politicians, the lower class, and "hardened criminal[s]" (209). By the end of their travels that night, Forrester claims that he feels "sick to the heart, not only of the sorrow and sin of London, but of the callous indifference to it displayed by Pharos" (210). Ailise Bulfin comments that this "ten-page denunciation of

imperial society functions not only as a justification for Pharos's countercolonial attack, but also as an admonition to its members about their increasing lack of fitness to uphold the empire" (425). While I agree that Boothby seems to indict modern Britain for its degenerate behaviour, I think that this scene focuses more on Britain's right to Egypt's antiquities than an upholding of the Empire in general. Pharos seems most appalled that "these are the people who rifle the tombs of the dead kings and queens of Egypt, and write and talk patronizingly about the civilizations of the Ancients" (204).

While Pharos is quick to condemn Britain for its degeneracy, he fails to recognize the same fatal flaw within himself. Just as Forrester judges Pharos for his lack of human empathy, the Egyptian gods judge him for his selfishness and hoarding of worldly possessions. It is not only Britain that is an example of a degenerate society in the text: ancient Egypt is one as well. The novel uses Pharos's curse to destroy not only Europe but also the last remaining citizen of the ancient Egyptian empire. The mummy's curse, then, is a trope through which Boothby consciously articulates British cultural degeneracy. The contagion of ancient Egypt, appearing in the guise of a curse, is imperial death, a deserved end for an imperial society in moral and imperial decline.

Forrester's expressions of guilt throughout the novel admit some degree of understanding for this deserved end. He agrees to join Pharos in repatriating the sarcophagus; he also accepts the blame for bringing the plague into Britain. "I was dishonoured enough already," Forrester says when he realizes he has infected England, and "for the future I should be an outcast, a social leper, carrying with

me to my grave the knowledge of the curse I had brought upon my fellow-men" (218). Even though Forrester likely references 'the curse' rhetorically here, as a turn of phrase, we can also read this literally, in that he recognizes that he has brought Pharos's curse into England. Forrester enables the plague to circumvent the boundaries of quarantine, thus infecting England. Pharos chose Forrester to carry the plague because Forrester was a collector of Egyptian antiquities; thus, Forrester is symbolic of the root cause that triggers Pharos's revenge. His guilt recalls Stephen Arata's claims about reverse colonization narratives, a subgenre of late-Victorian Gothic fiction which Boothby's *Pharos, the Egyptian* could easily be read as part of. Arata writes that "if fantasies of reverse colonization are products of the geopolitical fears of a troubled imperial society, they are also responses to cultural guilt. In the marauding, invasive Other, British culture sees its own imperial practices mirrored back in monstrous forms" (108). The fear that accompanies reverse colonization is accentuated by "a strong suspicion that the devastation may, after all, be deserved, that it may be a form of punishment for the nation's destructive imperial practices" (109). In this reading, Pharos's curse is just retribution for the penetrative and invasive excavations that took place in the Egyptian desert during the nineteenth century. If I extend Arata's reading of the imperial guilt of late-Victorian Gothic fiction to the mummy curse narrative, *Pharos, the Egyptian* appears as a novel that provides retribution to Egypt for Britain's metaphoric rape and pillage. However, as the cyclical return to imperial collecting at the close of the novel implies, imperial death is inevitable for both Egypt and Britain.

In order to elaborate upon this point, I wish to turn, in conclusion, to one of the novel's more incongruous, but critical, scenes, in which Forrester and Pharos rendezvous at the ruins of Pompeii. In this scene, Pharos continues to muse on the fate of the Roman Empire just as he does for the Egyptian empire and the British Empire. After their initial confrontation, Pharos takes Forrester around to the various sites in Pompeii, and tells him stories about its inhabitants which no living person could know. Just as he claims of different Londoners at the various sites he visits with Forrester, Pharos says he knows the inner secrets of the former inhabitants of Pompeii. However, unlike in London, when we understand that he learns of Britons' secrets because he is a skilled mind-reader, in Pompeii, he presents himself as a former acquaintance of its inhabitants and witness to its destruction. He imparts his knowledge to Forrester as a warning about the inevitability of cultural decline. He says:

> how very few are there of the numbers who visit [Pompeii] weekly that really understand it! What tales I could tell you of it, if only they interested you! How vividly I could bring back to you the life of the people who once spoke in this forum, bathed in yonder baths, applauded in the theatre nineteen hundred years ago. (68)

Forrester is in awe of Pharos's knowledge of this ancient Roman city, and remarks "of each [site] he had some story to tell - some anecdote to relate. From the graphic way he described everything, the names and characters he introduced, I might have been excused had I even believed that he had known it in its prime and been present on the day of its destruction" (70). Forrester is particularly

impressed by Pharos in this scene because Pharos displays more talent at the artifactual sublime than Forrester himself does; Pharos wishes to be credited with "an exceedingly vivid imagination" (70), suggesting that he, like Forrester, is prompted by sites and objects of extreme antiquity to poetic and imaginative flights of fancy. Thus, despite Forrester's predilection for European authorities on ancient civilizations, he is impressed by the anecdotes Pharos tells at each 'house' they pass by. Pharos refers snidely to the knowledge of Forrester's Baedeker, challenging the knowledge of European tourists and travellers, and setting himself up as the only reliable guide to the sights (64), something Forrester does not question.

Yet Pharos's anecdotes seemingly have a larger instructive purpose: to impugn archaeology and muse about the decline of Rome. For example, Forrester and Pharos pause at the house of Tullus Agrippa, near the Temple of Asclpius. Pharos apostrophizes the dead man "across the sea of time" (69), noting the greed and vanity the size of the house betrays. This appeal against moral and social indecency foreshadows Pharos's critique of London, another imperial society on the brink of destruction. Pharos also bemoans Victorian tourists' lack of respect for the past, shown not only in Egypt but also in Pompeii, another popular tourist destination. Pharos implies that visiting the ruins of Pompeii demonstrates a disregard for the sanctity of history. In a seemingly direct address to the hordes of Victorian tourists, Pharos laments the spectacle that Agrippa's house has become. He cries, "little didst thou dream that nineteen centuries later would find thy house roofless, dug up from the bowels of the earth, and thy cherished rooms a

show to be gaped at by all who cared to pay a miserable fee" (69). Interestingly, Pharos's use of the verb 'gaped at' to describe the ruins at Pompeii echoes his concerns about the bodies of Egyptian mummified kings and queens. Domestic spaces, like houses, Pharos implies, should not be the subject of tourist spectacle. Tourism and museum-going are similarly unwelcome intrusions into the past for Pharos, as he implies they are for the museum's objects and the tourism site's former occupants.

Pharos also laments the loss of ancient civilizations, especially when they are replaced by such inferior cultures as that of the Victorians. He takes Forrester to the Temple of Isis, evidence of the cross-pollination of Egyptian and Roman beliefs. He describes to Forrester how the temple would have looked, including its statues, its worshippers, its priests, and its smells of incense. "See how its grandeur has departed from it," Pharos says to Forrester, asking, "where, Mr. Forrester, are the priests now? The crowd of worshippers, the statues? Gone - gone - dust and ashes, these nineteen hundred years" (69). Pharos's tone, and his repetition of "gone," is elegiac; he witnesses how the passage of time has impacted and destroyed ancient civilizations. All that remains, Pharos reiterates, is their dust and ashes, traces of their material bodies.

I wish to read dust as a sign that brings together cultural decay, Egyptian antiquities, and contagion in *Pharos, the Egyptian*. In doing so, I borrow from Andrew Stauffer, who writes about Egypt's connection with signs of the apocalypse, including its connection to deteriorating material, like pieces of cloth or dust. Stauffer says that crumbling mummies transplanted to Britain

"constitute[d] a kind of confrontational, visionary plague: fear [of cultural loss] in a mouthful of dust" ("Ruins" 7). The contagion implied by dust in Stauffer's reading translates compellingly to *Pharos, the Egyptian,* and its twinned interests in cultural decline and collecting. The statues and people of Pompeii, turned into "dust and ashes" due to the passage of time, provide a melancholy counterpoint to the artifactual sublime. Rather than using the objects of antiquity to connect to the past, Pharos uses objects' disintegration and material remains to emphasize the passage of nineteen hundred years.

Conclusion

Using the curse narrative as a means of imagining inevitable cultural decay and inherited or 'infected' imperial death, Guy Boothby's *Pharos, the Egyptian,* interrogates colonial guilt about the British excavation of Egypt. The novel maps the penetration of imperial spaces like the Egyptian tomb onto the penetration of national boundaries of quarantine, and onto the penetration of immunological corporeal boundaries. My aim in reading the connections between contagion and collecting in Boothby's novel is to contribute to the ongoing scholarly discussion about the rise of mummy curse narratives in the nineteenth century, and explain the cultural work that they do. Although the frame narrative at the beginning of *Pharos, the Egyptian* at least implies that Britain somehow survives the plague (perhaps with the government's distribution of Forrester's recipe for a cure), the novel ends apocalyptically, with Britain still in the grips of the deadly plague, and Forrester suffering from brain fever. Aboard Pharos's yacht, and fleeing Europe,

Valerie assures Forrester that "the past is only a bitter memory" (230), asserting that the reveries of the artifactual sublime have no place in this new world.

Chapter Four

Nightmares of Sexual Desire: Theo Douglas's *Iras, a Mystery,* and Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*

The final chapter of this project turns to a discussion of sexuality and gender, topics which appear in some of the texts I have examined so far, but that I have not discussed at length in favour of focussing on other issues at play. My discussion of sexual desire in late-Victorian Gothic fiction about Egyptian antiquities expands upon the key issues I have already illuminated in this dissertation–namely, the tension between fantasy and nightmare, a pervading sense of cultural disenchantment, and a perceived cultural loss stemming from 'failed' imperial collecting. In Theo Douglas's *Iras, a Mystery,* and Richard Marsh's *The Beetle,* I examine the body of the female mummy; this body is frequently represented in late-century mummy fiction as either sexual, as in *Iras,* or repulsive, and in some complex cases like *The Beetle,* both simultaneously. The mummy, swathed in cloth and bandages, seems to invite unwrapping by British collectors and/or archaeologists, an act that becomes sexualized in this late-Victorian Gothic fiction. In two texts already mentioned in this dissertation, Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and Louisa May Alcott's "Lost in a Pyramid," male collectors desire to unwrap the bodies of 'their' mummies, a desire that is not repeated in fiction with 'un-gendered' or male mummies. As I outline in Chapter 2, the scene in which the mummy of Queen Tera is unwrapped is imagined as a sort of ocular rape, where the male scientists become excited while

unwrapping what turns out to be a beautiful, preserved female body. The lone female viewer, Margaret, identifies with Tera in this voyeuristic assault, and is upset by their actions. In "Lost in a Pyramid," the language of sexuality is similarly present when two male archaeologists unwrap a mummified body. Professor Niles comments that "this is a woman, and we may find something rare and precious here" (40), conjuring an image of exclusive access to the body of the virginal woman. In reply, Paul wonders if "this dark, ugly thing had ever been a lovely, soft-eyed Egyptian girl" (40), demonstrating the ways in which the body of the female mummy can be an object of both repulsion and desire.

Theo Douglas's novel *Iras, a Mystery* (1896) provides an entry point to discuss how sexual desire for the female mummy overlaps with the desire of the collector for the artifact. These intersecting desires to possess and expose (through unwrapping) construct a female body that is a spectacle of both sexual desire and repulsive horror. This nearly forgotten novel depicts the short-lived marriage of a British Egyptologist, Ralph Lavenham, who, after unwrapping his illegally smuggled mummy, discovers not a withered corpse but the beautiful, sleeping body of a young woman. He promptly decides to marry the woman, Iras, and the two flee England for the wilderness of Scotland to escape the spirit of the vengeful ghost of Savak, an ancient Egyptian priest who loved her. Ultimately, Iras transforms back into a mummified corpse, and Lavenham is left without anyone who believes him that she was ever alive in the first place.

This novel is an exemplary illustration of how unwrapping creates the collector's sexual desire for the ambiguously attractive/repulsive body of the

mummy, and how this desire ultimately causes personal or sexual loss for the collector. The image of mummy's wrappings in this text links representations of the sexual, feminized East and the Gothic corpse of antiquity, fusing together sexual desire and imperial nightmare. In analysing wrappings this way I am reminded of Bradley Deane's assertion that "masks, veils, and shrouds" are part of the Gothic tradition *and* the mummy fiction tradition, "which establish[es] them as conventional signposts of the intersection of dreadful mystery and compelling desire" (391).[1] The mummy thus participates in the Orientalist tradition where representations of Eastern women generate Western sexual desire through the interplay between clothed and nude, and by hinting at the process of unclothing which leads from the former to the latter. Through feminized representations of dancing girls, odalisques, courtesans, royal women, and supernatural beings, these texts create typical Orientalist binary constructions of East and West: where the West is active, the East is passive; where the West is imbued with penetrative power, the East is ripe for penetration; where the West is masculinized, the East is feminized; and where the West is rational, the East is sensual and emotional. *Iras* establishes this pattern, which is also present in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and "Lost in a Pyramid," of the passive, desirable mummy, ready for penetration/possession by the Western collector.

[1] Deane's article, "Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt: Imperial Striptease," compellingly links Britain's political interests in Egypt in 1882 with the rise of representations of a sexualized, feminized Egypt. For example, he examines a *Punch* cartoon featuring Cleopatra as Egypt and Caesar as Britain in which "political and sexual possibilities salaciously converge" (384).

Lavenham's position as the desirous, penetrative, possessive collector, and Iras's as the desired, penetrated, possessed mummy/wife, is established during both unwrapping scenes in the novel. When he first unwraps her coffin in his studio, he remarks upon the "costly fabric," saying that "it was enough to make the eyes of an Egyptologist glisten" with appreciation and desire (85). "What precious historical testimony might not be enshrined therein?", Lavenham wonders (85), not realizing that what is inside is indeed more "precious" to him than any other person or object. Iras is sleeping within, "exquisitely rounded," "beautiful," and in "perfect bloom," (89), and he instantly feels both a connection and a need to own her. "I knew my heart's one love when I saw her face to face," he writes, and "I recognized a need filled, an incompleteness suddenly made whole" (90). Lavenham's immediate decision to marry Iras as soon as possible, and disregard any scholarly inquiry into this supernatural occurrence, seems so bizarre that it can only be read compellingly as a moment where the collector's desire to possess the artifact is rewritten as explicitly sexual. Lavenham's desire to legalize his 'possession,' as both husband and collector, fuels his energy: "To have one belonging to me, depending on me, how sweet the possession!—how welcome the burden which with all loyalty of a glad heart I would carry!" (104). The novel's second unwrapping scene, after Iras 'turns back' into a corpse (if she was indeed ever alive in the first place), confirms this sense of ownership. As he removes amulets from the shroud as he unwraps her,[2] he observes the "Victorian

[2] The amulets' placement within the shroud is one of many ambiguous signs in the text that Lavenham never unwrapped her in the first place; yet, this image is counterbalanced by the

ring on the hand of a mummy three thousand years old," and says, "This is *my* wife" (240, emphasis added).

Throughout the text, Lavenham displays jealous possessiveness over his wife/mummy as Iras acts the part of the demure wife, fulfilling his fantasy of a domesticatable bride/object. He remarks that he is "uneasy […] when my one treasure was out of sight" (153), a moment that adds to his desire for his mummy when Iras suddenly returns holding another woman's baby. He "jealously" remarks that "it will be my fate to die and leave you—perhaps to another!" (98), possibly referring to the spirit of the priest Savak, but also evoking the image of inheritance, where another collector might own Iras after he dies. He is feverishly preoccupied with keeping her to himself, saying that "I no longer thought of any return to London or to work—nothing signified to me any more save the desperate effort to keep Iras mine" (175). Iras, overacting the part of the conventionally demure Victorian wife, supports Lavenham's possessive tendencies. She tells him that she does "not want to go back to my old name […] you shall give me a name" (94), encouraging the collector to re-name his object. Lavenham turns this moment into a marriage proposal, promising that he will "give you my own [name]" (94). Iras also begs for a veil to cover her face. "I do not want any eye to rest on it but yours," she tells Lavenham, who gives her a gauze veil he purchased in Egypt. This moment of re-wrapping shows the text's preoccupation with Iras's clothes, veils, and wrappings. Unwrapping scenes are twice moments of sexualized possession in the novel, yet, interestingly, Lavenham takes every

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wedding ring on Iras's hand.

opportunity during Iras's 'life' to 're-wrap' her. The first thing he decides to do, after settling on marrying Iras, is to send out for a fashionable fur coat, hat, and boots, which cover her "from throat to foot" (108); once she puts on her veil, her body is covered completely. Once in Edinburgh, he buys her "layer on layer" of clothes (251); the clothes from Edinburgh are an important symbol for Iras's ambiguous 'life,' as, after her disappearance, the fully-packed and seemingly undisturbed trunks of clothes arrive at his lodgings, with only a sprig of heather attached to one dress to suggest that they had ever been worn.

Jasmine Day, Bradley Deane, and Nicholas Daly have conventionally understood the collector's desire for the object as a type of metonymy, a substitution, a metaphorical expression of desire for something else transcribed onto the surface of the object. Day, for example, likens collector-mummy romances to "regressive fantasies in which resistance to collectors' control of objects, and thereby to European domination of the Orient, were ultimately contained" (39). While my own chapter follows this avenue of thought to a degree, I am also interested in the way in which possessing the object of Egyptology, the mummy, is a driving, pseudo-sexual force in these texts. In reading objects this way, I borrow from museum studies, and object studies, in analysing the object as a 'thing' inscribed with desire. In his introduction to *Other Objects of Desire: Collecting and Collecting Queerly,* Michael Camille reminds us that "pleasure—not as a passive and merely optical response but as an active, productive, and shaping stimulation of all the senses—is the fundamental experience at the foundations of the act of collecting" (2). Desire, Camille notes,

"hardly appears in either the historical or theoretical discussion of the history of collecting," even though it is "crucial to any understanding of the relationship between persons and things" (2). The desire to possess can also appear as gendered; Susan Pearce, in *On Collecting*, has also noted the conventional gendering of collecting as masculine, and how that gendering translates into male sexual desire for a female object. Her understanding of gendered desire stems in part from F. Baekeland's 1988 article in *Psychiatry*: "[Male collectors] often compare their feelings of longing for it to sexual desire. This suggests that art objects are confused in the unconscious with ordinary sexual objects" (qtd. in Pearce 220). Furthermore, Pearce reminds us that collecting is frequently called a "passion," a word that conjures both sexual desire and desire for the object (221).[3] The desire to possess, to collect and hold in one's keeping, is the prime object of Egyptology and lies encoded in *Iras.*

After he wakes from his bout with the Egyptian fever, and finds Iras gone, Lavenham cannot explain to his friend Knollys why so much physical evidence would suggest that she was not real, but rather, that he dressed up a mummy in furs and carted her around Scotland as his wife. Iras's return to corpse-form blurs the boundaries between desire and repulsion, and how these opposing terms are simultaneously written onto the body of the female mummy. The reactions to the mummy of Knollys and Lavenham's landlady Mrs. Mappinbeck contrast with

[3] Jasmine Day also writes of how the fantasy of unwrapping, as well as the fantasy of archaeological plunder, are figured in sexual terms in literature and film. The fantasy of the untouched tomb, she argues, is the fantasy of the virginal woman; the vaginal tomb is penetrated by the male archaeological phallus, which breaks the hymenal seal of the tomb door and steals the 'treasure' within (79).

Lavenham's expressions of desire and longing. Mrs. Mappinbeck, upon learning that Lavenham has a sarcophagus in his room, asks him if there will be "death-smells" (74), and tells him that her building will not become "a charnel and a dead-house for disreputable heathen corpses" (73). She cannot figure out what happens to "*that corpse*" (107), and Knollys is equally puzzled, though he remarks that it is "not very likely […] that you would travel with such an encumbrance on a bridal tour!" (148), not realizing that the 'encumbrance' and the bride are one and the same. The horror of Lavenham's probable necrophilia is apparent when Knollys tells him that no one saw him with a wife, but rather, with a "bundle wrapped in fur" (220). The bundle "was a mummy—the mummy of a woman; a thing swatched and bandaged in cerements and dry as a stick, which had been dead for hundreds—nay, thousands—of years. *The* mummy, doubtless that Skipton sent you to G— Street, and that you took from there under—the impression you told me of" (219).

Lavenham's sexualized and possessive desire for Iras, the mummy/bride, is ultimately written as a tale of loss in this novel. The grip of the past, represented by the vengeful love of the priest Savak, will not release Iras, and she remains at the end of the tale a withered corpse, marked by extreme age and decay. Lavenham's loss is explicitly documented on his marriage certificate, upon which only Iras's signature has begun to fade. "The beloved name was without doubt gradually disappearing," Lavenham says, "a few more months and the paper will be blank. It matters little; there is one place where her name is written indelibly, and that is my heart" (271). The marriage certificate symbolizes Lavenham's loss,

and if not the erosion of his desire, then the erosion of his ability to possess his artifact/bride.

In analysing the sexuality of late-Victorian mummy fiction, scholars tend to focus on the initial expression of desire, the fantasy, rather than the resulting nightmare of contact or experience of loss. For example, Ruth Hoberman reads the museum as a space that "puts desire under glass" (469), creating a situation where, in Gothic, the male collector has a "repressed desire for a more intimate relationship with his object of study [which is] frequently what triggers the story's supernatural events" (469), thus becoming an attempt to recapture or experience this desire. Nicholas Daly, in his book *Modernism, Romance, and the 'Fin de Siecle' : Popular Fiction & British Culture,* theorizes the romance and sexuality of mummy narratives as a version of commodity fetishism. "In mummy fiction, as in advertising," he writes, "the object or commodity is replaced by its fantastic, eroticized image" (112). In other words, "exotic goods turn into desirable women [and] the act of purchasing or acquisition is filled with sexual promise" (113). Yet, this promise is never fulfilled in this fiction. Desire prefigures loss; unfulfilled desire is written as disenchantment, as possession of an object, and its corresponding imperial fantasy of control that continually slips away. This over-arching expression of loss in *Iras,* and, as I shall shortly discuss, *The Beetle,* is what connects mummy fiction about sexualized female mummies with horror fiction that represents the mummy as a monster. In reading desire and horror side-by-side, I confront a critical gap in scholarship that is only beginning to be addressed. Like Ailise Bulfin, I read against "much of the criticism [of] supernatural

Egyptian fiction [which] differentiates the mummy romance from the curse tale, subdividing the theme into two separate strands and focusing upon the female mummy of the romance strand" (Bulfin 419). I read this group of fiction as "a single body of work traversing a spectrum of sentiment about Egypt, ranging from fear to desire" (Bulfin 421), but unlike Bulfin, who links this subgenre to British political complications in Egypt, I identify the overarching, shared representational strategies of late-Victorian mummy fiction as an expression of imperial disenchantment and loss.

The Monstrous Inversion of Collecting in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*

Richard Marsh's 1897 novel *The Beetle* subverts the Orientalist expressions of sexual desire that are encoded in texts like *Iras*. In this novel, the fantasy of exposure, and the nightmare of sexual penetration and rape are inverted; the monstrous Egyptian mummy-figure successfully avoids exposure to the British imperial gaze, and instead succeeds in wrapping and unwrapping two British subjects in trances: Marjorie Lindon and Robert Holt. The Beetle's sexual violation of both Holt and Marjorie reverses the conventional trajectory of Western/Eastern penetration, and dramatizes the sexual possession of, exposure of, and collection of, British subjects by an Egyptian monster. *The Beetle* offers the most significant challenge to British authority and power seen yet in this dissertation; through the antagonist of the Beetle, a species- and gender-shifting being that stalks and kidnaps British citizens in the streets of London, the text displays not only reverse colonization but reverse collecting, a threat to the imperial collecting impulses of Victorian Britain. This novel suggests how

sexualized portrayals of female mummies negotiated the nightmare of collecting from Egypt. Ultimately this novel offers a representation of cultural disenchantment and imperial loss similar to *Iras.* As a novel that combines sexualized and monstrous depictions of the Egyptian mummy, *The Beetle* offers strong evidence that cultural loss and disenchantment are what unite late-Victorian fiction about Egyptian objects.

Even more, perhaps, than *Dracula,* another novel published in 1897, *The Beetle* is "nineteenth-century up to date with a vengeance" (Stoker *Dracula* 67), encoding contemporary issues within radical Gothic terms. The cutting-edge issues foregrounded in the novel include labour debates in the Parliament, the emergence of the New Woman, fluid representations of hetero- and homosexuality, the late-nineteenth-century occupation of Egypt, spiritualism and psychic research, and cross-species transmigration and evolution. The narrative is split into four sections in order to best illustrate the various 'areas' of contemporary society. The first section is told by Robert Holt, a homeless man who is entranced by the Beetle; the second, by Sydney Atherton, inventor of chemical weapons, childhood friend of (and would-be paramour to) Marjorie Lindon; the third by Marjorie Lindon, a New Woman and fiancée to Paul Lessingham, left-wing politician; and the fourth by August Champnell, private investigator hired by Paul Lessingham. While these characters fit in fairly definable 'types,' the identity, species, and gender of the Beetle are ambiguous. It/he/she appears at different moments as a repellently hideous, foreign-looking man with mis-shapen facial features, a beautiful, voluptuous, young woman, and a

giant *scarabaeus sacer,* that "spider of nightmares; a monstrous conception of some dreadful vision" (Marsh 51). For the sake of pronouns, I will refer to the Beetle as 'she,' because the narrative strongly implies that this shapeshifting being is a female member of the cult of Isis, known as the Woman of Songs, who, in death, gained the ability to change her gender and species.

Sexual assault, sexual desire (across class, political, and ethnic boundaries), and violence permeate the text, creating tension between fear and desire, fantasy and nightmare. The Beetle arrives in London to persecute Paul Lessingham, who, twenty years ago, was held captive as a sexual slave to the cult of Isis in the Egyptian desert. Lessingham is traumatized due to his witnessing of the rape, torture, and immolation of numerous British women while in a mesmeric trance. He killed his rapist, a member of the cult, the Woman of Songs (the Beetle). Lessingham is now a left-wing, popular politician in London, and is secretly engaged to Marjorie Lindon, the daughter of a political rival. Meanwhile, the Beetle entrances and, the text implies, sexually assaults a homeless man, Robert Holt, and commands him to break into Lessingham's house and steal Marjorie's love letters. The Beetle then kidnaps Marjorie by mesmerizing her, assaults her, and attempts to leave London for Egypt, taking both Marjorie and Holt along, presumably to torture and kill Marjorie and use Holt as a slave for the cult of Isis. Sydney Atherton, Lessingham, and August Champnell follow the train on which the Beetle has escaped, and, by a stroke of luck, catch up to it due to a freak rail accident. During the accident, in which all the train cars are derailed, the Beetle is 'killed,' or perhaps squished, leaving a puddle of biological sludge on the floor.

Holt is also dead, and Marjorie is left insane, but, as the epilogue reveals, she is eventually healed over a period of years and becomes Lessingham's wife. The narrative ends with Champnell's inconclusive verdict that the Beetle may or may not have actually existed, but if it did, was "a creature born neither of God nor man" (Marsh 322).

Champnell's enigmatic proclamation at the end of the novel re-iterates the text's central preoccupation with the Beetle and the way in which she defies all attempts of categorization. As Kelly Hurley points out, "the Beetle-Woman presents a spectacle of corporeality at its most fearsome, of a material body which resists classification within categories of sexual and species identity from which 'the human' takes its meaning" (142). Indeed, the Beetle's spectacular transformations between male and female, human and insect, defy both Victorian and twenty-first–century taxonomic classifications. When Robert Holt first perceives the Beetle, lying on a bed, he remarks that "I could not at once decide if it was a man or woman. Indeed at first I doubted if it was anything human" (Marsh 53). The Beetle's skull is "disagreeably suggestive of something animal," her nose is like "the beak of some bird of prey," and her "blubber lips" stretch from her nose to her non-existent chin (53); her "satyr's smile" (55) marks her "deformity" (53) as something half-human, half-animal. Yet, suddenly, when she emerges from the bed, she seems to change: "about the face there was something which was essentially feminine; so feminine, indeed, that I wondered if I could by any possibility have blundered, and mistaken a woman for a man; some ghoulish example of her sex, who had so yielded to her depraved instincts as to have

become nothing but a ghastly reminiscence of womanhood" (61). It is not only the Beetle's species which is questioned here, but also her sex and gender. Her biological sex is seemingly indeterminate, and, if she is indeed a woman, she is a "ghastly" representative of femininity.

This off-hand reference to gender construction fits within the novel's larger interrogation of gender; both Marjorie Lindon and Dora Grayling (a young heiress enamoured of Atherton), for example, defy patriarchal conventions by moving about London on their own, choosing their own romantic partners, investing their money as they choose, and defying their families' wishes. Marjorie and Dora are examples of New Women, a term that emerged in the *North American Review* in 1894 (Ledger and Luckhurst 75) to identify women who countered traditional representations of Victorian womanhood through self-sufficient social, sexual, and economic behaviour. Pairing the Beetle, an entity that defies characterization within categories, with representations of New Women, who, socially, defied categorization within traditional gender stereotypes, strengthens the novel's anxious interrogation of boundaries of sex and gender. Victoria Margree notes in her article "'Both in Men's Clothing': Gender, Sovereignty and Insecurity in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*" that "Marjorie's claims to independence [...] are a source of anxiety for some of the male characters, and perhaps by extension for Marsh and his intended readership" (73). Her transformation into a threatening anti-feminine character climaxes when the Beetle 'kidnaps' her, ripping her hair out by the roots and forcing her to dress in men's clothing to walk around in public. Marjorie's anxiety-provoking masculinity

is mirrored by the erosion of men's masculinity in the novel as well. For example, after meeting the Beetle, Holt states that "I was no longer a man; my manhood was merged in his [the Beetle's]. I was, in the extreme sense, an example of passive obedience" (54). Paul Lessingham similarly becomes a "fibreless, emasculated creature" in the presence of the Beetle (245); as Kelly Hurley notes, "The Woman of Songs divests Lessingham of 'volition' and rationality, qualities which are traditionally the special prerogative of the masculine subject" (144). Indeed, the presence of the Beetle is not required to strip away Lessingham's masculinity. At mention of the Beetle's name, or at any depiction of the Beetle on paper, Lessingham "transform[s]" : "he sank in a heap upon the floor; he held up his hands above his head; and he gibbered—like some frenzied animal" (180). Under the Beetle's influence, Lessingham vacillates between masculine and feminine, human and animal.

I wish to link the novel's rejection of traditional boundaries of gender and biological sex with the larger issue of collecting. The Beetle inverts *fin-de-siècle* British representations of Egyptian collecting in two ways. Firstly, the Beetle reverses the conventional Orientalist gendering of activity and passivity. As I noted above, this text is no testament to the masculinized, penetrative power of British Egyptology or the feminized passivity of the mummy. The Beetle emasculates the novel's British male characters, and creates a model of feminized masculinity out of Marjorie Lindon. Furthermore, she defies passive feminization; she transforms from a voluptuous woman who flaunts her powerful sexuality to

Holt, Lessingham, and Atherton, to a powerful, but hideously deformed, man who breaks into British homes, and kidnaps British characters, in London.

Secondly, the Beetle's ability to shape- and gender-shift defies taxonomic categorization, testing the boundaries of archaeological and museal knowledge upon which Egyptology relied. Roger Luckhurst humorously describes the Beetle as a "liminal-man-woman-goddess-beetle- Thing" ("Trance" 160), suggesting that the Beetle occupies all of these categories: human, god, insect, object. Characters strain to define the Beetle in relation to animal or human, man or woman, and Champnell's closing words that she is "a creature born neither of God nor man" (Marsh 322) leave the matter on an inconclusive note. Even the "stains" of a "most unpleasant smell" left by the Beetle when she is squelched in the train accident defy scientific analysis:

> Some maintain that the stain was produced by human blood, which had been subjected to a great heat, and, so to speak, parboiled. Others declare that it is the blood of some wild animal — possibly of some creature of the cat species. Yet others affirm that it is not blood at all, but merely paint. While a fourth describes it as — I quote the written opinion which lies in front of me — 'caused apparently by a deposit of some sort of viscid matter, probably the excretion of some variety of lizard'. (319)

The Beetle's circumvention of classification — both in terms of gender and species — indicates her refusal to participate in the epistemology of archaeology, biology, Egyptology, or the museum. The text portrays several attempts to render

the Beetle in photographic terms, potentially for purposes of classification, but each attempt is met with failure, or, worse, temporary insanity. For example, Atherton finds a photogravure of "an illustration of a species of beetle with which I felt that I ought to be acquainted, and yet was not" (115). Significantly, the illustration is so "dexterously done" that the beetle seems almost "alive" in it, which causes Paul Lessingham to fall to the floor as if struggling with "nightmare horrors" (115). Later, when Atherton witnesses the Beetle transforming in front of him, he wishes he could "photograp[h] it on [his] brain," to prove to others that it was an "unusual" specimen of the insect, given its "monstrous size," its gleaming eyes lit by "internal flames," and its "curious [...] restlessness" (151). The Beetle, I argue, resists biological categorization in these ways because it is not supposed to function as man, woman, or insect: the Beetle is a mummy figure in this text.

It might seem strange to classify the Beetle as an mummy. Unlike antagonists from other texts I examine in this dissertation, the Beetle is not an actual mummy; however, she has many characteristics of one. Her skin is "an amazing mass of wrinkles," which testifies to her "living through the ages" (53). In fact, she frequently impresses British characters with her appearance of longevity. Atherton, in viewing the Beetle at his laboratory, muses that "as one eyed him [sic] one was reminded of the legends told of people who have been supposed to have retained something of their pristine vigour after having lived for centuries" (140). She is explicitly described as Oriental-looking at several moments in the text, and is also frequently described as swaddled in linens or clothes, reminiscent

of the mummy's wrappings. Most significantly, she is not dead and yet, not alive either. Paul Lessingham admits that he strangled her to death in Egypt when she was the Woman of Songs, at which point she transformed into a giant beetle. The Woman of Songs is now able to transform between man, woman, and beetle, a metamorphosis that Atherton witnesses and calls the "apotheosis"[4] of the beetle (175). The language of divinity here connects to the religious symbolism of Egypt's mummies. Furthermore, the Beetle is described countless times in the novel as a "thing," a word which at first seems to accurately capture its liminal not-human, not-insect, not-alive, not-dead status, but also emphasizes its object status. The word "thing" describes an object which the speaker does not, or cannot, give a name to, and both Robert Holt and Sydney Atherton use this word to describe the Beetle. Holt repeatedly describes the Beetle as a "thing" during his first encounter with it/her, in the abandoned house. He remarks that he feels the presence of some "unseen thing" (49), that he feels "that thing coming towards me" (68) or senses that "the thing went back–I could hear it slipping and sliding across the floor" (85). Atherton's use of the word "thing" is perhaps even more telling; he cannot sleep after the Beetle visits his laboratory, because "there was continually before my fevered eyes the strange figure of that Nameless Thing" (154). The capital letters on 'nameless thing' are reminiscent of a scientific or proper name or *genus,* suggesting that this descriptor is as close as Atherton can come to categorizing this man-woman-beetle-object. Like mummies in museums,

[4] Atherton refers to this transformation as an "apotheosis," a word that implies deification or changing from mortal to god.

the Beetle seems to defy categorization and occupy a transitional space between human and object.

Because the Beetle is a mummy figure, this novel fits within the larger group of late-Victorian Gothic texts about Egyptian objects and collecting studied in this dissertation. I diverge from the critical foci of the scholarly work on *The Beetle* by repositioning a discussion of the novel's representations of sexuality and racial relations within the larger context of imperial collecting in Gothic fiction. *The Beetle* is perhaps the most radical of the group of texts analyzed in my dissertation, because it depicts the complete inversion of the sexualized, racialized, and gendered power dynamics of collecting. The Beetle, a feminized, Oriental Other, *collects* 'mummified' British subjects in this novel, and in doing so, destroys all markers of her objects' identities, including gender, nationality, and even sanity. This is a representation of an Egyptian thing that collects British humans, a complete reversal of the imperial collecting process.

Trance, Rape, and Collecting in *The Beetle*

The Beetle 'collects' British subjects through hypnotism, a strategy that has a multitude of productive metaphorical significations. The Beetle's mesmeric powers set her apart from other mummies of late-Gothic fiction about Egyptian collecting, and ally her perhaps with other villains of the period, such as Svengali of George du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894) and and the eponymous Dracula of Stoker's novel. All of the Beetle's powers stem from her ability to produce a nearly unbreakable hypnosis in any victim. She entrances Paul Lessingham in Egypt for months, she entrances Robert Holt and forces him to break into Lessingham's

home, and she entrances Marjorie Lindon. The only character whom she fails to entrance is Sydney Atherton. In a curious scene in which the Beetle visits Atherton at his laboratory, she tries to hypnotize him to join her against their shared rival, Paul Lessingham. However, Atherton is affronted by the Beetle's threats toward Marjorie as well, and breaks the trance, wondering "what might have occurred if I had not pulled up in time!" (144). As retribution, Atherton uses one of the machines in his laboratory to produce sparks of electricity, which unexpectedly frighten the Beetle.[5] She entreats Atherton "to use me as your slave!" (145), reversing the power binary of hypnosis. Atherton now controls the body of the Beetle, not the other way around.

This scene connects trances and collecting. As the Beetle transforms into her insect form to show her powers to Atherton, he recognizes that he is witnessing "some astounding, some epoch-making discovery" (150), and attempts to "photograp[h] it on [his] brain" (151). Recognizing that this method of image-capturing is perhaps ineffective, Atherton grabs a large tin and lunges at the Beetle, attempting to capture it. However, no sooner has he placed the tin over the insect that it transforms again, into "a woman, and, judging from the brief glimpse which [Atherton] had of her body, by no means old or ill-shaped either" (152). He is so stunned by her transformation into a sexually desirable woman

[5] This scene is interesting in its discussion of science, another major theme of the group of texts I analyze. Atherton, in producing electricity, calls himself "something of a magician," just like the Beetle, who uses hypnosis. He then wonders if they might be able to share their knowledge of "scientific marvels" (145-6).

that she is able to flee. This episode becomes, for Atherton, a "nightmare" of the escape of the "Nameless Thing," one which was

> not rendered more agreeable by a strengthening conviction that if [he] had only retained the normal attitude of a scientific observer [he] should, in all probability, have solved the mystery of my oriental friend, and that his example of the genus of *copridoe* might have been pinned – by a very large pin! – on a piece – a monstrous piece! – of cork. (154)

The Beetle would not be exemplary of the *genus,* as museum-quality objects are required to be. Instead, the Beetle's display as a collected object would be "monstrous[ly]" gigantic. The image of Atherton attempting, but failing, to capture and catalogue the Beetle draws together the Beetle's inversion of the power dynamics of collecting, the vacillation of sexual desire between different ethnicities and genders, and the monstrosity of the Beetle.

Yet not only does the Beetle successfully reject collecting, she also engages in collecting British subjects herself. I suggest that the Beetle, in entrancing, and then 'kidnapping,' British subjects, enacts a form of reverse imperial collecting. This idea of reverse imperial collecting draws on Arata's concept of reverse colonization, but re-writes the threat of colonization as the threat of appropriation. By entrancing Robert Holt, Marjorie Lindon, and Paul Lessingham, the Beetle creates subjects/objects reminiscent of the mummy, who hover between life and death, are 'wrapped' in different clothing, and are removed from their homeland to serve as props in a ritualistic foreign temple. Marsh

seemingly draws on contemporary debates about the legitimacy of imperial collection as well. Mimicking the male archaeologists' figurative sexualized penetration of the virginal tomb and the feminized mummy, the Beetle literally sexually assaults her 'mummified' victims. The sexual violation of British subjects becomes one of the multiple loci for horror in this novel, as it is positioned at the intersection of the discourses of racial miscegenation, the diminishing of British masculinity, and the inversion of imperio-museal power.

The characters that the Beetle 'collects,' both twenty years prior in Egypt and in the current setting of London, are 'types,' or representatives of different *genera*: Lessingham is a strong, persuasive, hyper-masculinized politician; Holt is a lower-class, but educated, out-of-work clerk; Marjorie is a New Woman; and Sydeny Atherton, whom the Beetle tries, but fails, to collect, is a scientist, working on cutting-edge discoveries in his lab. It is intriguing that Atherton is the only character who resists the Beetle's mesmeric power. The text suggests that he is able to do so because he possesses his own type of mesmeric power through science, and also through sexual potency, which can rival the Beetle's own magic and sexual power. For example, after the Beetle fails to hypnotize him in his lab, Atherton shouts that "you may suppose yourself to be something of a magician, but it happens, unfortunately for you, that I can do a bit in that line myself – perhaps I'm a trifle better at the game than you are" (145). It is only the three women of the novel–the Beetle, Marjorie, and Dora Grayling– who are aware of Atherton's mesmeric powers. Marjorie Lindon, who seems immune to Atherton's hypnosis herself, still recognizes that he "possesses the hypnotic power to an

unusual degree," and suggests that he has "hypnotised" Dora Grayling into loving him (194). Yet Atherton seems to have scruples, whereas the Beetle does not; he refuses to manipulate Marjorie, in response to requests from the Beetle and Marjorie's father, even though the implied prize would be Marjorie's hand in marriage. His 'hypnosis' of Dora also yields marriage rather than extra-marital sexuality, whereas the Beetle's hypnosis results in rape.

Sexual assault is not incidental to the Beetle's collection of British subjects; rather, the Beetle collects British subjects in order to subject them to rape. Lessingham's narrative of his experiences in Egypt, twenty years prior, show this intent to commit rape. His narrative of his experiences in Egypt are truly bizarre and bear summarizing here. Lessingham was drawn away from Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo to seek "the spice of adventure" (there are definite sexual connotations here) in the native quarter (238). He is drawn to a woman singing, but can only catch glimpses of her through lattice-work and blinds, an image that suggests the exotic, sexual nature of the veiled Oriental woman. He remarks that her "Eastern harmonies [...] were indescribably weird and thrilling," and he sat listening, "entranced" (239). This trance-state leads to a period of "oblivion" (240) after which he wakes up in the temple, the sexual slave of the Woman of Songs. Lessingham recounts how she "wooed [his] mouth with kisses," which prompts a reaction of "horror and of loathing" (241). "They filled me with an indescribable repulsion," Lessingham reports, but "the most dreadful part of it was that I was wholly incapable of offering even the faintest resistance to her caresses. I lay there like a log. She did with me as she would, and in dumb agony I endured" (243).

He later describes these experiences as "unspeakable," which, as Kelly Hurley points out, was a common Victorian euphemism for rape (136). Hurley has also noted that Lessingham's experiences are particularly traumatic because "the Woman of Songs divests Lessingham of 'volition' and rationality, qualities which are traditionally the special prerogative of the masculine subject" (144). In raping Lessingham, the Beetle inverts the masculine/feminine binary of sexual, and imperial, power normally ascribed to Egyptian-British relationships.

Lessingham regains his masculinity at the moment that he breaks free of the Woman of Song's hypnosis. This is a climactic moment in the novel, when Marsh finally reveals what took place in the temple of Isis during Lessingham's imprisonment. Lessingham was forced to lie passive, as a sex slave and participant in orgies, while the worshippers of Isis made human sacrifices. The sacrificial victims were white women, and were "stripped to the skin [...] and before they burned her they subjected her to every variety of outrage" (244). After a particular sacrifice of "a woman – a young and lovely Englishwoman" who had been "outraged and burned alive" (244), Lessingham suddenly breaks free of the trance. Avoiding the Beetle's use of "utmost force to trick [him] of [his] manhood" (245), Lessingham strangles the Woman of Songs, who then transforms into a wriggling beetle. This moment, in which Lessingham avenges the violation of white, British femininity, and punishes the Oriental transgressor, restores his masculinity. Yet, even twenty years later, the mention of the Beetle's name causes him to revert to a feminized state; Atherton notes that "this Leader of Men, whose predominate

characteristic in the House of Commons was immobility, was rapidly approximating to the condition of a hysterical woman" (292).

The Beetle continues her cycle of hypnosis and rape when she 'invades' London. Her first victim is Robert Holt, who suffers several incidences of assault. In Holt's first, very memorable, encounter with the Beetle, she attacks him in insect form. The Beetle climbs Holt's paralysed body toward his "loins" (52). Eventually, "It touched my lips," he recalls, and "it enveloped my face with its huge, slimy, evil-smelling body, and embraced me with its myriad legs" (52). Holt's paralysed body is penetrated again later by the Beetle under hypnosis: "Fingers were pressed into my cheeks, they were thrust into my mouth [...] horror of horrors! – the blubber lips were pressed to mine– the soul of something evil entered into me in the guise of a kiss" (57). Even the end of Holt's narrative ends with an image of rape. The Beetle springs at him, strangling him and pushing him to the floor, and Holt "felt [their] breath mingle" and then faints (88), enacting a conventional literary response of feminine characters under sexual attack. At the end of the novel, Champnell cites the coroner's inquest into Holt's death, where the cause of death was "exhaustion" (321). This verdict suggests that Holt has been drained of energy due to his sexual enslavement to the Beetle. The novel never makes explicit the homosexual possibilities, and/or bestiality, inherent in the gender-shifting Beetle's rape of Paul Lessingham and Robert Holt. While Lessingham is enslaved by a being who seems quite clearly identified as female, Holt is enslaved by a being who vacillates constantly between man and woman.

Furthermore, because the Beetle attacks both men *and* women, the text makes evident the queer nature of the Beetle's sexual desire.

The implied rape of Marjorie Lindon constitutes a more paranoiac focus of the text, especially since the novel is largely concerned with "outrages" directed towards white, female bodies. As soon as it becomes clear that "he, or she, or it has got her" (253), the men spring into action to defend her. Atherton is horrified that "the most retiring, modest girl on all God's earth" (285)–which Marjorie is decidedly not–has been made to suffer indignities at the hands of the Beetle. Because she is threatened, she instantly transforms from a transgressive woman into a model of Victorian femininity. Accordingly, the inferred sexual torture is as distressing to the men as is the Beetle forcing Marjorie to dress in men's clothes to disguise herself. When Champnell suggests that the Beetle "strip[ped] he[r] to the skin" the men interject with cries of "the wretch! the fiend!", and Atherton cries "to think of Marjorie dressed like that!" (286). While Atherton seems mostly preoccupied with Marjorie's clothing, and the way it erases her femininity, Lessingham is more interested in Marjorie's possible assault. He tells Champnell that he is "back again in that Egyptian den, upon that couch of rugs, with the Woman of Songs beside me, and Marjorie is being torn and tortured, and burnt before my eyes!" (294).

The coded language Lessingham and Champnell use to discuss Marjorie strongly hints at the threat of rape, and even more, of contamination through rape by a foreign man. Champnell admits that he wonders "in what condition would she be when we had succeeded in snatching her from her captor's grip?" (294).

Although he lies to Lessingham, and promises they will find her unharmed, Lessingham refuses to believe she will remain "untouched, unchanged, unstained," and will be "but the mere soiled husk of the Marjorie whom I knew and loved" (295). Interestingly, the language of 'soiling' has already linked Marjorie and the Beetle at other times in the text; Atherton refuses to speak of Marjorie with the Beetle, because he does not want her "soiled by the traffic of his lips" (143), and her clothing, which the Beetle 'strips' from her body, lies "soiled and creased and torn and tumbled" at the abandoned house (264). By using a common euphemism and figurative literary strategy, for representing sexual impurity, the text suggests that the 'outrages' suffered by Marjorie, and other British women, are sexual in nature. Furthermore, Mrs. Henderson, the proprietor of the hotel where the Beetle, Marjorie, and Holt briefly hide (and where the men find Holt, nearly dead), claims that she hears "yelling and shrieking" (308) coming from the rented room. "Shriek after shriek" came from the room, she says, as well as "blubbering" and "panting" (308), sounds that are reminiscent of those heard by Lessingham in the temple of Isis. Kelly Hurley notes that the text "censors itself from speaking of what the Beetle does" to Marjorie, just as her own memory prevents her from remembering her trauma (135); this lapse suggests that they "cannot bear to recall what the Beetle did to them – or perhaps the text cannot bear to repeat it" (Hurley 135). Again, such 'unspeakability' suggests rape, as does the "repeated trope" that describes Marjorie's experiences as "'that to which death would have been preferred,' a common Victorian euphemism for rape" (Hurley 136).

These moments of sexual assault, or the threat of rape, dramatize the penetrative logic and practices of imperial collecting. The process of collecting is, as I have shown, encoded with sexual language, metaphors of penetration and virginity, concerns about racial purity, and images of violation. In *The Beetle,* such Western archaeological practices are literalized and reversed; it is now the Oriental subject who creates paralysed, not-alive/not-dead 'objects' out of bodies and uses them for her own purposes. *The Beetle* has been most commonly read as a text about the reversal of imperial power. Kelly Hurley, for example, writes that "the novel manifests a terror of engulfment by the Orient" (141). However, the text's anxieties about reversal extend beyond imperialism into sexuality, creating a tension over desirability that I read as part of the culture of imperial collecting that informed the larger body of late-Victorian Gothic novels about Egypt. Hurley writes that "*The Beetle* inverts its culture's own fascination with 'the Oriental experience,' its mania for colonization of the desirable Orient, into a belief in British (white) desirability, and a fear of aggressive Oriental 'colonization'" (141). Desire, here, is interpolated between collecting and Orientalism, and is written onto the white body of the British subject/object, rather than the brown body of the Oriental subject/object (the mummy).

What I wish to suggest is that sexual desire, and desire for the object (inextricably intertwined in *The Beetle*), are written onto skin in this novel. In the mummy fiction I have described, desire and fear are often inscribed through the mummy's skin and wrappings: in some texts, the wrinkled, decaying flesh of the mummy is the site of terror, and in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and *The Beetle*, the

skin of the desirable woman, unveiled and unwrapped, is the locus for desire. In Marsh's novel, the Beetle is weirdly preoccupied with skin, and in particular, with the desirability of white skin. The Beetle's skin is "saffron yellow" with an "amazing mass of wrinkles" (53), a common description of mummies; in an inversion of the Western desire for the East, the Beetle expresses desire for white skin. Shortly after commanding Robert Holt to undress, she looks at his naked body as he "shudder[s]," and says "what a white skin you have, –how white! What would I not give for a skin as white as that–ah yes!" (55). The Beetle's diction is curious here; rather than using the common phrase of desiring skin, she claims she wants *a* skin; read one way, this is a portrayal of the Beetle's strange spoken English, but read another way, this phraseology connects desire with collecting. "A" skin is what hunters, or collectors, desire to possess. The Beetle uses similar expressions of desire to discuss other characters. With a look of "savage, frantic longing," the Beetle tells Holt that Paul Lessingham is "straight as the mast of a ship, – he is tall, – his skin is white; he is strong [...] Is there a better thing than to be his wife?" (64). The Beetle reads Lessingham's figure phallicly, drawing attention to the straightness and height of his figure, and also to his white skin, which the Beetle desires both for sex and to collect.

As I suggested earlier in this chapter, the act of unveiling, of revealing the flesh, is a standard Orientalist trope that finds expression in much mummy fiction through the act of unwrapping, although in mummy fiction this act is also

encoded with fear. [6] In *The Beetle,* Egyptians' desire for skin, shown as an expression of sexual desire, is metaphorized as rape, assault, and is similarly encoded with fear. For example, Lessingham describes the assaulted women in the temple of Isis as "stripped to the skin," which allows him to observe that they are "as white as you or I" (244). His words suggest that the sadistic sexual ritual, described as torture and immolation, is an expression of desire for skin. He also notes, in a particularly gruesome segment, that "the ashes of the victims [were] consumed by the participants" (244), suggesting a cannibalistic ingestion of that which they desired so intensely. Marjorie is similarly described several times as 'stripped to the skin,' a phrase which, for Lessingham, conjures images of rape and torture.

Images of skin in Gothic fiction about Egypt are intimately connected to images of wrapping. Unveiling or unwrapping play a key role in the dramatizing of desire in these texts, linking the sexual, feminized East, and the Gothic corpse of antiquity, fusing together sexual desire and imperial nightmare, possession and loss, and sexual excitement and cultural disenchantment. A particular image of carpet in the novel connects collecting and wrapping. When Marjorie waits alone in the abandoned house in Hammersmith, while Atherton chases Robert Holt, she waits in a room with a pile of carpets on the floor. As she watches them, they begin to shift and move, and the Beetle emerges from the pile. This moment, obviously, dramatizes the moment of unwrapping, and even harks back to

[6] See Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars.*

Cleopatra, rolled up in her carpet before Caesar (again linking to desire in this scene). What is interesting is that these carpets, conventional Oriental symbols, are both objects of collection, and are also marked by the ritual of sexual torture witnessed by Lessingham in Egypt. One of the carpets, as Marjorie describes it, is marked with "the same beetle, over, and over, and over," woven to seem so life-like that she thinks she feels one "squelch beneath [her] shoe" (229). This rug is so disagreeable that Marjorie feels instant fear and wishes she had asked Atherton to stay with her while she waited. The house is furnished with "Eastern curiosities" (260), which disappear so suddenly when the Beetle vacates the premises, that they seem to have "evaporated into smoke" (260).

The other carpet in the room, however, is even more frightening. It is a white silk rug, which depicts the rite of human sacrifice undertaken in the temple of Isis. Marjorie sees the "lurid hues" of flames, and an image of Isis presiding over the ritual, with a "gaily apparelled beetle" perched on her "coppery brow" (230). On the altar in the fire

> was a naked white woman being burned alive. There could be no doubt as to her being alive, for she was secured by chains in such a fashion that she was permitted a certain amount of freedom, of which she was availing herself to contort and twist her body into shapes which were horribly suggestive of the agony which she was enduring. (230)

This rug, produced, transported, and displayed by the Beetle, depicts an act of acquisition: a white woman in torment, displayed on an altar of fire. The rug itself

thus becomes an artifact that provides evidence of reverse collecting. The rug maintains its meaning during transit, and, once in England, continues to represent the Beetle's motivations. Notably, the Beetle takes this bundle of rags when she leaves the house with Marjorie, and transports them with her in an Eastern fashion, carrying them upon her head. At one point in the narrative, Miss Coleman, the Beetle's neighbour, tells Champnell that she saw the Beetle vacating the house with "a bundle on his head" (280), so heavy that he was bent over, which presumably contains the carpets missing from the house. Lessingham immediately cries out that Marjorie must have been concealed inside the bundle.[7] In an inversion of the mummy narrative, Marjorie, in a trance, has been wrapped in the bundle of oriental rags, and notably, rags that symbolize the 'collecting' and torture of British women. She is the mummified subject of the narrative of reverse collecting: paralysed, collected, and swathed.

The novel's representations of collected British citizens point to a larger anxiety about kidnapping in Egypt. This concern, present throughout the novel through the backstory of Paul Lessingham, becomes even more prominent during Champnell's portion of the narrative. Champnell recounts a mystery that he investigated three years previously, in which a brother and his two sisters went missing in Cairo. When the young man re-appeared months later, he was "perpetually raving about some indescribable den of horror which was own

[7] The narrative is slightly unclear here. Although Marjorie definitely wanders London in Holt's clothes, it is unclear if she leaves the house in the clothes (as Champnell suggests) or if she is concealed in the bundle, as Lessingham argues.

brother to Lessingham's temple and about some female monster, whom he regarded with such fear and horror that every allusion he made to her was followed by a convulsive paroxysm" (296). After this incident, Champnell says, an Egyptian man came to the British Embassy who claimed to have knowledge of these orgies. The man admitted that "it was their constant practice to offer young women as sacrifices – preferably white Christian women, with a special preference, if they could get them, to young Englishwomen" (297). Yet, before he could testify as to these practices, he was mysteriously murdered; his body was lacerated and splintered, and his "face [was] torn to rags" (298). These stories, all taken together, make Champnell wonder "if the trade in kidnapping was not being carried on to this very hour, and if women of my own flesh and blood were not still being offered up on that infernal altar" (298). Champnell's assertion that these women are of *his* own flesh and blood asserts a national kinship between them, and makes his defense of Marjorie Lindon, in danger of 'exporting' back to Egypt, a matter of protecting his own nation's objects/subjects.

Sexual Desire and Loss in *The Beetle*

Perhaps we can read the novel's representations of what I have termed 'reverse collecting' within a larger critique of Egyptological methods near the end of the nineteenth century. The novel distinctly asserts that no good can come from the British seeking pleasure trips to Egypt, and suggests that what travellers 'bring back' with them can be intensely dangerous. The novel also potentially, and problematically, interrogates collecting, exporting, and 'displaying' (or sacrificing) bodies; the Egyptian context of this novel makes it impossible not to interpret the

trade of flesh, both in collecting and sexual terms, as archaeology. The violation of the subject/object of Egypt, frequently configured in sexual terms in popular and literary discourse, becomes literalized and reversed in *The Beetle,* suggesting that imperial collecting is not only damaging to Egypt, but also to Britain.

In this way the novel expresses the intense sense of cultural loss that appears in late-Victorian fiction in conjunction with imperialism. In *The Beetle,* the alternately desirous/hideous body of the Beetle articulates British cultural decline, that is, what stands to be lost from travel to, sexual connection with, and collecting of Egyptian subjects/objects. Through the representations of Robert Holt, Paul Lessingham, and Marjorie Lindon in particular, the novel destabilizes late-century gender construction, ultimately destroying strong and progressive representations of both masculinity and femininity. By creating fantasies of exposure and unwrapping, *The Beetle* subverts traditional Orientalist binaries of Western power through looking and possessing, representing British characters who are powerless under the Eastern gaze, and who are wrapped and unwrapped according to the sexual desires of the Egyptian mummy-figure. *Iras, A Mystery,* unlike Marsh's novel, affirms the customary gendering of West/masculine/penetrative and East/feminine/penetrated, but also articulates the same sense of cultural disenchantment and loss. These are tales of impotence and failed collecting, not the victory of Western desire for the objects of a feminized East. Both *Iras* and *The Beetle* thus counter conventional scholarly readings of a hyper-sexualized, feminized Egypt in Victorian art and literature. Instead, they produce a representation of a threatening Egypt through the figure of the

mummy, one which threatens British imperialism through expressions of sexual desire. The Orientalist fantasy of exposure, of peeling back layers to reveal the mummy's body beneath, is subverted in *The Beetle*. Ultimately, horror and sexuality converge in the body of the mummy, re-writing the Western fantasy of 'unveiling' the female mummy.

Conclusion

Imperial Decline and Late-Victorian Gothic Fiction

In 1906, only a few years after the publication of *The Beetle,* Edith Nesbit's *The Story of an Amulet* was published, the final installment of her successful children's trilogy, including *Five Children and It* (1902) and *The Phoenix and the Carpet* (1904). This novel re-unites Cyril, Robert, Anthea, and Jane with the creature called the Psammead; in this novel it can no longer grant the children's wishes, but it helps them obtain half of an ancient Egyptian amulet that, when whole, will grant the children's "heart's desire" (142). The piece of the amulet allows the children to time-travel to ancient civilizations looking for its missing half. The novel showcases Nesbit's extensive research into ancient Egypt, from the amulet's authentic Egyptian name of "Ur Hekau Setcheh" to the novel's dedication to her friend (and curator of the British Museum's Egyptian exhibits) Wallis Budge. Representations of ancient Egyptian objects form the core of the text, from the house museum complete with sarcophagus of the children's upstairs neighbour, Jimmy, an ancient civilizations scholar, to the children's time-travelling to the ancient Nile. The antiquities of the ancient world, and of ancient Egypt in particular, allow the children to work through contemporary issues of Empire.

In some ways *The Story of an Amulet* appears to re-inforce dominant Imperial ideology. For example, when the children take the Psammead to a magic-latern show and lecture at Camden Town, the lecturer concludes by stating

that "I wish that every one of you may grow up to be noble and brave and unselfish, worthy citizens of this great Empire for whom our soldiers have freely given their lives," a wish that comes true due to the Psammead, which is "a distinct score for Camden Town" (270). Furthermore, the spirit of the ancient priest Rekh-marā, who desires "great and deep learning" (286), merges with the body of the scholar Jimmy, creating a "merging of east and west" that "unifie[s]" Nesbit's vision for Britain (Sands-O'Connor 229). Yet, as Mavis Reimer suggests, "if Nesbit appears at one level to be an enthusiastic agent of the empire-builders, at another level she seems to be meditating on the inevitable end of empire, a topic that also preoccupied many of her contemporaries" (48).

The scene from the novel that most intrigues me is in Chapter Eight, after the children return from visiting the Queens of Egypt and Babylon; this scene uses the museum to stage an inversion of imperial dominance. The Babylonian Queen uses her wish with the Psammead to travel to modern London to visit the children: she magically transforms Londoners' clothes into ancient robes, she (unsuccessfully) demands to have an audience with Edward VII, and when the children take her on an outing to the British Museum, she "kicked up the most frightful shine in there. Said those necklaces and earrings and things in the glass cases were all hers—would have them out of the cases. Tried to break the glass—she did break one bit!" (144). In frustration, the Queen wishes that the objects she claimed as her own would come out of the museum to her:

> The glass swing doors and all their framework were smashed suddenly and completely. […One man] was roughly pushed out of

> the way by an enormous stone bull that was floating steadily through the door. It came and stood beside the Queen in the middle of the courtyard. It was followed by more stone images, by great slabs of carved stone, bricks, helmets, tools, weapons, fetters, wine-jars, bowls, bottles, vases, jugs, saucers, seals, and the round long things, something like rolling pins with marks on them like the print of little bird-feet, necklaces, collars, rings, armlets, earrings—heaps and heaps and heaps of things, far more than anyone had time to count, or even to see distinctly [….] A journalist, who was just leaving the museum, spoke to Robert as he passed. 'Theosophy, I suppose?' he said. 'Is she Mrs Besant?'[1] (145-146).

The Queen's seizure of "her" antiquities from the Museum is a frightening moment of both reverse colonization and reverse collecting, with the Queen denying British rights to the objects of the ancient world and reappropriating collected imperial objects. The doors to the British Museum are literally "smashed" open, and the courtyard becomes an impromptu bric-a-brac collection, complete with innumerable antiquities that undo the museum's categorization. The Queen operates as a vengeful mummy-figure in this scene, through Robert's explicit comparison of her to the mummified Queens inside the Museum, and because of her liminal dead-alive status (she *should* be dead, but she isn't).

[1] Nesbit's tongue-in-cheek reference to Annie Besant, a socialist and reformer like Nesbit herself, and a prominent Theosophist in London. Theosophy maintained extensive ties to ancient Egypt, as is suggested by one of Besant's books, *Isis Unveiled* (1877).

Furthermore, her indignant seizure of Museum goods echoes Pharos's violent abduction of his sarcophagus in *Pharos, the Egyptian,* suggesting links to other vengeful mummies of fin-de-siècle fiction. The journalist even titles his article about this occult event "Impertinent Miracle" (147), suggesting that the Queen lacks the proper respect for the British Empire and the British Museum.

This inversion of imperial power is not as permanent nor as damaging as in Gothic literature, however. The Queen's disruption in London is so frightening that one bystander cries that he wishes it were all a dream, and instantly, the world reverts to normalcy as if she had never come. The children nervously inquire whether or not she will ever reappear, and the answer is unequivocably "no," suggesting that, unlike Tera of Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars,* this Egyptian Queen's power of invasion is limited. The objects are returned to the Museum by the Queen's own suggestion after she sees how upset the children are. Thus on one hand it might seem that *The Story of an Amulet* re-affirms British imperial longevity and power, re-claiming the museum's antiquities and banishing the Queen back to ancient Babylon. However, the very fact that such a subversive scene appears in Edwardian children's fantasy literature hints at how Gothic representations of imperial decay and loss through ancient Egypt became more pervasive into the twentieth century. As Peter Hunt and Karen Sands suggest, scholarship has treated it as "apparently obvious" that late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century children's fiction was a "witting or unwitting agen[t] of the empire-builders" (40). However, "children's books may subvert elements of the codes within colonization, but not subvert the thing itself," or, in other words,

although children's literature might offer moments of imperial subversion, it ultimately is invested in valorizing the empire (42). Thus Nesbit borrows from the Gothic tradition to portray subversion,[2] but ultimately endorses the normalcy of imperial domesticity, returning London, the children's home, and the museum to "normal." Yet we cannot read this novel as a simple validation of New Imperialism, as it "envisions what might be called an antimuseum, a collection divested and dispersed–a collection in which the collectible, momentarily, fights back" (Black 160).

Nesbit's novel provides insight into how the Gothic mode of representing Egyptian antiquities, while specific to a particular historical moment, appeared in mutated forms in the twentieth century. The legacy of the ambulatory mummy and of enchanted Egyptian antiquities as symbols of threat haunts the Western imagination. Howard Carter, in 1922, proclaimed that he could see "wonderful things" inside the tomb of Tutankhamen (Wheatcroft 151), words that haunted Britain when, after Lord Carnarvon's death from the mummy's curse, multitudes of British citizens sent their own "wonderful things" from Egypt to the British Museum for safekeeping. And yet the mummy also stands as an ever-present symbol of loss, as is suggested by the early-nineteenth-century example of Lady Blessington's "Sketches of Society," when a young female visitor to the mummy exhibit remarks "to how many reflections do these shrivelled remains of poor frail mortality give rise" (153).

[2] Mavis Reimer suggests that although the comic tone of Nesbit's novels make them "difficult to describe as Gothic," the key themes of Imperial Gothic, as defined by Patrick Brantlinger, appear in the Psammead triology (53).

One of the key critical aims of this project is to assert the continued importance of analysing representations of imperial goods in fiction. These objects cannot speak for themselves; just as objects do in real museums, literary representations of objects "have shifting and ambiguous relationships to meaning. Being themselves mute, their significance is open to interpretation" (Hooper-Greenhill *Museums* 3). The extremely mutable meanings attached to Egyptian objects in late-Victorian Gothic fiction provide numerous points of entry for us to begin to uncover how the Victorians imagined their imperial relationships, and how their anxieties about imperial decline were articulated in fiction. Egyptian objects are harbingers of imperial death, *memento mori* of a once-great civilization and a current British protectorate, onto which late-Victorian British fiction imagined its own imperial decline.

By interrogating the meanings attached to literary representations of objects, we can uncover a more nuanced understanding of late-Victorian culture, a culture that was greatly impacted by its relationship to expanding consumer culture. The artifact is an object imbued with unique historical and cultural significance beyond practical use, and metynomically extends imperial power to the collector. Artifacts in Victorian fiction attest to Britain's mastery over the globe's people and their objects, except for in Gothic fiction, which appropriates Egyptian antiquities to represent inverted imperial relationships and question Britain's imperial longevity and strength. The objects of ancient Egypt held particular fascination for the Victorians as reminders of imperial strength and mortality. Thus postcolonial readings of the Victorians' relationships with their

objects could be impacted by an extended analysis of artifacts, objects imbued with myriad, complex meaning. In the Gothic mode, these are not objects that simply authenticate British imperial power, but rather open up complex questions of colonial guilt, of Britain's right to collect the objects of the world, of Britain's new, aggressive foreign policy. The "antimuseum" of Nesbit's novel, the fragmented imperial control over antiquities in the literary domestic collection, and the mummies who refuse to lie passively in their sarcophagi in novels by Stoker, Boothby, Douglas, and Marsh, suggest how the museum, imperialism, and Gothic were ideologically inter-related at the end of the nineteenth century.

These works of fiction provide a medium for nineteenth-century writers to channel the pervasive cultural anxiety about the state, and the fate, of the Empire during the New Imperialism. In these texts, the museum and the imperialism it sustained are gothicized, and the museum emerges as a site where foreign objects run amok, British collectors are threatened, and where the boundaries of Empire were symbolically ruptured and, in some cases, destroyed. Ultimately it is my hope that this dissertation provides a new point of entry for scholars to read how the Victorians mediated their understanding of the Empire through colonial goods that were imbued with particularly unsettling and complex signification. There is a tension that exists in literary representations of objects as imperial trophies that mark "the disparity of power between the imperial center and areas of conquest or contestation" and objects that "enter the museum when their world has been destroyed, and so they are relics and witnesses of a loss" (Siegel 5). For the Victorians, these objects spoke powerfully to them not only of the loss of the

ancient Empire of Egypt, but of the future loss of their own decaying Empire. Such readings of objects in nineteenth-century fiction provide new insight into the imaginative articulation of imperial relations, the pervasive cultural influence of artifacts, and the ability of the Gothic mode to unleash powerful anxieties about the fate of the British Empire.

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