LEABHARLANN CHOLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH | TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY DUBLIN
Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

Terms and Conditions of Use of Digitised Theses from Trinity College Library Dublin

Copyright statement

All material supplied by Trinity College Library is protected by copyright (under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 as amended) and other relevant Intellectual Property Rights. By accessing and using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you acknowledge that all Intellectual Property Rights in any Works supplied are the sole and exclusive property of the copyright and/or other IPR holder. Specific copyright holders may not be explicitly identified. Use of materials from other sources within a thesis should not be construed as a claim over them.

A non-exclusive, non-transferable licence is hereby granted to those using or reproducing, in whole or in part, the material for valid purposes, providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. Where specific permission to use material is required, this is identified and such permission must be sought from the copyright holder or agency cited.

Liability statement

By using a Digitised Thesis, I accept that Trinity College Dublin bears no legal responsibility for the accuracy, legality or comprehensiveness of materials contained within the thesis, and that Trinity College Dublin accepts no liability for indirect, consequential, or incidental, damages or losses arising from use of the thesis for whatever reason. Information located in a thesis may be subject to specific use constraints, details of which may not be explicitly described. It is the responsibility of potential and actual users to be aware of such constraints and to abide by them. By making use of material from a digitised thesis, you accept these copyright and disclaimer provisions. Where it is brought to the attention of Trinity College Library that there may be a breach of copyright or other restraint, it is the policy to withdraw or take down access to a thesis while the issue is being resolved.

Access Agreement

By using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you are bound by the following Terms & Conditions. Please read them carefully.

I have read and I understand the following statement: All material supplied via a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of a thesis is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or for educational purposes in electronic or print form providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

'To Arms!': Colonial Authors and the Fiction of Invasion 1890-1914

A thesis submitted to the School of English at the
University of Dublin, Trinity College,
in fulfilment
of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2014

Ailise Bulfin

DECLARATION

I, Ailise Bulfin, declare that this thesis has not previously been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and that it is entirely my own work. I agree that the Library may lend or copy this thesis upon request, subject to Irish Copyright Legislation and Trinity College Library conditions of use and acknowledgement.

Ailise Bulfin

TRINITY COLLEGE
0 7 JUN 2014
LIBRARY DUBLIN
Thesis 10380

SUMMARY

In 1909 P. G. Wodehouse penned a comic novella *The Swoop!* which saw Britain saved from the simultaneous invasion of nine foreign armies by a boy scout named Clarence Chugwater. Wodehouse's ludicrous plot, which featured invading armies not just from Britain's imperial rivals like Germany and Russia, but also from unlikely nations like Switzerland, Monaco, Morocco and Somaliland, was a satirical take on an alarmist body of popular fiction that burgeoned in the period between 1890 and the beginning of World War I as international relations deteriorated globally. Within this body of work, popular authors proffered endless versions of expected war between the European imperial powers which frequently culminated in the invasion of Britain, the small island centre of the world's then-largest empire. It is the contention of this thesis, however, that anxiety concerning the likelihood of Britain being invaded was a broad societal force deriving from a range of factors exceeding just that of inter-European rivalry and that it had a far wider impact on popular fiction than just its expression in the narrow subgenre of texts depicting future European wars. Instead, it is argued that what may be termed 'invasion anxiety' – a paranoid inversion of the triumphalist discourse of jingoism – had an overarching, transgeneric impact on the development of popular fiction in the fin-de-siècle period, and one which has been to some extent overlooked.

Broadly speaking, then, this thesis investigates the relationship between imperialism and popular culture in the fin-de-siècle period, specifically focusing on the intersection between invasion anxiety and popular literature by colonial authors. Based on the works of key historians, it is suggested that fin-de-siècle British society existed in a state of extreme paranoia concerning the threat of foreign invasion although Britain was ostensibly at the height of its imperial power. It is argued that a major reason for this paranoia was a seldom-voiced, but mounting concern that ceaseless imperial expansion was likely to provoke some kind of retributive invasion of Britain, not just by rival European imperial powers but also by rebellious colonial subjects. One of the key outlets for the expression of the fear of invasion was popular culture and this thesis identifies immigrant colonial authors living and writing in the imperial metropolis as a group ideally positioned to articulate it.

Exemplary of this group are the then-popular, but now-neglected Caribbean Anglo-Irishman M. P. Shiel and the Anglo-Australian Guy Boothby, both hybrid products of the colonial margins who shared a heightened sense of the immediacy of colonial issues. Their popular novels include admonitory texts of retributive colonial invasion resulting in mass metropolitan death, and both predicate this fiction upon contemporary colonial events which had particular resonance for them.

Invasion concerns are also discernible in the works of several other comparable best-selling contemporary authors – most of whom had strong colonial connections – including Bram Stoker, Arthur Conan Doyle, Sax Rohmer, H. Rider Haggard and Richard Marsh. Most of these authors wrote across the spectrum of popular genres emerging in the fin de siècle, including crime, horror and science fiction, and their texts are read along with Shiel's and Boothby's to reveal invasion anxiety and colonial concerns as influential in the development of these genres. Chapter one is broadly concerned with early crime and detective fiction with its dominant figure of the foreign criminal; chapter two takes in the fin-de-siècle gothic with its defining trope of the supernatural intruder; and chapter three considers the yellow peril strand of invasion fiction associated with but not exclusive to Shiel. It is upon these pervasive but less explicit representations of invasion and their relationship to fears arising out of the negative consequences of imperialism that this study focuses.

Ultimately it is arguable that invasion fiction was not merely reflective of the prevailing societal fear of invasion but was productive – to use Louis Montrose's term – upon the society in which it was consumed. And though this is difficult to substantiate, in conclusion this thesis examines a number of instances in which the productivity of fictional narratives of colonial revenge and invasion may be glimpsed. And it tentatively suggests that the invasion theme prevalent across a broad range of fin-de-siècle popular literary genres not only mirrored existing invasion anxiety, but also amplified and even provoked it by encouraging already-mounting jingoistic, militaristic and xenophobic social tendencies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is no way that I would ever have managed to undertake, let alone conclude, this thesis without the considerable and generous support and patience of a number of people whom I would very much like to thank here.

On the academic side, first and foremost, of course, has been my supervisor Darryl Jones. He has always been encouraging, enthusiastic and available, ready to help me through all the ups and downs this work encountered along the way. His work was the original source of inspiration for my choice of topic and decision to undertake a doctoral project and he has helped me see it through to conclusion. I feel it is also most important to thank Margaret and Morgan Jones too for their support and encouragement, particularly in the form of dinners and Christmas parties.

There are many other groups and individuals at Trinity College to whom I owe thanks and these include all those in the School of English who have helped along the way, particularly Diane Sadler and Orla McCarthy; the staff in the Early Printed Books room of the Trinity College Library who assisted me greatly in accessing obscure primary source material; the Trinity Trust Travel Grant scheme for facilitating my attendance at a number of conferences which helped me to disseminate my research and to move it forwards; and Ruth Doherty and others of the science fiction reading group for the always interesting discussions and crucial advice.

I would also like to thank the small but dedicated informal network of M. P. Shiel scholars for all their advice and generosity in sharing their research or source material, all of which have greatly benefited this project. These include Harold Billings and most particularly John D. Squires, whose passing has left the group most sadly depleted.

I am grateful to all the individuals and organisations who provided me with copies of the images used in this thesis and granted me permission to reproduce them. They are acknowledged individually beneath the images in each chapter.

I must also acknowledge that this project was partially funded and greatly assisted by a Postgraduate Scholarship from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences for which I am extremely grateful.

Finally I would like to thank the family and friends who have kept me going throughout: my wonderful husband Liam, my parents Antoinette and Mike, Liam's parents Lucy and William, and our brothers Neil, Gavin, Allen, Kevin and Alan and their other halves, our aunts Sandra, Jeanne and Roisin, and also Sylvia, our dedicated child-minder. This just would not have been possible without you all – your advice, support, proofreading, and most of all your child-minding contribution – and it is dedicated to you, and of course to those three delightful small people you have all helped me to look after, Siofra, Morgan and Emmett.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ix

INTRODUCTION 1

Colonial authors and the double voice of the call to arms 10

Invasion fiction and the fin-de-siècle context 16

Invasion fiction and the emergence of genre 29

'New dangers': Imperialism at the fin de siècle 36

Theorising invasion fiction 50

CHAPTER 1: GUY BOOTHBY'S DR NIKOLA: FOREIGNER, CRIMINAL, COLONIAL INVADER 62

Boothby's hyphenated heritage 66

'White' Australia's colonial others 78

'Who is Dr Nikola?': Boothby's invasive agent of colonial revenge 88

Dr Nikola and the vengeful Chinese 102

Mesmerism and the 'Coming Man' 115

Dr Nikola's alterity: constructing a racialised menace 125

The universal colonial other 125

The orientalising of fin-de-siècle villains 134

Dr Nikola's criminality: the popular tradition of foreign villains 142

Doyle and Irish criminality 142

Collins and the long tradition of Italian criminality 149

CHAPTER 2: SUPERNATURAL EGYPTIAN INVASION: BRITISH IMPERIAL PARANOIA AND THE CURSE OF THE SUEZ CANAL 164

The spinal cord of empire and the literary arousal of ancient Egypt 168

The Suez Canal: the imperial 'spinal cord' 168

Reading the restless mummy: the fiction of gothic Egypt 177

The mummy's curse: a supernatural expression of invasion 188

Egypt's most successful invader: Boothby's Pharos the Egyptian 188

The threatening connotations of Egyptian ethnicity 201

The political framework of the curse 213
The mummy romance 223
Ayesha the Egypto-Arabian: Haggard's encounter with Egypt 227
The Egyptian Question meets the Irish: Stoker's The Jewel of Seven Stars 234

CHAPTER 3: THE 'YELLOW PERIL': EAST-WEST COLONIAL RELATIONS AND M. P. SHIEL'S ORIENTAL INVASIONS 252
A 'half-green West Indian': Shiel's Caribbean origins 256
Shiel's transition to London 263
Anglo-Chinese relations and the 'yellow peril': Shiel's oriental invasions 271
Prior sources for the yellow peril 285
The publishing process and the yellow peril 293
Shiel's subsequent development of the yellow peril 300
The Caribbean component of an orientalist myth: The Chinese in the West Indies 314

AFTERWORD: 'TO ARMS!' IN EARNEST 334

BIBLIOGRAPHY 348

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION
Fig. 1. 'History Repeats Itself. (*Scene in a London Restaurant.*)' 2

CHAPTER 1
Fig. 1. Front cover detail of *Doctor Nikola.* 62
Fig. 2. 'Mr Guy Boothby on his favourite pony.' 73
Fig. 3. 'Barton (loq.): "You Dirty Boy!"' 82
Fig. 4. 'The Mongolian Octopus – his grip on Australia.' 85
Fig. 5. 'The black cat looked through the smoke at the three men.' 93
Fig. 6. Dr Nikola in his laboratory in Port Said. 95
Fig. 7. 'After the first cut the wretched culprit no longer attempted to comport himself like a man.' 100
Fig. 8. 'We set off, I running beside him.' 105
Fig. 9. 'The Assassin.' 106
Fig. 10. 'To my amazement he was a Chinaman.' 110
Fig. 11. 'Fighting like wild cats.' 112
Fig. 12. 'A gigantic negro made his appearance.' 128
Fig. 13. 'There is no help for it ... We must fight our way out.' 133
Fig. 14. 'Fears about the initial introduction of indentured labour into Queensland.' ... 158

CHAPTER 2
Fig. 1. '"Hold on!": "An allegory on the banks of the Nile." – Mrs. Malaprop.' 172
Fig. 2. 'Russia and France are inciting Turkey to bring up the Egyptian Question' 174
Fig. 3. 'Nearer yet sounded the clatter from behind.' 184
Fig. 4. 'I was stricken with a fit of the blues.' 189
Fig. 5. 'I instinctively recoiled from him in horror.' 192
Fig. 6. '"I see death," said the voice. "Death on every hand."' 194
Fig. 7. 'For when it said, "Keep still!" I kept still.' 198
Fig. 8. 'The polite crowd drew away from him.' 200
Fig. 9. 'Government Hospitality.' 206
Fig. 10. 'A "Capital" Sentence!' 206
Fig. 11. '"Drink," he said.' 207
Fig. 12. 'I lost all care for my safety.' 208
Fig. 13. 'The Egyptian Question.' 245
Fig. 14. 'The Irish Question.' 245

CHAPTER 3
Fig. 1. 'Mr. M. P. Shiel.' 268
Fig. 2. 'Hold On, John!' 276
Fig. 3. 'The Yellow Terror In All His Glory.' 283
Fig. 4. 'The Work of Civilisation.' 288
Fig. 5. Cover of *The Yellow Danger.* 295
Fig. 6. Illustration of Dr Yen How, 'He was duly at the Pattison Gate.' 310

Fig. 7. Illustration of Fu-Manchu, 'One last glimpse I had of the fixed, green eyes.'... 310
Fig. 8. 'Enraged Coolie.' 321
Fig. 9. 'One lifted a club to smite a head.' 325
Fig. 10. 'The scream of the victim and the scream of his slayer.' 326

AFTERWORD
Fig. 1. Poster for *The Yellow Menace* (1916). 341

INTRODUCTION

> If *we* are to *maintain* our position as a *first-rate* Power, we must, with our Indian Empire and large Colonies, be *Prepared* for *attacks* and *wars*, *somewhere* or *other* CONTINUALLY!
>
> Queen Victoria to Prime Minster Disraeli (28 July 1879)[1]

> It is a fact that people rise up, and it is through this that a subjectivity ... introduces itself into history and gives it its life. A delinquent puts his life on the line against abusive punishment; a madman cannot stand anymore being closed in and pushed down; or a people rejects a regime that oppresses it. This does not make the first one innocent, does not cure the second, and does not guarantee to the third the results that were promised ... It is enough that they exist and that they have against them all that strives to silence them, to make it meaningful to listen to them and to search for what they want to say.'
>
> Michel Foucault (1979)[2]

The call to arms referred to in the title of this thesis comes from the eponymous title of fin-de-siècle popular novelist M. P. Shiel's 1913 serial novel, *To Arms!* – a lurid 'yellow peril' thriller in which the author admonished Britain to heed the awakening of the rhetorical 'Chinese dragon' and ready itself to face imminent oriental invasion.[3] In Shiel's nightmare future the dormant Chinese empire, provoked beyond endurance by the long-running interference of Britain and the other European imperial powers in its affairs, finally galvanises itself to rise up and mount a counter-invasion against the encroachers. As the whole world becomes inebriated with the 'vertiginous vintage' that is war, the entire population of China is mobilised into a war-host more resembling 'a locust-swarm than an army' which pours inexorably westwards, reducing Britain and Europe to a state of 'howling anarchy' before its ultimate defeat.[4] If this scenario sounds highly

---

[1] Cited in L. C. B. Seaman, *Victorian England: Aspects of English and Imperial History, 1837-1901* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 206.

[2] Michel Foucault, 'Is It Useless to Revolt?', *Le Monde*, 11-12 May 1979, p. 1; reprinted in Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 263-67; 266.

[3] The novel has a complicated publishing history in that it was originally serialised as *To Arms!* in the Harmsworth group's *The Red Magazine*, 15:90-95 (Jan-Mar 1913), then published in novel form as *The Dragon* (London: Grant Richards, 1913), and finally, in its best-known incarnation, slightly revised and reissued as *The Yellow Peril* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1929).

[4] M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Peril* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1929), pp. 169, 227, 234.

improbable – as it most certainly was – this does not, however, mean that Shiel's catastrophic vision was entirely out of kilter with the sentiments of its historical moment. Some years previously in 1895, for example, a cartoon published in a popular family-oriented middlebrow periodical proffered what is but a slightly more restrained version of this same scenario (see fig. 1). Entitled 'History Repeats Itself', the cartoon wryly intimates that like the Roman Empire, Britain's hedonistic society is about to meet its impending demise. Its fall is credited to the new oriental barbarian invaders China and Japan, shown here seated cosily in a London restaurant and drolly comparing the scene to Rome under Nero.



Fig. 1. 'History Repeats Itself. (*Scene in a London Restaurant.*)
"Nero fiddled while Rome was burning."'
The Windsor Magazine, 1 (May 1895), p. 480.

Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

Given the actual state of international relations at the time, the cartoon's sentiment – like Shiel's vision – seems at first glance incongruous and invites a little further interpretation. On the page on which it appears, the cartoon is more fully glossed by an additional large caption above it: 'The War between China and Japan'. This is a reference to the recently-concluded and fiercely-fought Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5, in which Japan had convincingly defeated China. Thus contrary to the cartoon's implied conspiratorial cordiality, relations between China and Japan were in fact acrimonious; and not only was this the case, but Japan had also been prevented from realising the full extent of its territorial gains from China by the overbearing intervention of the major European imperial powers Russia, France and Germany.[5] In the face of this state of affairs, the suggestion that China and Japan are comfortably poised to effect the fall of Britain's empire is strongly indicative of a strain of paranoid thinking concerning imperial decline and potential invasion that seems quite detached from the reality of European political, economic and military pre-eminence. The presence of this scenario in a lightweight literary periodical like *The Windsor Magazine*, which did not specialise in political commentary, attests to the pervasiveness of this kind of paranoia and shows that Shiel's work was clearly not alone in giving popular expression to it. Indeed, as contemporary popular authors engaged with a range of topical foreign policy concerns for national security, similar calls to arms to that of Shiel's were reiterated across a burgeoning body of popular fiction that posited the invasion of Britain by a multiplicity of sinister foreign forces.

As is well documented, the period from 1890 to 1914, in which the cartoon appeared and Shiel's novel was published, was the era of high imperialism for Europe with the trade networks and territorial acquisitions of its 'great powers' growing at an accelerated pace. This growth was underpinned by equally well-known developments in technology – such as those in transport like the railway, the steam ship and the Suez Canal; in communications with advances in print technology and telegraphy; and in weaponry in the form of the machine gun, torpedo and rapid-fire artillery. For these same reasons, though, this was also a volatile era of dangerous rivalry between the European imperial

[5] Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1932-1914* (London: Penguin, 2012), pp. 324-33.

nations and of increasing counter-colonial resistance, both of which produced numerous potentially explosive diplomatic incidents and colonial conflicts across the globe. And it was from the spectrum of concerns raised by this latter aspect of imperialism that the admonitory sentiments such as those present in Shiel's *To Arms!* derived.

The cultural significance of these imperially-motivated fears for Britain is signalled in Edward Said's convincing characterisation in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) of contemporary British society as fundamentally informed by its engagement in imperialism: 'imperialism "was not something which was secondary and external – it was absolutely constitutive of the whole nature of the English political and social order ... *the salient fact*"'.[6] Though ostensibly at its imperial zenith British society was pervaded by concerns about impending imperial decline and a major reason for this can be ascribed to the little-voiced, but mounting, belief that there was a price to be paid for ceaseless imperial expansion. While the aspect of Michel Foucault's work typically emphasised is that which explicates the relentless operation of 'power-knowledge' upon individual subjectivities, the passage cited above as epigraph also emphasises what he seems to characterise as an innate counter-impulse for the oppressed to rebel. And as Queen Victoria's counsel to Prime Minister Disraeli amply discloses, in conjunction with the unprecedented territorial expansion of the British empire in the late nineteenth century there had developed deep corollary concerns for its security. Not least of these were the fears that the island of Great Britain was now imminently facing the threat of invasion by either its European rivals or its own rebellious colonial subjects, fears which had been gaining currency in the aftermath of such landmark mid-century events as the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1, and which had become societally prevalent by the 1890s. A key outlet for the expression of these fears was the 'seamy underbelly', to use Jasmine Day's expressive term, of popular culture.[7] And, as this study sets out to explore, the paranoid inverted logic of Shiel's novel and the *Windsor* cartoon is replicated across a body of fiction in which the reality of European imperial dominance

[6] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 77. The internal citation is from a Raymond Williams interview, but it is succinctly expressive of Said's overall position on the subject.
[7] Jasmine Day, *The Mummy's Curse: Mummymania in the English-speaking world* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 3.

was in some manner reversed to turn colonial subjects into terrifying, invasive aggressors.

To a certain extent the body of work which can be characterised as the fiction of invasion at the turn of the century, and to which Shiel's *To Arms!* belongs, had its roots in the aforementioned Franco-Prussian War, a brief but significant European conflict. The rapidity and totality of the unexpected French defeat by Germany had a powerful psychological impact not just on the countries involved, but on all the European imperial powers, especially Britain. While the threat to Britain of hostility with France receded, the menace of German militarism loomed as the obvious advantages of its modern techniques and technology of warfare were displayed.[8] As George Bernard Shaw retrospectively put it: 'Suddenly Germany beat France right down into the dust, by the exercise of an organised efficiency in war of which nobody up to then had any conception. There was not a State in Europe that did not say to itself: "Good Heavens! what would happen if she attacked *us*?"'.[9] With this fear and what he considered the comparably limited state of the British armed forces in mind, within months of the war's end then Lieutenant-Colonel George Tomkyns Chesney had penned a short fictional work, *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), to warn Britain of its vulnerability. In it he posited the German invasion and conquest of Britain based on its superior military technology. As is well known, Chesney's text caused an immediate uproar, helping to start a public campaign for military 'preparedness', and in the literary sphere, achieving 'the almost unique feat of starting off a literary tradition single-handed'.[10]

This tradition is what I. F. Clarke, its pioneering literary critic, terms future war fiction: a proto-science-fictional body of work which explored the possible consequences of developments in military technology and international diplomacy. Invasion was a key

[8] T. G. Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind: The Making of British Foreign Policy, 1865-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 71-5. While Otte observes that some viewed a cordial British relationship with the emerging Prussian great power as a beneficial possibility, others were deeply wary of Prussia's growing power and ambition.

[9] George Bernard Shaw, *Common Sense About the War* (1914), reprinted in *The New York Times Current History of the European War*, 1:1: *What Men of Letters Say* (Dec 1914), p. 13; online at *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/stream/commonsenseabou00shawgoog, 24 Sep 2013.

[10] Brian Stableford, *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890-1950* (London: 4th Estate, 1985), p. 30. Otte, for example, mentions the suspicions of one diplomat who warned in 1871 that unless Bismarck continued to restrain Prussia, Britain could soon face 'the "Battle of Dorking", which in my private belief would take place just as described and be as ruinous as that of Hastings!', *The Foreign Office Mind*, p. 73.

theme in this tradition, and by the 1890s, due to developments in both geo-politics and the literary marketplace which will be examined in due course, invasion fiction had gained major momentum. It burgeoned in the run up to 1914 as popular authors proffered endless versions of invasion and global conflict to a readership increasingly convinced that major war was imminent. Such narratives became so prevalent that they were famously parodied by P. G. Wodehouse in *The Swoop!* (1909), in which Britain is simultaneously invaded by nine foreign armies. Notable examples of invasion fiction of the future-war type that Clarke documents include William Le Queux's *The Great War in England in 1897* (1894) and hugely popular *The Invasion of 1910* (1906); Louis Tracy's *The Final War* (1896) and *The Invaders* (1901); and H. G. Wells's seminal *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *The War in the Air* (1908).[11] Typically these novels, with the exception of the more nuanced Wells's texts, turned upon the initially disastrous but ultimately heroically-vanquished military invasion of Britain by whichever European power or combination of European powers seemed most hostile to Britain at the time of writing. However, invasion fiction was not limited to texts explicitly depicting science-fictional future wars based on European rivalry. Rather, invasion concerns were represented less directly across a much broader range of fin-de-siècle popular literary modes including the yellow peril strand of invasion fiction associated with but not exclusive to Shiel, the fin-de-siècle gothic with its defining trope of the supernatural intruder, and early crime and detective fiction with its comparably dominant figure of the foreign criminal. It is upon these latter, more oblique, representations and their relationship to fears arising out of the negative consequences of imperialism that this study focuses.

Prominent in the ranks of those portraying terrifying invasion scenarios were colonial authors like Shiel, who, as a Caribbean-born, Anglo-Irish emigrant to London, was a quintessential product of nineteenth century imperialism. *To Arms!*, or *The Dragon* as the novel version was entitled, was not the first future history he wrote positing an oriental invasion of Europe, rather the last of a series of three. While it was a commercial failure,

[11] For more on future war fiction, including an extensive bibliography of relevant texts, see I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Also useful are his edited collections of contemporary texts, *British Future Fiction, 1700–1914*, 8 vol.s, (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001) and *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914: Fictions of Future Warfare and of Battles Still-to-Come* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996).

the first of the three, *The Yellow Danger* (1898), was a very popular work; it was probably the first major yellow peril novel published in Britain, and its success, given the execrable nature of its content, makes it worthy of critical attention.[12] Highly comparable to Shiel is the Anglo-Australian colonial author Guy Boothby, another prolific emigrant author who wrote across a wide spectrum of the popular genres emergent in the fin de siècle. Though Boothby is now little-known, in the 1890s he was a staple of the best-seller lists and the creator of an international master criminal character – Dr Nikola – who for a brief period was a household name to rank with Sherlock Holmes.[13] These two authors, Shiel and Boothby, have analogous colonial trajectories: Shiel was born in 1865 to a father of Irish descent and mother of probable slave origins in the British Protectorate of Montserrat and Boothby was born in 1867 in the British Colony of South Australia to an Anglo-Australian father and British mother. And both emigrated to the imperial capital London in their early manhood where they made a living out of writing popular fiction.

Owing to their comparable backgrounds, Shiel and Boothby seem to share a heightened sense of the immediacy of colonial issues and colonial themes pervade their wide and varied output. Both show a recurrent concern with hostile alien forces in a range of guises such as savage colonial subjects, deadly oriental plagues, and natural and supernatural foreign villains. Both produced inflammatory, admonitory novels of mass metropolitan death turning on what can be interpreted as some form of retributive colonial invasion. And both predicate their catastrophic scenarios upon contemporary events taking place in the colonies which had particular resonance for them. Likewise the two authors began producing their tales of colonial menace after they had emigrated to

[12] The body of critical work on the inimitable stylings of Shiel is small, and most concentrates on his best-known, last man novel, *The Purple Cloud* (1901), ignoring his invasion fiction. Much of the pioneering research on Shiel was compiled by A. Reynolds Morse, Shiel's meticulous bibliographer, in the 1980s; Harold Billings has published two volumes of the only existing Shiel biography; leading Shiel scholar John I. Squires has produced several key biographical and critical articles, many of which are available online; more recently a ground-breaking article by Kirsten MacLeod in *English Literature in Transition* has solved the mystery of the Shiel hiatus with a most disturbing revelation, and John Sutherland has edited an authoritative edition of *The Purple Cloud* for Penguin.

[13] Critical research on Boothby was for a long period virtually non-existent, amounting to one short biography by Paul Depasquale (which reveals that no known Boothby papers exist); an excellent chapter on the Dr Nikola novels in a work on Australian colonial adventure fiction by Robert Dixon; and a smattering of references in wide-ranging surveys of fin-de-siècle literature. Of late he has received a little more critical attention in an article by Clare Clarke in *Victorian Literature and Culture* and in the inclusion of a couple of his short stories in recent anthologies of Australian colonial fiction by Ken Gelder and Rachel Weaver.

England, seeking, in their representation of the colonial periphery for the imperial centre, to gain the acclaim of its literary marketplace. And though they both achieved a substantial degree of popularity in their own time, they have subsequently been almost entirely forgotten by modern readers and confined to the margins of fin-de-siècle scholarship. Apart from the frequently dubious quality of their writing, one reason for this neglect may be that their concerns did not transcend their age, but given how very representative of the age they were, their texts are most useful in shedding a light upon the mediation of invasion anxiety through society and provide the main area of investigation for this study.

Given how pervasive the sentiment was in the period from 1890 to 1914, Shiel and Boothby were, of course, not the only two authors to produce texts which display a concern with invasion. As the editors of a recent study of 'the imaginative manipulation of images of fear' argue, 'At ... pivotal periods in human history, when society itself seems to be on the verge of some frightening change or mutation, the fictional narratives arising from this milieu have made these moments of cultural convulsion visible'.[14] And invasion concerns are equally discernible in several key fin-de-siècle texts by other best-selling contemporary authors – most of whom had strong colonial connections. These include the Anglo-Irish Bram Stoker; the Scots-Irish Arthur Conan Doyle; Sax Rohmer, the son of Irish-Catholic immigrants to England; H. Rider Haggard, who spent a key period of his youth in British South Africa; and Richard Marsh, whose father was not colonial but of German Jewish descent. Many of their most popular texts, like Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897), Haggard's *She* (1887), Doyle's Holmes tales and Rohmer's Fu-Manchu series, display a comparable concern with invasive alterity that can in some sense be linked to the authors' colonial experiences, while the very popularity of the texts is itself indicative of the extent to which invasion anxiety pervaded the popular consciousness in the period preceding World War I.

Even the seemingly straightforward case of the British Lieutenant-Colonel Chesney is complicated by colonial factors and quite representative of their formative impact upon invasion scenarios. Though born in England, Chesney was also of Anglo-Irish origins and

[14] Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy (ed.s), intro. to *Fear: Essays on the meaning and experience of fear* (Dublin: Four Courts Press: 2007), p. 12.

by the age of eighteen had left England to spend most of his life in colonial service in India as an officer in the British Army, *The Battle of Dorking* being penned from the India Office.[15] Further, Chesney had fought in the Indian Mutiny, the major counter-colonial uprising of the mid-century, which will be explored in a little more detail subsequently. This traumatic event has been identified time and again as one which severely shook Britain's complacency regarding its colonial holdings, causing them to be seen increasingly as a locus of threat as well as opportunity and fuelling a hardening of colonial policy towards dissent.[16] That Chesney's colonial background and experience of rebellion in India informed his novel of European conflict and ignominious British defeat is amply evidenced by his premise that it was the dispersal of British forces to colonial commitments around the world that facilitated the German invasion, including another outbreak in India. Here, as a representative statement of the potential negative consequences of imperialism that would be reiterated in much of the invasion fiction to follow, is his explication of the causes of 'the crash':

> First, the rising in India drew away a part of our small army; then came the difficulty with America ... and we sent ten thousand men to defend Canada... Thus the regular army at home was even smaller than usual, and nearly half of it was in Ireland to check the talked-of Fenian invasion fitting out in the West. Worse still ... the fleet was scattered abroad: some ships to guard the West Indies, others to check privateering in the China seas, and a large part to try and protect our colonies on the Northern Pacific shore of America, where, with incredible folly, we continued to retain possessions which we could not possibly defend.[17]

[15] See Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War*, p. 27. Most of these bibliographical details, as well as a detailed reappraisal of the impact of Chesney's text, are to be found in Patrick M. Kirkwood, 'The Impact of Fiction on Public Debate in late Victorian Britain: *The Battle of Dorking* and the "Lost Career" of Sir George Tomkyns Chesney', *Graduate History Review*, 4:1 (Fall 2012), pp. 1-16.

[16] Something of the psychic shock caused by this revolt is evident in its outraged characterisation as a 'mutiny' – in other words, a treacherous revolt against rightful command. Though this designation is now understandably contested and from a post-colonial perspective tends to be replaced with the 'First Indian War of Independence' or 'Indian Rebellion of 1857', as this study focuses on the fears of the colonising nation, it will continue to use the Victorian terminology.

[17] General Sir George Tomkyns Chesney, *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (1871), in *The Battle of Dorking* and *When William Came* (Oxford: Oxford Popular Fiction: 1997), p. 6.

It is the aim of this study, then, to explore what can be characterised as the reciprocal relationship between the volatile contemporary geo-political operating environment of the British empire and the dissemination of invasion anxiety through popular culture to elucidate why authors with colonial connections should feel moved to sound this type of admonitory cry at this time. Before moving on to do so, however, a couple of caveats concerning its remit are necessary: though Shiel's writing career extended well into the twentieth century, and likewise the careers of others of the comparable authors, only works from the fin-de-siècle period, or prior works that were influential upon them, will form the basis of investigation. And for the purposes of investigation, the term fin de siècle is understood in its broadest sense, that connoted by the idea of the 'long nineteenth century', extending beyond the late Victorian period, into the Edwardian period, and concluded by the paradigm shift effected by the outbreak of World War I.[18] Further, though comparable imperial anxieties and invasion paranoia were arguably present in most Western imperial powers at this period – oriental invasion fiction, for example, was current in France, Germany and the U.S.A. – in order to retain a manageable focus, this study restricts itself to an examination of the phenomenon in the context of the British empire, and to the works of authors with British colonial connections.

Colonial authors and the double voice of the call to arms

Though authorship of metropolitan British invasion fiction was by no means limited to them, white authors of British extraction like Boothby and Shiel who had recently migrated from the colonial peripheries to the imperial capital featured prominently in the ranks of its proponents. And common to their treatment of the theme was the choice of colonial subjects as the potential invaders. Bearing in mind Said's caveat that '"big" facts

[18] This approach is countenanced by Stephen Coote in *The Penguin Short History of English Literature* where he maintains that the Victorian era really ended at the outbreak of the war: 'The First World War is the true and catastrophic end of the nineteenth century, its terrible climax.' (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 599. This date also bounds many of the studies to which my project refers, such as Patrick Brantlinger's and Nicholas Daly's (see below).

like imperial domination' should not be applied 'mechanically and deterministically to such complex matters as culture and ideas', it is nonetheless the case that these authors shared a common experience of coloniality and emigration, and plausible to suggest that this may contribute to the resonance of this theme for them.[19] To borrow Bridget Brereton's and Kevin A. Yelvington's rationale for their study of the post-emancipation Caribbean, '[while] in no way should colonialism be seen as a uniform process or monolithic structure, it must be understood as providing an ideological, political, economic, and, perhaps above all, social and cultural context' for the investigation of these colonial authors.[20] Though they originated from geographically diverse locations, the authors upon whom this study focuses grew up in colonial settler societies which adhered doggedly to British traditions, were conditioned to consider themselves loyal subjects of the empire, and were clearly attracted to London as its metropolitan heart. However they were also irrevocably products of their home colonies, *hybrids*, to adopt the paradigmatics of Homi Bhabha's colonial discourse analysis. Their sense of being British was unavoidably inflected by their encounters with the realities of colonial life beyond the confines of the European quarters, with indigenous peoples, other ethnic groups of settlers, and with terrains and landscapes, societies and cultures that diverged widely from the domestic British experience. This specifically colonial experience approximates to what Said, employing Rudyard Kipling's enduring rhetorical device, calls '[b]eing a White Man', a 'manner of being-in-the-world' he elaborates thusly in *Orientalism* (1978):

> It involved a reasoned position towards both the white and the non-white worlds. It meant – in the colonies – speaking in a certain way, behaving according to a code of regulations, and even feeling certain things and not others. It meant specific judgements, evaluations, gestures.[21]

This manner of being was the product of existence at the colonial peripheries, and unavoidable for these colonial authors. Their subjectivities were thus constituted by their

[19] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 3rd edn (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 12.
[20] Bridget Brereton and Kevin A. Yelvington (ed.s), *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Postemancipation Social and Cultural History* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1999), p. 10.
[21] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 227.

experience of both types of colonial culture and, among other things, they drew heavily upon this disparate experience in their writing.

The concept of hybridity or dual consciousness has been well elaborated in post-colonial theory: Bhabha's formulation of the bi-directional effect of the colonial project, stressing the interaction between the cultures of the colonisers and the colonised and the reciprocal construction of their subjectivities, informs much recent post-colonial thinking.[22] In the case of this study, its emphasis on the effect of their relations with the colonised and the structure of colonial society is useful in elucidating why emigrant, white colonial authors seemed to share such a predilection for narratives of colonial invasion. Intrinsic to their upbringing was a personal familiarity with the inequities of colonial life, some degree of knowledge of the harsh conditions endured by colonial subjects, and a corollary fear, or even experience, of consequent retaliation. As Robert Bickers puts it, writing of the experience of the settlers in the British concession in Shanghai in the 1890s, 'There was nothing unusual about these anxieties, for a sense of insecurity was a basic fact of colonial life .. part of the equipment of the colonist, carried out in the mental baggage.'[23] Likewise Kim Wagner, commenting on the lasting legacy of the Indian Mutiny, observes 'the sense of vulnerability that was an intrinsic aspect of the colonial experience'.[24] Though instances of colonial dissent and rebellion were widely reported in Britain, the lived experience of the precariousness of the colonial hegemony at the imperial peripheries made these all the more resonant for the colonial migrants. Even Said, whose concern in *Orientalism* is the elaboration of the unprecedented authority conferred by the mere circumstance of being a White Man, acknowledges that inherent in the condition is the fact of living 'very close to the line of tension keeping the coloreds at bay'.[25]

Bhabha, extrapolating from Frantz Fanon's explication of psychopathological identity formation in both coloniser and colonised arising from the inequitable structure of

[22] See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994).
[23] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, p. 305.
[24] Kim Wagner, '"Treading Upon Fires": The "Mutiny"-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India', *Past and Present*, 218:1 (Feb 2013), pp. 159-97; 191.
[25] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 228.

colonial society, is much more specific.[26] As Bhabha articulates it, the identity of the coloniser is so dependent on the existence of the colonised that he is bound to 'the shadow of colonised man, that splits his presence, distorts his outline, breaches his boundaries ... disturbs and divides the very time of his being.'[27] Further, colonial relations turn upon an inherently paranoid obsession with the inversion of the roles – thus for the coloniser the 'fantasy of boundless possession' is tempered always by the dread of its 'reversal', the knowledge that, in Fanon's succinct phrase, '"They want to take our place"'.[28] This embattled, marginal colonial consciousness is what informed the type of threat that white colonial writers fictionalised, and coupled with the prevalent metropolitan paranoia concerning invasion, led them to produce invasion scenarios in which the posited invaders were vengeful colonial subjects. A powerful corroboration of the tendency of harsh colonial experience to produce fantasies of reversal or inversion can be found in the travel writing of Emily Eden, who, with her brother, a recently appointed Governor-General of India, toured parts of northern India in a period of severe famine in the 1830s. Raising her gaze from immediate Indian scenes of devastation to the far-distant future in England, she memorably wrote:

> Perhaps two thousand years hence ... some black Governor-General of England will be marching through its southern provinces, and will go and look at some ruins, and doubt whether London ever was a large town, and will feed some white-looking skeletons, and say what distress the poor creatures must be in.[29]

As Pablo Mukherjee has shown, what is particularly noteworthy in Eden's apocalyptic vision is not just the image of ruined England or its imperial Indian ruler, but the presence of 'white skeletons' – India's starving English subjects.[30] This signals the proximity between Eden's exposure to the unconscionable realities of existence for Indians under British imperial rule and her fantasy of imperial inversion.

---

[26] As Fanon puts it: 'The Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave with a neurotic orientation.' See *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952; London: Pluto Press, 2008), p. 43.
[27] Homi K. Bhabha, 'Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the postcolonial prerogative', *The Location of Culture*, p. 62.
[28] Ibid., p. 63; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961; London: Penguin, 2001), p. 30.
[29] Emily Eden, *Up the Country* (1866), cited in Pablo Mukherjee, 'Touring the Dead Lands: Emily Eden, Victorian Famines, and Colonial Picturesque', *Critical Survey*, 21:1 (2009), pp. 24-38, 25.
[30] Mukherjee, 'Touring the Dead Lands', pp. 26-7.

In addition to suggesting how at the colonial peripheries the subjectivities of coloniser and colonised are mutually constructed by their unequal proximity to one another, Bhabha's concept of hybridity further implies that the discourse of the coloniser is likewise impacted and subverted by that of the colonised: 'Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority.'[31] Though Bhabha's concept of hybridity is open to question from a number of perspectives, not least that it is generalised, culturally unspecific and ahistorical, its contribution to illuminating how the dominant discourse of imperialism was riven by barely-suppressed doubts and anxiety is useful. This is the cultural version of hybridity acknowledged by Robert Young, whose work includes a problematisation of the term from a historical, genealogical perspective based on its re-enactments of the 'racialized formulations' of nineteenth century scientific discourse.[32] Young, though notable for his critique of the term, still acknowledges the subversive potential of the phenomenon: 'The hybridity of colonial discourse thus reverses the structures of domination in the colonial situation. It describes a process in which the single voice of colonial authority undermines the operation of colonial power by inscribing and disclosing the trace of the other so that it reveals itself as double-voiced.'[33] Bhabha's account of the disruptive, subversive nature of hybridity helps to explain the anxiety present in the output of these double-voiced authors who produced fictions of colonial invasion. In keeping with his explication of hybridity as representing 'that ambivalent "turn" of the discriminated subject into the terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification',[34] these authors turned the subjugated peoples of the colonial peripheries into invasive menaces to terrorise a paranoid, susceptible metropolitan population.

And there is a further sense in which white colonial immigrant authors possessed a dual consciousness: they were constituted not only by the experience of growing up in

[31] Homi K. Bhabha, 'Signs taken for Wonders: Questions of ambivalence and authority under a tree outside Delhi, May 1817', *The Location of Culture*, p. 162.
[32] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 6.
[33] Ibid., p. 23.
[34] Bhabha, 'Signs taken for Wonders', p. 162.

hybrid colonial societies, but also by the amalgamation of this with their subsequent experience of metropolitan society, producing a 'doubled hybridity' to use Young's phrase.[35] This doubled experience of colonial and metropolitan life, accentuated by the physical journeys necessarily undertaken between periphery and centre, gave them a wide-ranging understanding of the empire as a tangible, global endeavour: 'world-big Thought' or 'sun-kindled Imagination' as Shiel put it, speaking of one of his well-travelled heroes.[36] While there was a growing tradition of oriental invasion fiction in Australia, for example (a tradition which predated its emergence in Britain for reasons that will be explored in chapters one and three), the authors of this tradition naturally posited the invasion of the Australian continent. For the immigrants, narrating from a savvy, external vantage point their experience of the exotic for the consumption of the sheltered readers of the lucrative metropolitan literary marketplace, the obvious target for invasion was the metropolis. Nicholas Daly articulates the 'dual address' of the 'hybrid colonial text', observing the imbricated relationship in which 'colonial literary production is overdetermined by its awareness of metropolitan readership and ... literary traditions; consumption at the metropole, in turn, never takes places in complete ignorance of the discursive contexts of the colony'.[37] The loyalties of the migrant authors were British and their concern was for the survival of the empire, but their hybrid consciousness with its unavoidable knowledge of colonial realities, moved them to warn, Cassandra-like, of the potentially dire consequences of imperial possession.

[35] Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 24.
[36] M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Danger* (1898; London: Grant Richards, 1900), p. 124.
[37] Nicholas Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the fin de siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 55.

Invasion fiction and the fin-de-siècle context

While invasion fiction in its late Victorian form had been present since the 1870s, in the 1890s, in addition to the hybrid perspective of its many migrant authors, the confluence of several other factors contributed to the publication of a slew of texts that thematicized invasion. These included both explicit future-war themed narratives of invasion, and more oblique representations such as Shiel's yellow peril texts and those featuring Boothby's colonial criminal Nikola. The factors underlying this surge in publication included the rise of the 'new Imperialism' and escalating hostility of the geo-political climate, which are considered in more detail in the subsequent section on 'New dangers'; the increasing prevalence of fears of degeneration and decline, touched upon later in this section; and major developments in the literary marketplace to which we briefly turn here. In his analysis of fin-de-siècle literature, Daly refers to a 'tidal wave' of romanticism beginning in 1894, also the year widely acknowledged as witnessing the death of that mid-century institution, the three-volume novel.[38] The 1890s witnessed some well-documented developments that revolutionised the literary marketplace, including in response to cheaper printing technologies and growing literacy, the rise of the more affordable one-volume novel and rapid growth in the numbers of popular literary periodicals in circulation.[39] The novel now frequently appeared first in serial form in the popular periodicals, followed by publication in one-volume format if successful, and a dramatic increase in the overall numbers of novels being published took place. The shorter length of the one-volume novel was well suited to the fast-paced, plot-driven format of adventure fiction, and the invasion tale was no exception. As Clarke observes, since the publication of *The Battle of Dorking* in 1871, future war short stories had been a regular feature in the literary periodicals: 'the short story continued to be the favoured form for European future-war stories until the eighteen-nineties.' Then with the change in format and the avid demand for gripping serialisations, the novel form took over so that,

[38] Ibid., p. 17.

[39] These developments are detailed in Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989). See also Cecil D. Eby, intro to *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1987) on the proliferation and influence of printed material at this time.

'By 1900 the tale of "the next great war" had become a minor publishing industry in Britain and in Germany, as more and more propagandists and patriots described the war they all expected.'[40] It is also highly likely that the re-issue of Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* after his death in 1895 gave further impetus to the publication of future-war-themed invasion novels later in the decade.[41]

Given the diverse nature of the output produced by Shiel, Boothby and other comparable colonial hybrid authors, including what may be categorized as crime, gothic and science fiction tales, one of the findings this study hopes to bring to light is the extent to which fin-de-siècle popular fiction beyond the future war tale was affected by invasion concerns. There is an extensive body of research on the interplay between fin-de-siècle popular fiction and socio-historical developments during this important era, including works by cultural historians and literary critics such as Daly, Roger Luckhurst, Sally Ledger, Patrick Brantlinger, Stephen Arata, Daniel Pick and David Glover. These developments include social and political phenomena such as the new imperialism, the new woman, the new journalism and the rise of socialism; scientific and technological advances; new disciplines such as psychology, sociology and anthropology; and the pseudo-scientific doctrines of degeneration theory, social Darwinism and eugenics. However relatively little attention has been paid to invasion paranoia as an overarching influence on fin-de-siècle literature or to examining its presence across multiple related genres. Many critics and historians comment in passing upon the existence of invasion fiction in this period. Brantlinger, for example, in his enumeration of contemporary manifestations of social doubt, significantly includes 'the fad for "invasion scare" novels'.[42] Cecil Eby includes militaristic invasion fiction in his study of the forms of fin-de-siècle popular fiction that he argues helped to promulgate the militarism and xenophobia that prepared the British public for World War I.[43] Others likewise consider the presence of the invasion theme within single genres, for example, Clarke's seminal body of work on the future war genre; but little work has been done to approach the

[40] I. F. Clarke, 'Before and After *The Battle of Dorking*', *Science Fiction Studies*, 24:71 (Mar 1997), online at www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/71/clarke71art.htm, on 10 May 2009.
[41] Kirkwood, 'The Impact of Fiction on Public Debate in late Victorian Britain', p. 15.
[42] Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 33.
[43] Eby, *The Road to Armageddon*, chap. 2.

fiction of invasion from a transgeneric perspective. Brantlinger does briefly identify Stoker's *Dracula*, Wells's *The War of the Worlds* and Haggard's *She* 'as fanciful versions of yet another popular literary form, invasion-scare stories, in which the outward movement of imperialist adventure is reversed.'[44] But it is the view of this study that invasion anxiety was far more prevalent in fin-de-siècle popular fiction than has hither to been acknowledged. Hence it sets out to track the explicit and implicit presence of invasion anxiety within the emergent genres of crime, gothic and science fiction, and to reveal the colonial concerns of the authors as integral to representations of invasion and even formative upon the development of the genres themselves, as the next section on 'Invasion fiction and the emergence of genre' briefly sets out.

Brantlinger's seminal work on the relationship between British literature and imperialism, *Rule of Darkness* (1988), demonstrates a clear relationship between popular fiction and imperial concerns. It explores the manifestation of imperialist discourse in narrative form, including many popular works, and concludes that this discourse informed all aspects of nineteenth century culture and society. It understands discourse in the Foucauldian sense, as a form of power, and therefore considers that 'what the Victorians thought, wrote, and read about their developing Empire mattered'; essentially, that imperialist discourse actively contributed to the continued development of the empire.[45] From the point of view of this study, it is important to point out that by their mass-produced nature popular texts were one of the most widely-encountered sources of imperialist discourse – as Eby argues: 'Ephemera being ground out in music halls or being scribbled for the popular press had greater influence on the way Britons thought and behaved during the prewar years than the work of canonical writers'.[46]

In Brantlinger's study, he draws a significant contrast between the optimism reflected in early Victorian adventure narratives and the pessimism of the later Victorian period, and argues that eschatological and degeneration anxieties suffused the popular literature of the fin de siècle. The invasion theme can be positioned within this anxious body of fiction and, given its position within the discourse of imperialism, can be seen as being affective upon the society in which it circulated. If, as Martin Green asserts, the imperial

[44] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 233.
[45] Ibid., p. x.
[46] Eby, *The Road to Armageddon*, p. 9.

adventure tale inspired England to colonise,[47] the corresponding question is prompted as to what the invasion narrative produced – paranoia, war-mongering, xenophobia – in a word, jingoism? Jingoism, facetiously glossed by the stalwart social commentator W. T. Stead as 'Imperialism gone drunk – a kind of gin-sodden caricature', was a key cultural component underpinning the aggressive imperialist expansion and resulting great power rivalry of the late nineteenth century.[48] As the prominent economist J. A. Hobson explained it, 'Tricked out with the real or the sham glories of military heroism and the magnificent claims of empire-making, Jingoism becomes a nucleus of a sort of patriotism which can be moved to any folly or to any crime'.[49] And within this nucleus, invasion fiction, with its visceral accounts of dreadful invaders and heroic defenders, played its part.

Arata, in *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (1996), contends similarly to Brantlinger that the popular fiction of the fin de siècle is characterised by its engagement with prevalent societal anxieties informed by an encompassing conviction of unavoidable decline. He observes 'the decidedly eschatological impulse pervading so much late-Victorian fiction,' in which '[h]eroic narratives of foundation give way to stories of the end time' and distinguishes between high-Victorian fiction, which frequently solves its social problems by exporting non-desirables to the colonies, and late Victorian fiction, in which problems are increasingly inherited from the colonies.[50] As historian Piers Brendon demonstrates in *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (2007), the Gibbonian premise of the cyclical nature, and therefore inevitable decline, of empires was implicitly accepted by the nineteenth century's educated elite, leading many to dread that the British empire was already beginning to show signs of decay:

> Steeped in Gibbon's tremendous drama ... they perceived striking analogies between the two powers that dominated their respective worlds. The *Decline and*

[47] Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure: Deeds of Empire* (1979), p.3.
[48] W. T. Stead in his anti-Boer War periodical *War Against War*, cited in 'Our Mail Bag: News From Everywhere', *The Mataura Ensign* [NZ] (11 Mar 1899), p. 4; online at *Papers Past*, paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast, 3 July 2013.
[49] J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: Nisbet, 1902), p. 228; online at *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/imperialismastu00goog.htm, 3 July 2013.
[50] Stephen Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1, 107.

> *Fall* became the essential guide for Britons anxious to plot their own imperial trajectory.[51]

The British may have viewed themselves as a new imperial race in the Roman mode, but the ultimate descent into chaos in which the Roman empire ended was well-recognized – as, indeed, was knowingly alluded to in the satiric *Windsor* magazine cartoon discussed above (see fig. 1).

In the late Victorian period, the concern with imperial decline was often articulated within the terms of the prevalent theory of degeneration, which posited a corollary potential for human regression suggested by the theory of evolution. Though degeneration theory had been in circulation since the mid-nineteenth century, it was widely popularised following the translation of Max Nordau's ur-text, *Degeneration* (1892), into English in 1895. As Pick notes in his cultural history of the phenomenon, by the end of the nineteenth century degeneration theory was an almost universally accepted orthodoxy, with influential contemporary advocates such as Nordau interpreting various social and cultural phenomena in such a manner as to demonstrate that the process was already well under way in the decadent Western world.[52] Kelly Hurley, among many other critics, observes that degeneration anxiety was a pervasive theme of fin-de-siècle literature, particularly the gothic,[53] as, for example, classically articulated in Robert Louis Stevenson's sinister short story 'Olalla' (1885):

> 'My fathers, eight hundred years ago, ruled all this province: they were wise, great, cunning and cruel … Presently a change came. Man has risen; if he has sprung from the brutes, he can descend again to the same level. The breath of weariness blew on their humanity and the cords relaxed; they began to go down; their minds fell on sleep, their passions awoke in gusts … the seed passed on, it was wrapped in flesh, the flesh covered the bones, but they were the bones and the flesh of

[51] Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p. xv.
[52] Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 8.
[53] Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 65.

> brutes, and their mind was as the mind of flies ... the wheel has gone backward with my doomed race ... the race shall cease from off the earth.'[54]

In Stevenson's cautionary fantasy of regression, the atavistic Spanish family thus described, who can variously be interpreted as representing such British middle-class enemies as the landed aristocracy, the Catholic other and the invasive foreigner, have degenerated beyond all redemption to a state of bestial vampirism.

Within the body of fiction responding to these concerns of decline and degeneration, Arata has isolated a theme he characterises as 'reverse colonisation', which can be considered an aspect of the wider invasion premise. Reverse colonisation narratives represent the reversal of the colonial relations of domination and the consequent infiltration of the territory of the coloniser:

> In such narratives what has been represented as the 'civilized' world is on the point of being overrun by 'primitive' forces. ... In each case a fearful reversal occurs: the colonizer finds himself in the position of the colonized, the exploiter is exploited, the victimizer is victimized.[55]

Arata identifies a bi-faceted impulse underpinning this narrative structure. Firstly, the fear that the degenerating domestic population will be unable to defend themselves against the putative onslaught. And this accords with what Glover terms 'the imperialist's dilemma' – the quandary as to whether the product of an increasingly civilised society was inevitably over-refined individuals incapable of defending it from the external threats perceived.[56] Secondly, reverse colonisation narratives are driven by a collective, though seldom voiced, guilt for the practices of imperialism – Arata maintaining that they frighten not only because they invert the colonial hierarchy, but also because they reflect the abuses of colonisation back onto the colonial society. Brantlinger observes a similar response in what he describes as the genealogy of the myth of the 'Dark Continent', a process by which Victorian society transposed blame for the slave trade onto perceived African savagery, thus transferring their guilt along

[54] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Olalla' (1885), reprinted in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales of Terror* (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 127-8.
[55] Arata, *Fictions of Loss*, p. 108.
[56] David Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 97.

with it.[57] He notes this guilty transposition again in his discussion of literary responses to the Indian Mutiny in which 'the imperialist dominators become the victims and the dominated, villains.'[58] Both of these accounts of literary inversion in turn provide support for the postcolonial-inflected hypothesis of double-voiced colonial authors turning the subjugated peoples of the colonial peripheries into terrifying invaders of the metropolis.

Arata devotes the bulk of his analysis to the expression of reverse colonisation anxiety in the fin-de-siècle gothic, particularly *Dracula*, interpreting the supernatural villain in this and other similar popular novels as a gothicization of imperial fears. However, he also cites Wells's *The War of the Worlds* as a key example of a reverse colonisation narrative acting as a powerful exposition of colonial guilt. In this work Wells explicitly compares the treatment of Britain's colonial subjects to the treatment of London and its inhabitants by the Martians:

> And before we judge them [the Martians] too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought ... upon its own inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit?[59]

In *The War of the Worlds*, possession of inconceivably superior technology likened to 'lightning' gives the invading Martians total superiority over humanity with its 'bows and arrows,' in the same way that modern European weaponry gave the colonial powers such a deadly advantage over their colonial subjects. This technological survival of the fittest was amply demonstrated in many of the nineteenth century's colonial conflicts – in the assegais against guns in the infamous battle of Omdurman in Sudan or in the iron paddle steamers against junks in the Anglo-Chinese Opium Wars. The following remark from an enthusiastic young colonist in Doyle's macabre Chinese Boxer Rebellion short story, 'The Pot of Caviare' (1908), demonstrates this unthinking confidence in the superiority of British weaponry: 'What can these rascals with their matchlocks and swords do against

[57] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 195.
[58] Ibid., p. 222.
[59] H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (1898; London: Penguin, 2005), p. 9.

modern weapons. ... Mr Mauser and Mr Maxim are the two men who will see us through, and with them on our side no leader can go wrong.'[60] Ironically, and in keeping with the self-destructive paradigm posited by degeneration theory, the Europeans in this story take their own lives in response to a hysterical fear of their potential fate if captured by the Chinese rebels.

Wells's lamentation for the fate of the Tasmanians is, of course, ironic in the light of some of his later comments on the fate of non-white, technologically-weaker races in his non-fiction writing, for example in the 1901 essay *Anticipations*.[61] But here it amply demonstrates an awareness that the practices of the colonisers could come back to haunt them, particularly if the balance of technology changed. Though this awareness was not frequently explicit in the dominant discourse of the imperial project, manifestations of it appeared as early as the late-eighteenth century campaign against slavery, with the poet Richard Savage predicting that imperial abuses would lead to imperial demise and concluding:

> Yes – Empire may revolt – give them the day,
> And yoke may yoke, and blood may blood repay.[62]

Ledger and Luckhurst comparably observe, at the end of the nineteenth century, the multitude of images in contemporary British popular culture which reflect what they designate 'imperial terrors':

> [F]antasies of reverse invasion by the French or Germans, the stirrings of mummies in the British museum as Egypt and the Sudan were annexed, the evil genius of Fu Manchu and the 'yellow peril' as trade routes in the Far East were contested.[63]

---

[60] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Pot of Caviare' (1908), reprinted in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (Leicester: Galley Press, 1988), pp. 157-8.

[61] In this speculative work, Wells imagines an ideal 'New Republic' of the future governed by a class of technocrats. In order to pave the way for progress to this new ideal state, many of the so-called inferior races 'will have to go'. H. G. Wells, *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901; London: Chapman & Hall, 1902), p. 317; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/anticipationsofr00welluoft, 12 Dec 2012.

[62] Cited in Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 24. Thackeray's 1829 parody of abolitionist poetry contains the same sentiment: 'The day shall come when Albion's self shall feel Stern Afric's wrath, and writhe neath Afric's steel'; cited in Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 188.

[63] Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History c.1880-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. xvi.

Glover observes the synchronicity between Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June 1897 and the publication of *Dracula* in May 1897, reading *Dracula* as 'a kind of shadow-text to this extraordinary moment of public rejoicing', exposing the terrible fears of racial and hence imperial decline lurking in the heart of jingoist exuberance.[64] In each case geo-political events on the world-wide imperial stage seem to syncopate with the rhythms of anxiety pervading fin-de-siècle popular fiction. Overall the influential body of criticism on the fiction of this period produced by Brantlinger, Arata, Glover, Pick, Hurley, Ledger and Luckhurst underpins the analysis in this study, elaborating, as it does, the distinct correlation between fears of the potential downside of the imperial project and developments in popular fiction. Where it can be usefully extended is in the consideration of the role of colonial authors in producing hysterical depictions of colonial subjects hell-bent on revenge for colonial crimes, and in the elucidation of their relationship with the wider phenomenon of invasion fiction.

In an important related work, *Modernism, Romance and the fin de siècle* (1999), Daly also theorises a relationship between popular fiction and societal developments at the fin de siècle. He argues that the revival of the romance, or 'the novel of incident'/'adventure', 'provided the narratives and the figures that enabled late Victorian middle-class culture to successfully accommodate certain historical changes, notably modernising processes', including the new imperialism.[65] For Daly the romance functions as a 'narrative theory' for its time, a metaphor satisfactorily explaining the social facts of fin-de-siècle modernity, such as Britain's relationship to its colonies. His approach differs to the critics cited above in that he rejects their characterisation of the era as one of crisis, and hence their adoption of what he calls 'anxiety theory' as the critical lens through which to view its literature. His concern with this theory, as he explicates it, is based on the conception of fin-de-siècle popular fiction as *reflecting* prevalent anxieties. He concurs that key fin-de-siècle works such as *She* and *Dracula* 'are indeed anxious texts', but argues that such texts 'may produce and manage anxiety as well as express it'.[66] Hence he reads *Dracula* as more 'performative' than 'reflective', providing a reassuring

[64] Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals*, p. 99.
[65] Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the fin de siècle*, p. 24.
[66] Ibid., p. 30.

account of the role of professional men that reshapes society rather than mirroring its anxieties.

In its understanding of the fin-de-siècle popular as forming part of the dominant discourse of imperialism, this study places similar emphasis to Daly on the performative – or productive, to use Louis Montrose's term – capacity of literature, as will be explored shortly. The impact of *The Battle of Dorking*, though an extreme case, provides ample confirmation of the productive nature of invasion fiction, for example.[67] First, however, it is worth briefly observing that the assumption that there is value to be obtained from reading popular fiction through the lens of anxiety has long been integral to the cultural studies approach to literature, defined by John Storey as:

> an approach which insists that by analysing the culture of a society – the textual forms and documented practices of a culture – it is possible to reconstitute the patterned behaviour and constellations of ideas shared by the men and women ... of that society.[68]

If, as Raymond Williams argues, the function of analysing cultural documents is to understand the experience through which a culture was lived, to reconstitute what he famously terms 'structures of feeling', surely fin-de-siècle texts depicting imperial nightmares, including those centring on invasion, give important insight into its structures.[69] Storey accordingly contends, also from a Foucauldian perspective, that popular 'narratives tell us a great deal more about the desires and anxieties of the culture' that produced them, than about their explicit topics.[70]

This view is sustained by Darryl Jones, Elizabeth McCarthy and Bernice Murphy, the editors of a recent essay collection examining the interplay between 1950s anxieties and that era's popular culture, who, similarly to Storey, predicate their volume on:

> the hypothesis that popular cultural documents provide unique insights into the concerns, anxieties and desires of their times, most particularly through their habitual deployment

[67] Kirkwood, 'The Impact of Fiction on Public Debate in late Victorian Britain', p. 16.
[68] John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 4th edn. (Harlow: Pearson, 2006), p. 2.
[69] Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), p. 63.
[70] Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, p. 103. It should be noted that Daly adopts a cultural studies approach in *Modernism, Romance and the fin de siècle*, cf. pp. 4-5, 8.

> of forms of symbolic or metaphorical articulation, as a means of approaching their subjects obliquely.[71]

The latter part of this hypothesis signals the useful role played by popular culture in giving voice to concerns that cannot otherwise be easily addressed; a contention which is supported by the editors of the fear study who argue for the tendency of fantastic fiction 'to disclose, reveal and make visible that which is deemed best hidden from view'.[72] And a recent attempt to account for the fin-de-siècle romance revival turns upon this type of understanding. Nicholas Ruddick seeks to explain the explosion of what he delineates as the transgeneric category of 'fantastic fiction' in opposition to the dominant mode of realism in the fin de siècle, a category which intersects with Daly's understanding of the romance and includes the fiction of invasion. He argues that these non-realist texts were used 'to articulate some of the most alarming anxieties of the age', specifically anxieties of a masculine kind concerning matters of sexuality, whether homosexual, interracial, or emasculated.[73] The suitability of this mode lay in its ability to engage with these themes in an indirect manner which bypassed the vigilance of the censor, and which for the same reason could not be satisfactorily treated in realist fiction.[74]

Returning to Daly's argument, this study additionally countenances the management as well as performance of anxiety that Daly theorises in its acknowledgement of invasion fiction's role in bolstering imperial ideology and jingoism via frequent depictions of terrible threats heroically vanquished. It is, however, more concerned with the interpretation that in their very representation of imperial terrors, invasion texts undermined imperialism too, a position which is suggested by the work of Alan Sinfield and will be considered along with Montrose's in due course. Daly acknowledges the existence of what he variously designates 'an increasingly shrill rhetoric of decline' and 'a fin-de-siècle discourse of crisis and anxiety',[75] but does not emphasise the socially constitutive, Foucauldian implications of these discursive bodies. Taking these latter

---

[71] Darryl Jones, Elizabeth McCarthy and Bernice Murphy, (ed.s), intro to *It Came from the 1950s! Popular Culture, Popular Anxieties* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 3.
[72] Hebblethwaite and McCarthy, intro. to *Fear*, p. 12.
[73] Nicholas Ruddick, 'The fantastic fiction of the fin de siècle', *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, Gail Marshall (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 191-2.
[74] Ibid., p. 205.
[75] Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the fin de siècle*, pp. 30, 33.

implications into account, it becomes significant, and therefore worthy of consideration in itself, that such a discourse existed. In its productivity, the fiction of invasion reciprocally fuelled anxiety, and this anxiety contributed to the jingoism that underpinned the very imperial expansion that is often cited as evidence of confidence. With these points in mind, it can be seen that 'anxiety theory' need not be dismissed on the grounds that it is merely reflective. Interestingly Daly's analysis of Stoker's first novel, *The Snake's Pass* (1890), in its emphasis on the impact of Stoker's Anglo-Irish background and the implicit colonial context of the Irish Land War on producing what he deems an irresolute, uncontained ending, seems to support the view that the anxiety present in fin-de-siècle texts was not always manageable or deployed in support of imperialist goals.[76] It also lends credence to the approach of examining the impact of the colonial backgrounds of fin-de-siècle authors upon their fiction.[77]

Daly additionally critiques the anxiety theory of fin-de-siècle literature based on its reliance on the characterisation of the era as one of crisis, seeing it more as an age of development, as it certainly also was. Recent work on the period emphasises a blending of these perspectives: Ross Forman argues for a spectrum of positions on empire ranging from 'the glorification of the Empire during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 at one extreme [to] the millenarian prediction of *fin de siècle*, *fin du globe* at the opposite end'. Hence he observes 'a double helix of fin-de-siècle representations of Empire', on the positive side portraying continued expansion and the success of the civilising mission,

[76] Daly treats the novel 'as a vehicle for Anglo-Irish political fantasies ... relating to the Land War of the 1880s' (56), which he acknowledges was then perceived as a formidable threat to British rule in Ireland (68-9). He allows that this confirmed interaction with colonial discourses of unrest unsettled the pattern of narrative closure and management of anxiety that he attributes to the other imperial adventure novels, such as Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), that he reads it against. Daly argues that while *The Snake's Pass* 'ultimately fails as a fantasy of imperialist control', it highlights the strategies of closure that are evident to varying degrees in these other novels (54). He does not countenance that this interaction with colonial discourses of unrest and pattern of irresolution is comparably present in these other tales, especially those of Haggard, or consider the influence of coloniality upon their authors (though a home-grown Englishman, the formative and negative effect of Haggard's traumatic experience of the South African colonies upon him is well-documented and will be explored in chapter 2). Daly also holds that *The Snake's Pass* breaks the conventions of romance in this engagement with issues of coloniality (82), but I would argue this engagement is replicated across the imperial adventure genre.

[77] See also the following essay where Daly argues for viewing Stoker's *Dracula* as a colonial novel: 'The Colonial Roots of *Dracula*', *That Other World: The Supernatural and the Fantastic in Irish Literature and its Contexts*, Bruce Stewart (ed.), vol. 2 (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1998).

but on the negative belying 'the fear of collapse, degeneration and reverse colonisation'.[78] Ledger and Luckhurst also observe the highly specific, contradictory moment of the fin de siècle 'in which assertions of the limitless generative power of the British nation were haunted by fantasies of decay and degeneration'.[79] The majority of the Shiel and Boothby texts that are the subject of analysis in this study were written within a decade of each other, from the mid-1890s on, at what was ostensibly the zenith of British imperialism. But the imperial expansion and consolidation of state power that Daly considers to belie the characterisation of crisis do not have to be read in this way. Imperial expansionism has convincingly been read as a negative social development itself symptomatic of decline; to cite Bernard Porter as an extreme proponent of this view: '"Imperialism", as the word is generally understood, was for Britain, a symptom and an effect of her decline in the world, and not of strength.'[80] This was evident in the prevalent belief that continual expansion was essential to avert decline – encapsulated in Robert Clive's oft-quoted phrase, 'To stop is dangerous, to recede, ruin.'[81] And, leaving the theoretical sphere of imperial discourse aside, the practice of persistent territorial appropriation incurred an ongoing cycle of very real and potentially explosive political difficulties. The historical perspective utilised by this study, therefore, is the premise of historians such as Brendon, Barbara Tuchman and Eric Hobsbawm that though this period appeared one of easy imperial confidence, yet it was fraught with fears of imperial decline, of impending global war, and, I would argue, consequently of invasion. We will proceed to examine this historical context of '*attacks* and *wars*, *somewhere* or *other* CONTINUALLY!' in more detail in the subsequent section on 'New dangers'. But first we will turn briefly to the subject of the invasion theme and the development of popular fiction genres.

[78] Ross G. Forman, 'Empire', *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, Gail Marshall (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 91. In her introduction to this essay, Marshall even suggests, in response to this feared fragility of empire, 'the rise of the adventure narrative as a means of articulating the threat of Empire', p. 7.
[79] Ledger and Luckhurst, *The Fin de Siècle*, p. xiii.
[80] Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-1983*, 2nd edn., (London: Longman, 1984), p. xi.
[81] Cited in Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 98.

Invasion fiction and the emergence of genre

As well as arguing for the comprehensive, constitutive effect of imperialism upon nineteenth century British society, in *Culture and Imperialism* Said also theorises a reciprocity between the progress of the imperial project and the rise of the novel as the dominant literary form in the 1800s (as discussed further in the section on 'Theorising invasion fiction'). Rereading major early and mid-century texts to elaborate this often submerged mutual development, he observes that by the end of the nineteenth century empire had become 'a central area of concern' in literature, in the works of writers like Doyle, Kipling, Haggard, Stevenson and, of course, Joseph Conrad.[82] While Said's focus is on canonical and literary texts, this study intends to extend this perspective into the realm of the popular to investigate how imperial concerns, and particularly fears of invasion, were influential not just on the burgeoning romances that dealt explicitly with empire, but upon many of the emerging popular genres, and perhaps, to a certain extent, upon the very development of genre fiction. As popular fiction has been seen to function as an index of the preoccupations of an era, so the emerging genres articulated and augmented the concerns of a people whose relentless acquisition of overseas territory was provoking conflict both in Europe and all over the world. Science fiction owed much of its impetus to the twinned imperial themes of outward expansion and inward incursion – to the imperial adventure and the future-war invasion tale. Crime fiction, negotiating the effort to police boundaries between the self and the other, flourished in a society predicated on theories of racial difference, and fixated on maintaining the ever-expanding racial boundaries of coloniser versus colonised (in addition to the pre-existing ones of class and gender). And horror, or the gothic, fixated with the consequences of boundaries breached, experienced a major revival in the late nineteenth century, typified by gothicizations of the intrusive colonial other. In other words, all three of these major genres developing at the height of imperialism tended to turn upon external threats and frequently envisaged colonial subjects as the antagonists in direct or indirect form – from maddened oriental invaders, to colonial misfits turned criminal, to eastern vampires seeking dominion.

[82] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. xviii, 74.

Though early science fiction, or scientific romance as Wells originally dubbed the genre,[83] was most obviously informed by its fascination with contemporary advances in technology, as we have already touched upon, invasion concerns arising from colonial conflict also provided one of its predominant themes. Paul Alkon, in his history of the genre, considers that 'technological change with drastic social consequences has been the most general impetus toward the development of science fiction, as well as its master theme'.[84] And certainly future-war themed invasion texts are not out of place in this classification as they frequently combined futuristic weaponry with their terrifying, apocalyptic scenarios of war and invasion. The single work that had the most impact on the formulaic alien invasions of twentieth-century science fiction, Wells's ground-breaking *The War of the Worlds* in which 'the Martians warred in the same spirit' as the imperial nations, can itself be read as an extended meditation on the possible consequences of imperialism unchecked. And in Wells's later highly pessimistic *The War in the Air*, technology and imperialism are linked as general causes of inevitable future conflict: 'mechanical invention had gone faster than intellectual and social organization, and the world ... with its cheap newspapers, cheaper passions and imperialisms, its base commercial motives, ... its race lies and conflicts, was taken by surprise. Once the war began there was no stopping it'.[85]

While Wells's contribution to early science fiction is amply acknowledged, Shiel's oriental invasions were also influential upon the genre and even more explicitly reveal the colonial concerns that underpinned the future war version of the invasion tale. Shiel's *The Yellow Danger*, which follows closely the paranoid inverted logic of *The Dragon*, was in fact specifically commissioned to take advantage of a topical Far Eastern crisis which arose in 1897, threatening Britain's valuable China trade and prompting a European 'Scramble for Concessions' in China which contributed to the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion. As interest in Shiel's work waned after about 1910, the yellow peril mantle passed to another hybrid author, Rohmer, whose Fu-Manchu, 'the yellow peril incarnate in one man', took the theme to ignominious new heights from 1912 into the

[83] Patrick Parrinder, *Shadows of the Future: H. G. Wells, Science Fiction and Prophecy* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), p. 129.
[84] Paul K. Alkon, *Science Fiction before 1900: Imagination Discovers Technology* (Oxford: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994), p. 9.
[85] H. G. Wells, *The War in the Air* (1908; London: Penguin, 2005), p. 179.

mid-twentieth century.[86] Though Rohmer's Fu-Manchu tales were thrillers rather than works of science fiction and they and the yellow peril theme as such have thankfully died out, their racially-charged concerns were also displaced into space in the form of the thinly-disguised oriental villains that populated twentieth century science fiction.[87] The yellow peril myth was also given expression in the earlier 1890s crime fiction of the Anglo-Australian Boothby, and its genesis in the late nineteenth century and the particular role played by migrant colonial authors in circulating this oriental version of invasion in the metropolis is the main area of concern of chapter three.

Of all the popular genres, the gothic has been repeatedly deemed an ideal medium for the circulation of societal anxiety; as Hurley summarises: 'Gothic in particular has been theorised as an instrumental genre, re-emerging cyclically, at periods of cultural stress, to negotiate the anxieties that accompany social and epistemological transformations and crises'.[88] Another key context for the investigation of invasion fiction, then, is the much-theorised revival of the gothic mode in the fin-de-siècle period. Arata's analysis of late Victorian fiction posits that 'in this period political and cultural concerns about the decline of empire often become gothicized.'[89] Similarly Brantlinger, in theorising the genre he dubs 'imperial gothic' – a blending of adventure story and gothic tropes – posits that gothic is the means by which doubts about the imperial project manifested themselves even in the works of its keenest defenders among whom he numbers Haggard, Doyle and Kipling. Brantlinger asserts that this connection between imperialism and occultism is especially symptomatic of the anxieties and contradictions that attended the climax of the British empire, a response to the societal dread of decline expressing 'anxieties about the ease with which civilisation can revert to barbarism or savagery and thus about the weakening of Britain's imperial hegemony.'[90] Speaking specifically of what he terms the late Victorian gothic revival, Luckhurst similarly attests to its imbrication with the imperial project and destabilising effect: 'the genre pulses in

[86] Sax Rohmer, *The Mystery of Dr Fu-Manchu* (1913) reprinted in *The Fu-Manchu Omnibus*, vol. 1 (London: Allison & Busby, 1995), p. 15.
[87] Examples of these orientalised villains include Ming the Merciless of the *Flash Gordon* series (1930s, 1980s), the original *Star Trek* Klingons (1960-70s) and even, far more recently, the Trade Federation Nemoidians of the *Star Wars* prequels (1999, 2002, 2005).
[88] Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, p. 5.
[89] Arata, *Fictions of Loss*, p. 111.
[90] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, pp. 227-9.

sympathy with the rhythms of expansion and crisis in the British Empire. With its typical ability to invert meaning, it is often unclear whether the Gothic imagination is working in the service of the Empire ... or whether it is sapping imperial confidence by conjuring elaborate fantasies of ... "reverse colonisation".'[91] Exemplary of this gothic subversion of imperialist discourse is Lord Curzon's morbid likening of fallen empire to a lifeless body: 'If it is extinguished or allowed to die, our Empire will have no more life than a corpse from which the spirit has lately fled, and like a corpse will moulder.'[92] And in the sphere of fiction, an array of popular authors, many of whom had formative colonial backgrounds, utilised the gothic as an appropriate mode to engage with the dread of imperial decline and degeneration, of which invasion anxiety was a corollary.

In his study of English literary attitudes towards Italy, Kenneth Churchill charts the development of the obsession with imperial decline. He contrasts the early eighteenth century's confident presumption that Britain was the natural successor of imperial Rome, with a late eighteenth century drop in confidence discernible in the increasing interest in the ruins which attested to Roman civilisation's eventual demise.[93] This period's fascination with Roman ruins produced two works which were hugely influential in the nineteenth century, one in establishing widespread acceptance of the decline and fall paradigm, and the other in establishing the territory of the fallen empire as the locus of gothic terror. These were Gibbon's monumental and admonitory *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788) and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which, set in a haunted Italian castle, is widely considered the first gothic novel.[94] Thus a link can be discerned between the decline and fall motif and the gothic form from its inception. This pervasive concern with decline continued to yield rich material for popular authors, and by the end of the nineteenth century, the new locus of terror in the gothic revival had become the British imperial capital, now under threat from gothicized barbarians at its gates. As Glover observes, and exposes in Stoker's oeuvre,

[91] Roger Luckhurst (ed.), intro. to *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2005), pp. xiv-xv.
[92] Lord Curzon in a 1907 speech at Birmingham, cited in Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 33.
[93] Kenneth Churchill, *Italy and English Literature 1764–1930* (London: Macmillan, 1980), pp. 3-4.
[94] Ibid., p. 7.

'London was increasingly becoming the symbolic place in the late Victorian and Edwardian imaginaries where boundaries threatened to dissolve'.[95]

The most famous fin-de-siècle gothic invader is undoubtedly Stoker's vampiric Transylvanian count, but the trope recurs throughout the genre. Stopping short of positing full-blown colonial invasion, the inverted, paranoid presumption of a colonial desire for revenge yet structures many of Kipling's gothic short stories, such as his highly unsettling Indian tale of desecration and torture, 'The Mark of The Beast' (1890). Though it is not what he is best known for, Doyle also made a significant contribution to the gothic revival, including many short stories and novellas which turn upon malevolent colonial influences wreaking havoc upon domestic Britain. These include the iconic supernatural Egyptian tale 'Lot No. 249' (1892), in which an ancient Egyptian mummy is revivified in England and used to exact revenge upon unsuspecting Oxford university students.[96] The trope of the gothic invader is also deployed in the works of a whole stable of lesser-known writers like Boothby and Marsh, the vengeful ancient Egyptian priest of Boothby's *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899) and the demonic Egyptian creature of Marsh's *The Beetle* being further notable examples. The plots tend to follow a similar structure turning upon the appearance in England of a sinister supernatural figure from the imperial margins intent on perpetrating some fiendish, revenge-driven scheme to unleash exotic forces of destruction (in the form of mesmerism, plague, vampires, mummies, cults, etc.) upon the imperial homeland. The vengeance imputed to this villainous cohort can be interpreted as having its roots in the inverted logic of invasion paranoia, in which marginalised or subjugated peoples are transformed into aggressors, thus revealing the formative influence of invasion concerns on the fin-de-siècle gothic in underpinning one of its most important tropes. One strand of the fin-de-siècle gothic revival in particular is singled out for examination in chapter two of this study: that of supernatural Egyptian fiction with its cohorts of mysteriously revivified mummies. The investigation of this strand is especially useful for elucidating how colonial events and invasion concerns fuelled the gothic revival because it reveals how numerous tales featuring a threat to imperial Britain from hostile supernatural invaders of Egyptian origin began to make

[95] Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals*, p. 93.
[96] Other similarly structured Doyle tales include *Our Lady of Death* (1887), *The Mystery of Cloomber* (1889) and 'The Brown Hand' (1899).

their appearance contemporaneously with the deepening colonial engagement of Britain in the nominally Ottoman vassal-state of Egypt following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

In parallel with the ranks of literary supernatural invaders threatening the imperial capital were a significant number of foreign criminals who enlivened the pages of the growing numbers of crime and detective tales. The best known proponent of these tales is, of course, Doyle and his case is quite representative of the intersection between coloniality, invasion anxiety and the establishment of generic conventions. On close examination, the same colonial themes and anxieties that abound in Doyle's gothic can be seen to have a formative effect on the canon of work featuring Doyle's greatest contribution to genre fiction, the detective Sherlock Holmes. Recent scholarship has tended to posit a duality comparable to the doubled hybridity of the migrant authors in Doyle's identity, owing to an internal conflict between his support for British imperialism and his Irish heritage and Catholic upbringing; a duality which has been theorised to manifest itself in his predilection for the gothic.[97] But it may also be deployed as an explanation for the intrusion of the colonial into his Holmes tales and particularly for the significant number of invasive foreign villains that populate them, headed by the implicitly-Irish criminal mastermind Professor Moriarty. An appreciable number of the Holmes tales turn upon revenge for a crime committed at the colonial peripheries playing out at the imperial centre – for example, *The Sign of Four* (1890) and 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery' (1891) – and it is significant that though Holmes always solves his cases, this does not always lead to the complete containment of the foreign criminal, as is elaborated in chapter one of this study.

The widespread popularity Holmes achieved, once Doyle adopted the short-story form in the early 1890s, raised the profile of the detective tale greatly. This, coupled with the unexpectedness of Holmes's initial demise in December 1893, created a gap in the literary marketplace which set popular writers working overtime in an attempt to fill it, adapting the conventions of the Holmes stories to produce a corps of new detectives of various kinds, including Shiel's decadent detective Prince Zaleski and Boothby's

[97] See Catherine Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002).

charlatan sleuth Klimo.[98] Though the most frequently-discussed version, the detective tale was not, however, the only form of contemporary crime writing and some authors reworked the detective formula to produce tales focusing on antagonistic criminal characters. These notably include Boothby's series of novels featuring the colonially-charged master criminal Nikola, the main focus of chapter one. An anti-hero who dominated the tales in which he appeared, Nikola was very little hampered in pursuing his diverse range of international criminal activities by the array of amateur English gentleman protagonists who dogged his progress around the world.

Given the critical focus on the detective form, there is an established view that late Victorian crime fiction, particularly as influenced and exemplified by the Holmes canon, was a conservative genre which reassured its middle-class readers that no matter how devious the criminal or horrific the crime, the skilled professional detective would always triumph thus restoring the rule of law and order.[99] As Stephen Knight puts it concerning Holmes in a seminal work on ideology in detective fiction:

> In the Holmes stories ... we find scientistic and rational explanation of a materially known world; the psychic protection of a powerful hero and the exclusion of real physical threats from the plots; ... and above all central bourgeois values which operate through Holmes as the tools of maintaining order and through the victims as the qualities that earn Holmes's care and deserve the correction of disorder about them.[100]

While there is a considerable amount of formal evidence to support this interpretation, crime stories do not always neatly adhere to this pattern and the genre is not reducible to so straightforward a formula. As Clare Clarke argues in her consideration of Arthur Morrison's criminal-cum-detective (and likely model for Klimo) Horace Dorrington, the complexities of the stories featuring this other largely-forgotten anti-hero signal the necessity for a 'critical re-evaluation of schematic or reductive interpretations of the politics of detective fiction produced at this time'.[101] Likewise, the pervasiveness of the

---

[98] For a more extensive list of Holmes's followers, see Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.70-3.
[99] Ian A. Bell rehearses this view in 'Eighteenth-century crime writing', Martin Priestman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.8.
[100] Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980), p. 103.
[101] Clare Clarke, 'Horace Dorrington, Criminal-Detective: Investigating the Re-Emergence of the Rogue in Arthur Morrison's *The Dorrington Deed-Box* (1897)', *Clues*, 28:2, (Fall 2010), p. 9.

colonial concerns of its authors and the predominance of the often uncontainable foreign villain in the genre, which are foregrounded by an investigation of the formative influence of invasion anxiety upon it, also suggest that more cultural work than just reassurance was being performed by the genre.

'New dangers': Imperialism at the fin de siècle

Following on from the overview of the literary context of fin-de-siècle invasion fiction set out in the preceding section, it is time to turn in more detail to the historical factors underlying it and the historiographical view of them that this study adopts. Tuchman's extensive work, *The Proud Tower* (1966), which delineates the domestic, socio-political history of the western world from 1890 to the beginning of World War I, implies in its very title that the causes of the great cataclysm may be sought in the culture of the preceding period. Teleological caveats aside, she rightly points out that, 'A phenomenon of such extended malignance as the Great War does not come out of a Golden Age,' and maintains that while it was a time of confidence and material progress in European countries, it is incorrect to assume 'that doubt and fear, ferment, protest, violence and hate were not equally present.'[102] It is commonplace now to acknowledge that the rate of change, technological and social, during the nineteenth century was rapid, astonishing and unsettling. Scientific and technological developments changed society beyond recognition, leading to industrialisation, urbanisation and alienation; they also contributed to the undermining of traditional religious certainties and the breakdown of accepted social norms concerning class and gender. In this way, as material circumstances improved, a corresponding sense of unease, of fundamental existential angst, also grew. That those living at the end of the century felt that they were experiencing the cumulative effect of this process is attested to by the prevalent contemporary usage of the very term 'fin de siècle'.[103] As historian Paul Hayes summarises: 'In foreign as well as in domestic

[102] Barbara Tuchman, *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World before the War 1890-1914* (1966; London: Papermac, 1997), pp. xiv, xiii.

[103] Nordau, for example, critiques the widespread usage of the term 'fin de siècle' because it encourages millenarian thinking, considering its very currency to be representative of the degenerate fin-de-siècle

affairs the comfortable conservatism of mid-Victorian Britain gave way by the end of the century to an era of dissent, debate, controversy, conflict and, ultimately, the revision of assumptions. The world had changed and Britain had to change with it.'[104]

From a geo-political perspective, despite the fact that there had been peace on western European soil since the last Napoleonic War in 1815 (with the brief exception of the Franco-Prussian War), globally, diplomatic incidents, skirmishes and minor wars, most influenced by colonial factors, were occurring on a regular basis. As Foucault observes, it is in the nature of people to rebel against oppressive regimes that would silence them, and therefore it is unsurprising that the global system of British imperial hegemony would produce counter-insurgency. Thus, while the Victorian era has been portrayed as a time of enduring peace, in reality it was plagued by recurrent 'little wars' as the various nationalist uprisings of subject countries were often designated. One commentator, advocating the necessity for military 'preparedness' during the Second Boer War (1899-1902), revealingly spoke of: 'the numerous conflicts – practically one every year – in which the British Empire has for the past half-century been engaged up and down the globe'.[105] In fact, there were so many uprisings during this time that those in the anti-imperialist minority, like Hobson, considered the term *pax Britannica* 'a grotesque monster of hypocrisy'. Below is an excerpt from his sustained condemnation of 'the new Imperialism' which makes plain the conflictual nature of imperial expansion in practice:

> The decades of Imperialism have been prolific in wars; most ... have been directly motived by aggression of white races upon 'lower races', and have issued in the forcible seizure of territory. Every one of the steps of expansion in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific has been accompanied by bloodshed; each imperialist Power keeps an increasing army available for foreign service; rectification of frontiers, punitive expeditions, and other euphemisms for war are in incessant progress. The *pax Britannica*, always an impudent falsehood, has become of recent years a grotesque monster of hypocrisy; along our Indian

---

mentality that he reviles; Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (1892; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), p.2.

[104] Paul Hayes, 'British Foreign Policy 1867-1900', T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (ed.s), *Later Victorian Britain 1867-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 173.

[105] Robert Machray, 'Our Reserve of Generals', *The Windsor Magazine*, 12 (June 1900), p. 27.

> frontiers, in West Africa, in the Soudan, in Uganda, in Rhodesia fighting has been well-nigh incessant.[106]

Amongst the colonial conflicts that most impacted the later-nineteenth century British popular consciousness could be listed the Indian Mutiny, the ongoing rebellion in Egypt and Sudan, the two Anglo-Boer Wars, the Far Eastern crisis and ensuing Boxer Rebellion, and the long-running quandary posed by Irish nationalism.[107] Certain of these events are treated of in some detail at chapter level in this study to elucidate their imbrication with specific forms of invasion fiction. Chapter two takes in the history of the Islamic-nationalist uprisings in Egypt and Sudan, touching upon the impact of the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and the doomed campaign of General Charles Gordon in Sudan in 1884, and analysing its relationship with literary representations of vengeful Egypt. Chapter three discusses the Far Eastern context of the Anglo-Chinese Opium Wars, the worldwide Chinese diaspora, the late-1890s European scramble for Chinese concessions and the violent Boxer Rebellion as it bore upon yellow peril fiction. Chapter one explores aspects of the less overtly conflictual history (at least in terms of open warfare) of Australian colonial settlement, focusing on settler fears of contamination by racial others in the form of indigenous Australians and Chinese and Pacific Island immigrants and some literary responses to these. Other events that challenged the mid-Victorian sense of security and superiority, such as the paradigm-shaking rebellion in India, the cycle of incidents arising from Irish nationalism in its militant and political guises, and the initially-disastrous Second Boer War are considered briefly here. This high-level explication of the popular understanding of the volatile imperial context aims to underpin the analysis that follows in the subsequent chapters of the relationship between the texts under consideration and the colonial events that they address. Many of the events in question, such as the iconic 'martyrdom' of Gordon at Khartoum in 1884 or

[106] Hobson, *Imperialism*, pp. 132-3. It should be observed that Hobson had no quarrel with 'Colonialism' as he distinguished it from 'Imperialism'; the former involving what he deemed the 'creation of free white democracies' in Canada, Australasia and South Africa (131-2).

[107] This does not set out to be a comprehensive list of significant contemporary imperial events, for example, difficulties in the Balkan region and rival American activity in the Far East are not considered. It is, instead, a brief analysis of those events that either made a significant contribution to the rise of jingoism and new imperialist sentiment, or of those that directly influenced the texts under consideration in the subsequent chapters.

the disproportionately-celebrated relief of the Boer-besieged British in Mafeking in 1900 raised popular imperialist sentiment to a fever pitch, while at the same time exposing the truly tenuous nature of British imperial authority in practice.

The severe shock imparted by the unexpectedness and ferocity of the Indian Mutiny, as noted previously in relation to Chesney's colonial background, had fundamentally disturbed and disrupted Britain's understanding of its imperial endeavour. When the Indian sepoy regiments within the British Indian Army turned against their British commanders, it 'seemed to be a hellish inversion of the cosmic order', *The Times*'s correspondent commenting that its 'peculiar aggravation' was 'that the deed was done by a subject race – by black men who dared to shed the blood of their masters'.[108] Colonial subjects rather than being grateful for Britain's tutelage, as imperialist discourse upon empire's civilising mission suggested they should, were in fact revealed to be forcefully opposed to it. The brutality of the Indian rebels at the end of their notorious besiegement of Cawnpore (Kanpur), where surrendering British troops were slaughtered and British women and child hostages massacred and thrown down a well, sent shockwaves around the imperial world. A relatively atypical bloodthirsty episode in the overall conflict, it spawned many other atrocity stories, mostly unsubstantiated, but consumed with equal horror in the imperial capital.[109] Indeed the violent nature of the Indian opposition was so repeatedly exaggerated and so insistently cast as treacherous brutality as to produce a master narrative of native violence that could be used as a lens through which to view all subsequent colonial conflict, potential and actual.

As well as justifying the extreme severity with which the Mutiny was eventually quelled and the subsequent transfer of power in India from the East India Company entirely to the British Crown, the master narrative of native brutality fed inversion and invasion fears that not only might colonial subjects overthrow their rulers, but that when they did the results would be unspeakable. The impact of the Mutiny was palpable long after its immediate end, continuing to colour responses to ongoing imperial developments

[108] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 132; and *The Times*, cited ibid., pp. 132-3.

[109] See for example Jenny Sharpe who observes 'the historical production of a colonial discourse on the native assault of English women in India', in which the largely unsubstantiated reports on the treatment of English women by 'Mutineers' were used to justify the brutality of British counterinsurgency measures in 'The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter-Insurgency', *Colonial Discourse and Post -Colonial Theory: A Reader*, Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (ed.s) (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), p. 222.

around the world and also to underpin the excessive scenarios of mass death depicted in fin-de-siècle fictions of invasion. Late century fears concerning the possibility of a Russian invasion into British India across the northwest frontier, for example, were heightened by the supposition that this would immediately provoke a second Indian rebellion.[110] Indeed the outbreak of a second rebellion was an ever-present possibility to those concerned with the administration of India. As Wagner has documented, in 1894 the Mutiny-tinged misinterpretation of a transient local practice in northern India kicked off a small-scale second Mutiny scare that received considerable press coverage in England. It was widely publicised by an alarmist article in *The Spectator* (a paper with a flare for the admonitory as we will see concerning the origins of the yellow peril fear in chapter three) which insisted that very imminently, 'something against ... the intruding white man ... is about to be attempted'.[111] As Wagner has shown, in the ensuing debate, even those who argued against *The Spectator*'s interpretation – that the mud-daubing in question betokened an *immediate* outbreak – still fully countenanced the likelihood of a second Mutiny at some future date.[112] The issue gained sufficient traction to incur debate in the House of Commons and it is not impossible that the spectre of impending Mutiny-scale native violence, in conjunction with the other factors outlined earlier such as the re-issue of *The Battle of Dorking*, on some level contributed to the 1890s boom in invasion fiction.

Certainly the 1890s saw the publication of several Mutiny novels and fiction dealing with contemporary Indian settings was pervaded by references to the conflict.[113] Doyle's second Holmes tale, *The Sign of Four*, loosely fits this category, turning upon crimes that occurred in India during the Mutiny returning to haunt the descendents of those involved in 1880s London. Written in 1890, more than thirty years after the conflict, it still smarts with outrage at the perceived betrayal by the 'Mutineers': 'One month India lay as still and peaceful to all appearance, as Surrey or Kent; the next there were two hundred

[110] Kirkwood, 'The Impact of Fiction on Public Debate in late Victorian Britain', p. 12.
[111] 'Next Week in India', *The Spectator* (5 May 1894), cited in Wagner, '"Treading Upon Fires"', p. 160.
[112] Wagner, '"Treading Upon Fires"', p. 179.
[113] Brantlinger's survey of literary representations of the Mutiny, from its immediate aftermath to E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), includes several published in the 1890s, *Rule of Darkness*, chap. 7.

thousand black devils let loose, and the country was a perfect hell.'[114] The comparison with the home counties here is particularly significant, with its indirect suggestion, echoing Eden's famine fantasy, of such events being conceivable at the imperial centre. And while the novel alludes to the colonial greed which was the underlying cause of the rebellion, this in no way legitimates the position of 'the black fiends, with their red coats [British army uniforms] still on their backs, dancing and howling'.[115] E. M. Forster's far more ambivalent, disillusioned rumination upon British rule on the subcontinent, set out in *A Passage to India* (1924) and based on his experiences there in 1912-13 and 1921, further demonstrates the persistence of Mutiny habits of mind or the '"Mutiny"-motif', as Wagner calls it.[116] In times of even the slightest threat the Anglo-Indians in the text immediately fall back upon the most negative stereotypes of Indians and deploy the Mutiny as a cipher by which to decode the significance of events. As Mr McBryde, Superintendent of Police and 'old India hand', explains: to understand the true nature of Indian behaviour, 'Read any of the Mutiny records; which, rather than the Bhagavad Gita, should be your bible in this country'.[117] This event, or at least the popular understanding of it, still resonated so strongly more than half a century later, that Anglo-Indian society immediately interprets the alleged assault on Adela Quested as a continuum of presumed innate Indian savagery.[118]

Though, as Wagner points out, British rule in India was never under serious threat until 1919, after 1857 it was always undermined by the prevalence of the 'Mutiny'-motif in its own discourse: 'Perceived threats were invariably taken more seriously than the actual circumstances warranted and thus affected colonial policies in profound ways'.[119] In this unwarranted response can be seen the fundamental contradiction at the heart of imperialism, a dissonance discernible in the discourse between confidence and paranoia, expansion and collapse, jingoism and invasion, a phenomenon that this study hopes to bring out into clearer relief. The same response, for example, is evident in late century

[114] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four* (1890), reprinted in *Sherlock Holmes Selected Stories* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998) p. 179.
[115] Ibid., p. 180.
[116] Wagner, '"Treading Upon Fires"', p. 169.
[117] E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924; London: Penguin, 2005), p. 158.
[118] Sharpe, 'The Unspeakable Limits of Rape', p. 236.
[119] Wagner, '"Treading Upon Fires"', pp. 191-6, 192.

attitudes to China, which was increasingly cast as a locus of peril at the same time that European imperial power made steady inroads upon it, as discussed in chapter three.

Another major source of comparable disruption to the progress of late-nineteenth century imperialism emanated from that part of the empire closest to home, Ireland. Like those of the Mutiny, the effects of the brutal famine suffered by Ireland in the late 1840s reverberated across the century, belying the theory of the empire's civilising mission, fuelling domestic Irish nationalism in its militant and political guises, and spread anti-British sentiment across the globe in the resulting Irish diaspora, leading even to fears that Ireland specifically 'would be the nemesis of the Empire'.[120] Mike Davis, in his chronicle of imperial atrocity, *Late Victorian Holocausts* (2001), observes that the Irish famine was one in a wider cycle of drought and famine that characterised the imperial century and included those encountered by Eden in India. He describes how 'colonial expansion uncannily syncopated the rhythms of natural disaster and epidemic disease', with an imperial land-rush following each global drought.[121] In the case of the Irish famine, while the laissez-faire majority chose to characterise the famine as an evil necessary to 'civilise' overpopulated Ireland or a just punishment for Irish 'laziness', the views of the vocal and outraged minority, who advocated intervention to properly relieve the catastrophe, were also publicised.[122] At the end of the century two cycles of devastating famine again broke out in India, the horrors caused by the first drought being documented widely in the English press, though reporting of the second cycle was overshadowed by the Second Boer War. The first famine of 1896-8, which overlapped with the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee, had been described in the world press as 'the famine of the century', twelve to sixteen million being the death toll generally reported.[123] To the newspaper-literate reader of the day, it must have been clear that mass death, both accidental and organised, was an incontrovertible fact of colonial life, an inadmissible realisation which perhaps found oblique expression in the inverted fantasies of invasion fiction.

---

[120] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, pp. 111, 122.
[121] Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts* (London: Verso, 2001), p. 12.
[122] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, pp. 118-20. James H. Murphy, *Ireland: A Social, Cultural and Literary History, 1791-1891* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003), pp. 101-03.
[123] Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, p. 158.

The mid-century also had seen the outbreak of violent counter-colonial struggle in Ireland, one rebellion taking place during the famine in 1848 and another, Fenian, uprising occurring in 1867; both were minor and resulted in utter military failure but gave some impetus to the nationalist movement.[124] In the late century the parliamentary and 'physical-force' pursuit of Irish nationalism remained a thorn in the empire's side, the impact of which cannot be underestimated. T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day consider 'the Irish question', as it was known, as, 'one, perhaps even the, principal difficulty of the age'.[125] According to O' Day, during the late Victorian period, the Irish question received more time in parliament than any other single issue, including working class grievances, the empire or the demands of the Nonconformists.[126] Gladstone's first Irish Home Rule Bill precipitated the split of the Liberal party in 1886, with opposing party members such as Joseph Chamberlain defecting to the Conservative party. Chamberlain, the committed imperialist, while not opposed to some kind of devolution, believed that the proposed end to the parliamentary union between Britain and Ireland would be disruptive to the empire as a whole. In 1893 Gladstone's second attempt to have his Home Rule Bill passed was vetoed by an unprecedented turnout of the House of Lords.[127] And in 1895, after Gladstone's retirement and the election of a Conservative government under Lord Salisbury, *The Times* described Home Rule as that 'germ planted by Mr. Gladstone in our political life which has threatened to poison the whole organism', and evinced relief that it was now disposed of.[128] In addition to parliamentary agitation for Home Rule, the 1880s were an active decade for those engaged in more militant forms of struggle, witnessing the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish, Chief Secretary for Ireland, in Dublin in 1882; tenant-landlord conflict throughout Ireland during the long-running Land Wars; and the 1881-5 dynamite campaign waged by the Fenians in England, which

[124] Murphy, *Ireland: A Social, Cultural and Literary History*, pp. 89; Joseph Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848-1918*, 3rd edn (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2008), pp. 58-9.
[125] T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (ed.s), intro. to *Later Victorian Britain 1867-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 10.
[126] Alan O'Day, 'The Irish Question', T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (ed.s), *Later Victorian Britain 1867-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 239.
[127] Tuchman, *The Proud Tower*, p. 388.
[128] *The Times*, 17 July 1895, cited in Tuchman, *The Proud Tower*, p. 12. Even in the midst of the attempt by a subsequent Liberal government of 1906 to remove the traditional veto of the House of Lords, the Lords attempted to tag a rider onto the Act to exempt Home Rule from legislation that could be passed without their consent. In 1911 after the Lords' veto was finally abolished, a Home Rule Bill was again introduced, and failed this time due to the Ulster rebellion, provoking yet another parliamentary crisis.

targeted such London institutions as the Underground rail system and the House of Commons.[129] This agitation not only formed an additional front of violent counter-colonial opposition worryingly close to home, but also, via the dynamite campaign, brought grave concerns for personal security right into the very heart of the empire.

At the end of the nineteenth century one of the many volatile colonial situations in Africa exploded into full-scale military conflict: this was the long-anticipated Second Boer War, breaking out in 1899, and raising the societal tide of jingoism to still further heights before its conclusion three years later. In 1881 the First Boer War had ended with the unexpected defeat of superior British forces at the Battle of Majuba Hill in Britain's recently-annexed Transvaal territory and the subsequent retrocession of the Transvaal to Boer control. 'Remember Majuba' became the rallying cry of imperialists who wanted to redress this humiliation, and trouble between Boer and British colonists had brewed ever since.[130] To the horror of the British the first months of the second conflict fell far short of this ambition, resulting in 'Black Week' in December 1899 – a series of defeats so devastating that Tuchman posits: 'With Black Week went the last time Britons felt themselves unquestionably masters of the earth.'[131] This demoralisation was what precipitated the unprecedented and well-documented orgiastic public celebrations after Field-Marshall Lord Roberts relieved the besieged town of Mafeking in May 1900 and the war started to turn for the British. Despite these celebrations, the war was not without its critics – for the colonial greed it was predicated on, the barbaric methods adopted, and its great cost to the treasury.[132] Irish nationalists, who habitually opposed Chamberlain's imperial policy during his time as Colonial Secretary from 1895 to 1903, 'openly sympathised with the Boers' militant opposition to Britain', optimistically deeming it the beginning of the end of empire.[133] Another curious by-product of the war was the intensification of degeneration anxiety it engendered owing to the difficulty of enlisting physically-able recruits from London's disadvantaged lower class population, suggesting,

[129] See Niall Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 2-3, 19, 110.
[130] Tuchman, *The Proud Tower*, p. 21; Chris Williams (ed.), *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 89.
[131] Tuchman, *The Proud Tower*, pp. 57-8.
[132] Williams, *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 89.
[133] Ronald Quinault, 'Joseph Chamberlain: A Reassessment', T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (ed.s), *Later Victorian Britain 1867-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 82.

as Ledger and Luckhurst observe, that, 'The advancing front of empire was threatened from the very centre.'[134] Eventually successfully concluded for Britain in June 1902, the major legacy of the Second Boer War, in fact, was the exposure of the weakness of Britain's military forces against a well-armed opposition, ensuring the prevalent fears of degeneration and decline continued to flourish in the Edwardian era.

As per the imaginative response to the Indian Mutiny, it goes without saying that an event of the magnitude of the Second Boer War did not fail to elicit a narrative treatment of its own. Indeed, scanning the 'Monthly Report of the Wholesale Book Trade' sections of that barometer of the book industry, *The Bookman*, evinces a strong correspondence between colonial events in general and book sales on related topics. This was a relationship to which the journal was keenly attuned, commenting in 1896 (during a slack period): 'Any publication dealing with the colonies, or foreign parts generally, is still eagerly purchased, and several are being published'.[135] The South African debacle, as *The Bookman* unfailingly observed, was an event that provoked a deluge of topical accounts, fictional and non-fictional, including a Boer War-themed invasion serial by Louis Tracy called *The Invaders*.[136] The journal's leading item in January 1900, when the British public were still in a state of shock at 'Black Week', ran as follows: 'Booksellers are saying our defeats will considerably depreciate the war books which are to follow this unhappy business in South Africa. The Public, it is urged, do not care to re-read the finest descriptions of our defeats'.[137] While in April and May 1900, after the British began to gain the upper hand in the Boer War, it observed buoyant sales in the 'vast amount of literature created by the war'.[138] As many invasion fictions, like Tracy's *The Invaders*, extrapolated their scenarios of mass death and global conflict from such troubling current

[134] Ledger and Luckhurst, *The Fin de Siècle*, p. xvi.

[135] 'Monthly Report of the Wholesale Book Trade', *The Bookman*, 10:58 (July 1896), p. 104. An influential literary trade periodical, *The Bookman* was set up in 1891 in response to the expansion and diversification of the literary marketplace.

[136] *The Invaders* was serialised from March to August 1900 in *Pearson's Weekly* magazine. Tracy's invasion fiction is expanded upon in more detail in chapter three.

[137] 'News Notes', *The Bookman*, 17:100 (Jan 1900), p. 103. The 'Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade' section of this issue was subtitled 'The War and the Book Trade', and while noting a war-related decline in general book sales, it somewhat contradicted the issue's leader with the assertion that, 'the war has created a literature of its own, which is much sought after' (107).

[138] 'The War and the Book Trade', *The Bookman*, 18:104 (May 1900), pp. 37-8; see also 'The War and the Book Trade', *The Bookman*, 18:103 (Apr 1900), p. 4. Highlighting the major impact of the Boer War on the publishing industry, in these issues the long-running 'Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade' sections had had their titles entirely changed to 'The War and the Book Trade'.

events then taking place across the empire, they too tapped into this general interest in colonial events documented by *The Bookman*.

From his high-level perspective on the farrago of factors that contributed to British imperial decline, Brendon highlights the detrimental effect that events such as the Indian Mutiny, the Irish famine and the Boer Wars, just discussed, had on imperial confidence by the late nineteenth century and the tendency for the growing number of imperial crises at this period to be interpreted as warning signs of the empire's doom. This provoked the anxious, defensive mindset, expressed so succinctly in Victoria's admonition to Disraeli, envisioning, as it does, Britain's entire colonial holding as a locus of threat. As Brendon puts it: 'In the opinion of increasing numbers of Queen Victoria's subjects during the last two decades of her reign, imperial protection, consolidation and even expansion were essential to keep decadence at bay. The Empire ... must rise to avert decline'.[139] Vide leading Victorian orientalist, Richard Burton, advocating imperial belligerence and 'territorial aggrandizement,' with his bald assertion that, 'a race either progresses or retrogrades, either increases or diminishes,' it cannot stand still.[140] Arata emphasises Holbrook Jackson's 1913 study *The Eighteen Nineties* which characterises the second half of the decade as the time when the new imperialism degenerated into jingoism in response to the momentum of expansion and corollary fears of decline.[141] From this perspective, the strident new imperialism of this period can be interpreted as a reaction to fears of imperial decline – to paraphrase Bhabha, as anxious as it was assertive.[142] Expressive of this contradiction is an ultra-jingoistic piece in the family-oriented *Windsor* magazine on the manufacture of 'Tommy's Weapons' for the Boer War. Here, mixed with approving and bloodthirsty visions of the rifles, swords and bayonets in use, runs a counter-narrative of unease conveyed in the repeated reference to imperial battles past and future including 'charg[ing] a pack of savage Dervishes [Sudanese rebels], or

[139] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 165.
[140] Richard Burton, preface to *First Footsteps in East Africa* (1856), cited in Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 168.
[141] Arata, *Fictions of Loss*, p. 5.
[142] Homi K. Bhabha, 'The other question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism' in *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 100.

rush[ing] headlong to capture another Delhi' – this latter an implicit second Mutiny reference.[143]

Said's application, in *Culture and Imperialism*, of Immanuel Wallerstein's argument concerning the irrationality of capital accumulation to imperial accumulation helps explain the escalating strain posed by the ever-expanding empire: 'its additive, acquisitive gains continue unchecked even though its costs – in maintaining the process, in paying for wars to protect it, ... *in living in an atmosphere of permanent crisis* – are exorbitant, not worth the gains.'[144] And certainly the British empire did not stand still: in the last three decades of the nineteenth century its land mass quadrupled in size and its population grew by eighty-eight million, as it gained control, directly or indirectly, of Egypt, the Sudan, large portions of East, West, South and Central Africa, Malaysia, North Borneo, Upper Burma, Chinese ports, Afghan-border territories, Kuwait, Bahrain, Cyprus, the New Territories, and several Pacific islands.[145] In self-congratulatory tones, the President of the International Congress of Orientalists in his 1892 London address exulted: 'It is simply dazzling to think of the few thousands of Englishmen ruling the millions of human beings in India, in Africa, in America, and in Australia'.[146] However, arguably, implicit within this jingoist jubilance, is an acknowledgement of just how very precariously imperial power is situated. Though new territories were incorporated into the empire at an almost exponential rate, the geo-political climate in which this growth occurred was far from clement.

Pro-imperialists such as the eminent historian Sir John Seeley were well aware of the perils attendant on expansion, Seeley warning in his celebrated *The Expansion of England* (1883):

> The prodigious greatness to which it [Britain] has attained makes the question of its future infinitely important and at the same time most anxious, because it is evident that

[143] George A. Wade, 'Where "Tommy's" Weapons Are Made and Tested', *The Windsor Magazine*, 11 (Mar 1900), pp. 462-9; 468.
[144] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 406; my emphasis.
[145] Hayes, 'British Foreign Policy', p. 163; Williams, *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 61.
[146] Cited in Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley and LA (CA): University of California Press, 1991), pp. 165-6.

> the great colonial extension of our state exposes it to *new dangers*, from which in its ancient insular insignificance it was free'.[147]

In 1840 Britain had controlled nearly one-third of global trade and up until the 1870s it was the most obviously wealthy country in the world, but by 1880 it controlled less than one-quarter of global trade.[148] As Hayes points out, 'The acquisition of a large empire began to seem something of a mixed blessing once the economic and strategic dominance of Britain was no longer self-evident'.[149] The economic benefits of the empire over the responsibilities it entailed, both moral and martial, began to be questioned, and threats from having to spread military resources thinly across the ever-expanding colonies and from imperial rivalries with other great powers became apparent. Kipling's famous 'Recessional', written as a counterpoint to the hubris and jingoism attendant upon the 1897 Jubilee, warns, amidst biblically-inflected visions of decline, of the practical dangers of the dispersal of Britain's military resources: 'Far-called, our navies melt away; / On dune and headland sinks the fire: / Lo, all our pomp of yesterday / Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!'[150]

In addition to the continual, to use Victoria's phrase, colonial dissent and resultant strain on military resources, imperial rivalries caused Britain to face hostile relations with the other Western powers throughout the world. There was conflict with Russia in the Balkans, the Middle East, Central Asia on the Afghan border and the Far East on China's coast; France was a rival in Egypt, the Sudan, much of the rest of Africa and South East Asia; Germany was ascendant in Europe, and, following 'the Scramble for Africa' and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, had gained territories in Tanganyika, South-West Africa, former Ottoman lands, and was encroaching into China; and the newest imperial power, the U.S.A., was starting to play the 'great game' successfully in the Far East and Latin America. Again Hobson's summary of the dangers attendant upon the practice of imperialism is apt:

---

[147] John R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (1883; London: Macmillan, 1914), p. 2, my emphasis; online at Internet Archive, http:archive.org/details/expansionofengla00seeluoft, 15 Aug 2013.
[148] Hayes, 'British Foreign Policy, p. 160.
[149] Ibid., p. 153.
[150] Rudyard Kipling, 'Recessional' (1897), collected in Rudyard Kipling, *The Five Nations* (London: Methuen, 1903), pp. 214-5.

> Although the great imperialist Powers have kept their hands off one another ... the self-restraint has been costly and precarious. ... [T]he main cause of the vast armaments which are draining the resources of most European countries is their conflicting interests in territorial and commercial expansion. Where thirty years ago there existed one sensitive spot in our relations with France, or Germany, or Russia, there are a dozen now; diplomatic strains are of almost monthly occurrence between Powers with African or Chinese interests, and the chiefly business nature of the national antagonisms renders them more dangerous...[151]

Not without reason, British statesmen feared that systems of alliances were being formed against them by their European neighbours and some began to argue for closer relations with one of the European powers.[152] Chamberlain, arguing against the long-standing policy of 'strict isolation', advocated some form of European alliance lest the 'jingoes... drive us into quarrel, with all the world at the same time'[153] – a scenario that was frequently rehearsed in many invasion novels.

Though an ever-present concern for an island nation engaged in long-running global territorial aggrandisement, given this fraught geopolitical environment, it is reasonable to characterise the period from 1890 to 1914 as one of mounting paranoia in England concerning the threat of imminent conflict and potential invasion, and to view the practice of imperialism as a key cause. Interestingly Said characterises the discourse of orientalism, which was one of the cornerstones of nineteenth century imperialism, as 'a form of paranoia', different from ordinary historical knowledge based on its insistence on dividing the world into two opposing halves.[154] This kind of thinking naturally led to a preoccupation with maintaining borders and a fear of incursions, and the myriad of negative consequences potentially arising from the imperial project fuelled the societal dread of invasion in a number of ways. Increasing immigration from the colonies into Britain led to popular fears of being overrun; the disclosure of colonial atrocities and rebellions in the press inspired the dread of reprisals on home soil; and European rivalry

[151] Hobson, *Imperialism*, p. 133.
[152] J. M. Goudswaard, 'Some aspects of the end of Britain's "splendid isolation", 1898-1904', unpublished doctoral thesis, 8 May 1952, pp. 12, 23.
[153] Joseph Chamberlain in a speech to the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association, cited in 'Mr Chamberlain in Birmingham', *The Times*, 14 May 1898, p. 12.
[154] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 72.

over colonial possessions engendered fears, not unfounded, of global war on a hither-to unseen scale. Tuchman, for example, asserts that in Britain by the early 1900s, '[t]he idea of invasion became almost a psychosis.'[155] Brendon argues that in Britain '[b]efore the Great War it was a commonplace that "We are in the position of Imperial Rome when the Barbarians were thundering at the frontiers"', as the *Windsor* cartoon amply attests (fig. 1).[156] Brantlinger similarly observes that 'Much imperialist writing after about 1880 treats the Empire as a barricade against a new barbarian invasion.'[157] The pervasiveness of the invasion threat is further attested to by the foreword of the inaugural edition of the *Windsor* itself, which included the opening chapter of Boothby's first Nikola novel. It positioned itself in the literary marketplace with a tirade against the 'New Woman', which it justified by citing the superior physical strength of men 'who must defend the country against invasion.'[158]

Theorising invasion fiction

Given the emphasis placed on the importance of the socio-historical context of imperialism's 'new dangers' to the development of the popular literary phenomenon of invasion fiction, the mode of critical analysis adopted by this study may be characterised as a theoretically-informed historicism; or 'theoretically-engaged historical criticism', to use Jonathan Culler's useful description of the 'return to history' adopted by many current strands of literary criticism.[159] While it shares many assumptions and similarities of approach with certain of these historicist movements, this study does not, however, fall purely within the remit of any one school, nor are its readings solely the product of any one theory. Central to its approach, though, is Montrose's insistence on what he terms the

[155] Tuchman, *The Proud Tower*, p. 380. Eby comparably uses the term 'invasion neurosis' to describe the level of invasion paranoia in fin-de-siècle Britain in his examination of its manifestation in militaristic popular fiction, *The Road to Armageddon*, p. 11.
[156] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 226.
[157] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 230.
[158] 'A Foreword', *The Windsor Magazine*, 1 (Jan 1895), p. 1.
[159] Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 129.

'historicity of texts', or the historical specificity of cultural production.[160] This is a condition ably articulated by Salman Rushdie in introducing his historically-charged *Midnight's Children* (1980): 'Like all novels [it] is a product of its moment in history, touched and shaped by its time in ways which its author cannot wholly know'.[161] Hence this study's focus on the relevant aspects of the troubled imperial context which had a formative influence on the process by which popular authors with colonial connections harnessed their peripheral perspectives to create bestselling narratives of invasion.

For Montrose the 'reciprocal relationship between the discursive and material domains' implies that literature is both socially produced and socially productive.[162] This Foucauldian view of the discursive construction of history implies that literary works are implicated in the power-structures of their times, and contribute to the construction of contemporary discursive formations. A related premise, and one most often associated with Stephen Greenblatt, is that any subversion or dissent expressed through literary works is ultimately contained by them and only acts to reinforce the existing power relations of the time.[163] This latter premise is challenged by the cultural materialist approach of Sinfield, who emphasises both the relevance of the material historical to the text and the capacity of textual representations to disrupt the dominant discourse. According to Sinfield, 'The historical conditions in which it [the text] is being deployed are decisive'; what he considers them to be decisive *upon* is the potential of a literary text to be subversive, or dissident, to use his preferred term.[164] While the debate between the containment and dissidence models of literature is beyond the scope of this study, it is nonetheless informed by Sinfield's assertion that in the very representation of social struggle, of retributive colonial invasion in this case, though the ruling order may be ultimately restored at the end of the narrative, dissidence is enacted and the dominant discourse disrupted: 'Even a text that aspires to contain a subordinate perspective must

[160] Louis Montrose, 'Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture', in H. Aram Veeser (ed.), *The New Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 20. Montrose's reciprocal concern for 'the textuality of history', or promotion of historical texts within the work of literary criticism to a position of equal consideration with the literary, is not an approach followed here.
[161] Salman Rushdie, 2006 Preface to *Midnight's Children* (London: Vintage, 2008), xix.
[162] Montrose, 'Professing the Renaissance', p. 23.
[163] This position is outlined in the essay 'Invisible Bullets' in *Shakespearian Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).
[164] Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), p. 49.

first bring it into visibility; even to misrepresent, one must present.'[165] Hence the suggestion can be made that the invasion theme prevalent across a broad range of fin-de-siècle popular literary genres not only mirrored existing invasion anxiety, but also amplified and even provoked it by encouraging already-mounting jingoistic, militaristic and xenophobic social tendencies.

The period of concern for the historicist schools has tended to be the Renaissance, to effect 'a refiguring of the socio-cultural field in which canonical Renaissance literature and dramatic works were originally produced'.[166] Clearly this project's historical period is considerably later and hence its theoretical approach necessarily intersects with postcolonial theory, which includes nineteenth century imperialism as an area of concern. (This is in as much as postcolonial theory is consistent with a historicist approach as is briefly discussed below.) As already outlined in the section on 'Colonial authors and the double voice of the call to arms', the postcolonial understanding of hybridity helps to suggest why the fiction of invasion had such resonance for emigrant colonial authors. It is also worthwhile observing that while much work has been done from a postcolonial perspective to reread canonical works of the colonial period, and similarly to engage with the more recent works of indigenous authors of formerly colonised countries, less attention has been paid to the writings of white or settler colonial authors of the colonial period as a group, or to their role in narrating the colonial experience for contemporary metropolitan audiences.[167] In its investigation of the fin-de-siècle migrant white colonial call to arms, then, this study should help to partially address this gap. In theorising the postcolonial period, many critics, including Bhabha, view the contemporary migrant as the archetype of postcolonial identity, with a formative role in the cultural politics of the modern metropolis.[168] And Said by extension observes the potential challenge to the modern metropolitan system posed by the exilic, marginal viewpoint of the émigré

[165] Ibid., p. 48.
[166] Montrose, 'Professing the Renaissance', p. 17.
[167] Said touches upon this concern in his analysis of French colonial author Albert Camus's works 'as a metropolitan transfiguration of the colonial dilemma', *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 223. However this is in the context of a single author, at the end of the colonial period, and is chiefly concerned with Camus's inability to be reconciled with the process of decolonization.
[168] John McLeod (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 183.

consciousness.[169] This again resonates with the admonitory role posited by this study for the white colonial migrant author in the fin-de-siècle imperial metropolis. That the occurrence of colonial migrancy had impacted the nineteenth century metropolitan consciousness is attested to in Doyle's first Holmes novel in a telling observation voiced by Dr Watson, who, embittered by his own colonial experience, designates London 'that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the empire are irresistibly drained.'[170]

From a high-level conceptual perspective this study shares the emphasis placed on the bi-directionality of the imperial project by later postcolonial theory, as opposed to the more one-way view propounded initially in Said's founding text, *Orientalism*. Though Said convincingly elaborates the role of the Western discursive formation of orientalism in facilitating Europe's hegemony over its colonies, as this study argues, implicit in orientalism and in the wider discourse of imperialism, is a lurking sense of the dangers inherent in their practical application. As Stuart Ward puts it, speaking of the security and invasion fears of the loyal Australian colonies, 'unswerving faith in imperial certainties coexisted with residual anxieties about the fragile edifice of the British world'.[171] And though Said's account focuses on the discourse as a form of power, as already mentioned, he further characterises orientalism as 'a form of paranoia', and acknowledges in passing that the orient was habitually represented as a locus of danger as well as delight.[172] Many later theorists pick up on this area of concern and reappraise *Orientalism*'s account of the coloniser's agency as too monolithically powerful and the coloniser's identity as too unitary, arriving at a relationship between colonised and coloniser that is far more ambivalent.[173] As discussed previously in the section on the double voice of the colonial author, the contradictions inherent in colonial discourse which Bhabha theorises suggest that the coloniser is less secure, both psychically and politically, than *Orientalism*

[169] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. 403-4.
[170] Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1999), pp. 5-6.
[171] Stuart Ward, 'Security: Defending Australia's Empire', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 257.
[172] Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 167, 188, 237.
[173] It should be acknowledged that *Orientalism* does countenance bi-directionality in some respects – it allows for dissent and paranoia arising from the subjugation of colonised peoples, and to a degree has been misread as being overly monolithic.

implies. Applying this to the analysis of invasion narratives, it can be argued that if the thrust of postcolonial theorising since *Orientalism* has been to view imperial relationships as more than unidirectional, then the literary invasion motif fits conceptually with this model, revealing, as it does, the deep-seated fear of the agency of the colonised marginally present within colonial discourse. From this perspective, the fiction of invasion can thus be viewed as one instance of how their tightly-bound relationship with the colonised had an effect upon the culture of the colonisers.

It is important to acknowledge that later critiques of *Orientalism* discredit neither the illumination that it has shed upon the functioning of this discursive formation, nor its sustained examination of the role of literature within discourse, which substantiates the view of literature as productive. In constructing his argument, Said firstly asserts that 'knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control'.[174] Then, in outlining the various formats in which that information resided, he observes that in addition to the systematic knowledge of science and the academy 'was added a sizable body of literature produced by novelists, poets, translators and gifted travellers'.[175] He elaborates that as well as 'a positive doctrine about the Orient', orientalism was also 'an area of concern defined by', amongst others, 'readers of novels and accounts of exotic adventure'.[176] And, finally, in relating orientalism to nineteenth century imperialism, he asserts that 'Orientalism reinforced, and was reinforced by, the certain knowledge that Europe or the West literally commanded the vastly greater part of the earth's surface'.[177] Said's articulation of how orientalism operated upon and through a spectrum of cultural productions, including 'travel books, books of exploration, fantasy, exotic description',[178] which were fundamentally tied to the material-historical circumstances of their production, is thus highly applicable to the study of nineteenth century popular fiction (a category of literature which he generally overlooks) and in particular to the analysis of the fiction of invasion.

[174] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 36.
[175] Ibid., p. 40.
[176] Ibid., p. 203.
[177] Ibid., p. 41
[178] Ibid., p. 202.

Said's later *Culture and Imperialism*, which shares the bi-directional focus of later postcolonial theory, deepens the investigation of the links between discourse and culture, positing the intrinsic relationship between the culture of the colonisers and the practice of imperialism, 'between the prolonged and sordid cruelty of such practices as slavery, ... racial oppression, and imperial subjection on the one hand, and the poetry, fiction, and philosophy of the society that engages in these practices on the other'.[179] Said specifically theorises a reciprocity between the progress of the imperial project and the rise of the novel as the dominant literary form in the nineteenth century. This is envisaged as a cyclical process by which the social structures enabled by the possession of imperial holdings underpin the social and moral values of the novel, which in turn reflect and augment the values of that same imperial society: 'Without empire ... there is no European novel as we know it, and indeed if we study the impulses that give rise to it, we shall see the far from accidental convergence between the patterns of narrative authority constitutive of the novel on the one hand, and, on the other, a complex ideological configuration underlying the tendency to imperialism.'[180]

Said's insistence on imperialism as 'the salient fact' of nineteenth century British society, discussed previously, helps to illuminate how deeply fears of its negative consequences, of war and invasion, could affect that society. Likewise the emphasis on the mutual implication of the novel and imperialism, coupled with the observation that by the end of the nineteenth century empire had become 'a central area of concern' in literature, suggests how significant fictional representations of empire were to the society of the colonisers, and further, the potential impact of depictions of vulnerability. While Said insists that the novel engaged in a sustained consolidation of imperial authority, this study alternatively posits that the putative detrimental effect of invasion fiction in fact worked against it. Said argues for the total complicity of the novel in supporting the dominant imperialist discourse: 'It is striking that never, in the novel, is that world beyond seen except as subordinate and dominated, the English presence viewed as regulative and normative'.[181] While few invasion tales pose a challenge to the latter part of this assertion, I would suggest that, in general, invasion-themed fiction offers a

[179] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xiv.
[180] Ibid., p. 82.
[181] Ibid., p. 89.

qualification to the initial proposition concerning the depiction of the colonised as perpetually passive. Though the evident purpose of many of its authors was to bolster the empire with their admonitory calls (not to mention bolstering their own and their publishers' finances), implicit within their apocalyptic invasion scenarios was the destabilising suggestion that the British imperial sun might soon and suddenly set. As Catriona Ross puts it, writing of colonial Australian invasion literature, 'When the colonial invaders write of their own fear of invasion, they enter a fraught narratological terrain, where meanings cannot be contained within intended trajectories'.[182] And within this aporia is a space in which the agency of the colonised and Foucault's voice of the oppressed may, in some indirect sense, emerge.

In order to develop this proposition, and in keeping with the overall postcolonial undertaking to deconstruct the assumptions of the colonial period, this study makes use of deconstructionist techniques in its analysis of the selected texts. This methodology, with its emphasis on the instability, multiplicity and discrepancy of textual meaning, is useful in unlocking dissident readings, as Sinfield puts it: 're-working the authoritative text so that it is forced to yield, against the grain, explicitly oppositional kinds of understanding'.[183] This accords with the 'contrapuntal' methodology that Said adopts in *Culture and Imperialism* to 'draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented' in canonical works of early nineteenth century literature which ostensibly had little to do with empire.[184] And Young's explication of Bhabha is additionally relevant here: 'For Bhabha, hybridity becomes the moment in which the discourse of colonial authority loses its univocal grip on meaning and finds itself open to the trace of the language of the other, enabling the critic to trace complex moments of disarming alterity in the colonial text.'[185] This understanding and these techniques allow the imperial concerns underpinning the fiction of invasion to be revealed and the reciprocal fault-lines within the dominant discourse of imperialism arising out of invasion paranoia to be illuminated.

---

[182] Catriona Ross, 'Prolonged Symptoms of Cultural Anxiety: The Persistence of Narratives of Asian Invasion within Multicultural Australia', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, 5 (2006), p. 86.
[183] Sinfield, *Faultlines*, p. 22.
[184] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. 59, 78.
[185] Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 22.

Though there are well-documented conflicts between some aspects of the postcolonial and historicist approaches – between their underlying post-structuralist and materialist premises, for example – they are potentially complementary. Both are responses to Foucault's highly influential understanding of the socially constitutive nature of discourse and the resultant production of power structures.[186] Both allow for the adoption of a deconstructionist methodology to uncover the multifarious engagement with the dominant historical discourse and its corollary political practices in a work of literary fiction. Said's contrapuntal postcolonial readings of domestic nineteenth century canonical texts, for example, are certainly consistent with this approach. In fact, from this perspective, postcolonial criticism can be seen as an inherently historicist approach in its emphasis on the criticality of the historical, colonial context of literature; only its deep engagement with post-structuralist thinking tends to obscure this.[187] As Young puts it in response to materialist-historicist criticism of postcolonial theorising: 'the investigation of the discursive construction of colonialism does not seek to replace or exclude other forms of analysis, whether they be historical, geographical, economic, military or political ... [instead] it provides a significant framework for that other work by emphasising that all perspectives on colonialism share and have to deal with a common discursive medium which was also that of colonialism itself.'[188]

Combining these differently-inflected historicist approaches, and in keeping with the deconstructionist principles which emphasise the ambiguity of all representations, this study is fundamentally concerned with the role of literature within discursive formations – with its ability to perform both conservative and dissident functions. Imperialism was the dominant discourse of the fin de siècle, and popular fiction a component of it which reached an extensive audience. Accordingly we will explore how the body of popular texts depicting invasion both acted as a vehicle for reproducing the discourse of

[186] Controversies surrounding the exact nature of Said's engagement with Foucault, or with post-structuralism in general, are beyond the scope of this work. Instead it builds on the synergies between them, and key among these are Foucault's understanding of discourse as power and Said's extrapolations from that concerning the interconnectedness of nineteenth century culture and imperial power. Among many other works, Foucault's articulation of discourse and the operation of power-knowledge are notably set out in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and *Discipline and Punish* (1975).

[187] Said insists that the only way to understand imperial culture is historically, and hence on the importance of the historical context to the text, *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

[188] Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 163.

imperialism, but also, in its questioning anxiety, undermined that discourse too, potentially producing what Foucault has termed 'a "reverse" discourse' through which anti-imperial sentiments could be expressed.[189] The escalating exchange between invasion anxiety and the fiction of invasion was productive of the 'larger cultural text', to use Greenblatt's term, of jingoism.[190] While it propped up jingoist assumptions by providing justifications for increasing bellicosity, it undermined the unassailable conception of empire that jingoism relied on with the very intimation that invasion and collapse were possible. Thus it reciprocally fuelled jingoism, a destructive social phenomenon which in practice contributed to hardline foreign policy. Simply put, on some level, belief in the imminence of war helped to lead to a state of war, or the discourse of imperial bellicosity created a situation where the advance to actual declarations of war became more conceivable. Thus an investigation of the fiction of invasion sheds an interesting sidelight on the complex interplay of imperial factors that contributed to the outbreak of World War I, not the explicit factors of diplomatic machination and *realpolitik*, but tacit cultural factors such as the manner in which a pervasive societal paranoia about invasion helped create a climate which legitimated the idea of global war.

A thematic examination of the relationship between the fiction of invasion and the discourse and practice of imperialism begins in the first chapter of this study which is broadly concerned with the links between invasion anxiety and what can be classed as crime fiction. As we have touched upon in the section on 'Invasion fiction and the emergence of genre', chapter one takes Boothby's bestselling Nikola series as a case study and examines the structuring presence of invasion anxiety in it and in comparable narratives featuring master criminals, such as Doyle's Holmes stories. In doing so it considers the impact of the authors' colonial backgrounds upon their representations of criminality. In creating Nikola, the criminal, colonial interloper, Boothby was not just tapping into the concerns of the metropolis, but utilising the peripheral perspective derived from his Anglo-Australian background to articulate the invasion threat for the

[189] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (1976; London: Penguin, 1990), p. 101.
[190] Greenblatt, *Shakespearian Negotiations*, p. 95.

centre. Chapter one explores how Boothby, as a popular writer, used his knowledge of racial conflict in the Australian colonies to create sensational fictional narratives in which the grave dangers that he believed threatened the margins of the empire were instead unleashed upon its capital. It examines how he adopted and adapted the conventions of crime fiction to present his readers with an array of threats that are all essentially predicated upon the fear of invasion occurring in response to the practice of imperialism, centring on the master criminal Nikola character. Over the course of the series the character is consistently aligned with diverse hostile colonial forces of predominantly oriental origins and recurrently shown scheming against the colonial authorities. More specifically Nikola is closely connected with two of the volatile colonial situations previously mentioned as being of particular concern to imperial Britain at the time – its contested occupation of Egypt and its troubled imperial relationship with China. Nikola's telling insertion into these areas of foreign policy concern is elaborated in chapter one while their wider treatment in fin-de-siècle popular fiction is explored in chapters two and three.

At the same time that the criminal Nikola figure presented to the reading public a kind of generic embodiment of the societal anxiety concerning invasion, doubts and fears concerning the more localised Egyptian imperial quandary were beginning to receive specific treatment in the popular genre of gothic fiction. Under consideration in chapter two is the gothicization of the invasion threat observable in much fin-de-siècle popular writing, and in particular in its manifestation in response to the Egyptian context. The chapter examines the relationship between problems arising from British colonial policy in Egypt and the resulting paranoid response of popular fiction evident in Boothby's vengeful mummy narrative *Pharos the Egyptian*, and in other relevant tales of supernatural Egyptian invasion by Stoker, Doyle, Marsh, Haggard and a host of forgotten authors. As a sidelight, it addresses a comparable connection between the supernatural threats in the works of Stoker and ongoing anxieties concerning physical-force Irish nationalism. As chapter two briefly outlines, after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the canal route had quickly become the lifeline of the British empire, and the surrounding territory of Egypt pivotally important to the global balance of power. To protect its access to the vital waterway, Britain unofficially occupied Egypt in 1882, and the unstable status

of Egypt following this move quickly became a source of ongoing dispute with both emerging Egyptian Islamic-nationalist groups and the other European powers. Contemporaneously in the sphere of popular fiction, dozens of tales positing the irruption of vengeful, supernatural, ancient Egyptian forces within civilised, rational, modern England began to appear. Given the geopolitical context, these narratives of ancient Egyptian revenge for tomb-robbery are read in chapter two as symbolic of both the deep dread of losing access to the Suez Canal and the consequent desire for full control of it and these impulses are seen to inform the literary tropes of the mummy's curse and the mummy romance. Concern with Egyptian affairs is particularly evident in the works of emigrant white colonial authors, many of whom, like Boothby, had experienced first-hand the connective, strategic role of the canal en route to the imperial metropolis.

Moving on to consider matters Far Eastern in chapter three, we will see how at the same time that British and European incursion into China was entering the accelerated phase which culminated in the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, China too was being increasingly cast as a locus of peril and the yellow peril myth starting to gain currency. And the manner in which this occurred in the literary realm is highly comparable to that in which Britain's intrusion into Egypt was inverted and given horrific form in the popular gothic genre. In addition to imperial activity in Chinese territory, British colonial labour requirements were driving the mass migration of Chinese indentured labourers across the empire and particularly into the settler colonies of South Africa and Australia where they threatened the lower end of the white labour market. Though very few Chinese migrants had arrived in Britain in the 1890s, fuelled by strained Sino-British relations and mounting hysteria in the colonies, the fear of oriental invasion was starting to take hold in the metropolis by the end of the decade. And before the dramatic outbreak of anti-foreigner violence during the Boxer Rebellion gave the yellow peril fear major impetus, its proponents at the metropolitan centre tended to be those who had experienced firsthand the anxieties generated by Chinese immigration into Britain's colonies. As chapter one discusses, in addition to and interwoven with the threat figured in Nikola, Chinese villainy poses a complementary invasion threat in the work of the Anglo-Australian Boothby, who had grown up immersed in the nascent discourse of white Australian fears of oriental immigration. Equally well placed to articulate this fear

was the author whose texts form the focus of chapter three – the Montserratian Shiel, whose island neighbours in Britain's West-Indian colonies had also received a small influx of Chinese labourers. Following an investigation into the largely overlooked history of the Chinese presence in the Caribbean region, chapter three argues that Shiel's youth in a colonial society that had also experienced Chinese immigration may have similarly predisposed him to fantasies of Chinese invasion. In his case, the emerging genre of science fiction was the popular form adopted, and he gave expression to these fantasies as future war extravaganzas.

Alarmist though they are, Shiel's yellow peril texts are far from being univocal on the subject of empire and race, however, and the conclusion of chapter three considers the presence of a particular strain of dissidence that seems to recur in them. While on the surface they seem to effortlessly reproduce the extreme imperial ideology of race war, a careful examination in fact evinces some significant deviations from the typical racial assumptions of imperial discourse and a questioning of the practice of imperialism in its present guise. It is in this divergence particularly that we can glimpse traces of Foucault's 'reverse discourse', revealing how even such seemingly doctrinaire texts may contain a subtext in which counter-hegemonic, anti-imperial sentiments find expression. Before moving on to tease out such abstract propositions, however, it is time to turn to the equally elusive figure of Boothby's devilish master criminal and colonial menace; in other words – to employ Boothby's enduring cliché – it is time to introduce 'none other than Dr Nikola'.[191]

[191] Guy Boothby, *Doctor Nikola* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1896), p. 19.

CHAPTER 1

GUY BOOTHBY'S DR NIKOLA: FOREIGNER, CRIMINAL, COLONIAL INVADER

'Be advised by me … clear out of England while you have the chance. They want the things we took, and they want revenge. To get both they'll follow us to the ends of the earth.'

Doctor Nikola (1896)[1]

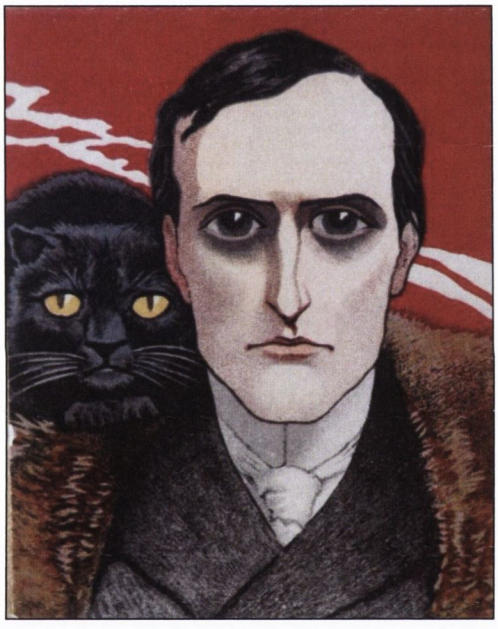


Fig. 1. Front cover detail of *Doctor Nikola* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1896).
Image from the author's collection.

Best-known creation of fin-de-siècle popular author Guy Boothby, the international master criminal character Dr Nikola (see fig. 1) captivated the popular imagination from his debut in *A Bid for Fortune* in 1895, the first of a series of five novels recounting the exploits of the devilish doctor. It and its sequels turn upon the grand schemes of this charismatic colonial antagonist whose distinctive blend of subversiveness and alterity

[1] Dr Nikola on the relentlessness of Chinese pursuit following his theft of hidden Chinese knowledge. Guy Boothby, *Doctor Nikola* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1896), p. 318.

seductively undermines the imperial project that their author ostensibly endorsed.[2] Though possessing only the most limited cult following now, for a brief period in the 1890s the Nikola character was as well known to the reading public as Arthur Conan Doyle's enduring detective, Sherlock Holmes, and connections between the two were frequently made. A spoof book review in *Punch Magazine* in 1898, for example, whimsically remarked, 'What a pity it is that *Mr. Sherlock Holmes* cannot be revived in order to be pitted against the nefarious *Dr. Nikola*!'[3] And it was this very quality of nefariousness that particularly set Boothby's 'mysterious, necromantic' character – to borrow the reviewer's description – outside the conventions applying to the Victorian hero-protagonist, making him one of the most prominent anti-heroes of fin-de-siècle popular fiction.

Like his ephemeral creation, Boothby himself attained overnight success followed by an almost equally speedy decline, and can be viewed as exemplary of the new breed of celebrity author emerging in parallel with the burgeoning of the book trade at the fin de siècle.[4] And while the quality of his literary output was often queried, he had an unerring knack for producing work that was in tune with the sentiments of the reading public; as another reviewer scathingly lamented about his 'unsatisfactory and deplorable works', 'Not a phrase – not the turn of a single sentence – but will be hailed by the music-hall-minded public as an old friend'.[5] As such his work in general, and the popular Nikola series in particular, is extremely useful as a barometer of contemporary popular interests and concerns. In addition to the Nikola crime thrillers, Boothby's other music-hall-friendly output traversed the spectrum of popular genres emerging at the fin de siècle and included ripping-yarns of adventure and romance, dark tales of arch-gothic terror and fanciful gestures in a science-fictional direction, all of which were inflected with major imperial overtones.

---

[2] The sequels are *Doctor Nikola* (1896), *The Lust of Hate* (1898), *Dr Nikola's Experiment* (1899), and *'Farewell, Nikola'* (1901).

[3] [The Baron de Book-Worms], 'Our Booking-Office', rev. of Guy Boothby, *The Lust of Hate* (1898), *Punch Magazine*, 114 (23 Apr 1898), p. 189.

[4] For more on Boothby as a celebrity author see Ailise Bulfin, 'Guy Boothby's "Bid for Fortune": Constructing an Anglo-Australian colonial identity for the fin-de-siècle London literary marketplace', in Mandy Treagus and Maggie Tonkin (ed.s), *Changing the Victorian Subject* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, Forthcoming 2014).

[5] 'Boothby, Bunkum, and Bathos', rev.s of Guy Boothby, *Love Made Manifest* (1899) and *Dr Nikola's Experiment* (1899), *The Outlook Magazine*, 16 Sep 1899, p. 218.

The prolific Boothby had emigrated from the Australian colonial peripheries to the imperial capital London in 1893, creating his Nikola series at the height of British imperial expansion, yet also in an atmosphere of increasing anxiety concerning imperial decline (as discussed in the Introduction). In this chapter we explore how Boothby tapped into this anxiety within the developing popular genre of crime fiction, presenting his readers with an array of threats that are all essentially predicated upon the fear of invasion occurring in response to the practice of imperialism. Reading Boothby's Nikola texts against the grain reveals, in the very dominance of the subversive master criminal figure within them, sub-currents of imperial anxiety that belie the unproblematic imperialist blustering of his comparatively lacklustre Victorian gentleman heroes. Throughout the series the Nikola character unfailing aligns himself with an assortment of reprobate colonial forces from mutilated Chinese murderers to powerful Sudanese bodyguards, while committing a series of spectacular criminal outrages from kidnapping, garrotting and vivisection to vendettas against various colonial authorities. He is also deeply implicated in two of the most difficult colonial quandaries then facing the British empire – those of the contested British presence in the Egyptian territories surrounding the strategic Suez Canal, and Britain's uneasy quasi-colonial relationship with Qing China and the resulting global Chinese diaspora, as we will explore.

In his portrayal of the vengeful Nikola figure, Boothby was not merely responding to metropolitan invasion anxiety, but also amplifying it – bringing the peripheral, hybrid perspective derived from his Anglo-Australian background to bear and helping to shape invasion concerns for the centre. From his youth in colonial Australia and subsequent journey to England he had both firsthand knowledge of the conditions of colonial subjects and a greater awareness of the workings of the global colonial system than many contemporary domestic English authors. The colonial events that seem to have particularly informed the development of Boothby's hybrid consciousness include the mass immigration of Chinese indentured labourers into the Australian colonies in the aftermath of the mid-century Anglo-Chinese Opium Wars and the brutal treatment of Aboriginal Australians by the white settlers, and these are examined in the preliminary section on '"White" Australia's colonial others'. On arrival in London, inspired by the success of his adopted mentor Rudyard Kipling's depictions of colonial India, Boothby

seems to have attempted to establish himself as a corresponding colonial authority, creating the public persona of a savvy Anglo-Australian from which to narrate his experience of the Australian and Far Eastern peripheries for the consumption of the metropolitan marketplace. In his crime and other sensational fiction, he thus translated his knowledge of Australian colonial realities into extravagant depictions of terrible perils lurking at the imperial margins, poised to overwhelm the centre.

Chief among Boothby's peripheral perils is the alien, criminal Nikola, who can be interpreted as a generic embodiment of the fear of the agency of the colonised, a product of the process by which the colonial subject is reconfigured as the oppressor in the face of guilt and the threat to white colonial interests, identified in the theories of Patrick Brantlinger and Stephen Arata as set out in the Introduction.[6] Of particular interest in this regard is the peculiar and consistent association of the nominally-Italian Nikola with the Far East and with the Chinese in particular throughout the series, explored in the section 'Dr Nikola and the vengeful Chinese'. The epigraph to this chapter is from the second novel in the series, *Doctor Nikola* (1896), which details the eponymous anti-hero's incursion into Chinese society in pursuit of valuable, guarded knowledge. In the quotation Nikola warns the English protagonist that the consequences of their colonialist interference in China have followed them all the way back to England, which has now become unsafe for them, infiltrated, as it has been, by vengeful Chinese forces. Here, coupled with the threat implicit in Nikola, Boothby is also conjuring up for his domestic English readership the threat of the 'yellow peril', a racist fear of Chinese invasion circulating in white settler territories such as Australia which were then experiencing large-scale Chinese immigration.

In the next section 'Mesmerism and the "Coming Man"', an examination of Boothby's singular articulation of mesmerism as an instance of the invasion threat provides further evidence of the impact of his coloniality upon his texts. His strong colonial 'Coming Men' tend to be relatively immune to the mesmeric influence of the foreign invader, but his weak metropolitan characters succumb to it helplessly, this dichotomous effect evoking degeneration anxiety and the fear that the metropolitan

[6] See Stephen Arata's account of reverse colonisation in *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Patrick Brantlinger on imperial gothic in *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988).

centre will not hold. Over the course of the final two sections, 'Dr Nikola's alterity' and 'Dr Nikola's criminality', the chapter proceeds to examine how Boothby used the twin attributes of foreignness and criminality to fully articulate the threat that the Nikola character presents, concluding with an examination of the origins of the invasion threat in the extensive lineage of literary foreign criminals from whom Nikola descends. Overall, in its account of the positioning of Nikola as a type of universal colonial invader, this chapter aims to shed a light on the wider narrative encoding of invasion anxiety that recurred across the body of fin-de-siècle popular fiction that engaged with this concern, in this case focusing on the genre of crime. Firstly, it opens with an investigation into the factors in Boothby's colonial upbringing which may have made colonial revenge and invasion so pervasive a theme in his literary output.

Boothby's hyphenated heritage

Though he achieved an ephemeral celebrity status in his own time, Guy Newell Boothby has long since fallen into obscurity and the little-known details of his life require some brief elaboration. He was born in Adelaide in 1867 to a prominent family who were deeply involved in the running of the recently-established British colony of South Australia. Boothby's father had been a member of the colonial parliament, three of his uncles were senior colonial administrators, and his grandfather was a controversial Supreme Court judge.[7] However, when he was aged approximately seven his English-born mother, whom he held in great regard, separated from his father and returned with her children to England. Following a traditional English grammar school education, Boothby returned alone to South Australia at sixteen, where, in his turn, he entered the colonial administration as a clerk. According to John Sutherland, in his introduction to a rare authoritative reprint of Boothby's best-known novel, *A Bid for Fortune* (1895), all of

[7] According to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Guy's Anglophile grandfather, Benjamin Boothby (1803-1868), who was Supreme Court judge from 1853 to 1867, contested the validity of many colonial enactments in an attempt to limit the growing autonomy of the South Australian Parliament, prompting frequent attempts to remove him from the bench. His opposition ultimately led to a British Colonial Laws Validity Act being passed to remove his grounds for objection, and also to his dismissal in July 1867. Alex C. Castles, 'Boothby, Benjamin (1803 - 1868)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 3 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1969), pp. 194-196, online at http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A030185b.htm, 23 May 2008.

this early transnational experience led Boothby to develop the sense that he belonged to two countries.[8]

This passing observation by Sutherland accords well with the idea of the multiple hybridity of the emigrant colonial author set out in the Introduction. Boothby's identity was constituted not just by what Edward Said terms 'the peculiarly compelling fact of residence in, actual existential contact with, the Orient [or colonies]', but also by his sense of being both English and Australian.[9] The colonial-born Boothby grew up in a settler society which adhered doggedly to British traditions, was conditioned to consider himself a loyal subject of the empire, and was attracted to London as its metropolitan heart. However he was also irrevocably the product of his home colony, a hybrid, in the sense articulated by Homi Bhabha which stresses the reciprocal construction of the identities of coloniser and colonised at the colonial peripheries.[10] Boothby's identification with England was unavoidably inflected by his encounters with the harsh realities of colonial life beyond the confines of white Adelaide society, with indigenous peoples, other ethnic groups of settlers, and with terrains and landscapes, societies and cultures that diverged widely from the domestic English experience.

Speaking specifically of colonial Australia, Piers Brendon characterises it as wracked by contradictions which derived largely from its settlement by two different types of colonist – free settlers and unwilling convicts – with the resultant conflicting aims of loyalty to the crown versus nascent republicanism.[11] From its inception as a convict colony in 1788, Brendon notes a distinctive Australian 'defiance' that was 'an incipient challenge to imperial authority, a primal cry for freedom inside a continental oubliette.'[12] By the 1820s, an Australian Declaration of Independence had been proposed and the drive toward self-government continued throughout the nineteenth century, accelerating

[8] John Sutherland (ed.), preface to Guy Boothby, *A Bid For Fortune, or Dr Nikola's Vendetta* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[9] According to Victorian imaginative geography anywhere East of the Suez Canal, including Australia, could easily have been construed as the Orient, but the salient point is the impact of the colonial experience upon the subject. It is also interesting to note that Said allows here for the kind of bidirectional influence of colonial contact that *Orientalism* is often critiqued for overlooking. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978; London: Penguin, 2003), p. 156.

[10] Homi K. Bhabha, 'Signs taken for Wonders: Questions of ambivalence and authority under a tree outside Delhi, May 1817', *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994).

[11] Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p. 72.

[12] Ibid., p. 63.

with the discovery of gold in the 1850s – a development frequently adverted to by Boothby in his fiction. Patrick Brantlinger concurs that the question-mark overhanging their origins fuelled the Australian dual-identity crisis and posits that '[t]he penal colony history of Australia elicits similar contradictions from many ... writers ...,' contradictions which 'characterize the entire literature of emigration and colonization'.[13] And Robert Dixon, one of the few critics to engage in a sustained treatment of Boothby's work, asserts, in his cultural history of Anglo-Australian adventure narratives, that as a body of work they reflect the subversive hybridity of colonial discourse articulated in Bhabha's theory, which accords well with this study's characterisation of Boothby as a hybrid author.[14]

This conflicted state of dual nationality was common to many of Boothby's contemporary colonial-born Anglo-Australians, but in Boothby it must have been aggravated by his parents' separation, the significant portion of his childhood spent in England, his movement back and forth between the colonial peripheries and the metropolis and his eventual return to London as an aspiring young writer. This produced a dislocated sense, observable in the work of many other contemporary colonial-migrant authors, of belonging fully neither to his home colony nor his adopted metropolitan British abode, the 'doubled hybridity' of Robert Young's analysis.[15] John Rickard observes an additional 'cultural schizophrenia' affecting early Australian authors stemming from the dilemma engendered by attempting to forge a distinctive Australian literature in the face of 'the continuing cultural ties with the metropolitan society' and the widespread belief 'that cultural standards had their ultimate source and legitimation there'.[16] A close analysis of Boothby's texts discloses evidence of this cultural schizophrenia and to his doubly-hybrid state can be attributed a contradictory double-voice that pervades and even characterises his fiction. It is evident in his recurrent promotion of the 'Coming Man' of the colonies over the degenerate home English stock

[13] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, pp. 112-3.
[14] Robert Dixon, intro. to *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, gender and nation in Anglo-Australian popular fiction, 1875-1914* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995). He analyses Boothby's first two Nikola novels in the chapter 'The Colonial City: Crime Fiction and Empire'.
[15] Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 24.
[16] John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, 2nd edn (New York: Longman, 1996), p. 132.

while simultaneously idealising the life of the English country gentleman above all others, and its manifestations are investigated over the course of this chapter.

Despite Boothby's family tradition of colonial service, his natural inclinations ran more to the creative than to the administrative and he was not satisfied with his limited role as a provincial colonial servant. His first literary ventures were directed at the theatre, but his ambition was not appeased by the lukewarm response his melodramas received in Adelaide. Hence when severe economic collapse hit most of the Australian colonies in the early 1890s, he followed the well-beaten path to London in December 1891. Many cultural historians note the limited opportunities for authors in small colonial societies such as Adelaide and the ever-present lure of London as the cultural capital of the empire.[17] Boothby himself acknowledges this situation via the experiences of the struggling young protagonist of *Love Made Manifest* (1899) who has failed to have a 'book ... published, [or] a play produced' in Australia, causing the novel's narrator to lament: 'The Colonies, ever ready to claim talent when it has been thoroughly recognised elsewhere, were almost stoical in their firmness not to encourage him in his endeavours'.[18] Correspondingly it is revealed that the young author 'had all his life entertained a desire that was almost a craving to see and know for himself the life of the greatest city in the world'.[19] Boothby, however, was thwarted in his first bid for recognition as lack of funds forced him to disembark en route in Colombo, Sri Lanka and begin making his way homewards through South East Asia. According to family legend, the dire poverty he faced on this journey led him to accept any kind of work he could get: 'This meant working before the mast, stoking in ocean tramps, attending in a Chinese opium den in Singapore, digging in the Burmah Ruby fields, acting, prize fighting, cow punching...'[20] This was followed by a brief sojourn on Thursday Island, a Melanesian island in the Torres Strait group recently annexed by the Queensland colony, where he worked as a diver in the lucrative pearl trade; and finally by an arduous journey overland across the Australian continent home to Adelaide. While Paul Depasquale, author of the

[17] Ibid., pp. 93-5, 129; Luke Trainor, 'Australian Writers, British Publishers, 1870-1902: Talking to the Nation', *Australian Historical Studies* 37:127 (2006), pp. 140-155.
[18] Guy Boothby, *Love Made Manifest* (New York: Herbert Stone, 1899), p. 21.
[19] Ibid., p. 23.
[20] Philip M. Robinson and Leslie A. Spence, *The Robinson Family of Bolsover and Chesterfield* (Chesterfield: Robinson & Sons, 1937), p. 103, cited in Paul Depasquale, *Guy Boothby: His Life and Work* (Seacombe Gardens, South Australia: Pioneer Books, 1982), p. 17.

only Boothby biography, warns that this account of his travels may be somewhat glamorous,[21] Boothby certainly travelled extensively in South East Asia, Melanesia and Australia at this period, collecting a stock of colonial anecdotes and experiences that were to inform much of his later writing.

Approximately two years later Boothby finally reached London and succeeded in having an account of his peregrinations, *On the Wallaby, or Through the East and Across Australia*, published in 1894. The travelogue met with reasonable success, which was matched later that year by Boothby's first novel, *In Strange Company*. A novel of adventure set variously in England, Australia, the South Seas and South America, *In Strange Company* established a pattern that was to characterise the succeeding Boothby oeuvre – the use of exotic, international and particularly Australasian locales that frequently function as an end in themselves superfluous to the requirements of plot. By October 1895, Boothby had completed three further novels, including *A Bid for Fortune*, which was successful from the appearance of its first instalment in a new lightweight, middlebrow periodical *The Windsor Magazine*, gaining Boothby widespread popularity and ultimately being his most reprinted work. As well as introducing the menacing Dr Nikola, Boothby's most memorable character, *A Bid for Fortune* also featured multiple antipodean backdrops showcasing his intimate knowledge of the Australian territories. This practice was replicated in the two other novels Boothby wrote in 1895 – *A Lost Endeavour* being set on solely on Thursday Island and *The Marriage of Esther* ranging across several Torres Strait Islands. A further eight short stories published in the *Windsor* between 1895 and 1897 all included an Australian setting that was in some cases entirely irrelevant to the plot. Many of these stories were re-issued in the 1897 collection *Bushigrams*, the intriguing Australianism of the title designed to suggest a certain kind of colonial tale, and the suggestion reinforced by a stereotypical outback scene of swagmen sitting around a billycan depicted in the attractive cover detail.

A major factor which may have inspired Boothby to produce this brand of Australasian adventure fiction was an encounter with Kipling, master of the imperial romance, while Boothby was still a struggling melodramatist. Depasquale has amassed

[21] Depasquale, *Guy Boothby*, p. 17. Depasquale also notes that no known papers exist for Boothby, which leave the details of his life sketchy at best.

convincing evidence that Boothby was prompted to make the transition to novel writing by a brief meeting with Kipling while the latter was passing through Adelaide in 1891.[22] Kipling, by then a major literary phenomenon, did Boothby the invaluable service of putting him in touch with his literary agent, the renowned A. P. Watt, who helped Boothby break into the London literary marketplace.[23] The acquaintance Kipling and Boothby struck up continued when Boothby moved to London: Kipling's endorsement was used by Boothby's publishers to boost his sales, and their friendship was frequently noted in the literary magazines.[24] The *Bookman*, for example, in January 1895 mythologizes their initial encounter in Australia, reiterating a much touted claim that Kipling called to Boothby from aboard ship on his departure, 'Stick to it, and put your trust in Watt.'[25]

Luke Trainor has established that by the 1890s a small Australian niche had developed in the British literary market, partly in response to the success achieved there by the tales of a forerunning producer of Australian colonial adventure fiction, Rolf Boldrewood.[26] Given that Boldrewood was also a client of Watt's, this was an opening that Boothby was probably aware of. Just as Kipling's success derived in part from a popular perception of his privileged position as Anglo-Indian insider, able to decode the enigmas of Britain's Far Eastern empire for the domestic audience, so Boothby may have hoped to establish himself as a corresponding Anglo-Australian authority. Gail Ching-Liang Low exposes what she considers Kipling's affectation of this interpretive role in *Kim* (1901): '[Kipling's] task is to make people "see"; to become the authoritative voice on native affairs – the interpreter that would seek to translate native terms into English

[22] Ibid., pp. 115-120. See Susannah Fullerton, *Brief Encounters: Literary Travellers in Australia* (Sydney: Picador, Pan Macmillan, 2009) for an account of the impact of Kipling's trip there.
[23] The role of Watt in launching Boothby's career is acknowledged in a grateful letter of 1894 from Boothby, cited in Paul Depasquale, 'An Incomplete Essay on Guy Boothby and the London Theatre', *The Pioneer Books Magazine*, 1 (Spring 1994), pp. 53–4.
[24] In the absence of any Boothby papers, commentary pertaining to Boothby from contemporary periodicals, particularly the literary review magazines, has been extensively examined in an attempt to provide further insight into his work and his place in the literary world.
[25] 'News Notes', *The Bookman*, 7:40, (Jan 1895) p. 105.
[26] Trainor, 'Australian Writers, British Publishers', pp. 146-53.

ones.'[27] And it is plausible to argue that Boothby was likewise trying to position himself as the mediator of all things Australasian for the metropolitan reader.

An interview published in the *Windsor* in December 1896, entitled 'The Creator of "Dr Nikola": An afternoon with Guy Boothby', reveals not only the success of the Nikola novels, but also that Boothby had already become noted for his Australian expertise. The interviewer admiringly remarks: 'With every phase of Australian life Mr Boothby is acquainted,' and, of 'the Australian solitudes ... [h]e tells, as one who understands, how men ... live'.[28] In the interview Boothby's lengthy, knowing descriptions of this life, while glossing over other questions, indicate a conscious effort to emphasise his 'Australianness'. The efficacy of Boothby's pose is apparent in a positive *Athenaeum* review of the third Nikola novel, *The Lust of Hate*, in 1898. In actuality a poorly-constructed work, the review sets it above other similar adventure novels due to its 'sketches of life in Australia' which are 'evidently based on personal knowledge and observation.'[29] Interestingly, Graham Huggan, in a 2007 survey of Australian literature, observes the 'marketability of nationality' in the context of contemporary Australian emigrant authors spinning Australian 'yarns' for their new metropolitan audiences, demonstrating the ongoing effectiveness of this kind of transnational literary approach.[30] Boothby's affectation is still evident in a subsequent 1901 *Windsor* feature on Boothby 'At Home', throughout which he repeatedly ignores questions concerning professional authorship in favour of re-iterating 'anecdotes of the times he had spent "on the wallaby"', or tramping across Australia.[31] That he is still harking back to a single trip, undertaken nearly a decade ago, emphasises the import he continued to attach to projecting this experienced colonial-Australian persona.

By the end of 1896 Boothby was comfortably established as a rising popular author, as the first *Windsor* interview attests. Here he made the startling revelation that after only

---

[27] Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 234.
[28] John Hyde, 'The Creator of "Dr Nikola": An afternoon with Guy Boothby,' *The Windsor Magazine: An Illustrated Monthly for Men and Women*, 5 (Dec 1896) pp. 129-133; 132.
[29] 'Tales of Adventure,' rev. of Guy Boothby, *The Lust of Hate* (1898), *The Athenaeum*, 3677 (April 1898), p. 498.
[30] Graham Huggan, *Australian Literature: Postcolonialism, Racism, Transnationalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 2.
[31] Wilfrid Klickman, 'Guy Boothby At Home,' *The Windsor Magazine*, 13 (Feb 1901) pp. 297-302; 299.

two years as a professional writer, he was now working on his seventeenth novel, and gave tips to aspiring young writers. The article was illustrated with photographs which show Boothby at work in his 'pretty residence in Surbiton,' and mentions an impending move to a larger property which would better reflect his improved status. The 1901 *Windsor* interview is accompanied by photos of a stouter and more affluent Boothby engaged in country pursuits in his impressive, new forty-acre Thames-side residence (see fig. 2).



Fig. 2. 'Mr Guy Boothby on his favourite pony.'
The Windsor Magazine, 13 (Feb 1901), p. 301.
Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin

This pattern of moving from grander to grander residence fits with Depasquale's assertion, from his reading of the Boothby oeuvre, that Boothby's ideal is retirement to an English country estate.[32] The *Academy and Literature* magazine in a similar vein observed that 'Boothby ... found story-writing not only easy and pleasant, but a rapid means of providing for the hobbies of a country gentleman.'[33] During this second *Windsor* interview Boothby, while consistently ignoring questions on literary matters, assumes a bluff good humour and simplicity reminiscent of many of his leading men and takes pains to show off his model farm. The exchange provides an interesting insight into Boothby's conflicted Anglo-Australian identity in that in his answers he laboriously

[32] Depasquale, *Guy Boothby*, p. 29.
[33] 'Notes,' *The Academy and Literature*, 69:1713 (Mar 1905), pp. 187-9; 187.

emphasises both the exotic colonial background which differentiates him from mainstream English experience, and his new status as English country squire which conforms to the domestic English ideal.

As well as exploiting his Australian experience, Boothby cynically exploited general racial and social prejudices, populating his novels with an array of foreign and deformed villains whose obvious degeneracy was designed to titillate his readers and encourage identification with his simplistic, undemanding Victorian gentleman protagonists. In utilising his colonial knowledge he rarely challenged the preconceptions of his sedentary metropolitan readership, writing rather, as he claims in the dedication of *The Marriage of Esther*, of the 'queer places and still queerer folk (the like of which must necessarily lie outside the ken of the stay-at-home Englishman's experience)'.[34] This confirms the Boothbian pose of appearing well-travelled, while pandering to the common prejudice of English superiority. As Said complains of the earlier traveller Alexander Kinglake, rather than gaining any real insight from his Eastern travels, Boothby's experience seems to act merely to 'solidify' his 'anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and general all-purpose race prejudice ... [m]any of the attitudes he repeats are canonical, of course, but it is interesting to see how little the experience of actually seeing the Orient affected his opinions'.[35] Boothby's orientalist approach accords with the pitch of the magazine that launched his career: the *Windsor*'s opening foreword states that its 'chief purpose' is 'to widen ... [the] outlook' of 'the family hearth' with tales of 'the glamour of the world and the great mysterious movement beyond the borders of the home.'[36] Its pages are correspondingly filled with exotic colonial tales, of which Boothby's are highly representative, and equivalent lightweight, informative non-fiction articles. That the utilisation of his colonial knowledge was a successful strategy for Boothby is attested to by the *Times* review of *A Bid for Fortune*, which enthusiastically remarks that Boothby seemed to have been almost as much of a traveller as his Nikola character, 'as familiar with the South Sea Islands, Australasian capitals, and Eastern towns as he is with London.'[37]

---

[34] Guy Boothby, *The Marriage of Esther: A Torres Straits Sketch*, (London: Ward, Lock, 1895).
[35] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 193.
[36] 'A Foreword', *The Windsor Magazine*, 1 (Jan 1895), p. 2.
[37] 'Recent Novels,' rev. of Guy Boothby, *A Bid for Fortune* (1895), *The Times*, 27 Dec 1895, p. 10.

Boothby's accomplishment as professional author is evident from his constant presence on the contemporary bestseller lists during the time he was writing in England between 1894 and 1905.[38] At the height of his career, he was earning an estimated £20,000 a year,[39] and Nick Rennison considers him 'one of the ... most financially successful novelists of his time.'[40] This is borne out by the fact that when the *Academy* magazine ran a spoof article in 1900 claiming that he had installed a solid gold bath in his latest mansion, it was credible enough to be reiterated in several other publications.[41] However all this success was not enough to sustain the lavish lifestyle Boothby had adopted. His series of impressive residences were rented, and he was forced to keep writing at a tremendous rate to maintain them, while the quality of his output steadily declined.[42] He worked long unsociable hours, dictating his novels onto a phonograph for transcription by a team of secretaries.[43] His career was cut short when in February 1905, at the early age of 37, he died suddenly of pneumonia, quite possibly brought on as a result of overwork. He had completed a hefty fifty three novels over the previous ten years, not to mention dozens of short stories and plays.[44] The following ironic poem of 1899 attests to the impression Boothby had made upon the literary profession during his short career:

> The old order passes, the new order comes,
> And Fiction to-day as a trade simply 'hums' ...
> The public, who pay, name the tunes of their choice,
> And the novelist-merchant, by heeding their voice,
> By pouring his tales in the phonograph's ear,

[38] Troy Bassett and Christina Walker, 'Books and Bestsellers: British Book Sales as Documented by *The Bookman*, 1891-1906', *Book History*, 4 (2001), pp. 205–236. This article also observes Boothby was the eighth most popular author in Scotland at this time.
[39] 'Boothby, Guy Newell (1867 - 1905)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 7 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1979), pp. 347-348, online at http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070352b.htm, 23 May 2008.
[40] Nick Rennison, *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* (Herts, Harpenden: No Exit Press, 2008), p. 210.
[41] 'Old Par's Wanderings', *The Academy*, 1492 (Dec 1900), pp. 579-80. Nine British publications re-circulated the rumour in various guises and it even crossed the Atlantic and was noted in a couple of American magazines. A search of the Australian Trove archive shows that it made its way to Australia also.
[42] His obituary in the *Academy and Literature* concludes that 'the vein of invention which, in the days of "Dr Nikola", promised to be rich, had been worked out some time before his early death.' 'Notes', p. 187.
[43] Depasquale, *Guy Boothby*, p. 25.
[44] This output is estimated by Sutherland, preface and intro. to *A Bid For Fortune*, p. xv. Sutherland also comments that Boothby possibly produced other novels pseudonymously.

> At the rate of four six-shilling thrillers a year,
> Attains …
> A mansion (by Maple), with everything fitting,
> And once every week a photographer's sitting…

Lamenting the declining interest in more serious work, it wryly concludes:

> Nor do I presume to suggest which is greater:
> George Meredith – King, or Guy Boothby – Dictator.[45]

As the poem suggests, Boothby's style of writing, given that he averaged five novels a year, is superficial to say the least, and briskly summed up in his *Times* obituary as: 'frank sensationalism carried to its furthest limits.'[46] Speed and plagiarism typified his method, a contemporary reviewer observing admiringly: 'the facility of style with which Mr Boothby throws off novel after novel apparently without effort,' and that as a matter of course '[h]e borrows ideas but adapts them to his purposes with … deft ingenuity.'[47] Boothby borrowed unreservedly from current events, prevailing theories and contemporary popular works, stringing elements of each together in a blur of action, and writing at such a speed that his output could almost be considered stream-of-consciousness. For this reason, while frequently making poor reading, his fiction is particularly pertinent as an index of fin-de-siècle social and cultural concerns. Brantlinger, in his analysis of Frederick Marryat's imperial adventure romances, could have been describing Boothby's style when he notes the shallowness of characterisation, the predestination of British characters to triumph, the reliance on stereotypes, and the emphasis on plot: 'Character shrinks to a semaphore, a signal code of stereotypic traits, while action becomes paramount.'[48] And Boothby himself explicitly compares the exploits of one of his colonial avengers to those in Marryat's romances.[49] Depasquale, who may be the only person in recent years to have read the entire Boothby oeuvre, claims that Boothby deliberately adopted an unchallenging popular style and wrote at

[45] 'The Literary Week,' *The Academy*, 57:1420 (July 1899), p. 76.
[46] 'Obituary: Mr Guy Boothby,' *The Times*, 28 Feb 1905, p. 10.
[47] 'Recent Novels,' rev. of Guy Boothby, *The Lust of Hate* (1898), *The Times*, 10 Aug 1898, p.10.
[48] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 50.
[49] Guy Boothby, *The Beautiful White Devil* (London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1896), p. 155.

such a breakneck pace in order to maximise sales.[50] In his examination of early Australian literature about Asia and the Pacific, including Boothby's *The Fascination of the King* (1896), Adrian Vickers argues that popular novelists succeed because they have 'the ability to "hit the right note", to precisely hone in on "normal" views in society and affirm them in such a way that most readers are lulled into a sense of "rightness" of what happens.'[51] Boothby's own description of his method would concur: 'I give the reading public what they want ... in return my readers give me what I want.'[52]

In his analysis of Boothby's Nikola novels as examples of what he terms imperial crime fiction, Dixon posits an additional reason for their success. Observing that crime fiction began flourishing in the 1890s at the height of territorial expansion and the corresponding imperial anxiety, he argues that it functioned as a locus for the narration of both national and imperial identities, and suggests this as a reason why authors such as Boothby 'whose work had strong colonial connections ... became internationally best-selling authors.'[53] From a similar postcolonial perspective, Stephen Knight's general survey of Australian crime fiction attributes the success of the genre to the role it played in helping to narrate the nascent Australian nation. He concludes that in its emergent phase in the late nineteenth century, the genre was largely concerned with the 'the simple colonial fact of oppressions that were known, and felt, and had to be either confronted or concealed'.[54] This telling observation sheds a light on the forces at work in much of Boothby's fiction, and in the next section we examine in a little more detail the history of 'white' Australia's oppression of its racial others, a history that informed the dark side of the portrayals of the colonial world in Boothby's texts.

---

[50] Depasquale, *Guy Boothby*, pp. 30, 42, 92.
[51] Cited in Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 119.
[52] Cited in 'Boothby, Guy Newell (1867 - 1905)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, online.
[53] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 155.
[54] Stephen Knight, 'Sterling settlement and colonial currency: Post Colonial Patterns in Australian Crime Fiction', *Working Papers in Australian Studies*, 82 (Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1992), p. 13. While Knight's general observations on Australian crime fiction are quite pertinent to Boothby's work, it should be pointed out that Knight largely dismisses the relevance of nineteenth century 'white' Australia's racial others to its crime writing, and focuses instead on the tensions between different classes of settlers, the lowest class of which he argues 'filled the role of a mass native labouring class' (4). He also does not consider Boothby as an Australian crime writer owing to his early emigration (11), however Boothby's youth in Australia makes his shared Australian experience intrinsically important to his fiction.

'White' Australia's colonial others

Like many colonial-migrant authors, colonial revenge and invasion were recurrent themes in Boothby's output. As a self-styled mediator of the Anglo-Australian experience, Boothby seems to have been well-placed to envision threats to it both at the peripheries and in the centre, the Nikola series featuring vendettas against members of the Australian colonial administration and allusions to a wider yellow peril threat. It is possible that the colonial-born Boothby may have suffered from feelings of inferiority, of not being fully accepted in the imperial capital, which may have fed into fantasies of revenge upon its citizens.[55] John Hirst observes the desire of those who campaigned for the federation of the Australian colonies in the 1890s 'to throw off the demeaning status of "colonial"'.[56] Said, pointing out the unacceptableness of being Australian in the mid-century, writes of convicts like Abel Magwitch of Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861), that 'subjects can be taken to places like Australia, but they cannot be allowed to "return" to metropolitan space', and contends that Australians were viewed as socially inferior well into the twentieth century.[57] And Dixon posits that Richard Hatteras, one of Boothby's key Anglo-Australian characters, 'is made to realise his own "otherness", his own unfitness as a colonial' when he is rejected by the aristocratic uncle he visits in England.[58] An inferiority complex is certainly discernible in the following passage from what Depasquale posits is the semi-autobiographical account of the young writer's journey from colonial obscurity to hard-won success in London in *Love Made Manifest*:[59]

> "Yes, my friend," he said to himself, as he watched a smart mail phaeton driven by a popular novelist go by, "some day you are going to drive in this park in exactly the self-same style; and perhaps another poor literary devil … may see you and derive some sort of encouragement from the look of fatted contentment upon your face"'.[60]

---

[55] Arata notes that Kipling never felt at home in England, viewing it merely as a 'wonderful foreign land.' *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, p. 151.
[56] John Hirst, 'Empire, State, Nation', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 156.
[57] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993; London: Vintage, 1994), pp. xvii, 127.
[58] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 165.
[59] Depasquale, *Guy Boothby*, p. 24.
[60] Boothby, *Love Made Manifest*, p. 25.

More pertinent factors influencing the themes of revenge and invasion can be found in the specifically Australian dimension to Boothby's coloniality. Given his family tradition of colonial service, it is significant that colonial officials, and particularly Australian ones, feature frequently as victims of his villains' schemes. Boothby was, especially in his early role as a colonial clerk, one of Kipling's 'White Men', existing on Said's 'line of tension' that kept the forces of colonial barbarism at bay.[61] And for the white settlers of Boothby's Australia, those on the other side of the line were chiefly indigenous Australians and Asian-Pacific immigrants. The implicit philosophy of each Australian colony, that it should replicate as far as possible the society of the 'mother' country, made it crucial to maintain a homogeneously white British population. As Eric Richards puts it, in the nineteenth century 'Australia's adherence to "Whiteness" was its defining characteristic'.[62] It was pursued with a zeal that often seemed absurd to metropolitan Britons and ultimately took official shape in the so-called 'White Australia' policy of 1901 which saw the introduction of an Immigration Restriction Act that facilitated the exclusion of 'undesirable' foreigners.[63] Even for a liberal politician such as the influential Alfred Deakin, the strongest motive for the federation of the disparate Australian colonies in 1901 was 'the desire that we should be one people, and remain one people, without the admixture of other races'.[64] Thus the pre-existing presence of the indigenous Aboriginal populations and the influx of Asian and Pacific Island immigrant labourers posed a physical and psychological challenge to a settler society preoccupied with keeping itself racially pure.

In Boothby's youth, in the 1880s and 1890s, antagonism between the settlers and the indigenes was an accepted fact of life. Though the conflict took place far away from the burgeoning cities where the vast majority of white settlers lived, in Boothby's home colony, South Australia, memories of the initial fierce struggles between the settlers and

[61] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 228.
[62] Eric Richards, 'Migrations', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 163.
[63] It was the very first act passed by the newly federated state of Australia, and the successor of many prior exclusion acts passed by the individual colonies and particularly aimed at the Chinese after the gold rush years of the 1850s. For more on this see Ouyang Yu, 'The Chinese Question: A Historical Overview', *Chinese in Australian Fiction, 1888-1988* (New York: Cambria Press, 2008).
[64] Cited in Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, 3rd edn (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 142.

the original inhabitants were relatively recent as the colony had not been founded until 1834. In the north and on the frontiers where Aboriginal populations had not yet declined following dispossession, this conflict, which is now being characterised as an unofficial war of conquest, was ongoing – a small-scale cycle of violent attacks, massacres and reprisals.[65] As Ann Curthoys documents, despite official policies requiring the protection of Australia's original inhabitants, the settlers 'regarded Aborigines as their enemies. From their colonial experience, a distinct settler ethos and "knowledge" of Indigenous peoples and how they should be treated ... emerged'.[66] This treatment took the form of violent suppression, centring on the practice of the '"punitive expedition", the gathering of a group of settlers or soldiers ... to answer an Indigenous attack with a bloody reprisal'.[67] And in the best imperial tradition, the settlers' territorial appropriation was justified through the calumniation of those they dispossessed. Applying the discursive precepts of social Darwinism to Australia, Aborigines at best could be seen as a primitive race naturally doomed to die out in the face of advancing white civilisation; at worst they were a subhuman scourge to be forcibly eradicated.[68] In the cycle of reprisal and counter reprisal, the Aborigines were cast as the aggressors and the irregular style of resistance they adopted was characterised as 'ungrateful', 'treacherous' and 'vengeful'.[69] The prevailing fear of attack for those white settlers living at the margins comes across strongly in the work of Rosa Praed, another migrant Anglo-Australian author contemporary of Boothby's. Writing of the legacy of her childhood on the Queensland frontier where her male relatives were always armed and lived in constant anticipation of Aboriginal attack, she recounted years later, 'I have not ceased to dream that I am on an out-station besieged by Blacks'.[70]

---

[65] See Joy Damousi, 'War and Commemoration', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 290.

[66] Ann Curthoys, 'Indigenous Subjects', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 90.

[67] Ibid., p. 86.

[68] See Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, pp. 60-61.

[69] Curthoys, 'Indigenous Subjects', p. 87.

[70] Mrs Campbell Praed, *Australian Life: Black and White* (London, 1885), cited in Angela Woollacott, 'Gender and Sexuality', *Australia's Empire* (*The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series*), Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 318.

Though the numbers of rural whites directly experiencing this feeling of threat were few, as Rickard and others have argued, the settler experience of the frontier was integral to the construction of a distinctively Australian sense of identity.[71] Thus the characterisation of the Aborigine as the dark shadow of the white settler took on a far wider cultural significance as a key component of the developing myth of 'the bush' in which the ruggedness of outback life was valorised as the genuine Australian experience. This was a gendered myth of manliness which, as Martin Crotty has argued, was constructed against numerous 'others' including indigenous Australians and Asians, not to mention women, criminals, and even the English.[72] The process of mythification intensified in the 1890s in response to the severe economic downturn and through successful popular fictional channels such as *The Bulletin* newspaper's 'ballad and slice-of-life' story[73] and the Australian version of the imperial adventure novel. An influential and chauvinist national paper, *The Bulletin*, or 'bushman's bible' as it was known, was founded in Sydney in 1880 and carried the unequivocal slogan 'Australia for the White Man' on its mast head.[74] Both indigenous Australians and non-white immigrants were the persistent target of its attack as the cover cartoon in fig. 3 shows.

[71] Throughout *Australia: A Cultural History*, Rickard tracks the development of the mythic position of the bush in Australian culture and argues that it was emphasised both to deflect from Australia's convict origins and to differentiate the nascent society from the metropolitan in order to support claims for Australian legislative independence. See also Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, as discussed later in this section. The following essays in Kate Darian-Smith et al. (ed.s) *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in Australia and South Africa* (London: Routledge, 1996) also explore aspects of this process of mythification: Gillian Whitlock, 'A "white-souled state": across the "South" with Lady Barker'; Kate Darian-Smith, '"Rescuing" Barbara Thompson and other white women: captivity narratives on Australian frontiers'; Sue Rowley, 'Imagination, madness and nation in Australian bush mythology'.

[72] Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870-1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), pp. 6-7.

[73] Rickard, *Australia*, pp. 64, 68-70, 129.

[74] Garry Wotherspoon, 'The Bulletin', *Dictionary of Sydney* (2010), online http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/the_bulletin, 21 Feb 2013.



Fig. 3. 'Barton (loq.): "You Dirty Boy!"', *The Bulletin*, 19 Oct 1901.
Image from the collection of the State Library of New South Wales.

Here newly-federated Australia's first prime minister Edmund Barton, wielding a scrubbing brush labelled 'A White Australia', is instructing 'Black Queensland' to clean up its act: the premise is that Queensland with its plantation industry is overrun by cheap labour in the form of Aboriginal workers and imported Melanesian labourers, the latter pejoratively referred to as 'kanakas'.[75] A similarly-themed cartoon issued in the same year and forecasting the post-Federation future shows an Aborigine in the shape of a leering python coiled menacingly around a young boy representing Australia.[76] Rachel Weaver has identified the short fiction published in *The Bulletin* and comparable

[75] See Rickard, *Australia*, 115.
[76] 'As It May Be: A Forecast', *The Bulletin*, 12 Oct 1901, p. 22; referred to by Ouyang in *Chinese in Australian Fiction*, p. 113.

contemporary papers as a key outlet for the expression of 'the violence of colonial settlement and Aboriginal dispossession' which was disavowed in official discourse, elaborating how in 'story after story, battles are fought, vengeance is taken, property and people burned... and their mangled corpses left to litter the ... desolate countryside'.[77] Given the wide circulation of *The Bulletin* Boothby was almost certainly familiar with it, both its 'school' of bush literature and its racist outlook, and many of the Australian tales that he later wrote for the London market betray the influence of its style.[78]

Focusing on the longer popular fictional form of the Australian imperial romance in which Boothby also worked, Dixon, following Bhabha and pursuing similar lines to Rickard, investigates what he terms the narration of the nascent nation at work in the genre. He argues that in contributing to the production of a national identity, the Australian imperial romance also 'reveals the anxieties that underlie the assertion of imperial and masculinist discourses'. The key anxiety he identifies for fin-de-siècle Australia was the loss of originary Englishness in the face of the harsh realities of life at the frontier and in particular in contact with indigenous Australians. This 'uniquely colonial identity crisis' turned upon the fear of the porosity of the boundaries between black and white Australia: that under the challenging conditions of the bush the nascent Australian identity would degenerate into merely a kind of 'white blackfellerism'.[79] Weaver likewise identifies a trope of 'white savagery' recurring in the bush tale, 'a breakdown in the distinction between the other and the same ... that sometimes occurs with the violence of realising colonial dominance'.[80] Dixon traces the disconcerting presence of the Aboriginal other through the adventure fiction of Boothby's Anglo-Australian contemporaries, and this anxiety is certainly identifiable in Boothby's explicitly Australian tales and, less directly, across his wider output too. As an author who had spent his young manhood in early-1890s Adelaide, Boothby had the generalised

[77] Rachel Weaver, 'Colonial Violence and Forgotten Fiction', *Australian Literary Studies*, 24:2 (2009), pp. 33-4.
[78] Ouyang maintains that in 'Story of Lee Ping', a Boothby tale of a Chinese merchant who runs an illegal 'fan-tan' or gambling shop in the northern territory of South Australia, the writing resembles *Bulletin* writing to a considerable degree; see *Chinese in Australian Fiction*, p. 92.
[79] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, pp. 63, 64, 79; he additionally argues that this identity crisis and consequent drive to exclude the Aboriginal or Asian other led to the abundance in the Australian imperial romance of the trope of the lost white race, degenerate hybrid societies which implied the potential fate of White Australia if it failed to establish a fully-formed white colonial identity of its own (pp. 63-6).
[80] Weaver, 'Colonial Violence and Forgotten Fiction', pp. 38, 48.

Australian cultural conception of the bush and its inhabitants then circulating to draw on, but he also had personal experience of it as well. His challenging journey across the Australian continent from Cairns to Adelaide, taking in Melanesian islands and mining settlements in the far north and trekking through the arid and sparsely populated interior of Queensland, had for a period of time placed him directly in the frontier contact zone with its Aboriginal and immigrant labourer populations.

Boothby used his journey not only to provide the substance of the travelogue that launched his literary career in London, but also as a source of settings for many of his fictional scenarios. The outback and the northern frontiers form the backdrop to a significant proportion of his Australian short stories and crop up recurrently in his longer works, including two of the Nikola novels. *On the Wallaby* relates a cautionary anecdote about white degeneration in which stranded travellers rescued by Aboriginals 'one by one … drifted apart', until 'for seventeen long years' the last survivor 'wandered with the tribe, coming more and more to forget his nationality and mother tongue'.[81] Boothby's familiarity with the violence of the settler-indigene relationship is revealed in his casual mention later in the travelogue of indiscriminate police 'shooting the natives down like dogs' in vengeance for a suspected murder.[82] In 'With Three Phantoms', part of the 1897 *Bushigrams* short story collection and discussed in more detail later, the themes of degeneration and violence are both present. The tale centres on a lost English traveller whose 'nationality' and very humanity seem questionable after his time spent 'living with the niggers', and it encounters in passing a police inspector whose punitive expeditions against 'the natives' provide 'security' to the 'lonely men compelled to dwell in the Far West'.[83] Likewise in 'Mr Aristocrat' (1905), a woman driven mad by her experience of the Queensland bush relives over and over the killing of her lover in an Aboriginal attack: found kneeling amongst 'speared' bodies in a 'half-burnt' homestead she repeatedly shrieks, 'They're coming! They're coming! Will nobody save me?'[84]

---

[81] Guy Boothby, *On the Wallaby, or Through the East and Across Australia*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1894), p. 186.
[82] Ibid., pp. 285-6.
[83] Guy Boothby, 'With Three Phantoms', *Bushigrams* (Ward, Lock & Co, n.d. [1897]), pp. 53, 50.
[84] Guy Boothby, 'Mr Aristocrat', *A Crime of the Under Seas, and Other Stories* (London: Ward, Lock, 1905), p. 332.

Of perhaps even greater concern to 'White Australia' than the Aboriginal presence was the influx of another perceived colonial menace. As chapter 3 explores in more detail, one consequence of Qing China's losses to Britain in the two mid-century Opium Wars was the large-scale immigration of Chinese people, mostly as indentured labourers, into Britain's Far Eastern and settler colonies. By the 1880s, though few Chinese people had migrated to England, the Chinese presence in Australian mining settlements and on plantations was considered to threaten the lower end of the 'white' labour market and anti-Chinese hostility was rife.[85] Newspapers, such as the newly founded *Bulletin*, traded on it, and many works of Australian popular fiction turned upon oriental invasion scares.[86]

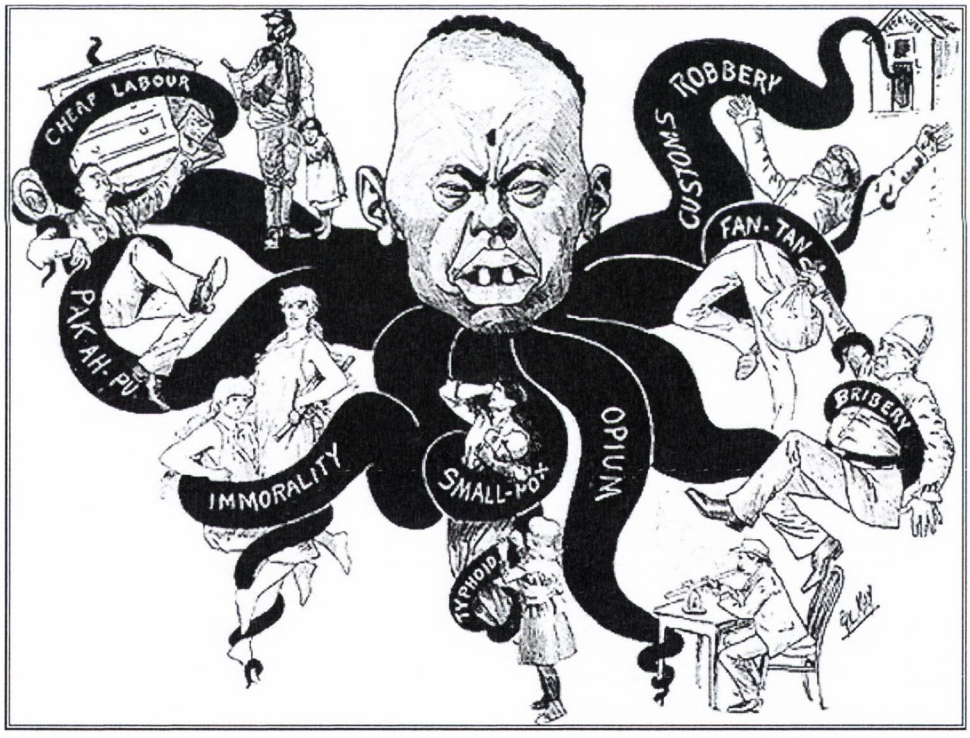


Fig. 4. 'The Mongolian Octopus – his grip on Australia', *The Bulletin*, 21 Aug 1886, p. 11.

Image reproduced with the permission of the *Making Australia Multicultural* website (http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/library/media/Image/id/623.The-Mongolian-Octopus-his-grip-on-Australia).

The Bulletin's notorious 1886 'Mongolian Octopus' cartoon (fig. 4) represents white Australians in the grips of all sorts of stereotyped Chinese evils from cheap labour, to

[85] Richards, 'Migrations', p. 167.
[86] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 136.

disease, to vice.[87] A decade later an equally insidious front page cartoon, entitled 'The Yellow Trash Question', represented Australia in the guise of a little boy on a life raft labelled 'Australia for the Australians' in danger of being capsized by a sinister, drifting Chinaman.[88]

Far from being new to Australian society, invasion anxiety was, in fact, one of its defining characteristics given what was deemed its vulnerable position on the imperial periphery, in close proximity to Asia in the north and on the far side of the globe from the 'mother country'.[89] As Stuart Ward has shown, invasion fears gained currency in the 1850s as the outbreak of the Crimean War and Russia's position as a Pacific power called into question the security of the Australian colonies. And this concern intensified in the 1870s in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war and the heightened tensions between the European powers.[90] Boothby's youthful account of his visit to Thursday Island reveals the type of defensive thinking this paranoia produced. He is forcibly struck not only with the island's wealth, but also its strategic position, figuratively speaking, as 'the lock of the northern gate of the entire eastern coastline of Queensland', thus 'a place of considerable importance in time of war' and on which 'large fortifications have lately been erected'.[91] From whom the threat of war or invasion may come, Boothby does not specify, but he is clearly habituated to consider Australia at risk.

By the 1880s China had become the key focus for Australian invasion fears. A series of Australian Intercolonial Conferences were held to address the perceived problem of Chinese immigration and in particular the paranoid delusion that China's Qing administration was covertly trying to establish a Chinese colony in Australia's sparsely populated north.[92] As elder statesman Henry Parkes warned in 1891, the anticipated

---

[87] Image reproduced with the permission of the *Making Australia Multicultural* website, http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/library/media/Image/id/623.The-Mongolian-Octopus-his-grip-on-Australia.

[88] 'The Yellow Trash Question', *The Bulletin,* 24 Aug 1895; online at http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/library/media/Image/id/859.Fears-of-Chinese-migration-1895.

[89] Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, p. 149.

[90] Stuart Ward, 'Security: Defending Australia's Empire', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 232-6.

[91] Boothby, *On the Wallaby*, p. 116.

[92] The 1888 Conference agreed a draft bill that almost entirely prohibited traditional Chinese immigration, even contravening the terms of Britain's 1860 post-war treaty with China, Ouyang, *Chinese in Australian Fiction*, p. 18.

Chinese offensive would succeed 'not ... by the bombardment of one of our rich cities' but by 'stealthily effecting a lodgement in some thinly-peopled portion of the country, where it would take immense loss of life and immense loss of wealth to dislodge the invader'.[93] The title of William Lane's 1888 admonitory novel amply reflects this prevalent paranoia: *White or Yellow? A Story of the Race-war of A.D. 1908.* From her analysis of Australian fictions of 'Asian invasion', Catriona Ross documents how Lane's text was part of 'a distinct body of formulaic invasion literature ... [e]merging in the late 1880s' in which 'stereotypical "hordes from the north"' spilled down to overwhelm 'a defenceless and underpopulated white Australia'.[94] Given his literary inclinations while a youth in South Australia, Boothby could hardly have failed to be aware of this literary phenomenon and perhaps noted its marketability. Certainly he was aware of 'The Chinese Question', adverting to it jocularly and in passing in *On the Wallaby*, but also excerpting a lengthy article which debated the merits of introducing 'cheap alien labour' to the northern plantations, warning 'that the small beginning may result in complications of such magnitude as those with which the United States are now called upon to deal'.[95] With this background it is not surprising that the Chinese would partially embody the invasion threat in Boothby's fiction. Many of his works disclose an awareness of global Chinese emigration patterns and feature Chinese vengeance quests against European imperialist transgressors. Certainly vengeance is one of the overriding themes of the Boothby oeuvre as the following section on Dr Nikola and his complex and often contradictory relationship with the Chinese explores.

[93] Henry Parkes, *National Australasian Convention Debates* (Sydney, 1891), cited in Ward, 'Security', 240.
[94] Catriona Ross, 'Prolonged Symptoms of Cultural Anxiety: The Persistence of Narratives of Asian Invasion within Multicultural Australia', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, 5 (2006), p. 87.
[95] Boothby, *On the Wallaby*, pp. 196, 177, 171. Ironically, he attributes the article to the London *Times*' Queensland correspondent, whom he seems to feel has a better understanding of Queensland politics than he.

'Who is Dr Nikola?': Boothby's invasive agent of colonial revenge

The contradictions and concerns of Boothby's hyphenated heritage seem to have been productively, if perhaps unconsciously, channelled into the characterisation of his most compelling creation, Dr Nikola. A distinctive combination of master criminal and mad scientist encapsulated in a debonair and disconcertingly foreign exterior, under Boothby's pen Nikola operated as a potent agent of colonial revenge across the series of novels in which he featured. While a preliminary examination of the Nikola series does not disclose notable colonial unease, on closer reading, in the very dominance of the vengeful, disturbing Nikola figure within it, a dissident subtext can be discerned. As Boothby mixed miscellaneous topical elements in his fiction, so his Nikola character embodied three contrasting personas, those of the criminal, the scientist and the outsider, and it is on the invasive threat posed by the foreign and criminal aspects of the character that the analysis of this chapter will focus. Though largely forgotten after the 1920s, following a memorable appearance on the literary scene in 1895 and almost instantaneous rise to fame, Nikola was an influential literary character in the fin-de-siècle period. A household name in the late-1890s, illustrations of the character graced the advertising billboards, the novels featured on the bestseller lists, dramatisations played on the London stage, and there was even a racehorse named Dr Nikola in his honour.[96]

The first Nikola novel, indecisively-titled *A Bid for Fortune, or Dr Nikola's Vendetta*, made its appearance in the very first issue of the *Windsor*,[97] which broke into the literary market place with great success in January 1895. Subtitled *An Illustrated Monthly for Men and Women*, it is categorised by the *British Literary Magazines* catalogue as 'a family magazine designed to entertain,' and was intended to compete with the very

[96] Depasquale in his biography cites several sources that refer to Nikola as a household name (pp. 68, 72, 120). *Bow Bells* magazine notes in September 1895 that the right of dramatisation of the 'weird and sensational' *A Bid for Fortune* had been purchased with the immediate cooperation of the author ('Art and Drama', 32:404 (Sept 1895), p. 332). Depasquale also documents the cashing in on Nikola's name of the 1902 theatrical production *Dr. Nikola*, an adaptation of the first two novels performed a year after the publication of the last Nikola novel ('An Incomplete Essay on Guy Boothby and the London Theatre', pp. 53–62). *The Times* racing pages list a racehorse of this name running between 1898 and 1900.

[97] *A Bid for Fortune* was serialised in eleven episodes in *The Windsor Magazine* between January and November of 1895. The conclusion of the last instalment promised 'an interview with Dr Nikola himself' in the Christmas issue, which was not forthcoming.

popular *Strand Magazine*.[98] *The Bookman* commented favourably upon its launch, noting that 'the first edition of 100,000 copies was sold out within a few days of publication.'[99] Boothby's Nikola character was heavily marketed in conjunction with the *Windsor* launch and was influential in establishing the magazine's success. A series of eye-catching, intriguing ads were run in the literary classifieds worded simply 'Who is Dr Nikola?'[100] And large promotional pictures of the character graced the hoardings to the extent that they warranted frequent comment. The *Times* review of *A Bid for Fortune* referred to 'the mysterious Dr Nikola, whose picture figured so prominently on London advertising hoardings not so long ago.'[101] Five years later, a review of a subsequent Boothby work fondly reminisced how at the time, 'Dr Nikola's cat terrified the pedestrian from every hoarding.'[102] The *Windsor* itself acknowledged the contribution of Boothby's first two Nikola novels to its success in its foreword for 1897.[103] While the *Bookman* summed up Nikola's emergence as a literary phenomenon thusly:

> Periodically we find some one tale or romance is produced which distinctly arouses greater popular interest and attention than any other at the particular period. Today the romance which holds that position is undoubtedly Mr Guy Boothby's remarkable creation, "Dr Nikola"!'[104]

However, despite this success and the character's subsequent influence upon the depiction of the high-profile, twentieth-century adversaries of Ian Fleming's Bond character, the novels of the series are currently very little known.[105]

Best-known and representative of both the Nikola series and aspects of the rest of Boothby's work is *A Bid for Fortune* which introduces the Nikola character. The plot of the novel is as inconsistent as its full title but essentially establishes the conventions of

---

[98] Alvin Sullivan (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837 – 1913*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 453.
[99] 'News Notes', *The Bookman*, 7:40 (Jan 1895), p. 105.
[100] For example, *The Times* classifieds, 11 May 1895, p. 2.
[101] 'Recent Novels,' rev. of Guy Boothby, *A Bid for Fortune* (1895), *The Times*, 27 Dec 1895, p. 10.
[102] W. H., 'New Leaves', *Outlook Magazine*, 6 (Aug 1900), p. 54.
[103] 'A Foreword for 1897', *The Windsor Magazine*, 5 (Dec 1896), p. 153.
[104] Ctd. in *Times* advertisement for *The Lust of Hate*, 5 Apr 1898, p. 2.
[105] For more on the putative influence of the Nikola character on Fleming's Bond villains see Ailise Bulfin, 'Sherlock Holmes and Dr Nikola: Too much at home in the underworld, or Holmes's improbable influence on the trope of the international master criminal,' in Sally Sugarman (ed.), *Sherlock Holmes: The Man and His Worlds* (Shaftsbury, VT: Mountainside Press, 2013).

the series, turning, as it does, upon the extraordinary machinations of the devilish doctor in pursuit of his 'audaciously-schemed plots', typically accompanied by an ineffectual English dupe and set against a diverse backdrop of international locations.[106] As such, it is worth a little further elaboration. Specifically, *A Bid for Fortune* pits the hale and hearty Anglo-Australian Hatteras against the urbane Nikola in defence of a linchpin of the Australian colonial establishment, the Hon. Sylvester Wetherell, Colonial Secretary of New South Wales. Hatteras is, as Boothby had briefly been, a Thursday Island pearl trader, and like Boothby, feels a connection with England that impels him to undertake a voyage there to visit his remaining English relatives, on which he falls in love with the Colonial Secretary's daughter Phyllis. Wetherell has come into possession of an oriental artefact of great significance, a Chinese token of high-office obsessively coveted by Nikola for the furtherance of undisclosed, but far-reaching, oriental schemes. When Nikola's attempts to intimidate Wetherell into surrendering the token fail he devises a revenge plot against Wetherell, which he articulates in the archetypal language of the master criminal:

> 'My friend, my very dear friend, Wetherell, my toils are closing on you. My arrangements are perfecting themselves admirably. Presently when all is complete I shall press the lever, the machinery will be set in motion, and you will find yourself being slowly but surely ground into powder. Then you will hand over what I want, and be sorry you thought fit to baulk Dr Nikola!'[107]

In actuality this fiendish, if massively over-complicated, scheme takes the form of a global conspiracy to dupe Phyllis into marrying an impostor masquerading as a young English aristocrat then visiting the Governor of New South Wales. Luckily this plan fails and Hatteras and the real Marquis of Beckenham return to Australia in time to pursue Phyllis who has now been kidnapped by Nikola in an attempt to ransom the token. Despite the best efforts of the heroes, Nikola's attempt is ultimately successful as he gains the token, but releases Phyllis and ultimately rewards her union with Hatteras with a symbolic gift of diamonds. As the plot is perpetrated in the main against senior

[106] 'Our Booking-Office', p. 189.
[107] Guy Boothby, *A Bid for Fortune, or Dr Nikola's Vendetta* (London: Ward, Lock & Bowden, 1895), p. 13; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

representatives of the Australian colonial administration, in which Boothby's family was so involved, the theme of vengeance against the colonial system is evident from the beginning of the series.

In common with many Boothby novels, the action of *A Bid for Fortune* traverses the globe at a breakneck pace. The characters seem to be in perpetual motion, engaging in three voyages between Australia and England over the course of the narrative, punctuated by eventful sojourns in Egypt and some Melanesian islands. The novel opens with Nikola at large in London hosting an unconventional private dinner party for a crew of colonial misfits he has assembled to carry out his conspiracy. The underlying colonial subtext and Boothby's global perspective are established from the start in this scene set in the aptly-titled Imperial restaurant. The party of rogues, who hail from South Africa and China, establish Nikola's mysterious international provenance, enumerating the numerous exotic locations in which they have previously encountered him, the following being representative: '"First time, Cabul, Afghanistan; second, Nijni Novgorod, Russia; third, Wilcannia, Darling River, Australia; fourth, Valparaiso, Chili; fifth, Nagasaki, Japan"' (6-7). Nikola himself has just returned from Cuyaba in Brazil, which, Boothby reminds the reader, is famous for its diamond fields, providing an early allusion to the colonial practice of exploiting overseas resources. This foreshadows the history of the Chinese token which was originally stolen from a Beijing lamasery by another colonial misfit dubbed 'China Pete'. It has been the subject of Chinese pursuit ever since, with sinister oriental figures tracking China Pete to Sydney and making violent attempts to regain it from both him and Wetherell there.

The motif of colonial theft and its consequences recurs throughout the Boothby oeuvre in common with many other contemporary colonial revenge narratives, including Wilkie Collins's influential forerunner *The Moonstone* (1868) and Arthur Conan Doyle's later *The Sign of Four* (1890), both of which likely influenced Boothby. Boothby's 1899 novel *Pharos the Egyptian*, which is discussed in chapter 2, is quite explicit about this concern and features one of the most successful revenge attempts against metropolitan Britain ever perpetrated by a literary foreign villain. Staging a gothic version of the invasion threat, in this text an undead high-priest of ancient Egypt unleashes a devastating plague against modern Europe in order to avenge the theft of his sarcophagus.

The prevalence of this motif in late-Victorian popular fiction suggests that underneath strident 'New Imperialist' assertions concerning the inalienable right of the British empire to its colonial possessions ran an undercurrent of doubt as to the validity of these claims.

In the first encounter Boothby provides for the reader with his agent of colonial vengeance, he begins to establish the mystery and the mastery of the Nikola character: making a dramatic entrance to the Imperial restaurant, Nikola is suave, striking, cosmopolitan and accompanied by his familiar, the fiendish black cat Apollyon.[108] Here is the initial description:

> It would take more time than I can spare the subject to give you an adequate and inclusive description of the person who entered the room at that moment. In stature he was slightly above the ordinary, his shoulders were broad, his limbs perfectly shaped and plainly muscular, but very slim. His head, which was magnificently set upon his shoulders, was adorned with a profusion of glossy black hair; his face was destitute of beard or moustache, and was of oval shape and handsome moulding; while his skin was of a dark olive hue, a colour which harmonised well with his piercing black eyes and pearly teeth. His hands and feet were small, and the greatest dandy must have admitted that he was irreproachably dressed, with a neatness that bordered on the puritanical. In age he might have been anything from eight-and-twenty to forty; in reality he was thirty-three. (7)[109]

This account is ably reinforced by the illustrations of Stanley L. Wood, who emphasises the brooding, arresting quality of Nikola's eyes, and habitually depicts him with the great black cat poised upon his shoulder, gazing at the reader with similar malevolent intensity, as in fig. 5.

[108] Darryl Jones asserts that Nikola is the first international master criminal to be accompanied by a cat and therefore a direct antecedent of Bond villain Ernst Blofeld, cited in Bulfin, 'Sherlock Holmes and Dr Nikola'.

[109] The opening sentence in this description, stating the unknown narrator's reluctance to engage in a comprehensive description, is typical of the hasty pace of narration that characterises Boothby's works.



Fig. 5. 'The black cat looked through the smoke at the three men.'
A Bid for Fortune (London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1895), p. 9.

Image from the author's collection.

The effect of Nikola upon the men he has assembled is electric and his hold over them absolute: they leap reverently to their feet upon his arrival and rush instantly to do his bidding on learning it. As all are Englishmen, though 'unscrupulous' and of colonial origin (11), this demonstration of Nikola's power over them on English soil signals on a small-scale the subversive potential of the masterful foreign interloper; as Nikola puts it, 'While you are serving me you are mine body and soul' (11). And it is in Nikola's global reach and ability to effect his agenda in any territory he chooses, including the heart of the metropolis, that the colonial revenge threat he embodies reveals its invasive aspect. Akin to Bram Stoker's masterful Count Dracula, the focus of Arata's account of reverse colonisation, Nikola can be included in the group of 'problematic or disruptive figures' Arata identifies, who emerge 'from the periphery of the empire to threaten a troubled metropole'.[110] As well as controlling a global criminal network, Nikola is the master of an array of extraordinary mental talents and oriental occult techniques. His initial encounter with Hatteras discloses not only his mind-reading prowess but also his power to engender visions. Most significantly, he is a skilled hypnotist, using his 'extraordinary

[110] Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, p. 107.

eyes' which glow like 'living coals' with varying degrees of success throughout the novel to control his foes (182-3). Mesmeric ability, a characteristic Nikola holds in common with other key fin-de-siècle foreign villains, heightened the terror engendered by the foreign invader by deepening the level of subjection that could be imposed, implying a complete subjugation of the English self to the foreign will, as elaborated on in the subsequent section on mesmerism.

At the mid-point of *A Bid for Fortune* a rare glimpse of Nikola in a quasi-domestic setting reveals the scientific aspect of his character when Hatteras and Beckenham, who had been garrotted and forcibly imprisoned by Nikola, stumble upon him at work in a kind of laboratory-museum hybrid which he has established in Port Said, Egypt. The remarkable contents of this room include oriental weaponry, implements of black magic, a living collection of human freaks,[111] and a dissecting table where Nikola is busy dismembering 'an animal strangely resembling a monkey' (181). Given that the room also contains what is referred to as a 'Burmese monkey-boy', it is strongly implied that Nikola is dissecting a human specimen. This laboratory scene clearly presents Nikola as a type of amoral scientist for whom the ends of discovery entirely justify the means, in the mode of Wells's Dr Moreau, with Boothby astutely tapping into the contemporary concerns about vivisection that Wells's novel turns upon.[112] It is complemented by Wood's apt illustration of Nikola and Apollyon in their habitual pose, staring intently at the reader amidst a collection of knives and skulls, offset by a freakish humanoid specimen in a bell-jar (fig. 6).

[111] This impulse to collect was one Nikola shared with his creator. The second *Windsor* interview with Boothby reveals his own collection of 'murderous weapons from all parts of the world,' and his collections of different types of animal, Klickman, 'Guy Boothby At Home,' pp. 298-302.

[112] Depasquale notes that although *A Bid For Fortune* was published slightly before Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), one of the key chapters describing Moreau's methodology had already been published in the *Saturday Review* of 19 Jan 1895, entitled "The Limits of Individual Plasticity." He suggests that this is very likely to have influenced Boothby in his depiction of Nikola as a scientist. *Guy Boothby*, pp. 69-70.



Fig. 6. Dr Nikola in his laboratory in Port Said.
Frontispiece to *A Bid for Fortune* (London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1895).
Image from the author's collection.

The importance of the scientific facet of the Nikola character is confirmed in the selection of this illustration as the novel's frontispiece. And the macabre exotic backdrop is designed to accentuate the menacing alterity upon which his character is predicated, a device that is replicated textually and illustratively across the Nikola series. By the close of the novel the master criminal persona is once again ascendant as Nikola, magnanimous in his victory, releases his kidnap victim with the grandiose admonition:

> "Now, goodbye; in an hour I am off to effect a coup with this stick, the magnitude of which you would never dream. One last word of advice: pause a second time, I entreat, before you think of baulking Dr Nikola". (336-9)

Following on from the vendetta against leading figures of the Australian colonial administration in *A Bid for Fortune*, retribution continues as the dominant theme of the subsequent Nikola novels, as Boothby rehearses several small-scale versions of the massive revenge plot enacted in *Pharos the Egyptian*. Though less overtly than in the Egyptian novel, the vengeful deeds carried out by Nikola and a number of other colonial agents that pervade the series can be interpreted as colonially motivated on many levels. This is particularly apparent in the third and fifth novels of the Nikola series, as discussed below; as the depiction of revenge in second and fourth novels deviates somewhat from this pattern they are discussed in more detail in the section on 'Dr Nikola and the vengeful Chinese'. The opening chapters of what is ostensibly the third Nikola novel, *The Lust of Hate*, appear to follow the colonial revenge conventions set up in *A Bid for Fortune*, implicating Nikola in the murder of several prominent members of English society, including the former 'Governor of one of our Australian capitals'.[113] That these crimes were perpetrated in central London by means of a lethally-adapted hansom cab reinforces the threat of alien infiltration of the imperial capital with a strike at the city's synecdochic mode of transport.[114] However Nikola's appearance in this disjointed novel is brief, his connection with these murders unsubstantiated, nor is their underlying motivation ever revealed. The vast portion of the action takes place in Australian and South African mining settlements or shipboard in transit between them and focuses on the travails of the luckless Englishman Gilbert Pennethorne who has been cheated out of a wealthy mining claim. Nikola's brief role is to tempt Pennethorn to take murderous revenge on the swindler using the hansom cab: "'I ... will,"' he hints darkly, "'in all probability, be able to put in your way what you most desire in the world ... Revenge"' (51).

---

[113] Guy Boothby, *The Lust of Hate* (London, Ward, Lock & Co, 1898), p. 42; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

[114] It also harks back to the plot of fellow Antipodean author Fergus Hume's earlier bestseller, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1887).

This trope of revenge for a colonial crime playing out at the imperial centre is comparably present in the works of Doyle, recurring across the Sherlock Holmes canon, as is elaborated in the later section 'Dr Nikola's criminality'. Like Doyle's early Holmes tale, 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery' (1891), the crime in *The Lust of Hate* was perpetrated by one colonist upon another in the wilderness of the Australian outback away from the constraints of civilised society but the violent consequences were imported back to England. In Boothby's text, however Pennethorn relents at the last minute and turns tail again for the colonies with Nikola only reappearing as a hasty afterthought in the concluding pages. Here he superfluously reveals that he had hoped to misappropriate the swindler's money to complete another undisclosed scheme 'that would have paralyzed Europe,' and cost 'probably half-a-million lives'(282). This murderous plan is quite at odds with the more objective scientific motivation Nikola evinces elsewhere in the series, but evocative of the cataclysmic events of *Pharos the Egyptian*. Boothby began work on his supernatural Egyptian tale in 1898, shortly after he completed *The Lust of Hate*, intimating that the wider colonial revenge motif was playing in his mind at the time of its writing, and that he was keen to provide an outlet for it.

Retribution also defines the fifth and final novel, *'Farewell, Nikola'* (1901), with Nikola resurfacing in Venice, consumed with exacting revenge upon the tormentor of his youth. In this text, the cast of the original book are reassembled and incongruously enter into social relations with Nikola to allow a more sympathetic side of his character to emerge. Over the course of the narrative Nikola finally reveals his origins to them: he is 'the descendant of one of the oldest Venetian families' but grew up on 'one of the Spanish Islands off the American coast' where he was grievously wronged by his Spanish stepfamily.[115] However, though Nikola succeeds in ensnaring his stepbrother in Venice, he foregoes revenge and ultimately retreats from the world to the solitude of an Eastern monastery. A last haunting glimpse of Nikola emanates from the mind's eye of Hatteras: 'a yellow-robed, mysterious figure, whose dark searching eyes look into mine with a light that is no longer of this world' (315). In that Nikola's stepfather was the Spanish governor of this unspecified Caribbean colony, the vengeance plotted in *'Farewell,*

[115] Guy Boothby, *'Farewell, Nikola'* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1901), pp. 90, 89; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

Nikola' can be read as colonial in motivation. Nikola himself was 'stripped and beaten like a slave' by his stepfather (91), while his stepbrother, as president of the fictional South American colony of 'Equinata', committed major colonial atrocities including the mass murder of political opponents and embezzlement of government funds (93-4). By these crimes Nikola, 'devilish' colonial avenger, is driven: 'I am waiting – waiting – waiting – for the moment to arrive when the innocent blood that has so long cried to Heaven will be avenged … he will be punished as man was never punished before' (94). In contemporary British popular opinion the practices of Spain in its South American colonies were deemed particularly cruel, largely because slavery had persisted there into the 1880s after it was abolished in British territories in the 1830s.[116] Boothby was thus manipulating readers' preconceptions of Spanish colonial misconduct to justify Nikola's quest for retribution against his oppressive Spanish stepfamily, while indirectly signalling the potential consequences of violent British colonial practice in its antipodean colonies.

Though indirectly and inconsistently represented, the thematic concern with colonial revenge in Boothby's imperially-inflected crime thrillers can be read as a product of his extra-metropolitan background. As we have seen, his formative period in South Australia and extensive youthful travels across the Australian continent left him well aware of the murderous treatment of indigenous Australians under the various Australian colonial administrations. As briefly discussed earlier, both *On the Wallaby* and Boothby's fictional Australian outback stories divulge this knowledge, as here in the full account of the practices of the 'Sub-inspector of Police' from 'With Three Phantoms':

> [W]hen the natives in any quarter made themselves more than usually objectionable, he would descend upon them tooth and nail, until there remained not a man among them to tell the story. Humanitarians would have called his work murder, but … [i]n his own phraseology "he was the hand of Providence engaged upon the extermination of the aboriginal in the interests of a higher civilisation."[117]

Here, the tacit colonial policy of extermination is calmly contemplated and any sense of transgression abundantly absent. The tale opens in Port Darwin, capital of the sparsely populated Northern Territory and focal point for invasion anxiety in the white Australian

[116] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London: Abacus, 1994), p. 24.
[117] Boothby, 'With Three Phantoms', p. 50.

psyche. It was also one of the territories where the advance of the settler was most 'fiercely contested' by the indigenous population, with the 1880s being a decade of particular violence and reprisals there.[118] The 'Sub-inspector of Police' is encountered in Boulia in the west of Queensland, a territory which also witnessed intense Aboriginal-settler conflict that was ongoing during the time Boothby travelled through it. The extremity of the violence in Queensland has led some historians to argue that this location 'witnessed "genocidal moments," when the settlers truly did seek to wipe the Indigenous peoples in their way from the face of the earth', as Boothby's knowing description of the police inspector's methods attests.[119] It is not hard to see how a close awareness of these types of practice could engender inverse fears of retribution which found fictional form in an omnipotent agent of colonial revenge such as Nikola.

Boothby's 1896 novel *The Beautiful White Devil*, which features another distinctive international master criminal, displays a comparable knowledge of colonial misdeeds to the Australian tales, this time taking place in the Far East. It however evinces a sympathy with the retribution these outrages might provoke that makes it worth analysing in conjunction with the Nikola series. The 'Beautiful White Devil', a 'notorious criminal of whom all the East was talking,' is in fact Alie, a white woman who commands a loyal fleet of oriental pirates and is the scourge of both the Far Eastern British colonial administration and of the Chinese, who coined her romantic appellation.[120] A more explicit narrative of colonial revenge than the Nikola tales, *The Beautiful White Devil* attributes Alie's motivation to her father's mistreatment by the British colonial authorities and subsequent dedication to avenging himself. On her father's death, Alie takes over the idyllic, multi-racial colony he had set up and continues to engage in piracy to support it, significantly extending the remit of his revenge mission to a general righting of colonial wrongs.

The most striking example of this is Alie's punishment in kind of a senior British colonial servant, 'an official holding a high office under the Government', who has beaten to death several colonial subjects. To Alie's indignation his official censure was merely removal from office:

---

[118] Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, p. 105.
[119] Curthoys, 'Indigenous Subjects', p. 92.
[120] Boothby, *The Beautiful White Devil*, pp. 51, 66; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

> 'He was removed from his high estate. That was all; he had murdered, I repeat it, deliberately murdered three people; in fact, flogged the lives out of two women and one man, and the only sentence passed upon him was that he should be transferred elsewhere. It makes my blood boil to think of it. … That was all, nothing more was done. The man went free. The poor wretches were only natives, you must understand. And who cares about a few natives? No one. … It is my intention, if possible, to catch him, to punish him as he deserves, and, by doing so, to teach him a lesson he will remember all his life'. (147-8)

True to her word, Alie's justice takes the form of kidnap and a serious, though non-fatal, beating administered to the offending official by her native crew, depicted aptly in fig. 7.



Fig. 7. 'After the first cut the wretched culprit no longer attempted to comport himself like a man.' *The Beautiful White Devil*, *The African Review*, 6 (9 Nov 1895), p. 810.

Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

This is a chilling portrayal of the type of 'fearful reversal' of the ordained colonial roles that Arata documents, and a remarkable and atypical (especially in Boothby's output) indictment of colonial rule, produced slightly before Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in 1899.[121] However Boothby undermines the subversive potential of his novel with a conventional conclusion, in which Alie's reign of terror is eventually ended by the very colonial miscreant she has punished, and she is married off to the standard Boothbian Victorian gentleman narrator – in this case, George De Normanville.

Despite the conclusion, the main body of the narrative sees the Beautiful White Devil at large as a dissident counter-colonial force capable of redressing colonial crimes and maintaining an ideal, oppositional colony. Like Nikola in his scientist persona, though far more consistently, Alie employs illicit means to effect her own conception of the greater good. While his controversial research may ultimately benefit wider society, she acts as a sort of Eastern female Robin Hood:

> 'I have never knowingly robbed a poor man, and ... have materially helped a good many. ... I have gone out of my way to assist the oppressed, and have taught wholesome lessons to their rulers and oppressors. ... The English, French and Chinese governments are my natural enemies'. (93)

The British authorities consider her such a threat they are forced to deploy 'two enormous men-of-war' to attempt her containment; as Alie puts it, 'England is determined to try and have the Beautiful White Devil after all' (278, 282), pitting herself against the entire imperial nation. With his sinister foreign derivation and global criminal network, the Nikola character proffered a similar threat to civilised imperial society, consistently subverting the authority of any domain he inhabited. Likewise, Nikola's targets are frequently senior colonial officials, Boothby's family tradition of colonial service becoming inverted in his crime fiction to emerge in a series of liminal, potent, subversive counter-colonial agents whose ability to disrupt the activities of operatives of the colonial system fundamentally calls its authority into question. In his general history of crime fiction, Knight observes that a distinctive group of tales featuring 'ironic anti-heroes' emerged in the 1890s, indicating 'that not all the audience for crime stories ...

[121] Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, p. 108.

were entirely interested in those who fully abided by the law'; a group which would seem to include Boothby's Beautiful White Devil and Nikola characters, though Knight does not specifically refer to them.[122] Knight regards this development as an inversion of the tradition responding to Doyle's hero-detective, as it most certainly was. However, as we can see in the case of Boothby's master criminals, when analysed from a postcolonial perspective, the anti-hero's ability to embody the colonial revenge and invasion concerns attendant on the practice of imperialism may also be proposed as a reason for the trope's emergence.

Dr Nikola and the vengeful Chinese

If the subversive agency embodied in the international master criminal provides one aspect of the invasion threat in the Nikola series, the other is to be found in the collective danger posed by representatives of the nation then the largest source of non-white immigration into Australia.[123] This is most evident in the second and fourth novels which diverge somewhat from the conventions of the series by implicating Nikola in Western colonial practices and shifting the role of avenger from him onto the Chinese people. Generically entitled *Doctor Nikola* (1896),[124] the second novel is set largely in China and represents the Chinese as a global threat to Western hegemony in line with the developing discourse of the yellow peril that is examined in detail in chapter 3. In what could be seen as a representation of the unequal quasi-colonial relationship between Britain and China writ in miniature, *Doctor Nikola* sees Nikola commit a series of intrusions into private areas of Chinese society during which he usurps Chinese authority and steals intellectual property.[125] In response to these provocative acts Nikola-as-coloniser then becomes the target of organised Chinese vengeance which dogs him through much of the rest of the series. In this early, mid-1890s London-published

[122] Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.71.
[123] Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, p. 103.
[124] As Depasquale notes, the eponymous title of the sequel implies the success of the first novel and impact the Nikola character had already made, *Guy Boothby*, p. 63.
[125] Though China was a sovereign state existing entirely outside the formal, territorial British empire, after the Opium Wars it had been subjected to a long-term, unequal trading relationship with Britain which placed it firmly within the informal sphere of British economic imperialism. For more on the influence of British imperialism on China, see Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1832-1914* (London: Penguin, 2012). This relationship is also covered in more detail in chapter 3.

depiction of the Chinese as an invasive menace, Boothby's familiarity with the popular anti-Chinese sentiment circulating in the Australian colonies is plainly evident. This accords with the argument developed in chapter 3 that before the dramatic 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China gave the yellow peril fear wider circulation, the proponents of this fear at the metropolitan centre tended to be those who had experienced firsthand the anxieties generated by large-scale Chinese immigration into Britain's white settler colonies after the mid-century Opium Wars.

In *Doctor Nikola* the master criminal aspect of Nikola's character yields to that of the scientist/imperialist in pursuit of valuable occult oriental knowledge. The Chinese token obtained in *A Bid for Fortune* allows him to pose as a Chinese official in order to penetrate the inner sanctum of an esoteric Tibetan sect which has discovered 'the power of restoring the dead to life, and of prolonging beyond the ordinary span the days of man.'[126] In this quest Nikola is accompanied by Wilfred Bruce who manages to combine the stock Boothbian role of hapless English dupe with another of Boothby's recurrent types, that of the savvy white colonial. Bruce has been hired by Nikola largely for his 'fondness for the Celestial character and absurd liking for going *fantee*' (2), or venturing in disguise into the native quarters, as the furtive practice was known. The infiltration of Chinese and Tibetan[127] society is thus predicated upon Nikola's and Bruce's ability to convincingly pass as Chinese people, evoking the real-life exploits of the notorious Sir Richard Burton, an exemplar for Nikola in this novel. Burton, oriental scholar and explorer *extraordinaire*, most famously disguised himself convincingly enough to complete the forbidden Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca at great risk to his life.[128] As many of the well-known ventures into 'the Orient', literary and actual – like Burton's, had taken place in the Arab world or India, Boothby's (albeit unrealistic) depictions of China's relatively unknown interior in *Doctor Nikola* might have been aimed at providing a more novel setting for the potentially jaded metropolitan appetite. That Boothby's tale made an impact is evident from a review in *The Bookman* written almost thirty years

[126] Boothby, *Doctor Nikola*, p. 46; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.
[127] Boothby uses the terms Tibetan and Chinese interchangeably throughout the novel.
[128] Rana Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient* (London: Pandora, 1994), pp. 90-1.

later, which compares another literary excursion into the unknown East to Nikola's prior exploits in China.[129]

Given the absurd description of the skin-staining and scalp-wigs which Nikola and Bruce employ to effect their Chinese disguise, the success of their venture seems incredible.[130] However, Dixon, who emphasises the significance of cross-cultural dressing in colonial adventure narratives, notes that despite several crises of disclosure, the plot relies on the readers' assent to the plausibility of their disguises through which Boothby provides an illusory offer of mastery over the other.[131] And that this type of covert scientific knowledge-gathering mission had long supported the European imperial project is well-documented in Said's account of the practices of orientalism.[132] Wood's illustrations for the text do little to aid the necessary suspension of disbelief, showing two aggressive looking men with unmistakably European features sporting an approximation of Qing era hair-styles and dress (fig. 8).

[129] Francis D. Grierson, 'The Mixture – Not As Before', *The Bookman*, 65 (Nov 1923), p. 118.
[130] These techniques, though, are reminiscent of the successful techniques of Burton, who used walnut juice to stain his skin, as well as donning native costume, as described in Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions*, p. 47.
[131] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 173.
[132] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 79.



Fig. 8. 'We set off, I running beside him.'
Doctor Nikola (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1896), p. 189.
Image from the author's collection.

However implausibly attired though, Boothby's undercover imperialists manage to effect a series of incursions that echo Burton's penetration of the private sanctuaries of Islam, infiltrating an anti-Manchu (Qing) 'secret society' in Shanghai (70), the Tibetan sect's lamasery in Beijing, and ultimately the sect's secret head quarters in Tibet.

Doctor Nikola was written at a time when anti-foreigner sentiment was building in China in the run up to the Boxer Rebellion as, in addition to the concession ports gained after the Opium Wars, Western governments continued to force territorial concessions from the declining Qing dynasty. Boothby was aware of the growing Chinese hostility to foreign intrusion and uses it to set the scene early in the novel when he stages an anti-

foreigner riot in Shanghai that culminates in the murder of a missionary and the fraught rescue of the missionary's daughter by Bruce (95-103). Wood's illustration in fig. 9 captures the assumption of Chinese ferocity aptly, depicting the wild-eyed, knife-wielding assassin in flight after his crime; this image fits into a developing iconography of what may be termed the 'murderous coolie' circulating in contemporary Anglo-American culture and discussed further in chapter 3.



Fig. 9. 'The Assassin.' *Doctor Nikola*
(London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1896), p. 97.
Image from the author's collection.

Boothby also refers to the Beijing branch of the secret society infiltrated by Nikola and Bruce as 'the most anti-European monastery in all China,' thus building an atmosphere of Chinese hostility to the West (56). Given his knowledge of this context, Boothby could not have failed to realise the unwelcomeness of incursions such as Nikola's and Bruce's into Chinese society. Brantlinger for example equates Burton's undercover ethnological

data-gathering with spying: 'Anthropological fieldwork is inevitably a form of spying ... particularly so when, as in Burton's case, the information gathered is to be used for defending and enlarging empire.'[133] As Said and Brantlinger hold that ethnological knowledge confers power,[134] the espionage and theft committed by Nikola and Bruce likewise increases the power of China's Western enemies and is directly detrimental to Chinese society.

Just as Burton risked execution had he been discovered during his *Hajj*, Nikola faces 'certain death' (55) for his desecration of the Tibetan sanctuary and, for his actions in China, is pursued by vengeful Chinese sectaries throughout this and the fourth novel. Their scope for exacting revenge is extensive, as Bruce is warned early on:

> 'This society into whose secrets he is so anxious to penetrate ... is without doubt the most powerful in the whole world. If rumour is to be believed, its list of members exceeds twenty millions. It has representatives in almost every town and village in the length and breadth of this great land [China], to say nothing of Malaysia, Australia and America; its rules are most exacting.'(93)

The reference to 'Malaysia, Australia and America' demonstrates Boothby's awareness of the global pattern of Chinese emigration, confirming the links between Boothby's colonial background and his depiction of the Chinese. As well as those in his native country, Boothby is referencing the growing numbers of Chinese immigrants into Britain's South East Asian colonies, communities of whom he had encountered in transit between London and Australia. In his travelogue *On the Wallaby*, for instance, is related the jaundiced account of a visit to 'the Chinese quarter' in Singapore with its 'cook-shops' selling 'roast dog, rat, cat, etc.', 'fan-tan [gambling] hells', and 'licensed opium dens', about all of which he concludes, 'for unadulterated misery and vice, unaccompanied by any redeeming feature whatsoever', it would be difficult to match.[135]

The culmination of *Doctor Nikola* reveals that Bruce has been tracked all the way to London by members of the society, led by the mutilated ruffian Quong Ma, who seek violent redress for his part in Nikola's scheme. As Nikola incredulously warns Bruce,

---

[133] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 163.
[134] Ibid., p. 166.
[135] Boothby, *On the Wallaby*, pp. 57-65.

'Why, you will hardly believe it, *but there are two Chinamen following you down the Strand even now*' (317). This disclosure of a murderous, implacable oriental presence in the heart of London on a busy street in broad daylight is a classic moment of invasion anxiety. It also foreshadows the plot of *Pharos the Egyptian*, implying the greater revenge threat that may follow more wide-scale colonial crimes. Though it may seem ironic, incredulity is frequently the response of those whom the consequences of colonial misdeeds have followed back to 'civilisation' in invasion fiction; they often seem astonished that their invasive acts abroad should incur a corresponding response. Ross's identification of an aporia at the centre of Australian narratives of Asian invasion goes some way towards suggesting a reason for this disjunction between colonial action and response: 'What is never mentioned in these tracts of white panic at the prospect of Asian invasion – indeed what cannot be mentioned – is that the fear of invasion may be based on the underlying anxiety produced by Australia's own unacknowledged colonial invasion'.[136] In other words, invasion texts display a reluctance to acknowledge their own underlying logic, that invasion is a likely consequence of the imperial project.

The theme of vengeful Chinese infiltrating a 'civilised' city to redress colonial crimes had, in fact, commenced in *A Bid for Fortune* with the attacks on Wetherell and China Pete in Sydney by members of the same Chinese secret society seeking the token of office. As China Pete attests: 'On six different occasions the priests of the Llamaserai in Peking have tried to murder me to get hold of it' (314). And the theme continues in the fourth novel *Dr Nikola's Experiment*, intensifying the scientific dangers on which its plot turns. Though it is book number four in the series, *Dr Nikola's Experiment* in fact flows seamlessly from the conclusion of the second novel, relating how Nikola attempts to use the Tibetan sect's stolen knowledge to rejuvenate a human subject. Appearing principally in the role of obsessive scientist, Nikola sees his unethical experiment go hideously awry, producing instead a Wellsian beast-man (albeit by an opposite process). Given the experiment's location in a 'grim' castle 'surrounded by giant cliffs' on the north-east coast of England, Boothby may have been alluding to Whitby where Dracula first landed

[136] Ross, 'Prolonged Symptoms of Cultural Anxiety', 90.

in England and invoking the gothic aspect of the invasion threat.[137] Certainly this setting foreshadows the remote closeted location of the experiment to resurrect an Egyptian mummy in Stoker's later work *The Jewel of the Seven Stars* (1903), which provides another Egyptianised version of the gothic invasion threat and is discussed alongside *Pharos the Egyptian* in chapter 2.

In *Dr Nikola's Experiment* the oriental threat manifests itself once again in the guise of 'that villainous Chinaman, Quong Ma' and his gang, who pursue Nikola and his hapless English assistant, the struggling doctor Douglas Ingleby, throughout the narrative (267). In a small-scale invasion incident, Nikola and Ingleby are hunted through Newcastle by these menacing oriental figures to the fortress-like castle which is then repeatedly breached. Yet again, as implied by the caption of fig. 10 which shows the leering, mutilated Quong Ma, astonishment at this infiltration of 'civilised' England is expressed without the slightest acknowledgement that it is the direct consequence of Nikola's earlier incursion into China.

[137] Guy Boothby, *Dr Nikola's Experiment* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899), pp. 169, 167; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.



Fig. 10. 'To my amazement he was a Chinaman.'
Dr Nikola's Experiment (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899), p. 144.
Image from the collection of Darryl Jones.

Accordingly, Nikola warns Ingleby concerning their Chinese pursuers:

> 'It means … that, although this is the nineteenth century and the law-abiding land of England, if we were to venture a little out of the beaten track ashore tonight, you and I would stand a very fair chance of having our throats cut before morning… There would be a good deal of irony in having perfected a scheme for prolonging life, only to meet one's death at the hand of a Chinese ruffian in a civilised English town.' (146, 157)

The ultimate manifestation of the threat is Quong Ma's invasion of sacrosanct domestic English space – the bedroom of Boothby's stock virtuous heroine: she woke feeling that 'some one, or something, utterly repulsive' was watching her, 'drawing

closer and closer', and then saw leaning over her 'the most horrible face I have ever seen or imagined... flatter than that of a European, with small, narrow eyes, and such cruel eyes' (130-1). The novel's sensational conclusion sees the reviled Quong Ma and the rejuvenated beast-man pitch headlong to their deaths from a high turret after 'fighting like wild beasts' (336). Ingleby retreats to safety with the heroine, leaving Nikola alone in the castle, darkly silhouetted against the sky, presumably contemplating his next scheme. In Quong Ma, who plays the degenerate brute to Nikola's refined master criminal, the yellow peril and gothicized invasion threats unite. He and his gang are flesh-and-blood oriental invaders of English soil, but given the depiction of his exceptional repulsiveness, his preternatural ability to infiltrate the impenetrable castle, and the high-gothic finale of the novel, the lines with the gothic invasion tale are blurred. Further, the visceral repulsion aroused by the derogatory, bestial representation of Quong Ma and his associates alienises the Chinese as a race and reinforces the credibility of the implied threat they pose.

Though Boothby habitually applies the standard pejorative terminology of imperialist discourse to most of the non-white races encountered in the Nikola series, his calumniation of the Chinese is sustained and extreme, as books two and four particularly evince. His absorption of the derogatory white Australian popular view of the Chinese leads him to place them firmly towards the bottom of the Victorian pseudo-scientific racial hierarchy, well below the devoted crew of Borneo tribesmen who follow Alie, for example. The racial threat Boothby attributes to the Chinese is evident in the brutality of the riot scene in *Doctor Nikola*, the activities of the increasingly bestialised Quong Ma character over the course of the series and also in a comparable incident in *The Beautiful White Devil* which depicts the violent treachery of a Chinese crew hired to escort De Normanville to Alie's yacht. The initial description of this crew sets the tone for the entire scene: 'a more evil-looking lot no one could possibly wish to set eyes on', with '[o]ne little pock-marked fellow' singled out as being 'particularly distasteful' in a description designed to evoke preconceptions of the East as a locus of disease (20). The evil characteristics of the Chinese are abundantly reinforced by the novel's illustrations, again by Wood, as shown in fig. 11.



Fig. 11. 'Fighting like wild cats.' *The Beautiful White Devil* (London: Ward, Lock and Co, 1896), p. 27.

Image from the author's collection.

As with the illustration of the assassin in fig. 9, in fig. 11 Wood does not depict what might be considered typically Chinese features but rather generic, malignant oriental features verging on the simian or even monstrous, which serves to highlight how little this Western portrayal of Chinese people was based in reality. Another curious aspect of the depiction of the murderous Chinese in this illustration is the similarity of their features to those of Nikola in Wood's illustration of the doctor in disguise in *Doctor Nikola* (shown in fig. 8). As fig. 11 graphically illustrates, onboard ship in *The Beautiful White Devil* the disloyal, degenerate Chinese crew attempt to murder De Normanville and

Alie's aide-de-camp, Walworth, with no apparent motive. The initial attack takes the form of garrotting, a method also employed by Nikola to capture Hatteras and Beckenham, and frequently used by Sax Rohmer's later Chinese master criminal, Fu Manchu, against his English adversaries. But the Chinese crew, though numerous, being racially inferior, are eventually overwhelmed by the valiant efforts of the savvy colonial Walworth. The descriptions of their demise are exceptionally gruesome and entirely devoid of empathy, presumably as is commensurate with their perfidy: 'On the deck were four dead bodies ... one at my feet, his skull dashed in and his brains protruding, a horrible sight – another under the bulwarks, his limbs twitching in his death agony, and his mouth vomiting blood with automatic regularity' (28). There is no plot-dependant reason for hiring this Chinese crew; their treachery merely serves to justify Boothby's denigration of the Chinese race. He even uses the usually tolerant Alie as a mouthpiece for this sentiment: 'I do not like the Chinese!' is her vehement response to reports of the attack (48). His treatment of the Chinese resonates with the extreme negativity of their portrayal in comparable Australian-published popular fiction from the 1880s on as documented by Ouyang Yu in his wide-ranging study of the treatment of the Chinese in Australian literature. Ouyang observes that 'a large number of the *Bulletin* stories churned out at the time portrayed them as sinful, diseased, dishonest, and *particularly vengeful* [my italics]'.[138] As we have seen, the Chinese encountered in Boothby's writing are little more than an amorphous mass undistinguished by individual attribute, fitting neatly with the stereotype of 'sinister Chinaman', whose sole concern throughout the Nikola series is retribution.[139]

Boothby's vilification of the Chinese is nowhere more blatant than in *Doctor Nikola*'s depictions of the country of China. It contains frequent passages of vehement invective, including the following extended account of life in Beijing, which is exemplary of the worst of these and worth quoting at length:

> The narrow streets were crowded ... Beggars in all degrees of loathsomeness, carrying the scars of almost every known ailment upon their bodies, and in nine cases out of ten not only able but desirous of presenting us with a replica of the disease,

[138] Ouyang, *Chinese in Australian Fiction*, p. 84.
[139] By contrast in *On the Wallaby*, while the Chinese are depicted in the general condescending tones of imperial travel writing, Boothby's harshest invective is directed against the Malaysian people.

> swarmed round us, and pushed and jostled us as we walked. Add to this the fact that at least once in every few yards we were assailed with scornful cries and expressions that would bring a blush to the cheek of the most blasphemous coalheaver in existence, accompanied by gestures which made my hands itch to be upon the faces of those who practised them. Mix up with all this the sights and smells of the foulest Eastern city you can imagine, add to it the knowledge that you are despised and hated by the most despicable race under the sun, fill up whatever room is left with the dust that lies on a calm day six inches deep upon the streets, and in a storm ... covers one from head to foot with a coating of the vilest impurity, you will have derived but the smallest impression of what it means to take a walk in the streets of Pekin. (133-4)

Boothby concludes this piece of execrable racism with the following justification adverting to his own status as experienced colonial: 'To the Englishman who has never travelled in China this denunciation may appear a little extravagant. My regret, however, is that personally I do not consider it strong enough.' This is ironic given that Boothby's travels never brought him to China – certainly not to Beijing, of which his description is riddled with geographical inaccuracies – but it accords with Boothby's alarmist colonial Australian perspective. This treatment of the Chinese can be interpreted as a sustained attempt to substantiate the invasion threat Boothby believes they present, perhaps aimed at alerting the domestic English population to the peril that already menaced their settler colonies. It chimes with the tactics of the overtly 'alarmist, didactic' Australian-published narratives of Asian invasion, which, as Ross outlines, often included 'supplementary declarations preceding the text proper [which] detail the author's contention that neither the government nor the Australian people realise the peril at hand, and state that the explicit aim of the fiction is to shock Australian readers out of this complacency'.[140]

The interwoven vengeance quests of the subversive Nikola against imperial authority figures and the Chinese against Nikola and other imperialist transgressors form the main articulation of the invasion theme in the Nikola series. The shadowy, uncontained Nikola targets Australian colonial governors and undermines any regime he encounters; the Chinese, though reviled, are nonetheless capable of pursuing Nikola across the globe to exact revenge for colonial trespass and theft. These threats are heightened by a curious

[140] Ross, 'Prolonged Symptoms of Cultural Anxiety', 87-8.

link that Boothby forges between Nikola and Australia's foremost racial enemy, in that, despite the vengeance sworn upon him, Nikola consistently associates himself with the Chinese. He habitually locates his headquarters in the Chinese quarters of the cities he infiltrates – for example, in London's East End and Sydney's Chinatown in *A Bid for Fortune* (as discussed subsequently); and in two of the following novels he is attended upon by a mutilated Chinese manservant, Ah-Win, who, despite a murderous attempt on another master, is unquestioningly loyal to Nikola. In *The Lust of Hate* Nikola, in passing, informs Pennethorn, '"I know China better than you know that part of London situated, shall we say, between Blackfriars Bridge and Charing Cross, and have spent many years of my life there"' (56) – which incidental assertion, in a narrative entirely unconnected with China, emphasises the peculiar association. Many similar claims to totalising orientalist knowledge about China are made in *Doctor Nikola*. In *A Bid for Fortune*, Nikola is even indirectly associated with Britain's troubled colonial relationship with China, Wetherall explaining that just before his first momentous encounter with Nikola, 'Curiously enough we had just been discussing the main aspects of the politics of the East' (315).

By the end of the 1890s, European rivalry over Chinese territory was leading many in Britain to view the politics of the East as a growing source of threat to Britain's imperial progress, and fears of Chinese retaliation were becoming more orthodox (as elaborated in chapter 3). The increasing popularity of this perspective on the Chinese in the metropolis is evidenced, for example, in the farcical conclusion to the melodramatic 1902 stage adaptation, *Dr Nikola*, which sees Nikola strangled by the pigtail of the head lama.[141] But in the vanguard of those sounding the alarm in the metropolis in the mid-1890s was Boothby, with his Australian-informed views of Chinese peril.

Mesmerism and the 'Coming Man'

In the contradictions embodied in the Nikola character – by times menaced by the Chinese, by times implicated in the invasion threat they are assumed to pose – some of the conflicts of Boothby's own doubly-hybrid Anglo-Australian identity may be reflected (by times bluff colonial adventurer, by times the very model of a modern English

[141] Depasquale, 'An Incomplete Essay on Guy Boothby and the London Theatre', p. 61.

gentleman). Another key area in which his contradictory double-voice manifests itself is his articulation of the 'Coming Man' of the colonies versus perceived domestic English degeneration, which he frequently links in his fiction to an idiosyncratic take on mesmerism. These interlinked themes, which pervade the Nikola series, *The Beautiful White Devil*, and *Pharos the Egyptian*, can be read as complementary facets of the invasion threat in that the vigorous Coming Man is consistently portrayed as less susceptible to the mesmeric powers of the invasive foreigner than effete native Englishmen.

As already discussed, Boothby's international master criminal Nikola possesses impressive mesmeric and mind-reading abilities, and these pale in comparison with the still more complete hypnotic control that his supernatural Egyptian villain Pharos can effect. Mesmerism was, of course, not an attribute peculiar to Boothby's foreign villains, but one shared with a host of comparable fin-de-siècle gothic villains, such as Dracula, the creature from Richard Marsh's 1897 best-seller *The Beetle*, and the less-known Miss Penelosa of Doyle's *The Parasite* (1894). Mesmeric power also characterised many criminal foreigners of the period: the notorious Svengali of George Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894) is an accomplished mesmerist; so too are the vengeful Indians of *The Moonstone*;[142] Collins's famous, forerunning Italian villain Fosco similarly claims to be an adept of the 'magnetic science';[143] and the description of Doyle's arch-criminal Moriarty, with his 'extraordinary mental powers' and 'oscillating', 'reptilian' face, is suggestive of mesmeric fascination.[144] As this extensive list of mesmeric villains attests, the popular fascination with psychic phenomena proved a rich vein for popular authors to exploit, with many of them sharing their readers' fascination – Doyle's interest in the occult, for example, was well-known.[145] That it was an area of personal interest to Boothby is evidenced by Depasquale's discovery that as a young man he performed publicly as a mind-reader in a one-man show in Adelaide, and by Boothby's curious

[142] Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1868; London: Penguin, 1998), p. 290.
[143] Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (1860; London: Penguin, 2003), p. 337.
[144] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Final Problem' (1893), reprinted in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 2001), pp. 491-2. As I argue later in this chapter, Moriarty's close association with Ireland allows him to be read as a foreign villain.
[145] For more on Doyle's interest in the occult see Andrew Lycett's biography, *Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), which pays particular attention to this aspect of Doyle's life.

assertion, in the introduction to *On the Wallaby*, that he had 'experienced almost every phase of colonial life... from Government officials and stock-brokers, to dramatists, actors, *conjurors, ventriloquists*, gold miners and station hands [my emphasis]'.[146]

In an article on what he designates 'trance-gothic' narratives, Roger Luckhurst examines the phenomenon of mesmerism in the late-Victorian gothic mode principally as a mechanism for investigating new and modern states of subjectivity. He acknowledges, however, that 'hypnotic or mesmeric power is part of the repertory of the fin-de-siècle monster,' and that 'representations of hypnosis are traversed by racial stereotyping, ... degenerate criminality, ... and sexual terrorism,' citing Svengali, Moriarty, Dracula and 'a host of exotic women mesmerists' as exemplary.[147] In her analysis of the mesmeric abilities common to foreign villains, Catherine Wynne concludes that they 'incarnate the occult and wield this tabooed lore to colonize the minds of their subjects' posing a threat to Western science which 'naturally culminate[s] in a threat to empire'.[148] The terrifying capacity of the foreign or colonial other to invade the very minds of English subjects threatened the imperial self on its most fundamental level, particularly as it tended to emasculate its male victims. Viewed in this light, mesmerism can be considered a specific manifestation of the invasion threat, a grave danger to the manly pursuit of empire.

This insidious, emasculating writing of mesmerism is exemplified in certain of Doyle's short stories – for example, in the 'predominant alien will' of the Penelosa character. A crippled, female eccentric of colonial West Indian origins, her power to control her male English prey, when in the full of her health, is absolute. 'This woman can dominate my nervous organism,' despairs her helpless victim, the respectable Victorian gentleman, Professor Gilroy, '[s]he can project herself into my body and take command of it ... I am powerless!'[149] The emasculating effect of mesmerism is even more extremely presented in Marsh's *The Beetle*, in which, under the influence of the evil

[146] Depasquale, *Guy Boothby*, p. 72; Boothby, *On the Wallaby*, xvi.
[147] Roger Luckhurst, 'Trance-Gothic, 1882-97', in Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (ed.s), *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century* (Hampshire, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 150.
[148] Catherine Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002), p. 160.
[149] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Parasite* (1894), reprinted in *The Edinburgh Stories of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1981), p. 59.

Egyptian creature, the stricken English victim despairs, 'For the time I was no longer a man; my manhood was merged in his. I was in the extremist sense, an example of passive obedience'.[150] (As a key tale of supernatural Egyptian invasion, *The Beetle* is discussed at length in chapter 2.) This effect recurs in Doyle's short story 'John Barrington Cowles' (1888) and the novella *The Mystery of Cloomber* (1889); the former explicitly setting out the wider social implications of a powerful mesmeric will:

> A strong will can, simply by virtue of its strength, take possession of a weaker one, even at a distance... If there was one man in the world who had a very much more highly developed will than any of the rest of the human family, there is no reason why he should not be able to rule over them all, and to reduce his fellow-creatures to the condition of automatons.[151]

Given this popular cultural articulation of the power of the mesmeric practitioner, coupled with Luckhurst's assertion that 'in the latter half of the 1890s hypnotism was culturally pervasive', the threat posed by the dominant will of an alien subversive such as Nikola is manifest.[152]

The interlinked theme of the Coming Man of the colonies was not peculiar to Boothby either, but rather to be found circulating in some versions of New Imperialist thinking. According to this imperial myth, the feared degeneration and weakness endemic in the cosseted metropolitan English population would be cured by the racial renewal taking place in the tough conditions to be found on the imperial frontiers such as those in the Australian colonies.[153] Thus the declining native English stock would be bolstered by the development of an active, competent colonial type created in a process envisioned as follows by Lord Curzon: 'in this larger atmosphere, on the outskirts of Empire ... is to be found an ennobling and invigorating stimulus for our youth, saving them alike from the corroding ease and the morbid excitements of Western civilisation.'[154] Examples of this tough, savvy colonial type abound in the Anglo-Indians of Kipling's fiction, and an

---

[150] Richard Marsh, *The Beetle: A Mystery* (1897; Ontario: Broadview, 2004), p. 54.
[151] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'John Barrington Cowles' (1888), reprinted in *The Edinburgh Stories of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1981), p. 32.
[152] Luckhurst, 'Trance-Gothic, 1882-97', p. 159.
[153] For an account of the Australian version of the Coming Man, see Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980* (London & Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 63-84.
[154] Romanes lecture (1907), cited in Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 3.

examination of Boothby's works discloses the recurrent presence of a comparable and typically Anglo-Australian type. His protagonists accordingly tend to divide into what may be termed 'strong colonials' who can, for example, withstand the mesmeric power of his exotic villains, and 'weak metropolitans' whose will is entirely subsumed to them; while on occasion the strenuous life of the colonial frontier can re-invigorate the weaker English-born. In *The Beautiful White Devil* De Normanville, who repeatedly faints at key moments, represents the weak, home-grown English type, and Walworth, who almost single-handedly defeats the hostile Chinese crew, represents the strong colonial. Hatteras of *A Bid for Fortune* and *'Farewell, Nikola'* is the epitome of the Anglo-Australian type, a self-made success forged in the challenging and racially-charged conditions of the north Queensland frontier as his bluff, hearty introduction attests:

> Richard Hatteras, at your service, commonly called Dick, of Thursday Island, North Queensland, pearler ... and South Sea trader generally. Eight-and-twenty years of age ... six feet two in my stockings, and forty-six inches round the chest; strong as a Hakodate wrestler ... And big shame to me if I were not so strong, considering the free, open-air, devil-may-care life I've led. Why, I was doing man's work at an age when most boys are wondering when they're going to be taken out of knickerbockers. I'd been half round the world before I was fifteen, and had been wrecked twice and marooned once before my beard showed signs of sprouting. (14)

This testimonial is vindicated by repeated demonstrations of Hatteras's physical superiority and by juxtaposition with versions of the weak metropolitan, as for instance in Boothby's sweeping characterisation of 'new arrivals [to Australia] from England' as 'weak-brained young pigeons with money' (18). But nowhere is the contrast more starkly drawn than between Hatteras and the examples of the home-grown English aristocracy that populate *A Bid for Fortune*. The English branch of Hatteras's family are minor nobility, and on paying a visit to the ancient family seat, Hatteras encounters his cousin Gwendoline: incapable of speech, bearded and dwarfish in stature, she is a crude caricature of the most excessive nineteenth-century theories of physical and mental degeneration. The message is obvious – in the same family one cousin, Hatteras, the product of the colonial frontier, is hale and hearty; the other, Gwendoline, product of the home counties, is degenerate to a shocking degree.

Similarly Hatteras's young travelling companion, the Marquis of Beckenham, seems a typically effete aristocrat, as Hatteras's first impressions attest: 'His voice was very soft and low, more like a girl's than a boy's, and I noticed that he had none of the mannerisms of a man – at least, not of one who has seen much of the world' (90). However, Beckenham, though initially weak, is not as degenerate as his peers (with whom his father had forbidden contact), and is thus capable of regeneration through his contact with Hatteras and ensuing travels. The message again is straight-forward – colonial experience can re-invigorate the weakened home stock. This trope is noted by Brantlinger as already evident in the mid-Victorian fiction of Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Charles Reade. The pioneering Pisistratus Caxton of Bulwer-Lytton's Australian colonial drama *The Caxtons* (1849), expresses this sense of regeneration aptly: 'Take them altogether, whatever their origin, or whatever brought them hither, they are a fine, manly, frank-hearted race, these colonists now!'[155] Fittingly it is Gwendoline's early death that allows the family title and property to pass to Hatteras (her degeneracy being too extreme for personal salvation through contact with him). He then ensures the renewal of the family line through his marriage to another vigorous colonial, Phyllis, daughter of Wetherell, the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales. That she is born and bred in Australia, is a point Boothby belabours at the novel's opening when Phyllis refers to herself jokingly as 'an Australian native' explaining that she 'mean[s], of course, as you know, colonial born?' (30-1).

Boothby's insistence on the ascendancy of the Coming Man can be seen as one attempt towards resolving his Anglo-Australian identity crisis. Dixon, who identifies the Coming Man, or 'Australian Type', as a common trope of Australian adventure fiction, argues that it aids the construction of an Australian national identity increasingly defined by its difference from the imperial centre. He further posits that '[i]n the context of Australia's relation to Britain, the Australian Type functions as part of an anti-imperial counter-discourse'.[156] Thus while hardly posing an overt counter-colonial threat, the Coming Man myth on some levels subverts the imperial project by challenging the fitness

[155] Cited in Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 125.
[156] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, pp. 85, 147.

of the metropolitan centre to govern its peripheries and suggesting the increasing capability of the settler colonies for self-government.

Certainly Boothby's depiction of the murderous official in *The Beautiful White Devil* accords with this sentiment, implying that British ruling authorities imposed externally from the degenerating home land are perverse and corrupt, while the men (and women) raised on the invigorating colonial frontier are healthy and just. A comparable viewpoint is evident in Kipling's account of the governance of the Indian colony, nowhere more eloquent than in *Kim* (1901). Here an Indian noblewoman discourses on the suitability of the Indian-born English to govern versus the unfitness of the homebred types: 'These be the sort to oversee justice. They know the land and the customs of the land. The others, all new from Europe, suckled by white women and learning our tongues from books, are worse than the pestilence.'[157] Of course Kipling does not consider here the ultimate origins of these able Anglo-Indian administrators, and in these representations both he and Boothby leave unconsidered the question of the perceived regressive potential of colonial life, the 'white blackfellerism' of Australia's racial nightmare, for example, and the outcome so bleakly depicted in *Heart of Darkness*. Further, in *A Bid for Fortune*, the lifestyle that the two exemplars of Australian vitality choose is not a return to the supposedly invigorating atmosphere of north Queensland but rather seclusion in the sheltered environs of Hatteras's English county seat, a choice echoed or aspired to by many others of Boothby's hardy colonial protagonists. Yet this ultimate rejection of the colonial heritage that is presented as the source of their strength is adverted to merely in a throwaway remark concerning the 'mother country' in the novel's concluding paragraphs, a pattern which is repeated in some of the subsequent Nikola novels. Thus, while throughout the bulk of his narratives and in the authorial persona he constructed, Boothby seems to favour the Australian aspect of his identity, in practice, like many of his protagonists, he poured the fruits of his labours into the pursuit of the English squirely ideal

The motifs of mesmerism and the Coming Man are linked in Boothby's work because the contrast between the two types of Englishman, strong colonial and weak metropolitan, is accentuated by the differing effects of mesmerism upon subjects of each

[157] Rulyard Kipling, *Kim* (1901; London: Penguin, 2000), p. 124.

type. In *A Bid for Fortune*, despite his occult oriental prowess, Nikola's first attempt to hypnotise Hatteras fails and he resorts to using narcotics instead; in a subsequent encounter the power of Nikola's eyes restrains Hatteras but must be reinforced by armed guards. A further attempt on Beckenham alone, however, is entirely successful:

> "I could not get away from those terrible eyes. They seemed to be growing larger and fiercer every moment. Oh! I can feel the horror of them even now. As I gazed his white right hand was moving to and fro before me with regular sweeps, and with each one I felt my own will growing weaker and weaker. That I was being mesmerised, I had no doubt, but if I had been going to be murdered I could not have moved a finger to save myself" (154).

This description of an irresistible mesmeric hold reads like a textbook account of the powers of many fin-de-siècle villains. It also contrasts markedly in its complete success with the partial attempts on Hatteras. Another son of the colonies, Wetherell, experiences an even less successful attempt by Nikola to hypnotise him:

> 'He laid himself back in his chair, and for nearly a minute and a half stared me full in the face. You have seen Nikola's eyes, so I needn't tell you what a queer effect they are able to produce. I could not withdraw mine from them, and I felt that if I did not make an effort I should soon be mesmerised. So, pulling myself together, I sprang from my chair, and, by doing so, let him see that our interview was at an end' (318).

Thus it is made clear that all the strong colonial type has to do to thwart the mesmeric powers of the foreign villain is to 'pull himself together', a course of action clearly unavailable to his passive metropolitan counterpart. Depasquale comments upon the peculiar passivity of many of Boothby's Victorian gentleman narrators but does not observe this distinction between domestic and colonial stock.[158]

Nowhere is the submissiveness of the weak metropolitan so completely demonstrated as in the encounter between the Egyptian villain Pharos and his helpless English victim, the gentleman artist Cyril Forrester, or 'the usual idiot of these stories' as the *Athenaeum* reviewer scathingly adjudges him.[159] It is no coincidence that Boothby assigns the profession of artist to Forrester as most schools of fin-de-siècle art were targeted by Max

[158] Depasquale, *Guy Boothby*, pp. 28, 89.
[159] 'Historical Romances', *The Athenaeum*, 3726 (Mar 1899), p. 368.

Nordau in the exposition of degenerate phenomena presented in his seminal articulation of degeneration theory.[160] Forrester's passivity is one of the novel's defining motifs – his will is entirely subjected to that of Pharos who manipulates him puppet-like to effect his revenge plot. Versions of the following account of Forrester's first experience of subordination are reiterated throughout the novel, with 'powerless' and 'incapable' standing out as overwords: 'It seemed to me I was bound hand and foot, powerless to help myself, and incapable of aught save to carry out the will of the remorseless being into whose power I had fallen so completely'.[161] The climax of the novel involves no battle of wills, agency is attributed solely to Pharos who has but to point a finger at Forrester to subdue him:

> Then, lifting his right hand, he pointed it at me. 'Fool – fool!' he cried, with withering scorn... 'Sleep again, and in that sleep do all I shall require of thee.' As he said this his diminutive form seemed to grow larger and more terrible ... His eyes shone in his head like living coals, and seemed to burn into my brain. ... obedient as a little child, I closed my eyes and slept. (358)

Pharos then subjects Forrester to hypnotic control '[f]or no less a period than five days and six nights' (359) and uses him to spread plague systematically across England in this time. On finally emerging from this trance, Forrester's continued helplessness prevents him from alerting the English authorities to Pharos's scheme, and he merely spectates at Pharos's final self-inflicted demise. In fact, the 'strain' of this 'terrible scene' upon Forrester's weak mind proves too great for him to bear, precipitating his last passive act of the novel – collapse into a 'dead faint' (375).

Pushed to the limit by the inexorable will of the foreign adversary, the weak metropolitan's frequent response is to consider recourse to self-destruction. Suicide is a recurrent theme in *Pharos the Egyptian*, the bizarre opening of which witnesses the villain enjoying the spectacle of a 'wretched suicide' in the Thames (26). Early in the novel the heroine, Pharos's captive ward Valerie, warns ominously that it would be preferable for Forrester 'to die than to fall into his power' (133). She attests that a 'young

[160] Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (1892; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), pp. 27-31.
[161] Guy Boothby, *Pharos the Egyptian* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1899), pp. 67-8; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

Norwegian pianist', again a degenerate artistic type, had previously committed suicide after falling under his sway and that she had made a similar attempt, but was thwarted owing to Pharos's complete mental hold over her (169-70). Ultimately, Forrester concurs that he would 'better, far better, be dead' when he finally realises how Pharos has used him (351). Similarly, pitted against the adversities of life and Nikola in *The Lust of Hate*, the luckless English protagonist Pennethorne contemplates suicide on three occasions (100, 212, 218). 'Powerless' in Nikola's 'grip of iron' (99), his first thought on how to escape is suicide:

> I leant upon the coping and looked down at the dark water ... Here was my chance if only I had the pluck ... Life had now no hope left for me. Why should I not throw myself over, and so escape the fate that must inevitably await me if I lived? One moment's courage, a little struggling in the icy water, a last choking cry, and then it would all be over and done with... (100)

Likewise, the weak-minded English doctor Ingleby, who is swept along against his better judgement by Nikola in *Dr Nikola's Experiment*, contemplates suicide as an option to evade his debts and failures throughout the opening chapter of the text, 'Tired of Life' (6-7, 17). But this tendency is not at all in evidence in the tougher colonial type Bruce who is similarly down on his luck in Shanghai at the start of *Doctor Nikola*, nor ever enters the thinking of Hatteras while he is subject to Nikola's outrages. This abnegation of the will to live on the part of the weak metropolitan can be interpreted as the ultimate form of degeneration. In Boothby's works the dominance of the foreign villain over the English protagonist is always emasculating, but the strong colonials Hatteras and Bruce ultimately emerge unscathed. The weak metropolitans Pennethorn and Forrester are far less capable of resistance, signalling the gravity of the invasion threat against the weakened home population in a depiction that is consistent with Boothby's alarmist colonial perspective and assumption of a savvy Anglo-Australian persona.

Dr Nikola's alterity: constructing a racialised menace

The universal colonial other

While mesmerism is one of the skills he uses to most sinister effect, the threat embodied by the Nikola character is far less predicated upon his implication in the occult than upon his exoticism. Though Boothby's representation of Nikola's ethnicity is wildly inconsistent – he seems by times to be Italian, Jewish, Middle Eastern, Far Eastern, even South American – Nikola is, however, from the outset clearly demarcated as foreign to contemporary English eyes. In the very first description Boothby proffers (cited above in the section 'Who is Dr Nikola?'), stereotypical foreign characteristics such as black hair and eyes, dark olive skin and pearly teeth are attributed to him in order to differentiate him from Boothby's target middle-class English readership and allow them to instantly recognise him as an instance of the racial other.[162] With the character's true racial origins undisclosed until half-way through the last novel, and his close association with many exotic locations, it is arguable that Boothby was constructing a non-specific racial otherness for Nikola to heighten the threat he presents. Boothby may have conceived of the character as Italian from the start – for example, he discloses that his first name is Antonio in the third novel – however, atypically for Boothby, he subtly chooses not to reveal Nikola's Venetian origins until the end of the series. This generic alterity allows Boothby to position him variously as threatening colonial other in *A Bid for Fortune*, and yet as invasive European colonizer in *Doctor Nikola*. As noted, the publicity campaign for *A Bid for Fortune* featured a series of ads asking 'Who is Dr Nikola?' to emphasise the mystery surrounding his origins. This coupled with Boothby's explicit refusal to answer the same question in the 1896 *Windsor* interview suggests a studied attempt to emphasise Nikola's exoticism on the part of author and publisher.[163]

---

[162] The following description from a contemporary Sherlock Holmes tale makes the case: 'a short, stout man, whose olive face and coal-black hair proclaimed his Southern origin, though his speech was that of an educated Englishman'. This description of the Greek interpreter's colouring in the eponymous tale matches closely that of Dr Nikola. Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Greek Interpreter', *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, (1894; London: Penguin, 2001), p. 440. The tale also features some other perhaps coincidental links to *A Bid for Fortune*: the villain of the piece has a mesmeric effect on his victim, and the location of the adventure is Beckenham.

[163] Hyde, 'The Creator of "Dr Nikola"', p. 131.

Nikola's ominous generic alterity is reminiscent of Dickens's rather two-dimensional caricature of a foreign villain, the murderer Rigaud/Lagnier/Blandois, of *Little Dorrit* (1857), whose power to disturb seems to derive largely from his non-specific foreignness, and whose multiple aliases reflect his ambiguous origins. The character himself directly expresses it in a statement which could equally be voiced by Nikola: 'I am a cosmopolitan gentleman. I own no particular country ... I am a citizen of the world.'[164] And it is his disconcerting alienness, reinforced by continual reference to his unattractive foreign features, that evokes such powerful revulsion in the sympathetic characters of Dickens's novel. Nikola too is a citizen of the world, master of many countries and subject of none, as Boothby is at pains to emphasise throughout the series. The following lengthy but inconclusive statement concerning Nikola's identity in response to a query from Wetherell amply demonstrates this:

> 'Dr Nikola? Well, he's Nikola, and that's all I can tell you. If you're a wise man you'll want to know no more. Ask the Chinese mothers nursing their almond-eyed spawn in Peking who he is; ask the Japanese, ask the Malays, the Hindoos, the Burmese, the coal porters in Port Said, the Buddhist priests of Ceylon; ask the King of Corea, the men up in Thibet, the Spanish priests in Manilla, or the Sultan of Borneo, the ministers of Siam, or the French in Saigon – they'll all know Dr Nikola and his cat, and, take my word for it, they fear him.' (314)

This lengthy enumeration not only emphasises Nikola's cosmopolitanism, but also directly links it to the dread he inspires. Through this and recurrent analogous implications in coloniality, he is positioned as a type of universal colonial other, capable of evoking any hostile colonial group, and particularly those of Eastern origins. From this perspective, he can be seen embodying the 'sense of generalized xenophobia' that Cecil Eby identifies as being a part of the dangerous jingoism and martial tendency that proliferated in British popular culture in the period before World War I[165].

---

[164] Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit* (1857; London: Penguin, 2003), p. 24. The final statement, of course, also adverts to Oliver Goldsmith's famous fictional Chinese social commentator in the 1760-1 satire of the same name.

[165] Cecil D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 7.

The vagueness of Nikola's ethnicity is exacerbated by the curiously unstable representation of his skin-colour throughout the series: it progresses from 'dark olive' at the beginning of *A Bid for Fortune*, to 'sallow,' 'pale,' 'death's-[h]ead,' and 'deadly white' at the close of novel.[166] This pattern continues throughout the sequels and seems at times deliberate, as in this from *The Lust of Hate* in which Nikola is described as both dark-skinned and pallid in the same paragraph:

> His hair and eyes were as black as night, his complexion was a dark olive hue, confirming that suspicion of foreign extraction which his name suggested, but of which his speech afforded no trace. He was attired in faultless evening dress, the dark colour of which heightened the extraordinary pallor of his complexion. (54-5)

The adjectives sallow and olive, which when pertaining to the complexion have connotations of a yellow-brown colour,[167] link Nikola to literary villains of the Far East, of Chinese or Japanese origin, as does his ability to convincingly impersonate Chinese people. He is certainly credited by many as being an inspiration for that major oriental villain of the early 1900s – Sax Rohmer's Dr Fu Manchu, whose nefarious schemes target the entire white race (Rohmer's character, along with the oriental villains of M. P. Shiel's yellow peril fiction are examined in chapter 3). Knight considers Nikola 'the model for Fu Manchu' and Dixon makes the same connection.[168] The attribution of pallor and impeccable dress, on the other hand, associate Nikola with the aristocratic Eastern European Count Dracula and the convention of the deathly-pale vampire. Sutherland alternatively asserts that the descriptions in the first novel strongly imply that Nikola is Jewish, making the connection between the time of writing and the large influx of Eastern European Jews into England from the 1880s fleeing pogroms in Russia and Poland. He further suggests the name Nikola may therefore be of Russian origin, alluding also to Tsar Nikolai II who succeeded to the throne in 1895.[169] The inconsistent representation of Nikola's complexion thus seems to fit with Boothby's tactic of

[166] 'olive,' pp. 7, 50; 'sallow,' pp. 225, 231, 258; 'pale,' pp. 182, 243; 'death's-head,' p. 221; 'deadly white,' p. 316.
[167] OED: 'Sallow: Of the skin or complexion: Having a sickly yellow or brownish yellow colour.' OED: 'Olive: An easily tanned or yellowish-brown skin colouring'.
[168] Knight, 'Sterling settlement and colonial currency', p. 11; Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 162.
[169] Sutherland, intro. to *A Bid For Fortune*, pp. xii-xiii.

genericising his alterity, creating a multivalent ethnicity evocative of the multiplicity of potential foreign threats to Englishness and empire ingrained in the contemporary popular consciousness.

Nikola's command of a blindly obedient staff of heterogeneous foreign henchmen serves to emphasise his connection with subversive colonial forces. The dubious white colonials of the first novel are accompanied by 'a gigantic negro' attendant and 'two powerful Soudanese' bodyguards (169, 183). These latter hastily-sketched African figures evoke Britain's ongoing colonial entanglements in North Africa, as is reinforced illustratively by presence of the turban in fig. 12, and discussed subsequently in this section and in chapter 2.

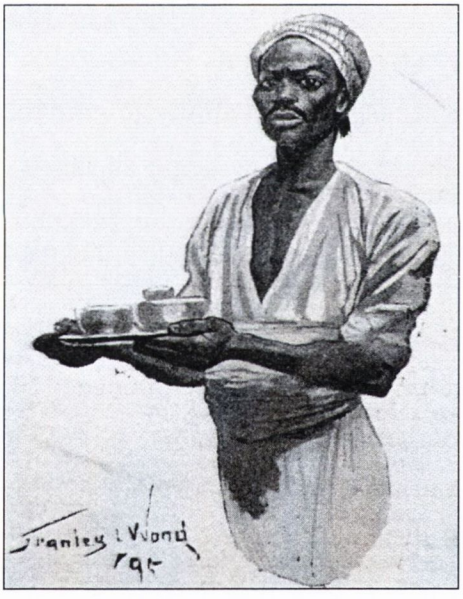


Fig. 12. 'A gigantic negro made his appearance.' *A Bid for Fortune* (London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1895), p. 169.

Image from the author's collection.

Later novels feature the Chinese manservant, Ah-Win, a shady Jewish agent, and a decrepit Italian caretaker – none of whom, unfortunately, are illustrated. As Dixon notes: '[a]s in Port Said, Nikola conspicuously associates himself with those others, working at the sites of discursive boundaries.'[170]

[170] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 171.

Stereotypes concerning Italian criminality and violence abounded in nineteenth-century British popular culture and are discussed in more detail in the final section of this chapter. The inclusion of a grossly clichéd underworld Jewish character, added to Sutherland's contention that Nikola himself can be read as Jewish, plays on the popular anti-Semitism triggered by the recent arrival of Eastern European Jewish refugees, particularly with regard to their noticeable presence in London's notorious East End district of Whitechapel. These immigrants were, for example, targeted as scapegoats for the 1888-9 Ripper murders, with angry East End mobs chanting slogans such as 'Down with Jews!', 'It was a Jew who did it!', and, more tellingly, 'No Englishman did it!'.[171] And, as Lynn Pan has observed, the wider anti-immigration sentiment that the Jewish influx provoked also took in the East End's tiny Chinese community thus conflating these two perceived racial menaces.[172] But of all of these sinister racial others – shady white, African, Italian and Jewish – Nikola is mostly closely associated with Ah-Win, the staunchly loyal, deaf and dumb Chinese manservant whom he tolerates as his only human companion in *The Lust of Hate*, and who can be read as a kind of grotesque Chinese alter ego to Nikola:

> Next moment the door opened, and in walked the most hideous man I have ever yet beheld in my life. In Australia I had met many queer specimens of the Chinese race, but never one whose countenance approached in repulsiveness that of the man Nikola employed as his servant. In stature he was taller than his master, possibly a couple or three inches above six feet, and broad in proportion. His eyes squinted inwardly, his face was wrinkled and seamed in every direction, his nose had plainly been slit at some time or another, and I noticed that his left ear was missing from his head. (56)

What is most significant in this account is not the facile attempt to provoke physical revulsion in the reader, as per *Doctor Nikola*'s account of Beijing, but the implicit connection made between Nikola and this specimen of Chinese monstrosity and between the latter and the immigrant Chinese in Australia.

The liminality of the locations in which Boothby situates Nikola reinforces his status as hostile colonial other. *A Bid for Fortune* sees him staying at 'The Green Sailor', a low

[171] Michael Diamond, *Victorian Sensation* (London: Anthem, 2003), pp. 186-7.
[172] Lynn Pan, *Sons of The Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese* (London: Mandarin, 1991), p. 88.

tavern in London's culturally-loaded East End dockland area of Limehouse. Limehouse was then considered to be London's Chinatown and in the popular imagination inextricably linked with presumptions of Chinese criminality in the form of opium dens and brothels. Though in the 1890s it consisted of a couple of quiet, rundown streets with a Chinese population of only two hundred, it had gained notoriety through sensational journalism and become a stock popular fictional setting for the exploits of dubious characters, dating back to Dickens's unfinished 1870 thriller *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.[173] In London once more in *The Lust of Hate*, Nikola, attended only by Ah-Win, makes his lair in a peripheral, abandoned 'boot and shoe factory' (55), and the reference to this industry is not incidental – for Boothby's readers it had associations with both the industrial East End of London and the immigrant Jewish population who found work in it.[174] In Venice, Nikola is presented as being well-known to the criminal underworld and at home at a gathering of 'hot-headed', exiled Russian nihilists in hiding in the city (71, 73). In Australia, Nikola is drawn to a much more populous Chinatown, 'the lowest quarter of Sydney', as a suitable location for his criminal activity, secreting his kidnap victim there (285). All of these settings are defined by their cloistering of groups of unwelcome foreigners within the main population of the city and all have connotations of criminality; collectively they symbolise how Nikola as racial other infiltrates civilised British society and subverts imperial authority.

Dixon conjectures that the motif of travel that dominates *A Bid for Fortune* plays upon 'the relation between the respectable parts of London and Sydney, and the mysterious East,' and points to 'the mounting crisis of imperial identity'.[175] In the context of the perceived threat posed by the immigrant Chinese to British Australian society, he emphasises the significance of the journeys that connect Government House and the Colonial Secretary's mansion with Chinatown in Sydney in this text, revealing the

[173] Other forerunning depictions of Limehouse include those by Oscar Wilde in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) and Doyle in 'The Man with the Twisted Lip' (1891). Rohmer later used it to great effect in his early 1900s Fu-Manchu novels. For more on the popular literary treatment of Limehouse, see Michael Diamond, *'Lesser Breeds': Racial Attitudes in Popular British Culture, 1890-1940* (London: Anthem, 2006), 19-28. See also Pan who argues that Limehouse's unsavoury reputation pre-twentieth century stemmed from its association with opium-smoking, *Sons of The Yellow Emperor*, pp. 85-9.

[174] David Feldman, 'Jews in the East End, Jews in the Polity, "The Jew" in the Text', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 13 (Dec 2011), p. 14; online at http://19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/article/view/630/734, 8 March 2013.

[175] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, pp. 162, 169.

permeability of the boundaries between civilisation and the invasive colonial other. This racial threat is overdetermined by the removal of Nikola's kidnap victim in *A Bid for Fortune* from Sydney's Chinatown to an island in the New Hebrides, a Melanesian island group of particular significance in the paranoid fantasies of 'White Australia'. In the 1880s the Australian colonies had sought to annex the New Hebrides and other strategic island groups in response to invasion fears stemming from the increased presence of Germany, France and Russia in the Pacific.[176] These islands also provided Australia with another major source of indentured kanaka labourers, whose large presence in the northern colonies contributed to the fears of 'White Australia' being overrun, as the 1901 *Bulletin* cartoon depicting 'Black Queensland' in fig. 3 clearly attests.[177]

Central to the portrayal of Nikola as generic hostile colonial is Boothby's choice of Port Said as the location for his laboratory in the first encounter that presents him in what may be called a domestic setting. On the mouth of the Suez Canal, 'the one great gateway between East and West,'[178] Port Said at this period was popularly considered the entry point to the Orient. Of enormous strategic importance, the Suez Canal, 'a dismal but profitable ditch,' as Conrad's rueful designation attests, literally provided expedient shipping access to Britain's Eastern empire.[179] Metaphorically it occupied a position of great significance in the Western imagination as it divided civilisation from varying forms of perceived oriental barbarism, forming 'that boundary line with which Britain inscribed its regime of difference upon the world.'[180] As touched upon in the Introduction, Said's seminal *Orientalism* (1978) documents expansively the operation of the enormously influential discourse which articulated this difference in Western imperial culture, and produced a mythologized orient suitable for colonial occupation. On the border between the West and this mysterious Orient, the liminal location of Port Said functions as an excellent symbolic backdrop for Nikola's multivalent alterity and menacing mastery of Western science and Eastern occultism. While Said emphasises that in actuality the encroachment across this border in general, and in the nineteenth century in particular, was that of the West upon the East, there existed nonetheless a deep

[176] Ward, 'Security', pp. 236-8, 241.
[177] Rickard, *Australia*, pp. 114-6.
[178] 'Egypt of Today', *The Windsor Magazine*, 5 (Dec 1896) p. 622.
[179] Joseph Conrad, *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896; London: Penguin, 1975), p. 20.
[180] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 86.

paranoia, paradoxically reinforced by the success of the colonial project, that the West was under sustained threat from Eastern invasion.[181] Kipling, literary authority on all things Eastern, articulates the popular perception of the location as the frontier of sinister oriental forces in 'The Mark of the Beast' (1891), a chilling tale of colonial revenge: 'East of Suez, some hold, the direct control of Providence ceases; Man being there handed over to the power of the Gods and Devils of Asia.'[182] From the long excerpt above detailing Nikola's international reputation, it is clear that his domain lay in and his agency derived from this mythicised territory to the east of the Suez Canal.

Boothby exploited many of the popular connotations of Port Said to great effect in his novels. In both *A Bid for Fortune* and *Pharos the Egyptian*, it functions as an introduction to 'the Immemorial East'[183] for his inexperienced, metropolitan characters. In *A Bid for Fortune*, 'poor though Port Said is in orientalism' from the veteran perspective of Hatteras, it is 'the first Eastern port' the sheltered Beckenham has encountered and wholly absorbing to him (149). This unstable Eastern city is not only mysterious, it is also the site of successive violent physical attacks upon both travellers. As well as being garrotted and kidnapped by Nikola, they are inadvertently embroiled in a violent siege at a mosque, where they narrowly avoid being beaten to death by an enraged mob of Arabs, as depicted in fig. 13. This accords with the mid-century account by Jeremy Bentham, prominent designer of the 'Panopticon' prison, of being 'mobbed' for sneaking into a minaret to obtain a panorama of a Middle Eastern town.[184]

[181] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 73 (hereafter cited parenthetically in the text).
[182] Rudyard Kipling, 'The Mark of the Beast' (1890), reprinted in Roger Luckhurst (ed.), *Late-Victorian Gothic Tales*, (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2005), p. 84.
[183] Boothby, *Pharos the Egyptian*, p. 159.
[184] Cited in Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley and LA (CA): University of California Press, 1991), p. 24.



Fig. 13. 'There is no help for it ... We must fight our way out.'
A Bid for Fortune (London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1895), p. 151.

Image from the author's collection.

While the contrast between the manly Englishman and the undifferentiated mob of fanatic Arabs in the illustration in fig. 13 could not be clearer, colonial revenge is the premise that underlies this incident, as it is 'the impudence and folly' of a group of English tourists, who have refused to remove their shoes in the mosque, that triggers the furious reaction (153). This unwelcome trespass upon an Eastern holy place is symbolic of the wider ongoing occupation of Egypt by British forces and the potential response, a key colonial conundrum which forms the topic of investigation in the next chapter. As chapter 2 sets out in detail, the centrality of the Suez Canal to Britain's imperial

endeavour at this time was a commonplace, and habitually alluded to in contemporary commentary in phrases such as 'our nexus – our nerve centre – at which our lines of empire meet'.[185] Thus in its very strategic importance, the location had become a potential liability to British imperial interests. At the time Boothby was writing, the threat to Britain's interests associated with the loss of the canal was as much of a commonplace as its importance. Thus Boothby's positioning of Nikola as at home within Port Said, where he is free to perpetrate grievous attacks on British citizens, has a deeper subversive subtext depicting him, as it does, as a hostile agent at large in a notorious imperial weak spot.

The orientalising of fin-de-siècle villains

Nikola's foreignness is one of the many traits he shares with other contemporary literary villains, and particularly those of invasion narratives. Sutherland, in his analysis of *A Bid for Fortune*, notes the 'blatant un-Englishness' of the master criminals of 1890s popular fiction, citing Dr Nikola, in company with Professor Moriarty, Svengali, Count Dracula, Prince Lucio (*The Sorrows of Satan*), and even H. G. Wells's Martians, as exemplary. He also notes several other characteristics that many of them possess in common including elaborate formal dress, hypnotic powers, predaciousness, sexual ambiguity, and hyper-intelligence.[186] In Nikola's case, in addition to his foreignness, his penchant for irreproachable attire is noted in *A Bid for Fortune*'s initial description of him, and his first remark to Hatteras clearly demarcates him as a predator, '"I think you will allow, Mr Hatteras, that half the world is born for the other half to prey upon!"' Observing Hatteras's ensuing confusion, he elaborates: '"There is only one sport of any interest to me in life, and that is the opportunity of making capital out of my fellow humans"' (52, 55). His very next act is to give Hatteras a convincing demonstration of a repertory of occult talents, prominent among which is mesmerism. With the exception of *'Farewell, Nikola'*, the doctor entirely eschews female company, Ingleby explaining in *Dr Nikola's Experiment*: 'To put it bluntly, Nikola is a woman-hater of the most determined order' (201). The superiority of his 'extraordinary brain' is manifest throughout the series in his

[185] Cited in Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 143.
[186] Sutherland, intro. to *A Bid For Fortune*, ix-xii.

scientific accomplishment and criminal superiority, stated similarly bluntly elsewhere in that text: 'Nikola is the most marvellous man in the world' (48). Given this combination of characteristics, Nikola clearly conforms to the model of the fin-de-siècle super-villain put forward by Sutherland.

Expanding on Sutherland's argument concerning the alterity of fin-de-siècle villains, this analysis would assert that they are specifically orientalised rather than co-incidentally un-English, and Said's explication of orientalist discourse certainly allows for this possibility. Throughout his work, and with an in-depth focus on the late nineteenth century, Said details the process by which 'the learned grids and codes provided by the Orientalist' to interpret the oriental subject became accepted truths via the constitutive nature of the discourse which 'forces the uninitiated Western reader to accept Orientalist codifications ... as the *true* Orient' (67).[187] Many of the villainous characteristics Sutherland lists are consistent with the reductive stereotypes of orientalist discourse: elaborate dress, while not exclusive to, certainly has connotations of oriental decadence and luxury, as does sexual ambiguity or depravity, as the tradition of oriental gothic from William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) onward amply attests. Predaciousness, in the guise of despotism, is another commonly-assumed trait. Mind-reading and mesmerism, while not exclusively Eastern, have obvious links to the irrationality and occultism typically imputed to oriental scholarship and religion. High intelligence is not usually attributed to any but the white race, but is necessary to provide a convincing threat. It is frequently counterbalanced by the assumption that the brilliant master-criminal is atypical of his primitive fellow nationals whom he manipulates in pursuit of his schemes, much like an oriental despot. Speaking illustratively of the common stereotypes and their use, Said summarises: 'An Oriental lives in the Orient, he lives a life of Oriental ease, in a state of Oriental despotism and sensuality, imbued with a feeling of Oriental fatalism.' Thus diverse writers, and their audiences, 'could carry on a lengthy discussion between themselves ... using all those generalities unquestioningly and yet intelligibly' (102).[188]

[187] Said additionally posits here that in the process of orientalisation, 'the Oriental was always *like* some aspect of the West' which allows Nikola's invasive criminality to be read as a mirror of Western practice.

[188] Said also maintains that the acceptance of these stereotypes became fixed in the nineteenth century in conjunction with the general expansion of the material colonial project, to the point that merely 'for a writer to use the word *Oriental* was a reference for the reader sufficient to identify a specific body of information about the Orient' (205).

From the frequency with which these oriental characteristics are assigned to fin-de-siècle villains, it is clear that, consciously or unconsciously, the popular authors of the period utilised them in order to heighten the threat posed by their villains. Though Said's emphasis is on the successful dominance effected by the European powers through orientalist discourse upon the peoples that were it its subject, he certainly acknowledges, albeit briefly, that inherent to the mindset was the deep-seated conviction of the threat of the 'Orient' as well as its promise. Said's focus is the codification of the long tradition of European Christian fear of Islam, and Islamic invasion (59-60), but he additionally notes in passing, 'the traditional Western hostility to and fear of the Orient' (237). Said considers that the sense of a threatening, invasive orient, 'an Oriental tidal wave' (250), develops not alongside confident nineteenth century imperialism, but mainly following the paradigm shift effected by World War I, citing the yellow peril anxieties of a 1922 John Buchan text as exemplary (251). However, as this study of fin-de-siècle popular fiction demonstrates, the fear was prevalent long before that. And in the Nikola texts, and all those others featuring comparable foreign villains, the well-known stereotypes were deployed to trigger fear of foreign infiltration, and cue the correct response of paranoia in the reader. Following Said, Rana Kabbani, in her examination of Europe's myths of the Orient, elaborates the logic involved in this kind of stereotyping: 'If it could be suggested that Eastern peoples were slothful, preoccupied with sex, violent, and incapable of self-government, then the imperialist would feel himself justified in stepping in and ruling.'[189] In this project, popular fiction conspired to present a clutch of orientalised villains whose implied menace to the integrity of empire helped to legitimate pre-emptive imperial aggression.

All of the above oriental stereotypes – decadence, depravity, despotism, irrationality – could equally feature on a list of symptoms of degeneracy if one were to apply Nordau's diagnosis of the condition. And, indeed, Said observes the growing convergence of orientalist theses of Eastern backwardness, degeneracy and inequality with Victorian pseudo-scientific racial and degeneration theory over the course of the nineteenth century, pointing out that the oriental was linked to those marginal groups commonly designated degenerate in Western society: 'delinquents, the insane, women, the poor'

[189] Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions*, p. 6.

(206-7). Further and paradoxically, although degeneracy had implications of the primitive and the savage, over-developed brains and intellectualism were also associated with it, particularly when combined with a lack of morality. Nordau, citing a European authority, elaborates: 'As regards their intellect, they can ... attain to a high degree of development, but from a moral point of view their existence is completely deranged ... A degenerate will employ his brilliant faculties quite as well in the service of some grand object as in the satisfaction of the basest propensities.'[190] This description applies quite well to the murderous plot to paralyse Europe alluded to by Nikola in *The Lust of Hate*, which he amorally considers 'one of [my] best-planned schemes' (282). Fittingly, Sutherland observes that the 'Machiavellian skill in orchestration of villainy,' possessed by these foreign criminals makes them 'masters of the long-term, sinister conspiracy against the English race.'[191] And though Sutherland's listed villains do not all directly embody the invasion threat, hostility to the so-called white race, and the English in particular, is certainly an attribute that they and the narratives that unleash them have in common. In this sense, the model of the foreign super-villain put forward by Sutherland conforms to the model of the degenerate and threat to the future of the European races put forward by Nordau.

In a resonant link with the imperial decline motif, Edward Gibbon repeatedly cites effeminate oriental characteristics as toxic to the manly enterprise of empire in his seminal admonition to the nascent British Empire, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788). This attitude is conspicuous in his account of the degenerate tyrant Heliogabalus (AD 204-22), exemplar of Roman decline. Alleged son of another 'worthless tyrant' and 'monster', this 'Syrian youth,' aided by 'a conspiracy of women and eunuchs,' seized power, 'and the East acknowledged with pleasure the first Emperor of Asiatic extraction.'[192] In a lengthy exposition upon his profligacy, Gibbon portrays the manner in which Heliogabalus, bedecked in silks, jewels and make up, 'abandoned himself to the grossest pleasures with ungoverned fury,' becoming the

[190] J. Roubinovitch, *Hystérie mâle et Dégénérescence*, (Paris, 1890) p. 33, cited in Nordau, *Degeneration*, p. 23.
[191] Sutherland, intro. to *A Bid For Fortune*, p. x.
[192] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, David Womersley (ed.), 1 (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 159, 162, 163-5.

quintessence of oriental luxury and despotism.[193] As the principal concern of Gibbon's instructive history is to explicate the fall of Rome, his painstaking picture of Heliogabalus, and a host of other tyrants, is intended to elucidate the internal weakness that he understands as the principle cause of Rome's vulnerability to barbarian invasion.[194] From this perspective, David Womersley observes that 'The irruption of the Goths therefore conforms to what is already becoming a recognizable paradigm in *The Decline and Fall*: internal weakness invites calamities...'[195] Gibbon's emphasis on Heliogabalus's Eastern origins and habits in his elaboration of this process reveals that the practice of associating oriental characteristics with a threat to empire had a long-standing precedent.

A particularly significant aspect of the orientalising of the Nikola character is the aptitude he displays for cross-cultural dressing. The notion that certain veteran colonials possessed sufficient understanding of the indigenous environment to enable them to pass as natives was a key assumption of the orientalist mindset. However, it was accompanied by the disturbing implication that by doing so they had to become temporarily other, and could be permanently altered by the experience. Nikola's facility for disguise is based on the real-life exploits of explorers like Burton, whose experience of the East was so deep that Said considers (in a phrase itself redolent of the mindset he critiques) that Burton 'was able to become an Oriental' (195). Burton asserted of his own learning that in order to 'know' 'the Moslem East,' all the Western student needed to do was to add Burton's notes to those of Edward Lane (author of *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836), Victorian authority on Egypt, and fellow traveller in disguise).[196] Kabbani, who deems Burton highly influential in forming nineteenth century Western attitudes to the Orient, maintains that 'the idea of penetrating into the East preoccupied the British travellers of the Victorian period' and that disguise aided this process as 'it seemed to allow the traveller a deeper access to a cloistered world which he thought guarded its

[193] Ibid., 1, pp. 167-8.
[194] See Gibbon's summary of imperial affairs, at the end of chap. 7, vol. 1.
[195] David Womersley, notes to the abridged edition of *The Decline and Fall*, (London: Penguin, 2005), p. 117.
[196] Richard Burton, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, 1 (London, 1885-6; 17 vols) p. 13, cited in Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions*, p. 55.

secrets closely.'[197] Brantlinger, in his analysis of Burton's contribution to the imperial endeavour in the Near East, comments that 'Disguise was a means of crossing the gulf between superior and inferior races, civilisation and barbarism – a means that led to ethnological knowledge as well as to adventure.'[198] In Boothby's fictional version, Nikola employs this technique in his Chinese expedition to gain access to hermetic Eastern institutions and appropriate their closely-guarded knowledge for Western purposes. But in immersing himself so thoroughly in the role of the Oriental, his alterity is augmented and his already-close association with hostile Eastern colonial forces further strengthened.

Burton's exploits provided inspiration for more literary masqueraders than Nikola and Bruce, including the comparable Sandy Arbuthnot character of Buchan's spy novel *Greenmantle* (1916), another learned Eastern scholar and master of disguise. Though published after the start of World War I, Buchan's orientalist assumptions are firmly rooted in fin-de-siècle thinking and Brantlinger cites *Greenmantle* as an example of the imperial gothic genre.[199] Buchan's nineteenth century preconceptions are evident in his portrayal of Arbuthnot, who, variously, 'know[s] the East about as well as any living man,' and 'know[s] something of the soul of the East,'[200] statements which compare directly with Bruce's claim that he 'know[s] China about as well as any living Englishman,' and Nikola's claim to know China as well as a Londoner knows his native city.[201] *À la* Burton, Arbuthnot disguises himself so plausibly as a fanatical Muslim sectary that he is selected to succeed the dying prophet of an insurrectionary movement. He later boasts to the compatriots of his undercover enterprises in Asia Minor, 'it wasn't difficult for me to move anywhere I wanted. My dress and pass-word franked me anywhere'.[202] The following longer passage detailing Arbuthnot's familiarity with obscure locales is highly reminiscent of the passage elaborating the international reputation of the Nikola character:

[197] Kabbani, *Imperial* Fictions, pp. 88-90.
[198] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, pp. 163-4.
[199] Ibid., pp. 227-8.
[200] John Buchan, *Greenmantle* (1916; London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 126, 266.
[201] Boothby, *Doctor Nikola*, p. 20, and *The Lust of Hate*, p. 52.
[202] Buchan, *Greenmantle*, p. 233.

> [Y]ou will hear of him at little forgotten fishing ports where the Albanian mountains dip to the Adriatic. If you struck a Mecca pilgrimage the odds are you would meet a dozen of Sandy's friends in it. In shepherds' huts in the Caucasus you will find bits of his cast-off clothing... In the caravanserais of Bokhara and Samarkand he is known, and there are shikaris in the Pamirs who still speak of him round their fires. If you were going to visit Petrograd or Rome or Cairo it would be no use asking him for introductions; if he gave them, they would lead you into strange haunts. But if Fate compelled you to go to Llasa or Yarkand or Seistan he could map out your road for you and pass the word to potent friends.[203]

The general (and unexplained) facility of the Briton for disguise which links the two narratives is explicitly asserted in a classic piece of orientalism at the conclusion of the excerpt:

> We call ourselves insular, but the truth is that we are the only race on earth that can produce men capable of getting inside the skin of remote peoples. Perhaps the Scots are better than the English, but we're all a thousand per cent better than anybody else.[204]

However, this facility for disguise, as well as materially aiding the imperial project through the knowledge garnered, blurs the lines between British identity and the identity of the hostile colonial other in a way which impinges upon the imperial psyche. It suggests a frightening permeability in the boundaries between self and other which Dixon's analysis sheds further light on. In an investigation of the relationship between the developing genre of crime fiction and empire, he examines the first two Nikola novels for the anxieties they disclose concerning imperial identity. Interpreting Nikola in this context, Dixon curiously considers him only 'vaguely "foreign"' – neither fully representative of the self or the foreign other, but a personification of the hybridity of Bhabha's postcolonial theory.[205] Dixon postulates that colonial adventure narratives 'abound with hybrid characters who … embody both the self's desire for the other, and

[203] Ibid., p. 124.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 162.

the paranoid fear that boundaries will collapse, that "I" will be absorbed by the other.'[206] Thus Dixon considers that the paranoia inspired by Nikola derives from his status as a hybrid who represents the internal crisis in imperial identity that accompanied the height of imperialism.

This analysis alternatively would suggest that Boothby himself, as a colonial author, was subject to the effects of hybridity, and that the invasion texts he created are a product of it, informed by the obsessive paranoia about the inversion of the colonial roles. In keeping with Bhabha's account of hybridity representing 'that ambivalent "turn" of the discriminated subject into the terrifying, exorbitant object of paranoid classification', it would interpret the anxiety Nikola engenders as deriving from his alienness which represents an external threat to the imperial project.[207] Although it is not explicitly disclosed that Nikola is foreign until the final novel, his very name is obviously un-English and, as this chapter has argued, Boothby takes great pains to craft a menacing generic alterity for the character.[208] While there is no doubt that the identity of the coloniser is tightly bound to that of the colonised, paranoia in the invasion tale derives not from the possibility of the colonised resembling the coloniser, but from their presumed desire to take the place of the coloniser, Nikola thus functioning as an embodiment of the 'disturbing questioning of the images and presences of [colonial] authority' that Bhabha discerns.[209] Both interpretations converge in that both envisage Nikola as impinging on imperial boundaries, as Dixon's summation of *A Bid for Fortune* would attest: '[it] plays upon its readers' paranoid anticipations that the boundaries of national and self identity are so porous that the other can reach through.'[210]

[206] Ibid., p. 11.
[207] Bhabha, 'Signs taken for Wonders', p. 162.
[208] Boothby, *A Bid for Fortune*, p. 51.
[209] Bhabha, 'Signs taken for Wonders', p. 162.
[210] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 171. Elsewhere, in an analysis of a seminal text of Australian fin-de-siècle angst, George Firth Scott's *The Last Lemurian* (1898), Dixon in fact equates the fear of hybridity with the fear of being bodily invaded by the low other, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 71.

Dr Nikola's criminality: the popular tradition of foreign villains

Doyle and Irish criminality

As we have explored, Nikola was but one of the clutch of fin-de-siècle fictional super-villains to menace the reading public, and in his delineation of the character Boothby was necessarily inspired by some forerunning exemplars of the type. A key precursor for Nikola may have been the highly-influential criminal mastermind of another hugely popular author whose fiction was also pervaded by colonial concerns. This is Doyle's Professor Moriarty, who was created in order to provide a foe worthy of effecting the demise of the celebrated Sherlock Holmes character. Moriarty's first appearance and the resulting death of Holmes occurred in 'The Final Problem' in December 1893. This was just one year before the serialisation of *A Bid for Fortune* began in January 1895 in the first instalment of the *Windsor* and less than a year before Boothby had received his commission to write a serial for the new magazine.[211] Given his love of 'light literature' and position as an aspiring young author under the tutelage of Watt, who was also Doyle's agent, Boothby is unlikely to have been unaware of Doyle's forerunning character.[212] He may have sought to fill the gap left in the literary marketplace for a character of Holmes's stature not with another Holmesian detective, but rather with a Moriarty-style master criminal.[213] Certainly Moriarty made an impact on the literary world at the time, despite the brevity of his appearance, because it was he who brought about the death (at least for ten years) of the much-loved Holmes. One of Doyle's biographers, Charles Higham, records the impact of Holmes's demise claiming that: 'Not until the death of Queen Victoria seven years later was there such widespread mourning. Over twenty thousand people cancelled their subscriptions [to the *Strand* magazine] immediately. … Young men in the city wore black silk bands around their hats … and

[211] *A Bid for Fortune* was serialised in eleven episodes in the *Windsor Magazine* from January to November of 1895. At least a quarter of it was written before the end of 1894, judging by the dates of the illustrations. *The Windsor Magazine* also ran a serial by Arthur Morrison in 1895 featuring another literary detective, Martin Hewitt, a more direct attempt to follow Holmes.

[212] No known record of the books in Boothby's collection exists, but his love of 'light literature' was observed by his uncle in the following Australian obituary, 'Mr Guy Boothby,' *The Advertiser* [Adelaide] 1 Mar 1905, p. 5; online at *National Library of Australia*, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5039806, 13 Mar 2013.

[213] Sutherland, Dixon and Depasquale all note the influence of Moriarty on Nikola, Depasquale additionally commenting that Nikola also inherits much from the Holmes character.

women appeared in mourning.'[214] Nikola's instant popularity may have been due to his ability, as a comparably aloof, intriguing character, to partially fill this vacuum.[215] Many contemporary commentators upon the Nikola series made a link between Nikola and the detective – for example, the *Bookman* speculated that 'Boothby's Dr Nikola ... seems likely at no distant date to rival the famous Sherlock Holmes,' and the following year the *Times* review of *Doctor Nikola* explicitly compares him to Holmes.[216]

In considering the influence of Doyle's master criminal creation upon the Nikola character, it should be noted that Moriarty is inconsistent with Holmes's typical adversaries prior to the publication of 'The Final Problem' in both the scale of his intellect and of his operations, and is thus considered one of the first significant examples of a literary master criminal.[217] In the aforementioned story, Holmes outlines the scope of Moriarty's criminality to Watson thusly: 'The man pervades London ... He is the organizer of half that is evil and nearly all that is undetected in this great city...' sitting 'like a spider in the centre of its web' of 'numerous and splendidly organised' agents.[218] As we have seen, Nikola similarly operates spider-like at the heart of a web of committed criminal henchmen, but the key difference between them is Nikola's international sphere of influence. In the excerpt above, Moriarty's domain is clearly demarcated as London – though a European aspect to his operations is mentioned twice in passing, the detailed description of Moriarty's activities focuses entirely on London. And when Moriarty's crime syndicate is infiltrated and dismantled, Holmes concludes that Moriarty's occupation will cease to exist precisely because he cannot now return to London.[219]

---

[214] Charles Higham, *The Adventures of Conan Doyle: the Life of the Creator of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Hamilton, 1976), p. 96. Though *Strand* struggled after this incident, the claim about the adoption of mourning dress is unconfirmed according to Lycett's more recent biography, *Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes*, p. 197.

[215] See Knight's chapter 'After Sherlock Holmes' in *Crime Fiction*, pp.67-80, for a discussion of Holmes's other followers.

[216] 'News Notes', *The Bookman*, 8:44 (May 1895), p. 39; 'Recent Novels,' rev. of *Doctor Nikola* by Guy Boothby (1896), *The Times*, 29 Dec 1896, p. 13. A 1898 *Bookman* review of *The Adventures of Captain Kettle* similarly comments that the hero now 'occupies a position in the gallery of popular heroes of fiction, where he takes his place close to Sherlock Holmes and Dr Nikola', 15 (Dec 1898), p. 24. An article in *The English Illustrated Magazine* observes that Nikola is to Boothby what Holmes was to Doyle – 'a goldmine', 20:192 (Sep 1899), p. 632. For an exploration of the link between the characterisations of Holmes, Moriarty and Nikola, see Bulfin, 'Sherlock Holmes and Dr Nikola'.

[217] Iain Pears, intro. to *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. xii.

[218] Doyle, 'The Final Problem', pp. 490-91.

[219] Ibid., p. 500.

Boothby's tales, on the other hand, strongly imply that Nikola, if similarly challenged, would simply remove himself to another of his liminal, exotic hideouts and seamlessly continue operations. As the character puts it unpleasantly in *Dr Nikola's Experiment*, 'I have homes in all parts of the world; I am in England to-day, engaged upon one piece of work, and in six months' time I may be in India, Japan, Peru, Kamtschatka, or if you like it better, shall we say playing tricks with niggers in Cape Coast Castle?' (180-1). Clearly Nikola's reach is global, as this and other lengthy recitals of his international provenance amply demonstrate, and it is this geographical pervasiveness that makes the character so distinctive – nowhere is safe from him.

By virtue of his appearance in a series of five novels and despite the superficiality of Boothby's style, Nikola is a far more elaborated character than the pre-hiatus Moriarty, of whose character Doyle provides only the briefest glimpse in 'The Final Problem', but further comparisons can still be made.[220] Nikola's villainy, for instance, is more nuanced than Moriarty's: in his scientist persona he pursues the humanitarian goal of prolonging human life, though his means derive from his criminality. Nikola is also far more obviously foreign than Moriarty; however, a key element of the threat posed by the Moriarty character derives from his implicit alterity. Though brought up in England, he is accepted to be of Irish descent by Holmes scholars (the name being an anglicization of O'Muircheartaigh).[221] His menacing London-based Irishness therefore could have had connotations of the militant Fenian branch of the Irish nationalist movement that had terrorised England in the 1880s. Wynne argues this point convincingly in *The Colonial Conan Doyle*, claiming that the very name 'situates the Napolean of crime within the context of Irish political nationalism,' and that the secret nature of Moriarty's criminal organisation mirrors that of Fenian and Irish-American militant separatist organisations.[222] It should also be pointed out that this connection is reinforced by Doyle in 'The Adventure of Empty House' (1903), the crucial text in which Holmes is resurrected, and in which his foe and one of Moriarty's key subordinates is Colonel

[220] Even in the post-hiatus tales – for example, in the novella-length *The Valley of Fear* (1915) where the Moriarty character receives its most sustained treatment outside 'The Final Problem' – the disclosures are confined to tantalising hints about his capabilities.
[221] Edgar W. Smith, 'The Napoleon of Crime: Prolegomena to a Memoir of Professor James Moriarty, Sc.D.', *The Baker Street Reader*, Philip A. Shreffler (ed.), (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1984), p. 81. Wynne also cites several scholars who note Moriarty's Irishness in *The Colonial Conan Doyle*, pp. 54-5.
[222] Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle*, pp. 52-5.

Sebastian Moran, the Irish name again forging the link between Irishness and criminality. And Doyle tellingly has Holmes attribute both Moriarty's and Moran's deviancy specifically to their ancestry which, as the names imply, is Irish.[223]

Wynne, in fact, approaches Doyle as a colonial author stressing the significance of his Irish parentage and Catholic upbringing. Born of good family in Edinburgh in 1859 Doyle was somewhat marginalised from the well-to-do social class he would have identified with by both the Irish Catholic ethnicity of his parents and the incipient alcoholism of his father. From this, later critics have tended to posit a duality in Doyle's personality, Wynne arguing that despite his respectable British public persona and firm and public support for the Empire, his fiction was very much influenced by this Irish colonial heritage. Further she holds that the gothic motifs which recur in his fiction reflect his own internal conflict between support for British imperialism and sympathy for the moderate Irish nationalist cause.[224] Doyle, for example, was well-known both for his public support of the British cause in the Boer War, and for his petition to reprieve the death sentence of his former friend Roger Casement for his contribution to the Easter 1916 Rising in Ireland. Approached in this light, something of the conflicted hybridity theorised for the migrant white colonial authors like Boothby can also be attributed to Doyle and can be glimpsed in the intrusion of matters imperial into his crime fiction as well as his gothic tales.

Colonial themes and concerns pervade the early Holmes canon: the first tale, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), features the revenge for a crime committed in the colonial context of the American frontier playing out in the heart of London. It concludes with the sentiment that the outcome of the case 'will serve as a lesson to all foreigners that they will do wisely to settle their feuds at home, and not carry them on to British soil,' an expectation which the rest of the Holmes canon proves most misguided.[225] The next novella, *The Sign of Four* (1890), explores the cursed legacy of treasure stolen from a rebel rajah after the infamous 1857 Indian Mutiny, and a striking proportion of the stories written between

[223] '[H]ereditary tendencies of the most diabolic kind', Doyle, 'The Final Problem', p. 490; 'the individual represents in his development the whole procession of his ancestors', Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Empty House' (1903), collected in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1905; London: Reader's Digest, 1995), p. 30.
[224] Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle*, p. 1.
[225] Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1999), p. 127.

1891 and 1893, collected as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892) and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894), turn upon aspects of colonialism interlinked with criminality.[226] Pertinent examples are 'The Speckled Band' (1892) in which the colonial contamination of an English doctor in India ultimately leads to murder in home counties Surrey and 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery' which, as discussed earlier, features the murderous consequences of a crime committed in colonial Australia again playing out in rural England. Moran in the later 'Adventure of the Empty House' combines the Irish physical force threat with the more general colonial contamination threat, as it is his disgrace and dismissal from service in the Indian army that precipitates his recruitment to Moriarty's gang. His initial victim in this story is 'the Honourable Ronald Adair ... second son of the Earl of Maynooth, at that time Governor of one of the Australian colonies,' who simultaneously represents the twin establishment pillars of the Anglo-Irish landlord class and the British colonial administration in Australia.[227]

Wynne notes the general proliferation of colonial concerns in the Holmes canon, but focuses instead on this theme in the non-Holmes stories.[228] Iain Pears likewise calls attention to the impact of the foreign upon so much of the early Holmes canon, commenting '[m]ore remarkable still is the frequency with which the crimes narrated in the stories are generated abroad and then brought back to play out their consequences in England; much of Holmes's work is to preserve the country from the corruption of foreign places, *and that of the Empire in particular* [my italics]: one almost thinks that without this foreign contamination even London would be a remarkably peaceful, law-abiding place.'[229] Arata similarly asserts that doubts concerning the imperial project are discernible in the Holmes canon from its inception, observing that 'Doyle in his fiction ... cannot prevent even his overt defences of empire from sounding like critiques.'[230] As Arata notes, in *A Study in Scarlet* Doyle's introductory depiction of the Watson character, that pillar of middle-class Victorian respectability, reveals that colonial service brought him 'nothing but misfortune and disaster,' following which he returned permanently

[226] I estimate that nine out of the twenty-five pre-hiatus Holmes stories (including the first two novellas) can be argued to have colonial themes or be significantly influenced by colonial factors. A further seven feature foreign villains.
[227] Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Empty House', p. 12.
[228] Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle*, p. 7.
[229] Pears, intro., *Adventures* and *Memoirs*, p. xi.
[230] Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, p. 140.

wounded to London.[231] Thus Watson is interpreted as a 'maimed colonial', a recurrent figure in the Holmes canon which, like Moran and the antagonists of 'The Speckled Band' and 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery', frequently moves inwards from the peripheries to become a locus of crime and corruption at the imperial centre.[232]

Dixon holds that crime fiction works to define the nation both by differentiating it from other nations and by creating an internal hierarchy of differentiations. Thus the focus is on boundaries, on establishing and subverting them, and the desired reader outcome is the purification of the self by the exclusion of the other. He interprets crime, then, as an intrusion of the other upon the self, and sees detection as the means of restoring the boundaries, and even intruding into the territory of the other.[233] Similarly, Wynne characterises Holmes as a 'colonial agent re-imposing order on superstitious and unstable topographies' through his detective skills, his appeal residing in 'his ability to enter and control ... these domains of criminal and colonial dissent'.[234] However, Dixon posits that the internal nation or self is never pure, being constantly under threat from either internal dissent or the intrusion of the foreign other. Returning to Holmes, it is significant that though he always solves his cases, this does not always lead to the complete containment of the criminal. Focusing on representative narratives with overt foreign or colonial connections, in *The Sign of Four*, the Agra treasure is not restored, but vindictively sunk by the colonial misfit Smalls; in 'The Naval Treaty' (1893), which features a grave threat to national security, Holmes recovers the vital stolen documents, but lets the thief go; in *A Study in Scarlet*, 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery', 'The Five Orange Pips' (1891), 'The Speckled Band', and 'The Greek Interpreter' (1893), the violent culprits are not punished by law but die of natural causes; and in 'The Engineer's Thumb' (1892) and 'The Musgrave Ritual' (1893), the foreign murderers escape completely.[235]

Though John Greenfield has argued that the mere solving of the crime or puzzle in the Holmes stories is sufficient to restore the status quo and reassure their intended

[231] Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, pp. 5-6.
[232] Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, p. 140.
[233] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 156.
[234] Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle*, pp. 68, 73.
[235] Doyle takes pains to racialise the murderess in 'The Musgrave Ritual,' pointing out that she is not English, but 'of Welsh blood, fiery and passionate', 'The Musgrave Ritual', *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 367.

professional middle class readership, there is a remarkable degree of leniency in their treatment of the criminal other.[236] As Arata observes, '[d]espite the great confidence he inspires, throughout [the] early tales Holmes seldom gets his man.'[237] It becomes plausible, then, to read the ambiguity of these endings in tales featuring foreign and colonial criminals as further indicative of Doyle's anxieties concerning the imperial project. Following Dixon's line of argument, that '[d]etection is the instrument of a narrative closure that roots out the low other and its hybrids, reconstituting the purity of imperial identity,'[238] the inconclusive outcomes of Holmes's cases can be interpreted as representing the ongoing difficulty of preserving imperial boundaries and avoiding contamination by the colonial other. When Moriarty's Irishness is considered in this context it becomes even more significant. If Holmes functions as a 'colonial agent' re-imposing order at the vulnerable boundaries, Moriarty's depiction as Holmes's intellectual peer and for-a-time vanquisher undermines the whole fabric of the colonial enterprise and exposes the underlying invasion anxiety that pervades the pre-hiatus Holmes canon.

Boothby's narratives betray a comparable, unsettling logic of significant inconclusiveness. The detection of his villains is typically incompetent and unsuccessful, leaving the invasive foreign interloper largely uncontained. The Nikola series is characterised by the ineptitude, passivity and even complicity of Nikola's English antagonists; Pharos, entirely uncontested, succeeds in unleashing a plague that kills Europeans by the million; even the Beautiful White Devil, despite confinement within the state of matrimony, remains at large and unpunished by the British authorities. Comparably Rohmer's early twentieth-century Fu Manchu character, putative successor to Nikola, survives decades of bungling pursuit by his English adversaries, Nayland Smith and Dr Petrie, and Rohmer himself shared with Doyle an immigrant Irish background, as explored further in chapter 3. What this recurrent pattern of inconclusiveness in tales featuring foreign criminals signifies is the role of the pervasive fear of the permeability of imperial boundaries in the work of authors with strong

[236] John Greenfield, 'Arthur Morrison's Sherlock Clone: Martin Hewitt, Victorian Values, and London Magazine Culture, 1894-1903', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 35:1 (Spring 2002), pp. 18-36, 19, online at http://www.jstor.org/stable/20083856, 29 Jun 2011.
[237] Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, p. 145.
[238] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 171.

colonial connections in shaping the nascent genre of crime fiction and the corollary importance of the genre in giving expression to this fear. It also throws into question the traditional view of the crime genre, and especially the detective tale, as an ultimately reassuring, conservative form, espoused by Greenfield above and by Knight in many of his readings of crime fiction.[239] It suggests that the generation or amplification of societal anxieties concerning invasion was also a key part of the cultural work being performed by the genre of crime fiction, allowing it to be seen as a disruptive force which may have contributed to the detrimental social forces of jingoism and xenophobia, instead of one which invariably provided reassurance.

Collins and the long tradition of Italian criminality

The courteous villainy of the Nikola character coupled with the eventual disclosure of his noble Italian background suggests as another possible literary precursor the memorable foreign villain of Collins's hugely popular sensation classic *The Woman in White* (1860) – in other words, Fosco, the scheming Italian Count. Boothby was, of course, not only likely to have been familiar with Doyle's contemporary works, but was also familiar with the forerunning works of Collins, as this disclaimer in *A Bid for Fortune* reveals: 'I must confess it *is* certainly more like the plot of a Wilkie Collins novel than a bit of sober reality.'[240] A chance remark by Hatteras earlier in this text may even contain an allusion to Fosco: 'This boy was the first nobleman I had ever clapped eyes on, though I knew the Count de Panuroff well enough in Thursday Island. But then foreign Counts, and shady ones at that, ought not to reckon, perhaps' (91). Certainly Nikola and Fosco share many characteristics, such as suavity; imperturbability; unconventionality; immaculate dress; great intelligence; amorality; extreme egotism; a mesmeric presence; and habitual accompaniment by familiar animals in the form of a black cat and white mice respectively. Both are also irreproachably polite and evince an elaborate concern for their female victims, and both emanate a vague, melancholic sense of regret for the necessity of undertaking their more objectionable actions. But their key common characteristic, the

[239] Knight, 'Sterling settlement and colonial currency', p. 13; Stephen Knight, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980), pp. 102-3.
[240] Voiced by Wetherell before relating his history with Nikola in Boothby, *A Bid for Fortune*, p. 308.

same one highlighted in relation to Nikola and Moriarty, is undoubtedly that of foreignness.

In common with Sutherland's list of villains, Fosco's 'un-Englishness' in both appearance and manner is subtly reiterated throughout the novel. The initial description states that he possessed 'a remarkable likeness, on a large scale, of the Great Napoleon,' with whom Moriarty is also associated, thus immediately linking Fosco to one of the greatest invasion threats ever to face Britain.[241] While Nikola's alterity is amplified by his Eastern proclivities, Fosco's is reinforced by his Catholicism; his own narrative discloses him to be a Papal Count, which emphasises this religious otherness. And the grandiose, self-proclaimed title Collins assigns him further distances him from Collins's readership, as the first part quoted here attests: 'Isidor, Ottavio, Baldassare Fosco; Count of the Holy Roman Empire, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Brazen Crown, Perpetual Arch-Master of the Rosicrucian Masons of Mesopotamia' (598). In an article featuring a discussion with Collins on the composition of *The Woman in White*, the interviewer refers to 'the immortal Count Fosco' as 'the quintessence of a hecatomb of villains, not English, but foreign.' The article continues, quoting Collins as explaining, 'I thought the crime too ingenious for an English villain, so I pitched upon a foreigner,' confirming both Fosco's studied alterity and English assumptions concerning the proximity of foreignness and criminality.[242] In addition, the minor villain of the work, Sir Percival Glyde, was born and educated abroad, subtly reinforcing the threat of foreign influence. That it was a theme of enduring interest to Collins is attested to by the plot of *The Moonstone*, his other great sensation classic, which, with its vengeful Indian priests, can easily be read as a proto-invasion narrative.

An aspect of Fosco's foreignness particularly worth examining in the context of his relationship to Nikola and the fin-de-siècle invasion threat is his 'yellowness'. Atypically for an Italian, his skin colour is repeatedly referred to as 'yellow' or 'yellow-white' (221, 286, 350, 570), and in the first physical description provided of him, he is noted to possess 'a singular sallow-fairness' (218). This curious complexion not only provides a

[241] Collins, *The Woman in White*, p. 218; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text. Moriarty is famously described as 'the Napoleon of crime' in 'The Final Problem', p. 490.
[242] Edmund Yates, 'Celebrities at Home no. 81: Mr Wilkie Collins in Gloucester Place', *The World* (26 Dec 1877), pp. 4-6; reprinted in 'Appendix B', *The Woman in White* (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 645-650.

strong link to Nikola, who is frequently attributed both sallow and pale skin, but also to the far-Eastern villains of the later yellow peril tradition. Fosco even likes to sport 'Nankeen trousers' (Nankeen being bright yellow cotton cloth originating from Nanjing in China) and 'purple morocco slippers', which combination conjures up the image of an oriental monarch (227). Fosco too has something atypically equitable to say on the subject of the Chinese and moral relativism. Alluding to Oliver Goldsmith's similarly topsy-turvy interpretation of British society from the perspective of an educated Chinese visitor, Fosco, like Dickens's Blandois, begins his exposition with the phrase, 'I am a citizen of the world,' continuing 'Here, in England, there is one virtue. And there, in China, there is another virtue. And John Englishman says my virtue is the genuine virtue. And John Chinaman says my virtue is the genuine virtue' (234). To Marian Halcombe's naïve riposte asserting the innateness of Chinese cruelty, Fosco counters:

> 'John Bull does abhor the crimes of John Chinaman. He is the quickest old gentleman at finding out faults that are his neighbours', and the slowest old gentleman at finding out the faults that are his own, who exists on the face of creation. Is he so very much better in this way than the people whom he condemns in their way? English Society, Miss Halcombe, is as often the accomplice as it is the enemy of crime.' (235)

Given Catherine Peters's assertion, in her biography of Collins, that he was fond of using Fosco covertly to express his own unconventional ideas, it is tempting to see this as a Collinsian criticism of Western theories of racial superiority and the iniquities these justified in imperial practice.[243] Nikola too is occasionally used in this mode to expose British double-standards: in the following atypically dissident passage for Boothby, he undermines British prejudice against Eastern learning by attacking the average Englishman's grasp of his own religion:

> 'In our own and other countries which we are accustomed to call "civilized" it has long been the habit to ridicule any belief in what cannot be readily seen and understood by the least educated. To the average Englishman there is no occult world. But see what a contradictory creature he is … [f]or if he be devout, he tells

[243] Catherine Peters, *The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1991), pp. 215-6.

> you that he firmly believes that when the body dies the soul goes to Heaven ... [but] he has no notion ... of what sort of place his Heaven is likely to be. ... In other words, ... he himself is simply a contradiction contradicted.'[244]

As if his moral relativism and religious alterity were not sinister enough, Fosco is additionally exposed as being a spy, who, like Nikola, has at his command a supporting cast of lesser but equally unpleasant foreign interlopers at work in England. Peters notes that at the time of writing of *The Woman in White*, in 1859, 'London was full of Neapolitan political exiles, conspirators and spies', and that this was very much in the mind of the reading public.[245] And Sutherland points out that at the time the novel is set, in 1851, London was thought to be crawling with foreign spies over on the pretext of visiting the Great Exhibition.[246] Collins's narrator Walter Hartright explicitly makes this point upon his discovery of the Count's covert profession:

> The year of which I am now writing was the year of the famous Crystal Palace Exhibition in Hyde Park. Foreigners in unusually large numbers had arrived already, and were still arriving in England. Men were among us by hundreds whom the ceaseless distrustfulness of their governments had followed privately, by means of appointed agents, to our shores. (564)

This reflection by Hartright refers not only to foreign spies but also to the revolutionaries and anarchists whom they pursued. Correspondingly, Fosco's threatening alterity does not end with the disclosure that he is a spy: he is also revealed to be a rogue member of an international secret society referred to as 'The Brotherhood'. This was mostly likely intended to allude to the Carbonari who waged a revolutionary Italian nationalist campaign against both the French and Austro-Hungarian empires in the early nineteenth century. It also foreshadows the presence of the anti-European Chinese secret society in the Nikola series. In *The Woman in White*, Professor Pesca, another member of the society and catalyst of Fosco's ultimate downfall, justifies its activities as being

[244] Boothby, *Doctor Nikola*, pp. 47-8.
[245] Peters, *The King of Inventors*, pp. 214-5.
[246] John Sutherland, intro. to Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (Oxford: World's Classics, 1996), p. xix. Doctors were also writing to the press warning that the presence of large numbers of foreign visitors to the Exhibition would result in the outbreak of plague and venereal disease in London, see notes to *The Woman in White* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 667.

undertaken on behalf of unnamed 'enslaved nation[s]', contrasting their position with England's freedom. This, however, implicitly resonates with the subjected position of England's colonies which could plausibly be considered enslaved nations. Pesca also acknowledges that regardless of its just cause, English opinion will dismiss the society's work as 'anarchy and revolution' (575). Thus, from an English perspective, just as Moriarty's criminal Irishness contains implications of terrorism and colonial sedition, Fosco's Italian criminality evokes the threats of revolution and anarchism. And these dangers, as Karl Beckson observes, were not unrelated: 'In London, terrorist outrages committed by the Fenians ... were inevitably associated in the public mind with assassinations by the anarchists on the Continent ... Indeed, reports in the British press of sporadic meetings in Paris or Zurich of socialists, Fenians, anarchists, and nihilists reinforced the impression that such groups were united in an international conspiracy.'[247] Collins astutely employed the precursors of these types of concern and, as Peters notes, used Fosco to make a connection between the closeted world of domestic crime typical of the sensation novel and the wider threat of foreign infiltration and terrorism.[248]

The revelation that the criminal Nikola is in fact Italian in the final novel of the series forges comparable associations between his character and radical Italian activism. While the eventual liberation of Italy from the Roman Catholic powers of France and Austro-Hungary had made the revolutionary leader Garibaldi a huge hero to the British public, with his visit to England creating a huge sensation in the 1860s, the ruling classes even then were not entirely blind to the subversive nature of his nationalist and populist appeal.[249] By the 1890s, as Beckson's observation attests, the general public were bombarded with media hype about terrorism and any allusion to Italian criminality would have conjured up the spectre of continental anarchism. The *Windsor* magazine, for example, in 1895 ran a series of features on 'Unknown London,' including an article on 'The Italian Colony in Saffron Hill'. Starting off as a colourful portrait of these 'picturesque' immigrants, it quickly descended into stereotypes of criminality and anarchism, with references to knife fights, thievery, and 'a man who, not so long ago,

[247] Karl Beckson, *London in the 1890s: A Cultural History* (New York: Norton, 1992); cited in Greenfield, 'Arthur Morrison's Sherlock Clone', p. 30.
[248] Peters, *The King of Inventors*, p. 214.
[249] Diamond, *Victorian Sensation*, pp. 50-2.

blew himself to pieces just by Eyre Street Hill.'[250] Kenneth Churchill, in *Italy and English Literature*, notes that following the establishment of the abortive Roman Republic in 1848, English 'novelists' interest in Italian revolutionary and reactionary politics ... became almost obsessive' and a host of Italian revolutionary narratives appeared.[251] Robert Louis Stevenson's 'The Pavilion on the Links' (1882) and E. L. Voynich's *The Gadfly* (1897) both turn upon the activities of Italian radicals, showing that the appeal of this topic endured in late-Victorian fiction. 'The Pavilion on the Links' brings the threat of Italian activism to mainland Britain with vengeful Carbonari infiltrating a quiet fishing village to seek redress from an English banker who has swindled them. And *The Gadfly*, a controversial, subversive novel, with a disturbing, modern sensibility, is set in 1840s Italy during the Young Italy uprisings. In keeping with this study's emphasis on authorial coloniality, it is interesting to note the respective Scottish and Irish backgrounds of these authors, particularly Voynich. Born Ethel Boole in County Cork, she supported the nationalist efforts of several countries, and her novel provides a curious link between the causes of Irish and Italian nationalism.[252]

That the representation of Italy as a locus of political unrest and social upheaval was an established literary trope of long-standing is further attested to by its treatment in the original gothic mode of the late eighteenth century. It is abundantly apparent in Ann Radcliffe's lengthy, scene-setting account of the perilous and war-torn nature of feudal Italy in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), which paints a lurid picture of warring states, mercenary armies and robber barons.[253] Churchill notes that following Horace Walpole's decision to set *The Castle of Otranto* (1765) in Italy, and reinforced by the popularity of Radcliffe's novels, there seemed to be a 'general belief among novelists that nowhere was so suited to tales of villainy and horror as a setting in Italy'.[254] He points out that in choosing this location Walpole was counting on 'his readers' ready association of such

[250] H. D. Lowry and T. S. C. Crowther, 'Unknown London: The Italian Colony in Saffron Hill', *The Windsor Magazine*, 1 (Jan 1895), pp. 305, 308, 310.
[251] Kenneth Churchill, *Italy and English Literature 1764–1930* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 131.
[252] Another curious link is Voynich's tendency to refer to the politics of Italian nationalism as a 'fatal quicksand' (22) or 'terrible bog' (93), according with Wynne's reading of Irish nationalism as represented by unsteady ground in the works of Doyle, and on a more general level with the common reading of the threatening nature of 'the shivering sands' as representative of the threat of the colonial other in *The Moonstone*. E. L. Voynich, *The Gadfly* (1897; London: Mandarin, 1991).
[253] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998), pp. 358-9.
[254] Churchill, *Italy and English Literature*, p. 16.

things with Italy', harking back to the portraits of that country in 'English Renaissance tragedy, which from Marlowe to Otway, had habitually associated sensation and horror with an Italian setting and had created a most potent image of a country of incest and intrigue, violence and hypocrisy'.[255] In much the same way, a century later, Boothby exploited popular preconceptions of Italian sedition and criminality to invest his Nikola character with sensational attributes. Henry James, who himself wrote a take on the Italian anarchist narrative, *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), indicted this facile treatment of literary Italy. He might be speaking of Boothby's portrayal of Nikola when he complains 'that the presumption is now directly against an Italian in a novel, until he has pulled off his slouched hat and mantle and shown us features that an Anglo-Saxon would acknowledge'.[256] Obviously, the sinister Nikola unmasked in this way would fail to present a reassuring aspect.

The characterisations of both Nikola and Fosco may owe something to Radcliffe's forerunning depiction in the influential *Mysteries of Udolpho* of the archetypal wicked Italian nobleman, Signor Montoni. In an admonition that could equally pertain to Nikola, the beleaguered heroine is cautioned, 'the schemes of Montoni are insearchable, but, I warn you, they are terrible; he has no principle, when interest, or ambition leads';[257] these qualities of inscrutability and amorality are highly reminiscent of Boothby's villain. Another of Radcliffe's notable Italian villains, the murderous monk Schedoni of *The Italian* (1796), bears a striking physical resemblance to Nikola, as this description indicates:

> His figure was striking … it was tall, and, though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapt in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in its air, something almost superhuman. His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face, encreased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eye, which approached to horror. … An habitual gloom and severity prevailed over the deep lines of his countenance; and his eyes were so piercing that they seemed to penetrate, at a

[255] Ibid., p. 6.
[256] Ibid., p. 136.
[257] Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 262.

> single glance into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts; few persons could support their scrutiny, or even endure to meet them twice.[258]

Mario Praz, analysing Radcliffe's villains in his treatise on romantic writing, notes certain qualities which recurred insistently in these 'Fatal Men of the Romantics' as he terms them: 'mysterious (but conjectured to be exalted) origin, traces of burnt-out passions, suspicion of a ghastly guilt, melancholy habits, pale face, unforgettable eyes'.[259] All of these traits are equally applicable to Nikola, and locate him within the tradition of the Miltonic Satan in which Praz places Radcliffe's villains.

In addition to the qualities noted by Praz, a passion for vengeance is another defining characteristic of the fatal romantic villain. Like Nikola, Montoni and Schedoni are driven by a consuming desire for vengeance that informs all of their actions, to the extent that they veritably epitomise that passion. Radcliffe further portrays vengeance as a particularly Italian trait: in relating the approach to Montoni's castle, she heightens the terrors that await the heroine there by designating the revenge she faces specifically 'Italian'.[260] In this she is drawing upon Shakespearean and Jacobean precedents for vengeful, passionate Italians. Churchill, who exposes her lack of real knowledge of Italy, yet credits her with vividly impressing on her readers' minds a horrific vision of that country, opining that her 'villains – Mazzini, Montoni, Schedoni – re-invigorated the "Machiavellian" figure of the Jacobean dramatists and suggested malice and mystery in every hooded figure in the Italian streets'.[261] Radcliffe's insistence upon Italian vengefulness, which pervades *Udolpho* and *The Italian*, accords with the dominant vengeance motif of the Nikola series, providing Boothby with a long-standing literary precedent for the motivations of his Nikola character.

Interestingly *The Italian* also features a supporting villain named Nicola, a priest of the Inquisition, and double-crossing henchman of Schedoni, who is also of this Satanic mould: 'Nicola, who was somewhat withdrawn from the circle, stood gazing … with the malignity of a demon. His glowing eyes just appeared beneath the edge of his cowl,

---

[258] Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1796; London: Penguin, 2004), p. 43.
[259] Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, trans. Angus Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 61.
[260] Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*), p. 225.
[261] Churchill, *Italy and English Literature*, p. 18.

while... the intermediate part of his countenance, receiving the full glare of the torch, displayed all its speaking and terrific lines.'[262] Nikola, in his habitual austere seclusion, has a certain monkish quality about him that accords with Radcliffe's infamous friars, and is confirmed by Hatteras's concluding vision of his withdrawal to an Eastern monastery. It is not this Nicola, however, whom Boothby claims inspired the name of his character, despite Nikola's affinities with these Radcliffean villains. Instead, in the first *Windsor* interview, while refusing to divulge Nikola's identity, he reveals, 'The name however was suggested to me one day in the train by seeing the name of Nicolo [*sic*] Tesla, the Italian electrician, in a public print'.[263] Hence Nikola's name reflects the mad scientist aspect of his personality, more so than the gothic villain. However, Boothby tellingly confused the nationality of Nikola Tesla, an ethnic Serbian born in the Croatian part of the Austrian Empire who later became an American citizen, mistakenly describing him as Italian. This indicates the implicit link he had already forged between Italian nationality and the master criminal he intended to create.

While the characterisation of Nikola clearly owes much to the long literary tradition of Italian criminality, it is arguable that there was something more immediate in Boothby's Anglo-Australian background that particularly inspired him to make this association. Along with many other prejudices, British settlers had brought the enduring assumptions concerning Italian iniquity with them to Australia, where Italian immigrants were treated with suspicion and dislike. From 1891 when a group of Italian labourers were brought in to work in the Queensland plantations the generalised anti-Italian prejudice began to take on a specifically Australian flavour. As the *Bulletin* cartoon in fig. 14 shows, poor Italian immigrants were linked to the reviled kanaka workforce, becoming another suspect racial group whose presence in the sparsely-populated north could be construed as invasive.

[262] Radcliffe, *The Italian*, pp. 456-7.
[263] Hyde, 'The Creator of "Dr Nikola"', p. 131.

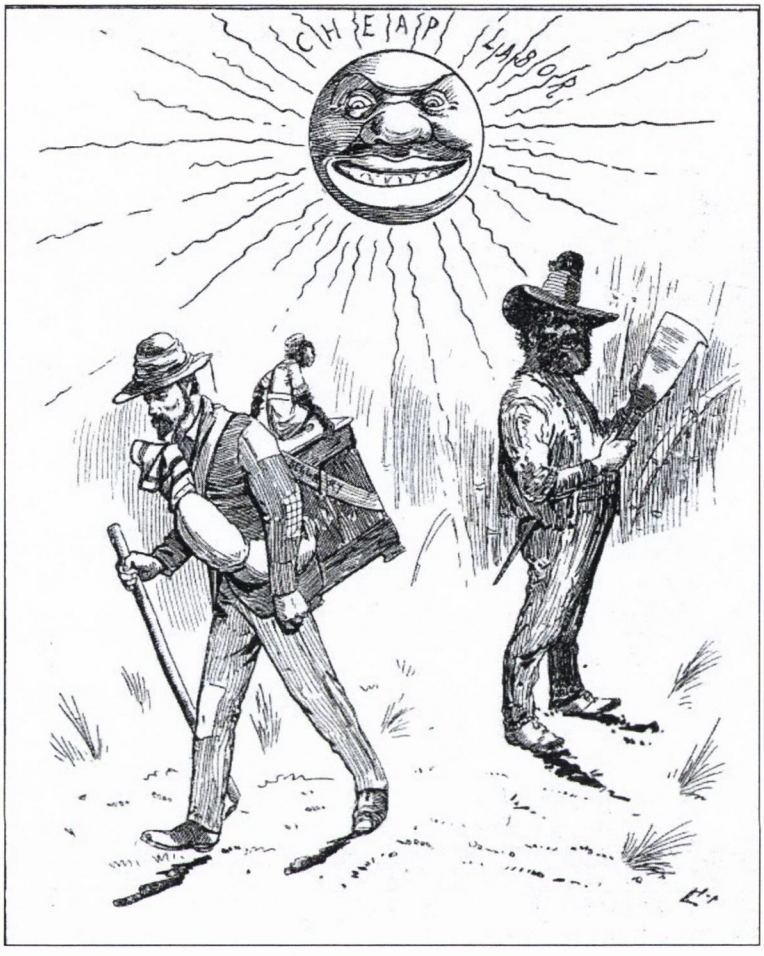


Fig. 14. 'Fears about the initial introduction of indentured labour into Queensland', *The Bulletin*, 22 August 1891, cover.[264]

Image from the collection of the State Library of New South Wales.

While the kanaka labourer with his machete is considerably more menacing than the wretched Italian organ grinder in the *Bulletin*'s representation in fig. 14, an alternative evaluation of racial peril revelled in the stereotypes of Italian volatility to reverse the threat: 'The kanaka is comparatively harmless; he could not successfully struggle against us... But the fiery Italian is as explosive as his native mountains and would overflow lava-like our regions and institutions'. It went on to abhor 'the contingency of a mafia ... being established in our midst; of labour disputes and family quarrels being settled by the

[264] Image reprinted in Helen Andreoni, 'Olive or White? The Colour of Italians in Australia', in Richard Nile (ed.), *Sojourners and Strangers*, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 77 (2003), p. 82; online at *The Australian Public Intellectual Network*, http://api-network.com/main/pdf/scholars/jas77_andreoni.pdf, 1 Mar 2013.

knife and of the terror of organised assassination being substituted for the law-enforced quiet and safety of our towns'.[265]

As Helen Andreoni has shown, Italians, as well as being painted as violent and subversive, posed a further threat to White Australia in that they were considered to be a non-white immigrant group.[266] More specifically they were categorised as 'olive-skinned', which label immediately brings to mind one aspect of Boothby's inconsistent rendering of Nikola's ethnicity. Further, the terminology adopted to describe the danger posed by Italian immigrants to Australia was appropriated from the pre-existing discourse of the yellow peril. This led to the circulation of such comparable derogatory epithets as the 'Dago menace' or the 'olive-skinned influx',[267] and even to what was intended as the damning characterisation of the Italians as 'the Chinese of Europe'.[268] As Erika Lee elaborates, the Italians and the Chinese '"occupied an ambiguous, overlapping and intermediary position in the binary racial schema." Neither black nor white, both were seen as inbetween – "yellow", "olive", or "swarthy"', their use as cheap labour further linking the two groups.[269] In this context, both Nikola's Italianness and Boothby's conflation of the threats emanating from the master criminal and the Chinese people seems less thoughtless rehashing of literary tradition and random narrative coincidence and more rooted in the specifics of his Australian experience.

Over the course of the five imperial crime thrillers that feature his most-compelling character, Boothby constructed the subversive persona of Nikola upon the basic foundations of foreignness and criminality. Over these he layered further dubious attributes such as a consuming obsession with revenge, a facility for cross-cultural disguise, a predilection for victimising British colonial officials, an amoral command of Western science, a mastery of occult oriental knowledge and an easy familiarity with the

[265] *Boomerang* 10 Jan 1891, 20; cited in Andreoni, 'Olive or White?', p. 81.
[266] Andreoni, 'Olive or White?', pp. 81-2.
[267] Ibid., pp. 84, 85.
[268] Erika Lee, 'The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gate-Keeping, 1882-1924', *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Spring 2002), p. 48; online at University of Victoria, http://web.uvic.ca/~ayh/Lee.pdf, 29 Mar 2013.
[269] Ibid., p. 47; inner citation from Donna Gabaccia, 'The "Yellow Peril" and the "Chinese of Europe": Global Perspectives on Race and Labour, 1815-1930', *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (ed.s) (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 177-9.

volatile colonial contact zones of the world. Just as Collins made full use of reader prejudices concerning foreignness in general and Italianness in particular to characterise his wicked count, so Boothby created a generically foreign villain, implicated with many suspect racial groups including (to summarise the earlier recitation), 'the Japanese, ... the Malays, the Hindoos, the Burmese, the coal porters in Port Said, the Buddhist priests of Ceylon; ... the men up in Thibet, the Spanish priests in Manilla, ... [and] the ministers of Siam'; and then he sharpened Nikola's multivalent colonial menace with the eventual disclosure of Italianness. Just as Doyle's Irish colonial origins impacted on the by-times inconclusiveness of the Holmes canon and racial identity of Doyle's arch-villain, so Boothby's conflicted Anglo-Australian background influenced his development of the unsettling, liminal identity of the Nikola character, leading him to conflate Nikola's criminal Italianness with White Australia's concerns about the yellow peril. Thus the sense of unease the character inspires derives from a number of sites of alterity, encompassing the concerns of a half-century of unprecedented British imperial expansion.

In the final novel Boothby added yet another layer to the subversive Nikola persona. As well as drawing on general and Australian-informed preconceptions of Italian criminality, in setting *'Farewell, Nikola'* in Venice and emphasising Nikola's specifically Venetian origins, Boothby is ultimately evoking the spectre of imperial decline. In this his text displays the encompassing concern with unavoidable decline observed by Arata in late-Victorian popular fiction, its ostensible narrative of 'masculinist adventure ... thoroughly "infected" by decadent ... paradigms'.[270] The faded glories of the once-powerful Venetian Republic form one of the major preoccupations of the text, Boothby situating Nikola in the crumbling ruin of his ancestral palazzo, alone, 'the last of an impoverished but ancient family' (88). Just prior to the text's climax, the preceding Roman archetype of decline is invoked when an eerie, moonlit excursion to Rome's Colosseum prompts this reflection: 'How many of the crowd gathered here to witness the agony of the tortured Christians ... believed that the very religion which they so heartily despised was destined to sway the world, and to see the mighty Colosseum, and the mightier power that built it, a ruin?' (256). This sentiment is reiterated in a notable

[270] Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, p. 6.

incident in *Pharos the Egyptian* set amidst the ruins of Pompeii. In a lengthy passage, the reincarnated Pharos takes Forrester on a guided tour of the ruined city, speaking from his apparent first-hand experience of it and emphasising its tragic demise: 'See how its grandeur has departed from it ... Gone – gone – dust and ashes, these nineteen hundred years.' And, apostrophising the once-prominent but now-petrified Pompeian citizen Tullus Agrippa, he taunts: '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' (111-3).[271] With these recurrent references to bygone Rome, and the careful relation of the Nikola and Pharos characters to fallen regimes, Venetian and ancient Egyptian respectively, Boothby was very much playing on his audience's Gibbonian-informed fears of imperial decline, as discussed in the Introduction. And ever implicit in the decline and fall premise is the invasion threat, as the demise of Rome inevitably conjures the nightmare of barbarians at the gates.

Collins's influential mid-century writing demonstrates a comparable awareness of the interconnection between the themes of imperial decline and invasion: his first published novel, *Antonina, or the Fall of Rome* (1850), drawing heavily on Gibbon's masterwork, provides an account of the conquest of Rome by Alaric, king of the Goths, in 410 A.D. In this text Collins ascribes motivation for the Goths' invasion of Rome partially to a desire for retribution for imperial atrocities committed by the Romans in their conquest of Gothic territories. Thus *Antonina* can be, and has been, read as a proto-invasion narrative with an admonitory subtext for modern Britons.[272] Reinforcing the interconnection between decline and invasion in fin-de-siècle popular fiction, many of the other foreign villains of contemporary invasion narratives are also representatives of fallen empires. Like Pharos, the terrifying, gender-bending, mesmeric villain of *The Beetle* derived from ancient Egypt. And Stoker's Dracula is the last of an Eastern European 'conquering race,' the Szekelys, themselves noted to be descendants of several other former ruling races including the Vikings and the Huns. This the character elaborates at length in a monologue upon their past triumphs, before ruefully concluding that now 'the glories of

[271] Given the Roman Empire's colonial involvement in Egypt, it is fitting that Pharos the Egyptian avenger evinces satisfaction at Pompeii's downfall.

[272] Lillian Nayder interprets it in this way in her study of Collins's fiction, *Wilkie Collins* (New York: Twayne, 1997), p. 22.

the great races are as a tale that is told'.[273] A more tenuous connection between the Irish background of Moriarty and fallen races can be established via the forerunning gothic tales of the Anglo-Irish author Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. The supernatural presence in these, in particular in the vampire tale 'Carmilla' (1872), has been interpreted as a gothicized response to the threat implicit in the presence of the dispossessed former Irish Catholic aristocracy at the margins of Anglo-Irish society.[274] And returning to Fosco's and Nikola's general Italian origins, from Gibbon's time onwards, contemporary Italians were frequently disparaged in English popular culture as the degenerate offspring of the fallen imperial Roman race.[275] Taken together, this notable group of literary foreign villains, many of whom were additionally the supernatural creatures of gothic narratives, provides a curiously doubled reflection of the invasion threat, its members both would-be invaders and representatives of overthrown civilizations; and it is to the gothicization of the invasion threat that we now turn in chapter 2.

In closing, a final, spontaneous characteristic Nikola shares with many other fin-de-siècle literary villains, gothic and otherwise, is that of popularity, and several analyses can be applied to shed some light on why this character and his literary predecessors such as Moriarty and Fosco, with their threatening combinations of foreignness and criminality, were so appealing to the reading public. Dixon postulates that the crime genre's representation of detection as the means of maintaining boundaries and excluding the other from the self explains 'why foreign villains have played such an enduring role in crime fiction.'[276] Michael Diamond suggests that the Victorian appetite for sensation extended to the worship or revilement of foreign revolutionary leaders, such as Garibaldi.[277] And Brantlinger observes concerning the demonization of the aristocratic rebel leader Nana Sahib following the Indian Mutiny, that 'Nana Sahib emerges as the personification of much larger forces, the spider in the web's eye of the "gigantic conspiracy."'[278] Something of a combination of attraction and revilement seem to have

[273] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897; London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 36-7. For more on this reading of Dracula, see Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, pp. 113-6.
[274] Robert Tracy, intro. to Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly* (1872; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1999).
[275] Churchill, *Italy and English Literature*, pp. 1, 7, 138, 170.
[276] Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 156.
[277] Diamond, *Victorian Sensation*, pp. 41, 46-53.
[278] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 202.

been engendered by Boothby's character who provided a fictional outlet for the belief in the likely reoccurrence of large-scale colonial conspiracy that was part of the cultural legacy of the Indian Mutiny.[279] Indeed it can be argued that Nikola was successful precisely because he tapped into the pervasive concern that the colonial endeavour was a source of danger as well as wealth, and came to generically embody the corollary invasion anxiety this provoked, adding a forerunning, alarmist yellow peril aspect to it based on Boothby's Far Eastern and Australian experience. Finally, from the comparative analysis of the threat presented by the Nikola character and other contemporary literary foreign villains in this chapter, it may additionally be suggested that on some level the reading public particularly enjoyed being titillated by the subversion of the empire that they simultaneously placed so much faith in.

[279] See the Introduction, and Kim Wagner, '"Treading Upon Fires": The "Mutiny"-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India', *Past and Present*, 218:1 (Feb 2013), pp. 168-70.

CHAPTER 2

SUPERNATURAL EGYPTIAN INVASION: BRITISH IMPERIAL PARANOIA AND THE CURSE OF THE SUEZ CANAL

> 'Ah, 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.'
>
> Guy Boothby, *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899)

> What of this piercing of the sands?
> What of this union of the seas? ...
> What good or ill from LESSEPS' cut
> Eastward and Westward shall proceed?
>
> 'Latest – From the Sphinx', *Punch* (27 Nov 1869)

At the same time that Guy Boothby's master criminal Dr Nikola character presented to the reading public a kind of universal embodiment of the societal anxiety concerning invasion, doubts and fears concerning a more localised imperial quandary were beginning to receive specific treatment in another popular genre. In 1859 Ferdinand de Lesseps had begun his great endeavour to sunder the isthmus of Suez and connect the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, the Occident with the Orient, irrevocably altering the geography of the earth and simultaneously upsetting the precarious global balance of power. Ten years later the eyes of the world turned to Egypt as the Suez Canal was inaugurated amidst extravagant Franco-Egyptian celebrations in which a glittering cast of international dignitaries participated. That the impact of the canal upon Britain would be momentous was acknowledged at the time,[1] though the nature of this impact was a matter for speculation, as the question posed above by *Punch* implies. While its co-developers France and Egypt pinned great hopes on the canal – that it would allow France to challenge Britain's maritime primacy and help Egypt to modernize, Britain was

[1] Zachary Karabell, *Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal* (London: John Murray, 2004), p. 248-9.

understandably suspicious of an endeavor which had the potential to undermine its global imperial dominance. And if one was to seek in the libraries of contemporary British popular fiction an answer to *Punch's* riddle, one would be led to the inescapable conclusion that grievous ill alone would proceed westwards through Lesseps's cut from the land of the Pharaohs to the lands of those who interfered in the affairs of modern Egypt as a host of uncanny Egyptian villains were unleashed on the unsuspecting metropolis.

The creation of the canal had been as much a feat of international diplomacy as of engineering; guided by Lord Palmerston, the British government had attempted to heed its progress at every turn, and official British participation at the inauguration celebrations was minimal. But they were nonetheless followed with great interest, and British newspaper coverage was abundant. Emily Haddad's examination of British journalistic accounts of the opening reveals that 'the economic interests of imperial Britain strongly inform British views of the canal'.[2] She observes that these accounts are characterised by speculation as to whether the canal would benefit or harm the British empire – it would, for example, bring India nearer, but simultaneously make it more vulnerable to Britain's rivals. The *Punch* excerpt cited above took a pessimistic and somewhat prescient view of the canal's future role in international affairs. This nineteenth century version of the riddle of the sphinx ponders the likelihood of profit or loss, war or peace; its ominous conclusion, 'We know what seas the work unites, who knows what sovereigns it divides', is reinforced by a double-page cartoon dramatizing the canal's disruptive effect on the great power relationships.[3] As political and economic speculation proliferated, popular authors, ever attune to the chords of societal unease and their pecuniary potential, turned increasingly to the gothic as a suitable medium for the treatment of fears concerning the consequences of the canal for Britain. Chief among these was apprehension that retribution from the East for Europe's ceaseless meddling there could flow through the canal as easily as colonial produce.

[2] Emily A. Haddad, 'Digging to India: Modernity, Imperialism and the Suez Canal', *Victorian Studies*, 47:3 (Spring 2005), p. 385.
[3] 'Latest – From the Sphinx', *Punch*, 57 (27 Nov 1869), pp. 210-4. Haddad considers this poem and cartoon exemplary of British attitudes towards the canal.

Despite Britain's initial opposition, the canal quickly became the lifeline of the British empire, and the surrounding territory of Egypt became pivotally important to the global balance of power. To protect its access to the vital waterway, Britain unofficially occupied Egypt in 1882, and the unstable status of Egypt following this move quickly became a source of ongoing dispute with both emerging Egyptian Islamic-nationalist groups and the other European powers. The burning issue of Britain's ambiguous relationship with Egypt became known popularly as 'the Egyptian Question', and was a recurrent plague to British foreign policy over the ensuing decades. Given Edward Said's assertions of the broad constitutive effect of the imperial project upon British society and of the reciprocity between the development of imperialism and the novel – as discussed in the Introduction,[4] it follows that an issue as fraught as the Egyptian Question could not have been without an effect of its own. More specifically, other literary critics such as Patrick Brantlinger and Stephen Arata have observed the tendency for doubts and fears concerning the imperial project to be gothicized and addressed through the medium of popular fiction, and their paradigms of 'imperial gothic' and 'reverse colonisation' are also explored in the Introduction.[5] In a pertinent recent work directly exploring the darkening of Egypt in the British cultural imagination in the late nineteenth century, Roger Luckhurst observes 'this structural principle: wherever there is imperial occupation, there is a reserve of supernaturalism, an occult supplement to an allegedly enlightened rule that becomes a currency for acknowledging and even negotiating the consequences of this colonial violence'.[6] And indeed, contemporaneously with developments in Anglo-Egyptian politics, a subgenre of Egyptian-themed gothic fiction began to grow in popularity, within which concerns over the Egyptian situation tended to find fictional expression in the form of the supernatural invader. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is the elucidation of the reciprocal relationship between problems arising from British colonial policy on Egypt following the opening of the Suez Canal and the development of this paranoid subgenre of popular fiction.

---

[4] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994).

[5] See Stephen Arata's account of reverse colonisation in *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Patrick Brantlinger on imperial gothic in *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988).

[6] Roger Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 241-2.

The fiction of supernatural Egyptian invasion was one strand in the much-theorised revival of the gothic literary mode which occurred at the fin de siècle. And the gothicization of the invasion threat is evident in many popular fin-de-siècle novels, especially, as Arata elaborates, in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), which is briefly examined later in this chapter. But the gothic treatment of Egypt in response to the politics surrounding the Suez Canal is exemplary both in terms of the number of tales closely following the same structure and the amount of explicit references to the Egyptian situation they contain. From 1869 when the Suez Canal opened, and gaining further momentum after the 1882 occupation, a body of tales positing the irruption of vengeful, supernatural ancient Egyptian forces in civilised, rational, modern England began to appear. The most extreme of these is Boothby's narrative of retributive mass extermination, *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899), and other notable examples include Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903) and Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897). The theme also recurs in certain of Arthur Conan Doyle's short stories such as 'Lot No. 249' (1892), in many aspects of H. Rider Haggard's works, and in a large backdrop of lesser known periodical stories, such as K. and H. Prichard's 'The Story of Baelbrow' (1898). Given this profusion of supernatural Egyptian invasion-themed contemporary popular tales it is clear that the significance of the Egyptian Question was not lost on popular authors or their audiences.

The typical plot turns upon modern English trespass into an ancient Egyptian tomb, the misappropriation and removal of a mummy or its artefacts back to England, and the unleashing of a curse which entails supernatural Egyptian forces exacting revenge in the heart of the imperial metropolis. A contrapuntal analysis reveals that these plots are almost invariably supported by a framework of references to the unstable political situation in modern Egypt that would have been unmistakable to the newspaper-literate contemporary reader. Though the period in question in Egypt, especially under the General Consulship of Lord Cromer (1883-1908), is characterised as one of relative peace, in fact it was a turbulent time, as was manifest in England via newspaper reportage and recurrent parliamentary debates on the Egyptian Question. Given this geopolitical contextual framework, the narratives of ancient Egyptian revenge for tomb-robbery can be read as symbolic of both the deep dread of losing access to the Suez Canal and the

consequent desire for full control of it, and this is elaborated in the sections of this chapter that explore the literary tropes of the mummy's curse and the mummy romance. Following an initial contextual overview of the broad range of fictional accounts of gothic Egypt, the chapter moves on to consider in detail first representations of the curse and the vengeful invader centring around Boothby's *Pharos the Egyptian* as the most extreme example of this theme. It then explores some of the key tales most often cited as examples of the romance, including Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and more tangentially Haggard's *She* (1887), to examine their intersection with political actualities and the manner in which the curse paradigm also operates within them. However, before this analysis can take place and as the historical interpretation in the chapter runs somewhat counter to the received understanding of Anglo-Egyptian history in the pre-World War I period, a closer look at events following the opening of the canal will provide the starting point.

The spinal cord of empire and the literary arousal of ancient Egypt

The Suez Canal: the imperial 'spinal cord'

As chapter one briefly touched upon, the Suez Canal had come by the time Boothby was writing to play a crucial role in the functioning of the British empire. In 1882, the year of the British occupation, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck viscerally summed up the relationship: 'Egypt is of the utmost importance to England on account of the Suez Canal, the shortest line of communication between the eastern and western halves of the Empire. That is like the spinal cord which connects the backbone with the brain'.[7] Hence the significance of Boothby locating the head-quarters of that recalcitrant colonial menace, Nikola, upon the canal's very entrance in Port Said. In an admonitory 1870 article on the potential effect of the canal's opening can be found a succinct articulation of Britain's endangered yet unprecedented position of global dominance: 'with her hold on India – the most precious of all earthly possessions; with her splendid colonies in Asia, in Australia, in North America, in South Africa; and with her enterprising intercourse with

[7] Cited in Mahmud Zayid, *Egypt's Struggle for Independence* (Beirut: Khayats, 1965), p. 33.

every country – almost every port and city – of the globe'.[8] Of the locations listed above, all, with the obvious exception of Canada, were most expediently accessed via the Suez Canal. Thus Lord Palmerston, in a statement that exemplifies the imperial mindset, glibly proclaimed: 'We do not want Egypt ... for ourselves, any more than any rational man with an estate in the north of England and a residence in the south would have wished to possess the inns on the road. All he could want would have been that the inns should be well-kept, always accessible, and furnishing him, when he came, with mutton-chops and post-horses.'[9] And this was just the kind of pragmatic logic that led Britain into ever closer involvement in Egyptian affairs.

Though the canal did not initially generate the expected volume of traffic and despite Britain's original cynicism concerning the project, within just five years of its opening three-quarters of the shipping passing through it was British, since it halved the distance to India, reducing the journey time to just four weeks.[10] Eric Hobsbawm stresses the key role played by India in the British economy in this period, and the corresponding criticality of controlling sea routes to it.[11] A. N. Wilson notes that in the event of a Russian invasion of India, 'an ever-present possibility in British paranoia, if not always in Russian foreign policy', or in the event of more Mutiny-type unrest within India, the Suez Canal would facilitate the speedy movement of troops to India.[12] And it should further be observed that in the event of any invasion threat to the English homeland, the canal would equally facilitate the mobilization of the far-flung British armed forces and colonial armies to its defence. Hence despite passing up earlier opportunities, when the debt-laden Khedive (sovereign) of Egypt was forced to sell his holding in 1875, British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli seized the chance to obtain a controlling share in the Canal Company, triumphantly declaring to Queen Victoria: 'you have it, Madam!'[13] Disraeli's comment concerning how fraught the negotiations had been reveals the growing imperial paranoia concerning access to the canal: had he failed, 'the whole of the

[8] 'Visions from Suez', *Once a Week* (1 Jan 1870), p. 492.; cited in Haddad, 'Digging to India', p. 386.
[9] Cited in Peter Mansfield, *The British in Egypt* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1971), p. 4.
[10] *The Times*, 14 Dec 1875, p. 4.
[11] Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (London: Abacus, 1994), pp. 68-9.
[12] A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Arrow, 2002), p. 389.
[13] Ibid., p. 390.

Suez Canal would have belonged to the French, and they might have shut it up!'[14] The *Times* was less positive about Disraeli's purchase, worrying that 'the possible results of this national investment are so large and indefinite that it would be vain to speculate on them' but prophetically observing it would draw Britain inextricably into Egyptian affairs for good or ill.[15] Analysing this early sentiment towards the canal, Haddad observes 'the rhetorical convergence of the canal with British interests well before Egypt comes consistently or officially within Britain's sphere of influence'.[16] And it was this rhetorical convergence, and corresponding sense of vulnerability, that popular authors were responding to with their accounts of Egyptian menace; chief among these being the emigrant colonial authors, such as Boothby, who had journeyed via the 'spinal cord' of empire.

Despite its controlling share, British access to the canal remained vulnerable as continued foreign interference in Egypt provoked domestic resentment culminating in a proto-nationalist rebellion in 1881 which established a provisional government. Led by Colonel Ahmed Urabi, the *al-hizb al-watani*, meaning patriotic or nationalist faction, 'were opposed to the control of Egypt by foreigners, whether Turkish or European.'[17] The 'rebel' Urabi himself (better known to the British as Arabi Pasha) was 'an impressive Egyptian colonel [with] a magnetic personality and great oratorical power,' who would have a lasting effect on the popular imagination, both British and Egyptian.[18] The following summer after anti-European riots in Alexandria, Britain could stand the threat to trade posed by this volatile situation no longer.[19] Despite the reluctance of Disraeli's successor William Gladstone to intervene, he had no option but to recognise that British economic interests were deeply dependent on uninterrupted access to the Suez Canal, or as *Punch* put it, 'just now the question that mainly concerns England is not the Porte's

[14] Cited in Karabell, *Parting the Desert*, p. 263. Disraeli's machinations in obtaining the controlling share involved organising a loan to the British government from Lionel de Rothschild's banking firm to make the share purchase possible. For more on this complex negotiation see Karabell, pp. 262–65.
[15] Editorial, *The Times*, 27 Nov 1875, p. 9.
[16] Haddad, 'Digging to India', p. 385.
[17] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley and LA (CA): University of California Press, 1991), p. 137. The Khedive of Egypt, temporarily overthrown in this coup, was nominally a vassal of the Ottoman Empire.
[18] Zayid, *Egypt's Struggle for Independence*, pp. 21, 25.
[19] By this time, forty-four percent of Egyptian imports came from Britain and eighty percent of Egyptian exports, mainly the unprocessed cotton which fuelled Britain's textile industry, went to Britain; Wilson, *The Victorians*, p. 465.

Suzerainty [Ottoman Empire's nominal claim to Egypt], but whether ... we are to have the Suez-erainty...'[20] Hence Britain invaded and occupied Egypt on the pretext of restoring the Khedive but, as Henry Keown-Boyd explains in his history of the British presence in Egypt, with the real intent to 'safeguard the route to India and the Far East through the Suez Canal', which it immediately seized.[21]

The British campaign under General Garnet Wolseley was swift and effective, routing Urabi's forces in just eight weeks; nonetheless Wolseley's staff-officer, who must have had a romantic turn of mind, warned against hubris seeing portents of future downfall as Egypt 'has ever played a strange part in the destiny of empires'.[22] This superstitious prognostication is indicative of the tendency to gothicize the Egyptian situation that was also at work in supernatural Egyptian fiction. Something of this gothic imaginary is conveyed by the *Punch* cartoon in fig. 1 of John Bull wrestling a gigantic crocodile labelled Egypt, little-aided by his rival the French emperor. While this representation of Egyptian rebelliousness is not supernatural, it is certainly monstrous and menacing, and published at the height of the Urabi regime just before Britain felt compelled to invade.[23]

[20] *Punch*, 82 (24 June 1882), p. 297.

[21] Henry Keown-Boyd, *The Lion and the Sphinx: The Rise and Fall of the British in Egypt, 1882-1956* (Durham, Spennymoor: The Memoir Club, 2002), p. 8.

[22] Cited in Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p. 168-9.

[23] Curiously while *Punch* rarely expressed the threat of Egyptian nationalism in supernatural form (like those well-known images of Irish nationalism, 'The Irish Frankenstein' (20 May 1882) and 'The Irish "Vampire"' (24 Oct 1885)) at the outbreak of the Urabi uprising it did represent the unrelated threat of economic protectionism as a revivified mummy (17 Sept 1881). The accompanying poem speculates as to whether the electrified mummy will 'scare old GLADDY [Gladstone] if it begins to stir, and make a horrid noise, and roll its eyes about, *just as if it were alive* ... like that horrid Frankenstein thing', pp. 126-7. During this period *Punch*'s large political cartoons increasingly featured Egypt, showing its growing importance in British foreign policy, as, for instance, in that of the British lion pinning down a document representing the Suez Canal deeds (15 July 1882).



Fig. 1. '"Hold on!": "An allegory on the banks of the Nile." – Mrs. Malaprop.' *Punch*, 82 (10 June 1882), p. 271.

Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

The significance of the military occupation of Egypt, which gave Britain de facto control of this strategic location, cannot be underestimated. Paul Hayes considers it to be 'the most important single act in British foreign policy in this period,' as it secured vital access to the Suez Canal but incurred the major resentment of both France and Russia.[24] Piers Brendon similarly maintains that the occupation aggravated the other European powers, particularly France and Germany, helping to precipitate the imminent scramble for African territory during which European colonial rivalries reached dangerous new heights.[25] This great-power resentment meant that Britain's seizure of Egypt did not have the simple *force-majeure* legitimacy of uncontested colonial annexation. As Anshuman

[24] Paul Hayes, 'British Foreign Policy 1867-1900', in T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (ed.s), *Later Victorian Britain 1867-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 158.
[25] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 178.

Mondal puts it, 'Egypt's pivotal position in the wider field of international relations, its importance as a pawn in the political game of chess being played in Europe ... between the major powers,' prevented the straightforward incorporation of Egypt into the empire.[26] However this very criticality meant it could neither be lightly abandoned; debate between permanent settlement versus military withdrawal raged. Certainly Gladstone never intended a long-term occupation, rightly fearing that interest in the canal would lead Britain to colonise troublesome surrounding territories in Africa, 'all in the name of defence', and cause further difficulties in international relations.[27] But, as many historians have noted, no opportune moment for the withdrawal of British forces from this key location ever seemed to present itself, and Britain retained a controlling presence in Egypt until as late as 1956.

From immediately after the occupation past the turn of the century, the question of Britain's relationship with Egypt continued to be an ongoing source of national and international controversy and it was within this fraught geopolitical milieu that the gothic tales of restless ancient Egyptians took shape. At various points throughout the 1890s, particularly for leverage during clashes over Africa, the other European powers threatened to challenge Britain's dubious status in Egypt. Speaking of German posturing in 1895, an English diplomat lamented 'Germany has, through Egypt, our tail between her teeth and can give it a bite whenever we don't do what she wants'.[28] The satirical cartoon in fig. 2, printed in October 1897 while Boothby may have been contemplating *Pharos the Egyptian*, shows how current the Egyptian Question was.

[26] Anshuman A. Mondal, *Nationalism and Post-Colonial Identity: Culture and Ideology in India and Egypt* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 141.
[27] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, pp. 143, 166.
[28] Cited in Zayid, *Egypt's Struggle for Independence*, p. 51.

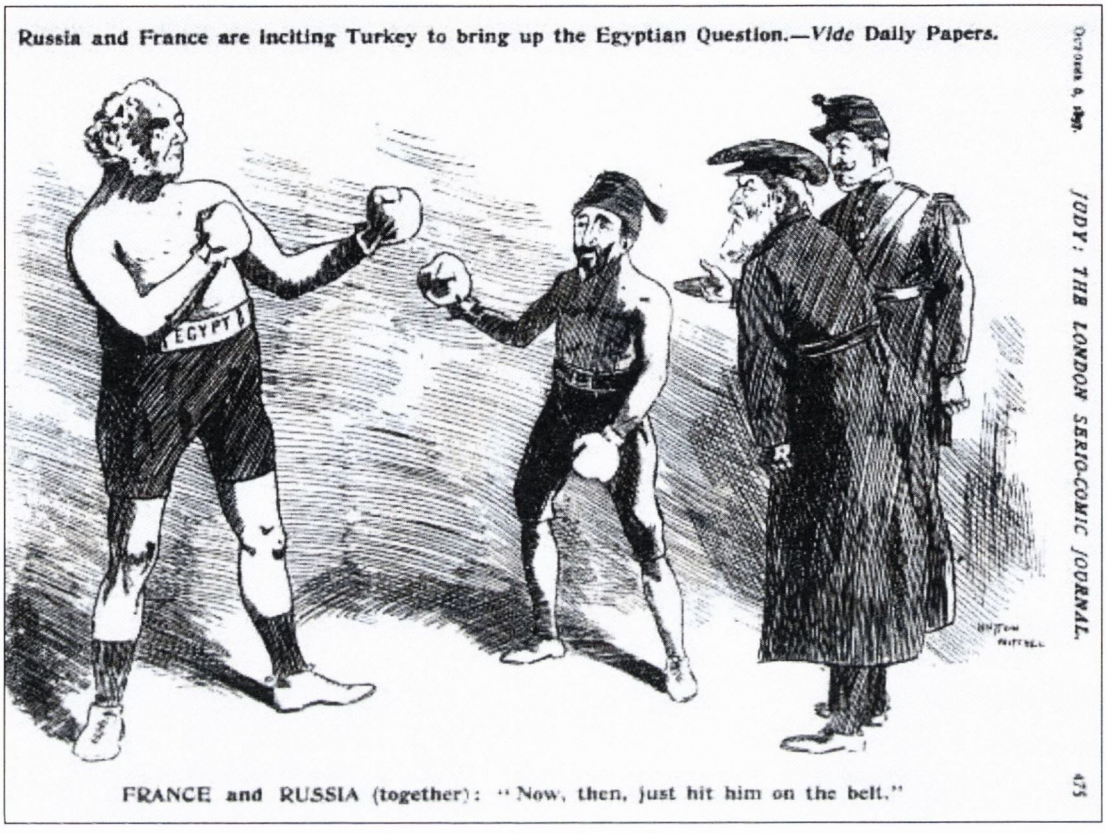


Fig. 2. 'Russia and France are inciting Turkey to bring up the Egyptian Question' *Judy*, 1589 (6 Oct 1897), p. 475.

Image published with permission of ProQuest. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.[29]

An admonitory article published in December 1897 in the prominent weekly periodical *The Spectator* (on the topic of the concurrent colonial crisis in China that is explored in detail in chapter three) warned against any deeper involvement in China when 'after a quarter of a century we have not legalised our position on the Nile'.[30] Egypt's status was likewise a running concern in Haggard's periodical, *The African Review*, which noted Gladstone's and John Morley's observation 'that the occupation of Egypt poisoned our foreign policy and lay at the root of all the difficulties which concerned us in the world.'[31] According to Viscount Milner, who served in Cromer's administration in the

[29] Image produced by ProQuest as part of *British Periodicals Collection I*. Inquiries may be made to ProQuest, The Quorum, Barnwell Road, Cambridge, CB5 8SW, UK; Tel: +44 (0) 1223 215512; Web page: http://www.proquest.co.uk.

[30] 'Topics of the Day: The Partition of China', *The Spectator* 79:3626 (25 Dec 1897), pp. 920-1. In this article the view of the entire colonial endeavour as a source of threat is evident in the related concerns that, 'We are going to have ten years at least of strain and difficulty in India,' and 'we have not thoroughly digested one morsel of the immense and hurried swallowings we have made in Africa'.

[31] 'Sir Charles Dilke on Egypt', *The African Review*, 6 (19 Oct 1895), p. 659.

1880s, in his frequently re-issued retrospective *England in Egypt* (1892), 'Everything ... seemed to be going wrong at one and the same time. Alike in military matters, in diplomacy, and in politics, Great Britain was simply haunted by the Egyptian Question.'[32] As the editors of an exploration of 'the imaginative manipulation of images of fear' observe: 'In a curious doubling back and forth, socio-cultural fears, apparently too sensitive to be addressed overtly, are "dealt" with in fictional narratives which are then used by commentators as a means of depicting ... [similar] events'.[33] And, indeed, in this instance Milner seems driven to the use of supernatural imagery to find a suitable register for conveying the gravity of the Egyptian problem.

More significant even than the reality of the political difficulties posed to the empire by its relationship with Egypt was the intensity of anxiety these engendered, the sensation of 'living in an atmosphere of permanent crisis'.[34] Egyptian vulnerability became a key tenet of late nineteenth century imperial paranoia, with the canal lodged in the imperial psyche as the spinal cord of empire and correspondingly its weakest point: sever the cord and the empire would be effectively paralysed:

> By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Suez Canal had become the fulcrum of the British Empire ... As the volume of trade increased, the British government began to treat the canal as the most vital, and most vulnerable, point in the whole empire. ... British officials were so concerned about the possibility of Suez's falling into hostile hands that they justified expansion into Afghanistan, ... East Africa, ... Iran and the Middle East. The logic, however tenuous, was that if adversaries such as Russia, Germany, or France controlled any of these regions, they would be able to threaten the Suez Canal, and if they seized the canal, then the entire British Empire could be severed and dismembered.[35]

As Zachary Karabell's analysis stresses, however implausible, even the most remote threats to the canal generated exaggerated concern because of its criticality to the well-being of the imperial corpus. Writing of his travels in Egypt in 1898, the year *Pharos the Egyptian* was serialised, the prominent *Daily Mail* war correspondent, G. W. Steevens,

[32] Alfred Milner, *England in Egypt*, 6th edn (1892; London: Edward Arnold, 1899), p. 74.
[33] Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy (ed.s), intro. to *Fear: Essays on the meaning and experience of fear* (Dublin: Four Courts Press: 2007), p. 12.
[34] See Said on Immanuel Wallerstein in *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 406.
[35] Karabell, *Parting the Desert*, pp. 266-7.

aptly expressed the general sentiment towards Suez: 'I did see the famous Canal. ... Never, I suppose, has any single work of man upset the balance of the world like the Suez Canal; it has made and unmade men, cities, nations'.[36]

As Wolseley's staff-officer had alluded to, even before the building of the canal Egypt had of old played a fateful role in the destiny of European imperial civilisations – from the classical Greek and Roman to the Napoleonic French. Gibbon's seminal history commented periodically on Egypt's impact as a Roman colony, observing how 'The seditions of Alexandria had often affected the tranquillity and subsistence of Rome itself'.[37] In *Orientalism* (1978) Said emphasises the established contemporary view of Egypt's 'cultural, geographical and historical significance ... the focal point of the relationships between Africa and Asia, between Europe and the East ... the stage on which actions of a world-historical importance would take place'.[38] He thus accords a deep cultural significance to Britain's relationship with Egypt after 1882, selecting occupied Egypt as exemplar for his extended elaboration of the operation of nineteenth century British orientalist discourse. What Said's analysis highlights is the success of orientalism in the Egyptian context, the manner in which colonial administrators like Cromer wielded their 'knowledge' of 'the Oriental' to effect the subjugation of the country.[39] However, from the historical analysis above, it is also evident that the rhetoric of confidence concerning achievements in Egypt was riddled with doubt – like the general discourse of imperialism, as anxious as it was assertive. No matter how strident the assertions of Britain's success in Egypt were, nor how much the resulting difficulties were downplayed, concern over the vital territory increased continually and disproportionately, and it was to this concern that the fiction of gothic Egypt responded. Though Said emphatically designates the canal the 'logical conclusion' of orientalism, reducing the distance of the orient from Europe and essentially rendering it a harmless administrative entity,[40] he never addresses the opposing discourse of paranoia surrounding the canal, expressed so insistently both at the level of political commentary

[36] G. W. Steevens, *Egypt in 1898* (1898; New York: Dodd, Mead & Co, 1899), p. 30; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/egyptin189800stee, 10 June 2010.
[37] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, David Womersley (ed.), 1 (London: Penguin, 1995), chap. 13, p. 371.
[38] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978; London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 84-5.
[39] Ibid., pp. 35-6.
[40] Ibid., pp. 91-2.

and, as we will now examine, via the popular-cultural outlet of Egyptianised invasion fiction.

Reading the restless mummy: the fiction of gothic Egypt

Few were better placed to articulate the metropolitan fears concerning Egypt than the emigrant white colonial authors, some of whom experienced first-hand the connective, strategic role of the Suez Canal en route to the imperial capital. While the concept of the canal as gateway between East and West, and border between civilisation and barbarism was firmly established in the popular imagination (as discussed in chapter one), for those who had experienced it personally while travelling between the peripheries and the metropolis, its significance must have been inescapable. Boothby and Haggard steamed through the canal on voyages between England and Australia and South Africa respectively, and Boothby, Haggard and Doyle additionally visited Egypt as tourists. For these colonial authors, the wide-ranging perspectives engendered by their hybrid marginal-metropolitan experience would have helped to heighten their awareness of the imperial vulnerability implicit in Britain's provisional control over the Suez Canal. Their keen knowledge of unpleasant colonial realities – Boothby's of the harsh treatment of indigenous Australians and Chinese immigrants, Haggard's of Boer and indigenous African unrest (examined subsequently in this chapter), and Stoker's and Doyle's of the unstable Irish political situation – additionally left them well placed to treat imaginatively of the consequences of Egyptian rebellion. Marsh, author of the biggest selling supernatural Egyptian tale, was not a colonial author but to some extent may have shared their hybrid and outsider perspective as the son of a German Jewish merchant disgraced for committing fraud.[41]

Boothby's particular answer to the Egyptian Question took the form of Pharos, undead high-priest of ancient Egypt and instrument of its vengeful gods, who single-handedly carried out one of the most successful and lethal invasions of England to be found in fin-de-siècle popular fiction, leaving untold numbers dead. The grim admonition

[41] Certainly the scant details of Marsh's biography reveal a predilection for dissembling these undesirable origins, 'affecting a cultivated gentlemanly manner' while engaged in fraud on his own behalf, before reviving his career as a popular author. See Minna Vuohelainen, intro. to Richard Marsh, *The Goddess: A Demon* (1900; Kansas City: Valancourt Books, 2010), p. xv.

quoted as epigraph to this chapter is a disturbing forewarning of Pharos's impending vengeance for the desecration of his sarcophagus by modern European tomb-raiders. Here the violent consequences of archaeological plundering can be read as symbolic of the potentially catastrophic downside of Britain's territorial appropriation of modern Egypt. Boothby's villain, and the other comparable supernatural Egyptian invaders dreamt up by colonial authors, can be interpreted as products of the process by which the colonial subject is reconfigured as the oppressor in the face of a threat to colonial interests discussed in relation to Nikola in chapter one. Reacting to the prevalent concern voiced for British imperial interests if access to the vital waterway was cut off, the *modern* inhabitants of Egypt with their growing nationalist consciousness are refigured as supernatural *ancient* Egyptian villains, and a threat emanating from British-occupied Egypt has a devastating effect on the occupier's homeland.

The roots of the modern interest in ancient Egypt predated the ramping up of late nineteenth century colonial activity, however, lying rather in the popularisation of French research undertaken during Napoleon's brief occupation of Egypt between 1798 and 1801. The ensuing cultural fascination may have helped to forge a popular association between the greatest engineering feat of the modern age – the Suez Canal, and the colossal monuments of the former civilisation. It was well known that indirect canals between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea had existed in antiquity, and it was thus easy to envisage the Suez Canal as entirely dissociate from the despised state of modern Egypt, and more as a nineteenth-century European-led reincarnation of the glorious pharaonic past. From 1865, the canal works had become an added attraction for tourists visiting the ancient sites, with Thomas Cook offering packages that combined the two locations.[42] Cook's very advertisements for these tours reinforced the connection between the canal and ancient monuments, portraying the project as 'the thought of centuries' unfulfilled 'until within the last few years ... modern civilisation began seriously to set about emulating the labours of the ancient Pharaohs, who ... constructed a canal between the two seas'.[43] Karabell maintains that the Suez Canal Company certainly exploited the glamour of ancient Egypt in order to increase the prestige of its project and sell shares. In

[42] Karabell, *Parting the Desert*, pp. 215, 249.
[43] Advertisement cited in Said, *Orientalism*, p. 88.

1867 the canal exhibit was the one of chief attractions at the Universal Exposition of Art and Industry in Paris, to which millions of international visitors flocked. Unlike all the other modern Egyptian exhibits, the canal exhibit was housed in the Egyptian pavilion, which was constructed in the image of a pharaonic temple to showcase the wonders of ancient Egypt. The approach to it was via rooms filled with a host of ancient Egyptian relics including sarcophagi, scarabs and five hundred mummified skulls. As well as receiving hundreds of English visitors, this popular exhibit also received widespread coverage in the English press.[44] This conflation of the canal with the monuments of the Pharaohs may suggest a reason why popular authors such as Boothby addressed the impact of a world-changing modern engineering project indirectly via the relics of ancient Egyptian civilisation. And the contentious status of the canal from its inception further suggests why the representatives of ancient Egypt turned hostile in this fiction, and none more so than Boothby's villain, Pharos.

The earliest fictional narratives engaging with ancient Egypt also predate the era of the Egyptian Question, seeming to be the product of what Jasmine Day terms the 'mummymania' resulting from the discoveries made during the Napoleonic encounter.[45] Tales featuring mummies made sporadic appearances throughout the mid-century in conjunction with the famous Belzoni exhibitions and the fad for mummy-unwrapping, however they tended to be fanciful or satirical with little intimation of Egyptian animosity.[46] In the late 1860s, the numbers of Egyptian-themed tales in the literary magazines began to grow and the notion of retribution and the curse started to take hold. It is this trope of the curse, which can be viewed as an expression of invasion anxiety, that differentiates these late-century tales from their predecessors and provides the structural homogeny that allows them to be read as a coherent gothic subgenre responding to Egyptian politics. The first known curse tale published in an English magazine, 'Lost in a Pyramid' (sometimes subtitled 'or, The Mummy's Curse') appeared

[44] Karabell, *Parting the Desert*, pp. 225-8, 252.
[45] Jasmine Day, *The Mummy's Curse: Mummymania in the English-speaking world* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 1.
[46] Notable examples include Jane C. Loudon, *The Mummy!* (1827), Edgar Allan Poe, 'Some Words with a Mummy' (1845) and Theophile Gautier, *The Romance of the Mummy* (1856). For a summary, see Paula Guran, 'The Mummy', in S. T. Joshi (ed.), *Icons of Horror and the Supernatural: An Encyclopaedia of Our Worst Nightmares*, 1 (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007), pp. 382-5.

in 1869, the year the Suez Canal opened.[47] It is worth summarising here as it is a classic articulation of the curse paradigm, featuring the explicit warning 'beware of the Mummy's Curse'.[48] In brief, the protagonist, lost while pursuing treasure in a tomb, unwraps and burns a female mummy and takes some of her artefacts home. She turns out to be 'a famous sorceress, who bequeathed her curse to whoever should disturb her rest' and her poison ultimately kills his travelling companion and reduces his new wife to a state of 'death in life'. It is possible to read this chain of events as representative of the fatal consequences of Western interference in modern Egypt, with the offended Egyptian entity in turn dispossessing the trespasser of his most precious belonging. The trajectory of the narrative also fits with what Day, in her anthropological investigation of the operation of the mummy's curse myth in Western culture, has identified as a recurrent hubris/nemesis plot structure which underpins nineteenth century curse narratives.[49] This structure is analogous to that of the decline and fall paradigm of empire and relates the overt archaeological concerns of the texts to deeper imperial fears concerning invasion.

Though 'Lost in a Pyramid' was a reprint of a tale published earlier in 1869 in America, its appearance coincides with a number of tales starting to posit the negative consequences of tomb exploration in the late 1860s, just as work on the Suez Canal neared completion and the hype leading up to its opening mounted.[50] These include 'An Egyptian Ghost Story' (1863), which features a supposedly haunted tomb in a Coptic monastery, and mentions 'the sacrilegious hand of Frankish spoilers of ... Egyptian mummies'; 'In the Sepulchre' (1868), a Poe-ian revenge in which a thwarted English suitor mummifies and abandons his rival in an ancient Egyptian tomb; and 'A Night with King Pharaoh' (1869), which sees a party of English tourists trapped in a pharaoh's tomb and left for dead by their treacherous Arab guides, the political context acknowledged in

[47] According to Day the earliest known curse tale, 'The Mummy's Soul', dates back to 1862 and was published anonymously in an American periodical; see *The Mummy's Curse*, p. 46.
[48] 'Lost in a Pyramid', *Reynolds's Miscellany*, 42:1086 (3 Apr 1869), pp. 244-5.
[49] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, p. 52.
[50] It appeared, also anonymously, in America as 'Lost in a Pyramid: The Mummy's Curse' in *The New World* (16 Jan 1869), but has since been attributed to Louisa May Alcott. See *The Louisa May Alcott Encyclopaedia*, Gregory Eiselein and Anne K. Phillips, eds. (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001), p. 187. The American version was discovered by Dominic Montserrat as outlined in 'Louisa May Alcott and the Mummy's Curse', *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt*, 9:2 (Summer 1998), pp. 70-85.

a reference to the topicality of 'the prophecies about Egypt and the future of the Turk'.[51] These proto-curse tales were followed by scores of tales in the early 1880s after the British occupation of Egypt, which persist into the 1890s and early twentieth century as the Egyptian Question continued to rage. Previous estimates of the numbers of these tales published are conservative: Nicholas Daly, for instance, estimates that, 'Between 1880 and 1914, more than a dozen mummy narratives appear'.[52] However improved, digital access to periodical archives shows that between 1860 and 1914 dozens, perhaps more than a hundred, of these stories were published. Given the correspondence between their dates and significant events in Egypt, it is reasonable to assert that the writers of popular fiction were responding to these events – speculating upon and sensationalising their possible consequences.

From a cultural perspective, the body of fictional narratives of supernatural Egyptian invasion can be positioned within the wider popular cultural phenomenon that Luckhurst has delineated as 'Egyptian Gothic', which centres upon the mummy's curse myth. In his genealogy of the phenomenon, Luckhurst contends that Egyptian Gothic is 'a cultural formation that emerged and permeated popular culture from the 1880s to the 1930s ... not just a literature, but ... something wider, a set of beliefs or knowledges in a loosely occult framework', which additionally had its existence in the discourses of journalism, orientalism, spiritualism, theatre and the museum, and developed both in response to the emerging academic discipline of Egyptology and to the politics of Egyptian Question.[53] Luckhurst's concern is tracking the myth in the form of *rumour*, several of which circulated widely in late-Victorian and Edwardian London – precursors of the superstitious furore surrounding the opening of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922. Two

[51] 'An Egyptian Ghost Story', *Leisure Hour*, 602 (July 1863), pp. 441–43; 'In the Sepulchre', *Reynolds's Miscellany*, 40:1044 (June 1868), pp. 411–12; and Baron Schlippenback, 'A Night with King Pharaoh', *Belgravia*, 9 (August 1869), pp. 196–213 (all accessed online at *British Periodicals Collection I*, see Bibliography for details). Though a minor aspect of this text, the curse is also the underlying plot driver of Robert Bulwer-Lytton's *The Curse of the Drowned: The Ring of Amasis* in which a cursed ring taken from a mummy causes a modern reprieve of a 3000 year old tragedy (first published London: Chapman & Hall, 1863; circulated continuously in pirated form until its revision and republication first in serial form in the *English Illustrated Magazine* (1889) and then in book form (London: Macmillan, 1890). See its *New York Times* review (1 June 1890)).

[52] Nicholas Daly, *Modernism, romance and the fin de siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 85.

[53] Roger Luckhurst, 'The Mummy's Curse: A Genealogy', in Jarmila Mildorf, Hans-Ulrich Seeber & Martin Windisch (ed.s), *Magic, Science, Technology and Literature* (Berlin: LITVERLAG, 2006), p. 123.

rumours are singled out as being particularly prevalent and influential, each with significant imperial aspects, allowing a direct line to be drawn between the concept of the mummy's curse and the mechanics of empire. The first curse rumour, which began to circulate in the 1870s, concerns T. Douglas Murray, amateur geographer and close associate of the explorer Sir Samuel Baker, whose Sudanese exploits helped spark off the Islamic Mahdist uprising and notorious last-stand of General Charles Gordon in the mid-1880s. Murray's purchase of a striking mummy case was considered to have brought serious injury and death upon his party en route home from Egypt, and ill-luck was quietly rumoured to dog whoever housed the mummy case, which eventually took up a restless residence in the British museum. The publication of the story in 1904 by journalist Fletcher Robinson, close friend of Doyle, gave the rumour even wider currency – Robinson's sudden death in 1907 was even attributed to it. The second curse rumour has even more direct colonial connections. In this instance, as the story goes, the ill-omened mummy case was purchased as a souvenir by Herbert (or Bruce) Ingram, while he accompanied the ignominious failed 1885 Gordon Relief expedition, which he had partially financed, into Sudan.[54]

Luckhurst observes that ancient Egyptian culture has very little concept of the curse and that no sense of a curse is likewise evident in the early Napoleonic accounts of Egyptian discoveries.[55] Day traces the origins of the myth to Arabic lore in which '*Jinn* spirits were believed to guard the treasures in Egyptian tombs' and tomb paintings were thought to depict mummies coming back to life, and shows that Western culture had been exposed to these beliefs via the medieval *mumia* trade.[56] So the question arises as to why the myth should gain such currency in late nineteenth century Western popular culture. Day attributes the cause to a societal guilt at the practice of tomb despoliation by European archaeologists, viewing it as a justificatory manipulation of ancient Egyptian culture in the interests of the dominant Western scientific discourse.[57] More specifically, Luckhurst's genealogy clearly demonstrates the relationship between the curse rumour

[54] For an extended treatment of the development and significance of these rumours, see Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse: The True History*, chap.s 2 & 3.
[55] Luckhurst, 'The Mummy's Curse: A Genealogy', p. 131.
[56] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, pp. 3, 45. *Mumia* was powder made from ground up mummies and used for medicinal purposes, its popularity resulting in the appropriation and sale of mummies to Europe from the Middle Ages on.
[57] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, pp. 2-4.

and the post-occupation politics of the Egyptian Question.[58] But the presence of the vengeance theme in the tales of the 1860s suggests that its initial impetus was the geopolitical upheaval occasioned by the advent of the Suez Canal, albeit one that greatly increased following the occupation. This allows a link to be fashioned between the opening of the canal and the genesis of the gothic subgenre of supernatural Egyptian invasion. Applying the general perspective of this study to the question reveals a proximity between the rationale of the curse myth and the invasion tale, both turning upon fear of revenge for interference in foreign places following the perpetrator home. And if the literary curse is read as another cultural expression of invasion anxiety this suggests a further reason for its prevalence at the end of the nineteenth century

As a form, the gothic with its emphasis on transgression and retribution was ideally suited to the transmission of the mummy's curse myth, and though Luckhurst's primary concern is with the curse as rumour he observes that within the gothic literary revival, by the 1890s: 'This form of colonisation in reverse, finding Egyptian monstrosity at the imperial centre, had become typicalised'.[59] In many of these tales the vengeful supernatural Egyptian invader takes the form of the revivified mummy. This is not always the case, though, and representations of intrusive Egyptian alterity vary. In *Pharos The Egyptian* it is unclear as to whether the murderous high-priest is a re-awoken mummy, a reincarnation or a cursed immortal; and the villain of the most popular supernatural Egyptian tale, *The Beetle*, is one of the most loosely defined creatures in the fin-de-siècle gothic – not a mummy, but rather some kind of demonic scarab incarnation. 'The Story of Baelbrow' features a curious hybrid – a vampiric English ghost which possesses an Egyptian mummy in order to wreak vengeance.[60] And Doyle's 'Lot No. 249' features the form that would become iconic in twentieth century cinema, the

[58] The relationship between the mummy's curse rumour and the political context of the intensification of British colonial activity in Africa in the late nineteenth century receives a more extended treatment in Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse: The True History*. Reading the curse as a 'displaced account' of some of Britain's shocking setbacks in its African campaigns, especially in Sudan, Luckhurst argues that 'the vengeance of the mummy might have had less to do with powers imputed to the Ancient Egyptians and much more with the contemporary geopolitics of North African resistance to British imperialism' (80-1).
[59] Luckhurst, 'The Mummy's Curse: A Genealogy', p. 130.
[60] First published under the pseudonym E. and H. Heron, *Pearson's Monthly Magazine*, 5 (April 1898), pp. 366–75.

reanimated, bandaged corpse – in this case wielded in a vendetta against unsuspecting Oxford University students, as depicted in fig. 3.[61]



Fig. 3. 'Nearer yet sounded the clatter from behind.'
'Lot No. 249', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 85:508 (Sept 1892), p. 541.
Image courtesy of Cornell University Library, Making of America Digital Collection.

Despite the prevalence of the trope of the vengeful invader and its successful translation to the medium of film, many supernatural Egyptian tales included a less-enduring romantic element in which an encounter between a beautiful female mummy and some variety of imperial Englishman awakens an eternal but ultimately doomed passion. Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, H. D. Everett's *Iras: A Mystery* (1896) and,

[61] First published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 85:508 (Sept 1892), pp. 525-44.

less directly, Haggard's *She* are considered notable instances of what is referred to as the mummy romance. While it is not a widely-theorised body of work, much of the criticism that supernatural Egyptian fiction has attracted differentiates the mummy romance from the curse tale, subdividing the theme into two separate strands and focusing on the female mummy of the romance strand. Daly, in his interpretation of the fin-de-siècle mummy tale as a 'descriptive commodity theory', distinguishes between 'hostile mummies who revenge themselves on those who have disturbed their original resting places' and other narratives which exploit the erotic possibilities of mummies. He contends that the majority of fin-de-siècle mummy narratives fall into the latter romance category, which allows their reading as commodity objects.[62] Day holds that in the late nineteenth century 'romantic visions of mummies competed with sinister legends of curses' both of which narrative strands she relates to the escalating European archaeological exploitation of Egypt.[63]

Bradley Deane, like Daly, maintains that 'the typical mummy of Victorian and Edwardian fiction is a woman ... who, perfectly preserved in her youthful beauty, strongly attracts the libidinous attention of modern British men'.[64] He then draws an interesting analogy between the female mummy as an alluring, veiled oriental woman representative of Egypt and the unofficial status of Egypt as a 'veiled Protectorate' of Britain.[65] This is reflected in the strategies of suspense and irresolution that characterise mummy romance narratives which, he argues, turn upon problematizations of time leading to open-ended conclusions: 'it is precisely the eroticised suspense of mummy fiction that betrays its entanglement within the complicated aspirations of Victorian imperialism and, most particularly, within the political riddle posed by Egypt'.[66] Though Deane's socio-political analysis tends to overlook the implications of the trope of the curse and the vengeful invader, it is pertinent because in interpreting the mummy romance as the dominant fictional response to the Egyptian Question it foregrounds the

[62] Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle*, pp. 102, 109–10.
[63] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, pp. 8, 19,
[64] Bradley Deane, 'Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt: Imperial Striptease', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 51:4 (2008), p. 384; online at http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/english_literature_in_transition/v051/51.4.deane.html, 17 Dec 2008.
[65] 'Veiled Protectorate' was the term used to describe Egypt's relationship to Britain by Milner when undersecretary to Cromer, Egypt's British Consul and de facto ruler following the 1882 occupation.
[66] Deane, 'Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt', p. 385.

distinct connection between supernatural Egyptian fiction and Anglo-Egyptian politics, clearly demonstrating how concerns over this vital territory provoked a gothicized fictional response.

While claims for the predominance of the mummy romance might seem to challenge reading the vengeful supernatural invader as the embodiment of imperial paranoia concerning the Suez Canal, there are many reasons why this need not be the case. The most straightforward is that, as the following analysis of a significant amount of recently unearthed Egyptian fiction reveals, curse tales actually outnumber romances by a factor of about two to one. Though more of the tales feature female mummies, a significant proportion of these are unambiguous curse narratives with no suggestions of the female mummy as anything other than hostile and vengeful. These include 'Lost in a Pyramid' and even lesser-known tales such as 'The Egyptian Amulet' (1881) in which a cursed ring causes an American girl to be temporarily and adversely possessed by a female mummy; 'The Curse of Vasartas' (1889) in which a curse activated when a female mummy is brought to England has fatal consequences until the mummy is re-interred; and 'At the Pyramid of the Sacred Bulls' (1896) in which English looters who unwrap and revivify a female mummy are subsequently murdered by an Arab sheikh.[67] Moreover, of the tales that eroticise the female mummy, many additionally associate varying degrees of threat either directly or indirectly with the object of desire. This category includes *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, which turns upon the fatally cursed attempt of a team of English professionals to resurrect the Sorceress-Queen Tera and contains only the most indirect and problematic suggestions of romance, and *Iras: A Mystery* in which the romance between an English Egyptologist and the revivified princess Iras is doomed from the outset by a curse which pursues the ill-fated lovers across England; Haggard's *She* may also be placed tentatively in this category. Finally, in the very rare cases where any threat to the representatives of empire is largely absent, none of the romances ever produce satisfactory or sustainable unions. Doyle's 'The Ring of Thoth' (1890) is a classic instance of this type: filled with 'grief and horror', its atypically

[67] 'The Egyptian Amulet', *The London Reader*, 37:946 (June 1881), pp. 164–67; Eva M. Henry, 'The Curse of Vasartas', *Belgravia*, 69:276 (Oct 1889), pp. 1–13; and Charles J. Mansford, 'At the Pyramid of the Sacred Bulls', *The Windsor Magazine*, 3 (Jan 1896), pp. 386–91 (all accessed online at *British Periodicals Collection I*, see Bibliography for details).

unvengeful ancient priest Sosra wishes only for death to release him from 'ineffable despair' so he can rejoin his long-dead love whose mummy he has tracked to the Louvre.[68] Though still beautiful when initially unwrapped, the mummy is denied even temporary revivification by the relentlessly grim plot logic; instead the tale, suffused with a sense of the decline of Egyptian civilisation, ends in tragic mode with Sosra clasped in a death embrace with the now-corrupted mummy.

Taken together, these observations imply that rather than dividing supernatural Egyptian fiction into two separate strands, it should instead be considered a single body of work traversing a spectrum of sentiment about Egypt, ranging from fear to desire. While there are plenty of tales at one end of the spectrum that could be considered pure curse tales, none yet emerge that could be considered pure romances – even in the sense of merely holding out the sustained possibility of a positive outcome.[69] This prompts the suggestion that the curse trope, with its sense of inexorable doom, essentially underpins all of these tales from the violent revenges to the ill-fated romances, giving the genre a unifying structure, and relating it to the broader imperial anxieties about decline and fall. When the criticality of the Suez Canal to the British imperial project is applied to this analysis, it sheds further light on the late-nineteenth-century narrative fascination with intrusive ancient Egyptians, suggesting that the spectrum of representations can be interpreted as complementary responses to the potential consequences of Britain possessing the canal – great promise and grave peril. While political threats that could sever the imperial lifeline found expression in pure curse form, the allure of Egypt's

[68] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Ring of Thoth', *The Conan Doyle Stories* (Leicester: Galley Press, 1988), pp. 791, 786; first published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, 14 (Jan 1890).

[69] In addition to the four proto-curse tales listed earlier, what may be termed the pure curse tales published in England include *Pharos the Egyptian*, *The Beetle*, 'Lot No. 249', 'The Story of Baelbrow', 'Lost in a Pyramid', 'The Egyptian Amulet', 'The Curse of Vasartas', and 'At the Pyramid of the Sacred Bulls'. Other similar tales not covered here include Justin Huntly McCarthy, 'Professor Petrus', *Belgravia*, 54:216 (Oct 1884), pp. 67–84; Edwin Wooton, 'The Secret of Horeb-Ra-Men', *Idler*, 35:80 (May 1909), pp. 213–17; Hester White, 'The Dead Hand', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 297:2088 (Dec 1904), pp. 521–34; W. G. Peasgood, 'The Necklace of Dreams', *Pall Mall Magazine*, 45:204 (Apr 1910), pp. 645–54; Frederick Graves, 'The Dead Face', *Pall Mall Magazine*, 46:209 (Sept 1910), pp. 494–98 (all accessed online at *British Periodicals*). The ambiguous or doomed romances include *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, *Iras* and 'The Ring of Thoth', and also Grant Allen [as J. Arbuthnot Wilson], 'My New Year's Eve among the Mummies', *Belgravia*, 37:148 (Feb 1879), pp. 93–105; and H. Rider Haggard, 'Smith and the Pharaohs', *Strand Magazine*, 44:264–45:266 (Dec 1912–Feb 1913). The conventions of Egyptian fiction are also used in other genres such as Sax Rohmer's detective tale 'The Mysterious Mummy', *Pearson's Weekly* (Nov 1903) and C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne's satire 'The Mummy of Thompson-Pratt', *Atoms of Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1904).

ancient treasure, colonial resources, and strategic position circulated as the desirable but unachievable object of the mummy romance. Thus the vengeful supernatural invader suggests the imperial nightmare of barbarians at the gates, while the eroticised female mummy holds out the tantalising prospect of secure empire. In presenting this argument for a unified interpretation of supernatural Egyptian fiction, it is important to state, along the lines of Said's preamble to his postcolonial reading of *Mansfield Park*,[70] that it in no way precludes any other readings of mummy fiction. It claims not that supernatural Egyptian fiction emerged solely as a response to the geopolitics of empire, but rather views it as strongly implicated within the pressing imperial questions of the day.

The mummy's curse: a supernatural expression of invasion

Egypt's most successful invader: Boothby's Pharos the Egyptian

Advertised in *The Times* as Boothby's 'greatest novel' to date, 'weird, wonderful, and soul-thrilling', more than a century later *Pharos the Egyptian* has fallen even further into obscurity than the Nikola series, but as the most extreme instance of the curse tale it is a good place to begin analysis of the interplay between the fiction and the politics.[71] A preliminary survey of reviews of *Pharos the Egyptian* discloses a contemporary awareness of supernatural Egyptian fiction as a distinct body of texts, within which Boothby's novel was immediately located. In a somewhat disdainful review, the *Athenaeum*, for example, designates it one of 'these pseudo-Egyptian stories', and the *Academy* similarly observes that the link between ancient Egypt and modern England 'is of course a mummy' – confirming the then familiar role of this trope.[72] Turning to the text itself, a close reading will allow the constellation of concerns circulating in the subgenre of supernatural Egyptian fiction to emerge, revealing its place in the popular culture component of the fraught socio-political discourse surrounding the Suez Canal.

[70] See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. 95-115.
[71] 'Publications', *The Times*, 17 Mar 1899, p. 2.
[72] 'Historical Romances', *The Athenaeum*, 3726 (Mar 1899), p. 368; 'Fiction', rev. of Guy Boothby, *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899), *The Academy*, 1405 (Apr 1899), p. 407.

Representing imperial manhood in the novel is the enervated English artist, Cyril Forrester, who has 'always possessed a singular attraction' for 'the land of Egypt', of the kind that often proves fatal for the protagonists of Egyptian gothic tales.[73] As discussed in chapter one, as an aesthete, Forrester conforms to Nordau-derived definitions of the degenerate and is the archetypal Boothbian weak metropolitan type, and therefore an unpromising defender of empire against supernatural Egyptian infiltration. Confirmation of his lassitude is evident in the first visual depiction of Forrester which shows him indulging in an aimless bout of melancholy (fig. 4), and similar illustrations of an increasingly prostrated Forrester recur throughout the text.[74]



Fig. 4. 'I was stricken with a fit of the blues.'
Pharos the Egyptian, The Windsor Magazine, 8 (June 1898), p. 37.
Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

Over the course of the novel, Forrester falls ever deeper under the domination of the villain Pharos, and no strong colonial type capable of providing a challenge emerges, one of the factors which may suggest the perceived gravity of the Egyptian situation in the popular view.

[73] Guy Boothby, *Pharos the Egyptian* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1899), p. 23; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.
[74] This illustration was present only in *The Windsor Magazine* serial version of the novel; it was omitted from the book edition which contains only twelve of the more than thirty magazine illustrations.

In a naiveté that smacks of hubris, Forrester has implicated himself in Egyptian vengeance by foolhardily adorning his London studio with a noteworthy collection inherited from his father, 'the most eminent Egyptologist our century has seen' (10). 'It had been a fancy of mine when I first took the studio,' he whimsically muses, 'to have it decorated in the Egyptian fashion' (49). In this he is following the contemporary fashion for bedecking domestic interiors with the spoils of Egypt, Day observing that at the time, '[i]ntact mummies with coffins were regarded as scientific specimens or *objets d'art*'.[75] However, in the more-dubious, less-material realm of the Egyptian gothic, the disturbing fact of the mummy's real status as disinterred human remains appropriated from its native land is what is emphasised, and almost universally assigned a sinister significance. Thus, as Day puts it, '[c]haracters inadvertently import the supernatural Other-world into their home countries ... when they souvenir mummies or artefacts. Their safety zone is penetrated by a phallic Little Egypt...';[76] and Forrester's London home is no exception. This decorative intrusion of Egypt into domestic English space is a repeated trope, occurring also in Doyle's prior short story 'Lot No. 249', in which the extreme profusion of oriental curios and Egyptiana in Oxford student Edward Bellingham's chambers is reminiscent even of Nikola's den in Port Said. Chief of his 'thousand strange relics from Egypt and the East' is a mummy-case, out of which leers its 'horrid, black, withered' (and utterly unromantic) occupant, which is wielded by Bellingham to effect his vengeance throughout the tale.[77] Forrester's collection is similarly dominated by a magnificent mummy-case which is the immediate cause of the trouble in the novel. As per Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) and echoing the role of the Chinese in the Nikola series, its rightful owner – the seemingly modern-day Egyptian, Pharos – appears swiftly on its heels on Forrester's doorstep intent on regaining possession.

The admonition cited as epigraph to this chapter is what Forrester imagines the mummy-case's occupant might have thought upon finding himself displaced for decorative purposes to a nineteenth century London apartment. Read attentively, it is a

[75] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, p. 24.
[76] Ibid., p. 79.
[77] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'Lot No. 249' (1892), reprinted in Roger Luckhurst (ed.), *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2005), pp. 114-5; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text. It is interesting to mention, in light of the *Punch* cartoon shown earlier depicting Egypt as a monstrous, unruly crocodile, that Bellingham's collection also included 'a true son of the old Nile, a great hanging-jawed crocodile ... slung in a double noose' from the ceiling (114).

classic expression of the mummy's curse which contains all the underlying hallmarks of invasion anxiety. Firstly, the acknowledgement of colonial wrong-doing – in this case theft and sacrilege: 'your father stole me from the land of my birth, and from the resting place the gods decreed for me'; secondly, the threat of revenge: 'but beware, for retribution is pursuing you'; and finally, the notion of this vengeance penetrating to the heart of London: 'retribution ... is even now close upon your heels' (49). Approached from a postcolonial perspective, what is even more significant is that Forrester concludes this reflection with an allusion to the current state of Egypt: 'Cigar in hand, I stopped in my walk and looked at it [the mummy-case], thinking as I did so of the country from which it had hailed, and of the changes that had taken place in the world during the time it had lain in its Theban tomb' (49). Thus in one of the framing incidents of the text, the anticipated revenge for tomb-robbery is linked with the vastly altered condition of occupied modern Egypt, and the transformative effect of the Suez Canal upon the modern world indirectly suggested.

Predictably, the antagonist of the tale, Pharos, turns out to be the original occupant of the mummy-case, his vendetta against Forrester for defiling it emblematic of Egypt's wider grievance against European interference. Pharos's malevolence is clearly demarcated in the novel's opening scene, during which Forrester witnesses him revelling in the spectacle of a nocturnal suicide in the Thames. The incident unfolding by Cleopatra's Needle, an ancient Egyptian monument recently re-erected Thames-side in 1878, its very location is charged with an imperial significance. Although the obelisk was presented to the British government rather than appropriated by a colonial expedition, the reference to it is an early allusion to the displacement of ancient artefacts from Egypt to the imperial centre, and more generally evokes the transfer of Egyptian power and wealth to British control. The hostile Egyptian alterity of the Pharos character is reinforced in an early illustration in which he looms menacingly at Forrester from behind the mummy-case, the shadow blurring the division between the ancient and the modern, between his form and its (fig. 5).

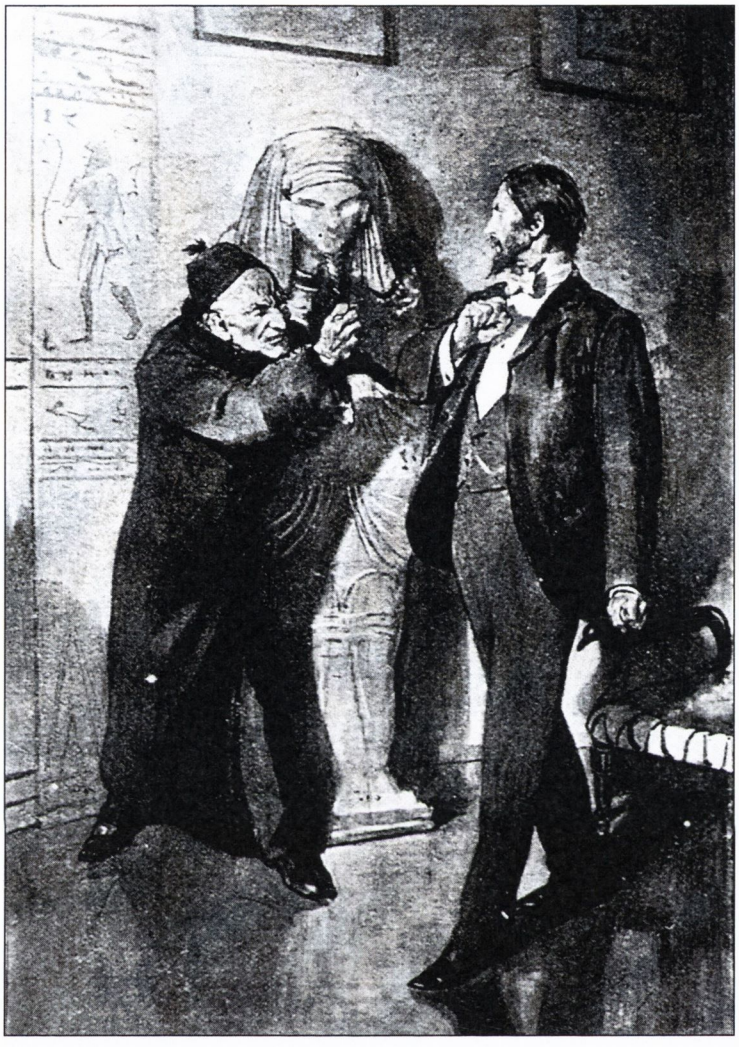


Fig. 5. 'I instinctively recoiled from him in horror.'
Pharos the Egyptian (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1899), p. 56.
Image from the author's collection.

This is in opposition to the clear distinction drawn between Forrester in his conventional English evening dress and Pharos in his oriental attire. And this divide is echoed in the juxtaposition of the mummy-case with the traditional *chaise longue*, the presence of which emphasises the incongruity of placing ancient Egyptian burial artefacts within the borders of modern English domesticity.

In his original incarnation, Pharos was Ptahmes, high priest to the Pharaoh of the Exodus whose opposition to Moses caused the plague that annihilated Egypt's first-born males. Once again the *Athenaeum* reviewer, in confirmation of the prevalence of the trope, remarks that these Egyptian stories 'always include that date' [i.e. the date of the

biblical Exodus].[78] This biblical motivation for Egyptian revenge upon Western Christianity foreshadows the colonial revenge theme and is signalled early in a description of Forrester's academy painting of '*Merenptah*, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, learning from the magicians the effect of his obstinacy in the death of his first-born son' (23). For his role as Merenptah's adviser, Pharos was cursed by the Egyptian gods with eternal life and despatched at the end of the nineteenth century to punish the despoilers of modern Egypt, as he warns Forrester:

> 'Thy father, was it, wretched man, ... who stole this body from its resting-place? ... who broke the seals [of] the gods...? If that be so, then may the punishment decreed against those guilty of the sin of sacrilege be visited on thee and thine for evermore.' Then, turning to the mummy, he continued, as if to himself, '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. It is decreed, and none shall stay the sword!' (56)

In this extended passage, the anger directed against the actions of the individual Egyptologist transitions seamlessly into a vehement denunciation of the subjugated condition of modern Egypt and an intimation that retribution will take place on a national rather than personal scale. Within this condemnation also is an elegiac sense of the fall of ancient Egyptian civilisation and the dangers attendant on imperial decline.

While the vendettas of the master criminal Nikola were personal and directed at specific members of the British establishment, Pharos's mission turns out to be nothing less than the genocide of the European races, and most specifically the British. Thus he starts a cataclysm in Egypt which spreads out westwards through Turkey to engulf imperial Europe and, ultimately, insular Britain. Unlike the yellow peril masterminds of chapter three, Pharos needs no barbarian hordes to effect his plan, merely the hapless Forrester. Exploiting Forrester's weakness of character and affection for his beautiful ward Valerie, shown below in fig. 6 under his mesmeric control, Pharos lures Forrester to Egypt with promises of seeing the ancient sites.

[78] 'Historical Romances', p. 368.



Fig. 6. "'I see death," said the voice. "Death on every hand."'
Pharos the Egyptian (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1899), p. 146.
Image from the author's collection.

Boothby's account of this Egyptian trip not only provides a flawless reproduction of unoriginal orientalist assumptions about the country, but also follows the course of the classic nineteenth century tourist route through Egypt, including the mandatory steamship cruise up the Nile from Cairo to Luxor. It also includes an incident, very similar to those in the short periodical tales of tomb-robbery like 'Lost in a Pyramid', in which Forrester finds himself nearly entombed in the great pyramid at Giza.[79] Though he does not appropriate any artefacts, the damage already being done by his Egyptologist father, it is here that Pharos infects him with a virulent plague that will devastate Europe. The insistent recurrence of the 'lost in a pyramid' episode followed by the unleashing of a curse in these tales can be read metaphorically as indicative of the anxiety surrounding Britain's entanglement in Egypt and the dangers attendant upon extricating itself peacefully and securely from it. In Boothby's scenario the dangers are extreme as Forrester on his return journey unwittingly spreads the plague westwards through Europe,

[79] Forrester's account of the ancient Egyptian sites accords closely with Steevens's journalistic account in *Egypt in 1898*, with which Boothby's text is compared later – even down to observations concerning bats and tomb-robbery.

leaving 'millions' dead in his wake (27). The illustration in fig. 6, captioned 'I see death ... on every hand', shows Valerie in a hypnotic, prescient trance that confirms the impending success of Pharos's mission, revealing the extent of the coming pestilence to her. Just as the Suez Canal facilitated the transportation of imperial goods to Britain, it was also feared to be a potential vector for oriental disease, with quarantine facilities installed in Port Said 'to prevent the introduction of any epidemic disease whatever through Egypt and the canal ... on the Mediterranean littoral and in Europe generally.'[80] Cholera outbreaks, for example, were frequent in Egypt, their disruption of tourism warranting comment in the British papers, and Boothby utilises these contemporary concerns to arm his Egyptian invader.[81]

On reaching England, the ultimate target of his revenge mission (323), Pharos escorts Forrester on a comprehensive tour of London society, high and low, simultaneously exposing its decadence and ensuring the maximum spread of disease. Starting at the 'Antiquarian club' amongst what to Forrester's eyes is 'as fine a collection of well-born, well-dressed, and well-mannered men as could be found in London' (327), Pharos, from his explicitly-stated Egyptian perspective (331), denounces it as 'one side of the luxury and extravagance which is fast drawing this great city to its doom,' revealing the true parasitic nature of these outwardly respectable citizens (327-9). Pharos continues to expose hypocrisy in a number of high society venues including the House of Commons, the members of which were engaged in petty squabbling 'in the face of a grave national peril' (333) and a fancy dress ball at Covent Garden, which Forrester, beginning to succumb to Pharos's marginal viewpoint, can only liken to Dante's Inferno (336). From here Pharos drags Forrester through the city's lowest quarters including the notorious 'Seven Dials' rookery and 'the most typical thieves' gambling hell in London' (339), where he witnesses drunkenness, criminality and violence cheek-by-jowl with homelessness and hunger. Overall the experience leaves Forrester 'sick to the heart ... at the sorrow and the sin of London' (340). This chapter-long denunciation of imperial society functions not only as a justification for Pharos's counter-colonial revenge attack, but also as an admonition to its members about their increasing lack of fitness to uphold

[80] 'Egypt of Today', *The Windsor Magazine*, 5 (Dec 1896), p. 622.
[81] See, for example, reports on an 1895 outbreak in the *African Review*, 6 (Jul–Dec 1895), pp. 665, 722, 822, 907.

the empire. When Forrester eventually realises his own and Pharos's part in devastating Europe, Pharos confronted explicitly cites colonial theft as the cause: 'For I tell thee assuredly that the plague which is now destroying Europe was decreed by the gods of Egypt against such nations as have committed the sin of sacrilege' (356). This reiterated rebuke permeates the text, signalling the thematic proximity between ancient supernatural vengeance and modern Anglo-Egyptian colonial relations, and the examination of the specific implications of Pharos's Egyptian ethnicity in the next section elucidates this further.

In many key aspects, Pharos is significantly comparable to Marsh's forerunning supernatural Egyptian invader, the 'liminal man-woman-goddess-beetle-Thing' of then-bestseller *The Beetle*,[82] which is highly likely to have influenced Boothby.[83] The Beetle creature is likewise obsessed with revenge as it warns in a melodramatic, if somewhat inarticulate, manner that recalls Pharos's admonitions: 'But the avenger follows after, lurking in the shadows... waiting, watching, till his time shall come. And it shall come! – the day of the avenger!'[84] Both characters are also extreme instances of the degenerate of fin-de-siècle pseudo-science, which is one facet of the invasion threat they present and worth considering as a prelude to delving into the specific implications of their Egyptian-ness. The physical descriptions of each Egyptian invader conform closely and are highly comparable in their overdetermination of the subject's degeneracy. Here is the introduction to Pharos, a far cry from the debonair Nikola, but a classic Boothbian combination of colonial invader and degenerate monstrosity (see fig.s 5, 6 & 8):

> His height was considerably below the average, his skull was as small as his shoulders were broad. But it was not his stature, his shoulders, or the size of the head which caused the curious effect I have elsewhere described. It was his eyes,

[82] Roger Luckhurst, 'Trance-Gothic, 1882-97', in Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (ed.s), *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century* (Hampshire, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 160.

[83] The first edition of *The Beetle* appeared in late September or early October 1897, most likely before Boothby started plotting his Egyptian novel (see 'The political framework of the curse' section of this chapter). The prior serialisation, *The Peril of Paul Lessingham: The Story of a Haunted Man*, ran in *Answers* magazine from March to June of 1897. For details of *The Beetle*'s publication history, see Minna Vuohelainen, 'Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897): a late-Victorian popular novel', *Working With English: Medieval and Modern Language, Literature and Drama*, 2.1: Literary Fads and Fashions (2006), pp. 89-100.

[84] Richard Marsh, *The Beetle: A Mystery* (1897; Ontario: Broadview, 2004), p. 64; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

> the shape of his face, the multitudinous wrinkles that lined it, and, above all, the extraordinary colour of his skin, that rendered his appearance so repulsive … think first of old ivory, and then endeavour to realize what the complexion of a corpse would be like after lying in an hermetically sealed tomb for many years. Blend the two, and you will have some dim notion of the idea I am trying to convey. His eyes were small, deeply sunken, and in repose apparently devoid of light and even of life. (28)

While Forrester's degeneracy had been subtly, perhaps unthinkingly, drawn, Pharos's is blatant, so multi-faceted that it produces no coherent mental image. Comparably, the 'supernaturally ugly' Beetle creature is introduced thusly:

> There was not a hair upon his face or head, but, to make up for it, the skin, which was a saffron-yellow, was an amazing mass of wrinkles. The cranium … was so small as to be disagreeably suggestive of something animal. The nose … was abnormally large … The mouth, with its blubber lips, came immediately underneath the nose, and chin … there was none. This deformity … it was which gave the face the appearance of something not human, – that, and the eyes. For so marked a feature of the man were his eyes, that, ere long, it seemed to me he was nothing but eyes. (53)

The only contemporary illustration of the Beetle creature discloses the illustrator's failure to render a convincing visual depiction of this ludicrous monstrosity (fig. 7).[85]

[85] The first edition of *The Beetle* contained four illustrations, of which only this one attempted to depict the Beetle creature. The prior serialisation in *Answers* magazine was un-illustrated. See Vuohelainen, 'Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*', pp. 92-3.



Fig. 7. 'For when it said, "Keep still!" I kept still.' Frontispiece,
The Beetle (London: Skeffington, 1901, 8th edn; identical to the 1st edition of 1897).
Image from the collection of Minna Vuohelainen.

Grossly exaggerated descriptions such as these abound in the fin-de-siècle gothic and, as Kelly Hurley has shown, are underpinned by the idea of the 'criminal type' emergent in Victorian criminology and degeneration theory as documented by theorists like the influential Italian Cesare Lombroso and his English translator Havelock Ellis.[86] The criminal and degenerate implications of attributes such as the malformed heads; the 'small, deeply sunken' eyes and disproportionately large shoulders of Pharos; and the beaklike nose, 'blubber lips' and chinless-ness of the Beetle, would have been instantly

[86] For a list of the most common criminal attributes see Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 93. She also observes that Lombroso's works were accessible to the 1890s British reading public, p. 182.

recognisable to the contemporary reader.[87] Contrast these descriptions, for example, with Boothby's tritely approving account of Forrester's appraisal of the character of an English police inspector: '... I remarked, making a mental note as I spoke of the man's character as I read it in his large, honest eyes, well-shaped nose, and square, determined-looking chin' (64). The physiognomic logic is relentless: a man's moral character is written plainly in his physical conformation – the greater the deviancy from Victorian norms, the greater the threat to Victorian society. Taken as a whole Boothby's disturbing portrayal of both British protagonist and foreign invader as degenerate is a classic moment of Arata's reverse colonisation anxiety, the fear that the effete metropolitan population will be unable to prevent the onslaught of the atavistic colonial invader – a fear which proved well founded in the case of Pharos. This scenario is replicated in *The Beetle* in the scene illustrated in fig. 7, which shows Robert Holt, the down-and-out clerk who is the first victim of the Beetle and a character of comparable ineptitude to Forrester, under the complete thrall of the creature's 'dreadful eyes' (57).

The same physiognomic prejudice is also at work in Doyle's 'Lot No. 249', in which the hallmarks of monstrous degeneracy are inscribed upon both the mummy and its orientalist master Bellingham; so great is Bellingham's repellent physical abnormality that the manly protagonist Abercrombie Smith concludes 'he had never seen nature's danger signals flying so plainly upon a man's countenance' (115). And this reads almost exactly like an account of the malevolent power of the Beetle's eyes: 'More obvious danger signals never yet were placed in a creature's head' (141). After Bellingham's hostile agency has been revealed, Smith likens his 'fat, evil face' to 'some bloated spider fresh from the weaving of his poisonous web' (131), a description also evocative of the account of Moriarty's criminal degeneracy in 'The Final Problem' (1893) (discussed in chapter one). Far from functioning in any way as objects of desire, Bellingham and his mummy, and Pharos and the Beetle creature are so repugnant that their very corporeal presence provokes a physical reaction of disgust and even nausea in those around them, well captured in Boothby's novel by the illustration in fig. 8. Once again a clear distinction is drawn between the freakish Pharos and normal London society as his fellow

[87] Julian Wolfreys makes this point regarding the Beetle's physical attributes, intro. to Richard Marsh, *The Beetle* (1897; Ontario: Broadview, 2004), p. 17.

gallery-goers recoil from in him disgust, mutually constructing a quarantine zone between his person and theirs. And this significant illustration, which so insistently differentiates Pharos and depicts degenerate monstrosity at the very heart of fashionable London society, was chosen as the novel's frontispiece.



Fig. 8. 'The polite crowd drew away from him.'
Frontispiece, *Pharos the Egyptian* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1899).
Image from the author's collection.

Speaking of his experience of this encounter, the ever-susceptible Forrester confesses: 'I became conscious of a curious sensation … accompanied by a lowering of the pulse that was quite perceptible, followed by an extraordinary feeling of nausea. … The room and its occupants began to swim before me. I tottered, and at length, being unable any longer to support myself, sat down on the seat behind me' (35). Similarly, Holt experiences 'a sense of shrinking, horror, nausea, rendering me … helpless,' on

stumbling upon the Beetle creature (51) (fig. 7). Hurley observes that the nauseating effect is common in what she terms the abhuman monsters of the fin-de-siècle gothic, and further that the subject is itself 'compromised by its confrontation with the disgusting object, drawn into the field of its Thing-ness',[88] or bodily invaded by it so to speak. Indeed, elaborating on the 'agony' of his 'invertebrate' 'passivity' in the presence of the creature, Holt refers to its perusal of him as an 'invasion' (51-2). This contamination seems to be what the alarmed metropolitans depicted in fig. 8 are trying to avoid – as Forrester confirms: 'I was not the only one who came within the sphere of his [Pharos's] influence. Indeed, it was strange to notice the manner in which the polite crowd drew away from him... Had he been a snake, they could scarcely have shown a more unanimous desire to withdraw from his neighbourhood' (36). In that other classic of 1890s gothic, Count Dracula's physical proximity likewise produces 'a horrible feeling of nausea' in the relatively inept protagonist of Stoker's tale, Jonathan Harker, the effect quickly following a comparable if slightly more nuanced description of the Transylvanian antagonist's 'very marked physiognomy'.[89] This personal, physical invasion is comparable to the intimate, mental invasion experienced by the victims of mesmerism, an ability uniting Pharos, the Beetle, Dracula and Nikola, and a broad spectrum of fin-de-siècle foreign villains, natural and supernatural, as explored in chapter one. In these representations of degenerate foreign fin-de-siècle monsters proffered by marginal and colonial authors, a kind of colonial abject can be seen at work, centring on an invasiveness that is both sexually and politically charged.

The threatening connotations of Egyptian ethnicity

Underpinning the extreme degeneracy of Pharos and the Egyptian invaders, is, of course, their non-Englishness. On the one hand, their degenerate alterity is suggestive of the supposed atavistic savagery of the most primitive races, whose traits were considered to include a marked predilection for vengeance.[90] Ellis, for instance, in delineating the 'atavistic anatomical peculiarities' of the 'criminal type' in *The Criminal* (1890) repeatedly observes that they are shared by 'the lowest human races' among which he

[88] Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, p. 45.
[89] Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, (1897; London: Penguin, 2003), p. 24-5.
[90] Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, p. 95.

numbers those 'in Africa ... the indigenous fellaheen, Berbers, and negroes of the Soudan'.[91] Immediate neighbour to Sudan, Egypt had a multiracial society which included significant numbers of each of the aforementioned groups, so that the degeneracy of the Egyptian supernatural invaders additionally evoked fears and prejudices concerning the races of North Africa, something of which seems to be captured in the illustration of the Beetle creature in fig. 7. On the other hand, as the previous chapter sets out, like the rest of their villainous fin-de-siècle cohort, they are not coincidentally un-English – they are specifically orientalised to set them apart from English society and heighten the terror they engender. And, as noted, the late nineteenth century convergence between orientalist discourse and degeneration theory meant that the two conditions were mutually implicated. However, unlike Nikola, Pharos and the Beetle are not generically oriental, they share a specifically Egyptian identity which had significant implications of its own. Thus, in addition to the negative traits – such as slyness, treachery, and cruelty – conferred by the general condition of being oriental, they additionally connote the related threats of hostile Islamic alterity and Egyptian nationalism, to which we now turn.

Pervasive as it was, degeneration theory also informed the Victorian characterisation of modern Egyptian society. Greatly though the ancient civilisation was esteemed, contemporary Egyptians, while avoiding the bottom of the nineteenth century racial hierarchy, were despised, as Said puts it, as the 'degraded remnants of a former greatness'.[92] They were deemed the fallen offspring of their pharaonic forebears; a view which comes across strongly in Pharos's earlier cited lament. Steevens in 1898, echoing the established traveller perspective, speaks dismissively of 'squalid, modern Egypt', 'after all the aeons of [its] wonderful history' now inhabited by 'the debased and parasitic Egyptian who cringes for backsheesh'.[93] Timothy Mitchell, exposing the relentless stereotyping of modern Egyptians as backward and indolent, observes that Islam was specifically implicated in this indictment of the national character – to the extent that it was commonly believed that Egypt's conversion to Islam had precipitated its poor

[91] Havelock Ellis, *The Criminal* (New York: Scribner & Welford, 1890), pp. 208, 26, 69; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/criminal00elli, 16 Apr 2013.
[92] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 233.
[93] Steevens, *Egypt in 1898*, pp. 226, 276–77.

modern condition.[94] Such views had pertained since Napoleon's expedition and been crystallised in Britain by pioneering orientalist and traveller-in-disguise, Edward Lane, in the canonical *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836). This, though far from hostile to its subject, nonetheless documented the retrograde state of Egypt's contemporary Islamic inhabitants in mind-boggling detail. Lane unambiguously attributes the ills of modern Egypt and its inhabitants largely to Islam, in conjunction with the climate and despotic government.[95] He specifically blames 'their superstitions ..... for many of [their] faults' of character, asserting that these derive in a large part from their religion.[96]

While popular conceptions of modern Egyptian degeneracy may seem to have little bearing upon fictional narratives that outwardly turn upon the threat of ancient supernatural menaces, a closer look reveals that Pharos, the Beetle and many of their fictional counterparts can be interpreted as modern Islamic Egyptians also. And this interpretation is crucial to understanding the relationship between the supernatural Egyptian invasion tale and Anglo-Egyptian colonial politics. When Pharos is seen in the guise of a modern Egyptian Muslim, the link between the curse trope and invasion anxiety is elucidated and the full implications of Pharos's destructive agency emerge. This is because, in addition to the traditional hostility between Christianity and Islam, a significant connotation of the late-nineteenth-century Islamic Egyptian identity was that of nationalism, which was posing a progressive threat to British control of Egypt and the Suez Canal. From the Urabi revolt onward, Egyptian nationalist interests gradually coalesced and began to organise, ultimately producing the postwar Revolution of 1919

[94] Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, pp. 106, 112. He further observes that this pervasive stereotyping was internalised by the Egyptians themselves, especially those educated in Europe, even the nationalists. The nationalist leader Mustafa Kamil, for example, believed that the flaws of the Egyptian character were what allowed the occupation to continue (109).

[95] Edward W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians: Written in Egypt during the years 1833-1835* (1836; London, New York & Melbourne: Ward, Lock & Co, 1890, reprinted from the 3rd edn, 1842), p. 255; online at *Travellers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA)*, http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9176, 13 Oct 2009.

[96] Ibid., 202. 'The Arabs are a very superstitious people,' Lane intones knowingly, 'and none of them are more so than those of Egypt' (203). He considers their superstitions so crucial to a full understanding of the character of modern Egyptians that he devotes two chapters to their elaboration. Most prominent are the superstitions concerning the *Ginn*, a class of supernatural beings intermediate between men and angels, the evil branch of which may be called *efreets* and are 'very powerful and always malicious' (204). The modern Egyptian belief that the ancient tombs are inhabited by efreets (207) provides another lens for viewing tomb occupants such as Pharos.

which achieved a degree of autonomy for Egypt. While many histories downplay the impact of nationalism between 1882 and 1914, this is not a complete representation, and Hobsbawm observes that though this period seemed quiet, Egypt was never reconciled to British occupation; like Brendon he highlights the joint threats of Irish, Egyptian and Indian nationalism to empire, all emerging in this period.[97] Though Urabi was swiftly and decisively defeated, it took a further decade for Cromer's regime to subdue provincial resistance,[98] and contemporary British observers feared the lasting consequences of the revolt. Lord Randolph Churchill held that Urabi 'was the leader of a nation, the exponent of nation's woes, and that the military rebellion was the desperate struggle of a race'.[99] Gordon, whose fate was to become inextricably linked to Egyptian affairs, warned that 'Arabi ... will live for centuries in the people; they will never be "your obedient servants" again'.[100] Popular novelist Hall Caine writing in 1909 of Egyptian sentiment notes 'the fires of disaffection that had smouldered in their midst for years'.[101]

On what basis, then, can Boothby's villain be read as a disaffected modern Egyptian? Post-occupation, visiting Egyptian nobility were not uncommon in fashionable London society, glamorous if not fully acceptable, and certainly this is the guise in which Pharos is presented and accepted by Forrester in his early appearances. Steevens, musing on the various racial groups of modern Egypt, observes some who are 'chocolate, round-cheeked, small featured, genuine Egyptian mummy', a type which matches well enough with the textual and illustrative accounts of Pharos.[102] As these accounts also reveal, in English company it is not only Pharos's physical difference that makes him stand out – his attire is highly distinctive and markedly Eastern. Early descriptions have Pharos perversely sporting 'a fur coat and a peculiar cap in the height of the Season', beneath which he further 'disdained the orthodox style of dress, [and] wore a black velvet coat, closely buttoned beneath his chin, and upon his head a skull cap of the same material'

---

[97] Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*, p. 287. See also Niall Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 103-17.
[98] Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, p. 156.
[99] Cited in Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 168.
[100] In a letter of 3 Aug 1882 to Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, a vocal anti-imperialist opposed to Britain's interference in Egypt. Cited in Blunt's *A Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (1907; New York: Alfred Knopf, 1922), p. 325.
[101] Hall Caine, *The White Prophet* (London: Heinemann, 1909), p. 5.
[102] Steevens, *Egypt in 1898*, pp. 39-40.

(41-2). Close variations of these descriptions recur at every early encounter with Pharos in London, and they are faithfully reproduced throughout the novel by the illustrator, who never depicts Pharos in any other garb. As the items described bear no resemblance to the dress of ancient Egypt, what this emphasis on Pharos's dress in fact denotes is the modern oriental status of the wearer.

The most striking article, visually and textually, is the 'curious description of cap' (28), its significance evidenced by repeated textual references, which are typically modified by adjectives reinforcing its unorthodoxy, such as 'peculiar', or 'curious'. Though never explicitly stated, this black velvet skull cap bears a resemblance to the Muslim prayer cap known as the *taqiyah* and functions to distance Pharos from ancient Egypt and associate him with the religion of Egypt's modern citizens. This implication was not lost on the illustrator, who has taken the liberty of adding a tassel (never mentioned in the text) to the cap which makes it also suggestive of a Turkish *fez*.[103] As a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt had a Turko-Egyptian ruling class who were distinguished by the wearing of the *tarboosh* – the Egyptian version of the fez – as distinct from the turban, the more usual headwear of Egypt's other Islamic groups.[104] This additional decoration would undoubtedly have reinforced the connection between Pharos and modern Egyptians even more closely for Boothby's readers: in contemporary *Punch* cartoons, for example, the Khedive, often employed as a personification of Egypt, is largely identifiable by his tarboosh (see fig. 9). The high-buttoned collar of the Khedive's coat is also comparable to that described on Pharos's black velvet coat. Visually, this cartoon lampooning the poor hospitality afforded on Khedive Ismail's 1867 visit to London, also subtly makes the same differentiation between the superior orthodoxy of the British establishment and the inferior exoticism of the Egyptian as does the illustration of Pharos amongst the exhibition-goers.

[103] It is important to point out that Pharos's cap neither resembles exactly nor was likely to have been intended to exactly resemble either a *taqiyah* or a *fez*. Instead it reflects the author's and illustrator's popular-cultural conceptions of what contemporary Egyptian headwear might look like.

[104] See Lane's *Manners and Customs* for highly detailed portraits of the attire worn by the various Egyptian social and racial groups. The dress of the ruling Turkish class is also noted by Steevens in *Egypt in 1898*, pp. 37, 58.



Fig. 9. 'Government Hospitality.'
Punch, 53 (13 July 1867), p. 15.

Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.



Fig. 10. 'A "Capital" Sentence!'
Punch, 83 (16 Dec 1882), p. 282.

Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

An additional connotation of the fez or tarboosh may have been that of colonial troops since many North African brigades, including the Egyptian army, had adopted it as their official headgear by the late nineteenth century. Brendon, for instance, mentions the booing of Cypriot troops during the 1897 Jubilee parades because the crowd were under the misapprehension that their fezzes implied Turkish nationality.[105] While the Egyptian army by the 1890s was well under the control of its Sirdar (Commander), General Horatio Kitchener, in the 1880s it had formed the backbone of the Urabi uprising. The rebel Urabi himself was typically depicted in his fez and uniform, as in the *Punch* cartoon lampooning the relative leniency of his sentence to exile rather than execution (fig. 10).

[105] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 209.

The tarboosh-like qualities of Pharos's cap are quite apparent in the illustration of Forrester's ordeal in Egypt (fig. 11) where Pharos's modern dress stands out sharply against the monuments of ancient Egypt.



Fig. 11. '"Drink," he said.'
Pharos the Egyptian (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1899), p. 180.
Image from the author's collection.

Again contrasting with the looming presence of the Sphinx in the background, Forrester's captors in this illustration represent some of the different ethnic groups of modern Islamic Egypt, including what appear to be turbaned Sudanese and burnoose-garbed Bedouins. This impression is confirmed by Pharos habitually issuing instructions to these

subordinates in Arabic and Forrester's observation of the great 'respect felt for Pharos by such Arabs as he was brought in contact with' (188). Further illustrations of Forrester's captivity reinforce the modern Islamic character of the native Egyptians, as can be seen in fig. 12, which discloses no visible connection with ancient Egypt bar the putative hieroglyphics on the background pillars.



Fig. 12. 'I lost all care for my safety.'
Pharos the Egyptian (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1899), p. 218.
Image from the author's collection.

In this way, despite his proclaimed ancient origins, Pharos is insistently presented as one of and closely associated with Egypt's modern citizens. He is never represented, textually

or visually, in any other than modern dress, even when he returns to the sites of Egypt's ancient civilisation. The illustrations also insistently depict the increasing helplessness of the imperial Englishman, Forrester, at the hands of this motley Egyptian crew. Far from reinforcing the imperialist ideal of doughty Britons in full command of the natives, the clear inversion of the roles implies the paranoia concerning the Egyptian Question.

The antagonist of *The Beetle* is equally open to interpretation as a modern Egyptian. Though (as is much discussed) most aspects of its identity are unstable – its gender, its sexuality, its very humanity – once ascertained, its Egyptian ethnicity remains constant throughout the text. In Holt's first encounter with this vicissitudinous entity, though he 'could not have positively' identified such a basic attribute as its gender, he can confidently assert, 'I had no doubt it was a foreigner' (52). This generic alterity is narrowed down by the text's second narrator, Sydney Atherton, a self-assured gentleman scientist. Honing in on the creature's burnoose (or hooded cloak) he first identifies it as an 'Arab of the Soudan' (103), and more pejoratively, as an 'unbaptised Mohammedan' (107). The first explicit connection with Egypt is the Beetle's stated adherence to the 'children of Isis' cult (106), which evokes ancient Egyptian civilisation.[106] But this is immediately qualified by speculation as to whether the cult persists in contemporary Egypt (111-4) and by Atherton's persistent designation of the Beetle as 'Arabian' (117), and more tellingly as 'Egypto-Arabian' (138), thus firmly linking it with modern Islamic Egyptians. Perhaps arising out of the Victorian scientific drive to subdivide and classify the natural world, Atherton evinces a persistent concern to exactly determine the Beetle's ethnicity: following the definite statement that '[t]he fellow was oriental to the finger-tips', he further speculates as to whether he was 'an Arab', 'a fellah', or 'a Mohammedan' (140). While Atherton is ultimately unconvinced it belongs to any of the above categories, their enumeration further reinforces the Beetle's links with the ethnic groups of modern Egypt. Similarly, Bellingham, the antagonist of 'Lot No. 249', though an Englishman, is comparably implicated with modern Egyptian ethnic groups. A 'demon' at Eastern languages, he is as comfortable beyond the navigable reaches of the

[106] It is worth noting here that the vengeful Ayesha of Haggard's *She* was also a devotee of Isis, and her crusade against the Vinceys also derived from a slight to the goddess.

Nile with 'the Arabs as if he had been born and nursed and weaned among them,' speaking Coptic, Hebrew and Arabic with equal fluency (111).

The minor characters encountered in pursuit of the creature throughout *The Beetle* tend to take it unproblematically at face value as Arab – from the cabby: 'a Arab bloke'; to the constabulary who know him locally as 'the Arab'; to various railway staff who identify him as 'Arab', to the aspirating residents of the East End: 'a Harab'.[107] Of all those who come across the Beetle, the landlady's response is highly representative: she gives a disgusted account of 'Mr. Arab' attired in 'one of them dirty-coloured bed-cover sort of things ... wrapped all over his head and round his body, like ... them there Arabs wear' (273). She further produces a letter obtained from the creature signed 'Mohamed el Kheir' (272), an obviously Muslim name with no connotations of ancient Egypt. The fourth narrator of the text, the detective Augustus Champnell, shares Atherton's preoccupation with exactly pinning down the Beetle's ethnicity. Though he repeatedly refers to the Beetle as an Arab (284, 285, 287, 313), he eventually concludes that the creature was 'probably no more Arab' than he was, and 'certainly not Mohamed el Kheir' (298). But, while he and Atherton fail to assign the Beetle to a specific Egyptian category – fellahin, Arab, etc., they never question its Egyptian origins. And reading the text against the grain suggests that the concern each shows with placing the creature in the modern Egyptian racial context and the repeated presumption of its Egyptian-Arabian ethnicity, allow it to be read implicitly as a modern Islamic Egyptian. Despite Marsh's attempts to create a mysterious ancient provenance for the Beetle, he continually reverts to assumptions about modern Islam to characterise it. These include attributing the 'evil eye' to it (141),[108] describing it 'salaaming' down to the ground (145), and referring to it as a 'fanatic' (107, 147), which pejorative was even then habitually applied to the adherents of Islam.[109]

Details of the threat posed by this fanatical Egyptian invader are regrettably not left to the imagination in Marsh's lurid narrative. Atherton's romantic rival for Marjorie Lindon,

[107] Textual references: the cabby: 'a Arab bloke' (263); the landlady: 'that Arab party' (274, 275, 276, 277, 279, 280); the police: 'the Arab' (281, 282, 299); the railway staff: 'the Arab' (287, 288, 290, 291, 310, 311, 313); Limehouse residents: 'a Harab' (299, 300, 301, 307, 308, 309).

[108] See Mitchell for an account of the significance of the power of the gaze, or the evil eye, in modern Muslim Egypt, *Colonising Egypt*, pp. 2, 100.

[109] In *The White Prophet*, Caine refers to the Sudanese Mahdist rebels as a 'horde of Allah-intoxicated fanatics', p. 5.

the heroine of the tale, is the rising Radical statesman, Paul Lessingham, who has the dubious honour of being the ostensible object of the Beetle's revenge in England. Differing from the typical curse narrative in that it has no tomb-violation rationale, Lessingham is 'accursed' for spurning the Beetle creature in its female incarnation following a rash nocturnal excursion into the native quarters of Cairo on a youthful visit to Egypt (64). His ordeal commences in the modern Egyptian context of a dubious Cairo café, and ends up with him prostrated in a mesmeric trance in a subterranean grotto, variously demarcated an 'Egyptian den' (294) or 'Cairene inferno' (295). Lessingham's captors turn out to be the Beetle's Egyptian cult of Isis worshippers which does persist in modern Egypt and engages in the brutal sacrifice of young women, 'preferably white Christian women, *with a special preference .. to English women*' (297; my italics). The relation of the cult's practices is shocking not only for its brutality, but also because Marsh reiterates it gratuitously, each time explicitly mentioning white women being burnt alive, so that Book IV, Champnell's narrative, is essentially a sequence of these accounts punctuated by details of the pursuit of the Beetle.[110] Given this repetition coupled with the modern Egyptian references suffusing the text, it is not difficult to read this as figurative Egyptian revenge for the trespass of England into Egypt.

Further, this campaign is spreading out from Egypt to England as Lessingham warns: 'My own conviction is that there is at this moment in London an emissary from that den in the whilom Rue de Ragabas' from whom emanates a 'terrorism which threatens … to overwhelm my mental and physical powers, – which bids fair to destroy my intellect, my career, my life, my all' (251). In response 'this Leader of Men, whose predominate characteristic in the House of Commons was immobility' is reduced to 'the condition of a hysterical woman' (292): Egyptian terrorism thus striking at the very heart of the British political establishment. This is emphasised by the Beetle's abduction and abuse of Marjorie, herself the child of a well-known Conservative politician: 'the lovely daughter of a famous house; the wife-elect of a coming statesman' (289). Even the composed, professional Champnell is stricken at the thought of Marjorie being subjected to the cult's practices: 'shut up in that rattling, jolting box on wheels [a London cab], alone with that

[110] The cult's practices are elaborated in detail twice in Lessingham's and Champnell's accounts (241, 297) and in graphic allusion three times via the embroidery Marjorie finds and Lessingham's and Champnell's imaginings (230, 294, 298).

diabolical Asiatic, with the enormous bundle, which was but the lurking place of nameless terrors, – what might she not, while being borne through the heart of civilised London, have been made to suffer' (293). A classic statement of invasion anxiety, akin to those expressed in relation to the Chinese presence in England in the Nikola series (see chapter one), the horror here is amplified by its relocation to the imperial metropolis. Adding further emphasis to the invasive nature of the threat, the Beetle attempts to secrete Marjorie in a 'disorderly' lodging-house in Limehouse (301), Marsh clearly sharing Boothby's sense of the aptness of this sinister orient-within-London as a lair for an oriental invader, and echoing Nikola's residence there in *A Bid for Fortune*. For Marsh's readers, the Beetle's choice of the notorious Limehouse district to evade pursuit would have evoked the contemporary issues of oriental immigration into and criminality in Britain (discussed further in chapters one and three).

Ultimately, the political reading of the Beetle's motivation is corroborated by Atherton's attempt to account for the creature's malevolence towards Lessingham: 'Can the objection be political?' he muses, 'what has Lessingham done which could offend the religious or patriotic susceptibilities of the most fanatical of Orientals?' (107). While Atherton casually dismisses these possibilities, nonetheless, amidst his tale of supernatural Egyptian terror, Marsh clearly acknowledges both nationalist and religious sentiment to be likely causes of grievance for modern Egyptians. Comparably, in 'Lot No. 249', as no overall motive for Bellingham's vendetta is ever disclosed, it is tempting from this political perspective to read his Egyptian acculturation as the driver of it, a view supported by the ethnic characterisation of his criminality in this classic reproach: 'You'll find that your filthy Egyptian tricks won't answer in England' (132).[111] Returning to *The Beetle*, Atherton further ponders the implications of Lessingham's own politics in considering the source of the Egyptian creature's ire: 'Politically, I can recall nothing. Foreign affairs, as a rule, he has carefully eschewed' (107), which raises two important points. Firstly it brings to mind Atherton's original characterisation of Lessingham as 'a wretched Radical' (97) and hence Radical policies on Egypt. As these were largely anti-imperial and typified, for instance, by those of the prominent Liberal Morley who

[111] No motivation for revenge is ever attributed to Bellingham's mummy either, though it is acknowledged to have 'intelligence' and 'strength' (135). But given the comparable despoliation of its resting place, it may be assumed to share a similar motivation to Pharos.

advocated withdrawal from Egypt,[112] it is fitting that Atherton concedes they were unlikely to have offended Egyptian sensibilities. It is arguable that instead Marsh was indirectly criticising this political view, suggesting that shirking foreign policy responsibilities and taking a soft stance on the Egyptian Question could have devastating consequences for Britain. The second more general point of interest concerning Atherton's musings is that, in an ostensibly gothic tale of ancient supernatural revenge, they refer directly to contemporary British foreign policy in modern Egypt.

The political framework of the curse

Though supernatural Egyptian fiction ostensibly turned upon the encounter with resurrected ancient Egyptians, as we have seen, hostile modern Egyptian ethnicity insistently pushed itself into the narratives as the political criticality of Anglo-Egyptian colonial relations relentlessly impinged upon this popular cultural medium. In seeking to account for this recurrent intrusion of the political into the literary, Said's work is elucidating. He theorises that the material fact of Britain's possession of the Near Orient meant that for British writers 'the room available for imaginative play was limited by the realities of administration, territorial legality, and executive power.... To write about Egypt,' he continues, speaking of literary texts, 'was a matter of touring the realm of political will, political management, political definition'.[113] Concerning the strategic value of 'the territory between the Mediterranean and India', united by the vital Suez Canal, Said affirms that British writers necessarily had a 'pronounced and harder sense' of its 'weighty importance' and thus 'a very combative awareness of how relations between the Orient and Europe would have to be conducted'. He goes on to recount how this political awareness entangled itself in the plots of serious novelists such as Disraeli and George Eliot – how, in their oriental novels, they could not avoid 'straying into the complexities of British realities as they decisively affected the Eastern project'.[114] The same awareness constrained the writers of fin-de-siècle popular fiction, and in the Egyptian gothic, as well as in the endlessly reiterated, closely conforming curse plot

[112] Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire 1850-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 44.
[113] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 169.
[114] Ibid., p. 192.

structures and the modern, Islamic attributes of the ancient invaders, it is evidenced by recurrent references to key dates and events in modern Egyptian politics. For example, though 'Lot No. 249' was published in 1892, it is set – for no plot-dependent reason – in 1884, evoking both the aftermath of the 1882 campaign against Urabi and the opening of Gordon's doomed engagement with the Islamic Mahdist rebels in neighbouring Sudan, his death the following year at Khartoum becoming one of the defining events of empire in the late-Victorian period.

In Boothby's work, his awareness of contemporary Egyptian politics is knowingly intimated in a later Egyptian-themed short story, 'A Professor of Egyptology' (1904), which features an encounter with another supernatural but non-threatening ancient Egyptian. Observing the mix of nationalities comprising fashionable Cairene society, including 'French Ministers', 'Bimbashis on leave from the Soudan', Greek attachés, Russians, Americans, many English, and a 'sprinkling of military and diplomatic uniforms', Boothby concludes: 'Taken altogether, and regarded from a political point of view, the gathering had a significance of its own', which worldly observation pertains of course to the Egyptian Question.[115] In *Pharos the Egyptian* the seventy-page section of the text set in Egypt is littered with references to current political affairs. Boothby alludes to the centrality of Port Said, gateway to the Suez Canal, to imperial trade when he has Forrester observe upon docking there, 'last, but by no means least, the crowd of shipping in the harbour' (159). Directly after Forrester's disembarkation in Port Said, Boothby signals Britain's military presence in Egypt: on the train journey from Port Said to Cairo alongside 'the high bank of the Canal', far from evincing the usual tourist anticipation for the ancient sites, Forrester instead observes their passage by 'the battlefields of Tel-el-Kebir and Kassassin' (160-1). Both locations witnessed notable battles in the 1882 campaign against Urabi, and it is significant that Boothby evokes them in a passage in which he builds tension concerning Pharos's unrevealed but clearly malevolent intentions.[116] The next morning, discoursing enthusiastically from his hotel window upon Cairo's perceived oriental colour, Forrester tellingly concludes 'and while I watched, emblematical of the change in the administration of the country, a guard of Highlanders,

[115] Guy Boothby, 'A Professor of Egyptology', *The Graphic*, 70 (1904), pp. 773–75.
[116] See Peter Mansfield, *The British in Egypt* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), pp. 47-50 for details of these battles.

with a piper playing at their head, marched by, *en route* to the headquarters of the Army of Occupation' (163). Boothby also mentions 'the war of '82' in the first Nikola novel, *A Bid for Fortune*, in the episode set in Port Said.[117] More specifically, the reference occurs during the scene, discussed in chapter one, in which a group of irreverent British tourists are attacked by 'a crowd of furious Arabs' at a mosque.[118] This evokes the spectre of modern Islamic-Egyptian hostility to the British presence irrupting at the very canal mouth, a threat Boothby amplifies by depicting the subversive Nikola in a dominant position there.

As a colonial immigrant to Britain, Boothby had personally experienced Port Said and the Suez Canal en route between England and Australia in the early 1890s, and the location's recurrence in his fiction indicates that its importance and vulnerability were not lost on him. When the financial success of his writing permitted, Boothby returned to Egypt as a tourist, spending the 1897-98 winter season there.[119] Along with the growing redistribution of ancient Egyptian artefacts as souvenirs across the British empire was the converse flow of imperial citizens to Egypt. In 1895 *The African Review* observed the burgeoning popularity of Egypt with British tourists after it became a British-occupied territory.[120] In 1890, before Boothby emigrated, ancient Egyptian artefacts had been displayed at the South Australia museum in Adelaide for the edification of this outpost of empire deemed to lack a history of its own, which may have spurred Boothby's interest to visit the Egyptian sites himself once he could.[121] In the absence of any detailed biographical material, Forrester's musings on the successful sale of a painting may give some indication of Boothby's thoughts on embarking on his own trip: 'If I received what I wanted, I promised myself a treat I had been looking forward to all my life. ... I would take a long holiday, and instead of spending the next winter in England, would start for

[117] Guy Boothby, *A Bid for Fortune, or Dr Nikola's Vendetta* (London: Ward, Lock & Bowden, 1895), p. 150.
[118] Ibid., p. 151.
[119] *The Bookman* notes Boothby's departure for Egypt in November 1897 and proposed return the following Spring 'via Naples, Rome, Florence, Venice and Paris', many of which featured in his fiction, see 'News Notes', 13:74 (Nov 1897), p. 29.
[120] In 'News Out of Egypt' it observes that ten years previously in 1885 European visitors to Egypt were mainly 'friends of the English Army of Occupation', yet five years later there were more than four thousand visitors, and in the '95 season, seven and a half thousand, *The African Review*, 6 (13 Jul 1895), p. 63.
[121] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, p. 22.

Egypt in the autumn, taking in Italy en route, make my way up the Nile, and be home again … during the early days of summer' (30).[122]

'A Professor of Egyptology' provides further insight into Boothby's impression of Egypt as a tourist destination:

> [They] had reached Cairo in November – the best month to arrive, in my opinion, for then the rush has not set in, the hotel servants have not had sufficient time to become weary of their duties, and what is better still, all the best rooms have not been bespoken. It was now the middle of December, and the fashionable caravanserai … was crowded from roof to cellar. Every day people were being turned away, and the manager's continual lament was that he had not another hundred rooms wherein to place more guests.[123]

Here again, as discussed in chapter one, the savvy, well-travelled persona that Boothby liked to present, and construct for certain of his colonial characters, is abundantly to the fore in the knowing narratorial voice. More tellingly, these passages reveal the impact of Boothby's personal experience of Egypt on his writing. And further indicative of this impact is Boothby's choice of Merenptah as the Exodus Pharaoh in *Pharos the Egyptian*, though at the time the identity of this key Pharaoh was the subject of much dispute. In March 1898 during Boothby's trip to Egypt, the mummy of Merenptah had been discovered in a major mummy cache and immediately touted as the real Exodus Pharaoh, and this most likely informed Boothby's portrayal.[124] The magazine serialization of *Pharos the Egyptian* began shortly after Boothby's return home in June 1898, and, given his typically breakneck pace of production, it is likely that he plotted the novel while in or shortly after returning from Egypt.

Also in Egypt in 1897-98 during the same winter season as Boothby, was Steevens writing the newspaper reports that became his book *Egypt in 1898* (1898). A popular and influential journalist, according to Luckhurst and Sally Ledger, Steevens's 'personality driven reportage' was significant in the 'move from the anonymity and distance of the

[122] This itinerary matches that of Boothby as cited above in *The Bookman*.
[123] Boothby, 'A Professor of Egyptology,' p. 773.
[124] Patrizia Piacentini, '"Wonderful things" on paper: the Egyptologist Victor Loret in the Valley of the Kings', *Apollo Magazine* (July 2003), online at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0PAL/is_497_158/ai_106732097/, 10 May 2010.

early 1880s to the bestseller narratives of dastardly Muslims' in the 1890s.[125] Blazing a trail as a war correspondent with the *Daily Mail* from its inception in 1896, his on-scene reports were speedily despatched home by telegraph to an eager mass audience, before being compiled into travelogues. His nonfiction account of Egypt is thus contemporaneous with *Pharos the Egyptian*, and useful in divulging both popular British attitudes toward Egypt and something of what Boothby may have experienced during his sojourn there. Like Boothby, Steevens in his sketch of Cairo, alludes to the presence of the occupying forces in a strikingly similar knowing aside. Following a comparable orientalist account of Cairo's multifarious life, he too concludes 'And then the blare of a band swells up the street ... and khaki, white helmet, Lee-Metford and bayonet, buckles and pipe clay, swings past Tommy Atkins. That is the first and last thing you will see in Cairo ... That for the time being is Egypt'.[126] Both writers also draw attention to the Kasr-el-Nil barracks, head-quarters of the British Army, amongst Cairo's more typical tourist sites.[127] Boothby uses it to preface the climactic scene in which Forrester is infected with the plague on a clandestine midnight excursion to Giza, the modern political reference contextualizing the ensuing shift to old Egypt (172), and again as he and Pharos set off deeper into Egypt to restore the mummy to its original resting place (189).

The recurrence of references in *Pharos the Egyptian* to the British military presence in Egypt gains significance in light of the fact that during the winter of 1897-98 great preparations were under way there for the resumption of Kitchener's famous and successful Sudanese campaign in 1898. This had been launched in 1895 to counter the resurgence of the militant Islamic movement known as Mahdism that had regularly threatened to spill over into Egypt, an ongoing hazard since the iconic death of Gordon in 1885.[128] Steevens's reports give a great sense of Cairo abuzz with troop movements and weapons stockpiling, highlighting the dangers posed to Egypt by Sudanese instability. He holds that due to a premature cessation of the campaign the previous year, 'Egypt was left militarily in the most exposed position imaginable', wide 'open to attacks across the

[125] Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History c.1880-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 134.
[126] Steevens, *Egypt in 1898*, pp. 58-9.
[127] Ibid., p. 57.
[128] For an account of Kitchener's campaign, see Keown-Boyd, *The Lion and the Sphinx*, pp. 41–43.

desert' from Sudanese dervishes, as the Mahdists were known. Consequently, 'all Cairo at this moment is rustling with the wildest rumours' – of heavy defeats at the front, captured gunboats, mutinous colonial troops, and potential dervish invasion.[129] Clearly anyone then wintering in Egypt could not have been unaware of these circumstances; the rumours no doubt circulated among British tourists as well as journalists and residents, and this personal experience may have honed Boothby's sense of the precariousness of Britain's hold on Egypt and the canal.

Sudanese affairs were of particular significance to the British relationship with Egypt because vast tracts of Sudanese territory were then nominally under the control of the Egyptian Khedive. Keown-Boyd observes how closely interlinked the histories of Egypt, Sudan and Britain were at this time, and how 'the Mahdist threat from the south' fed into imperial paranoia about Egypt. Though he considers the threat more perceived than real, there were nonetheless circulating fears of similar Islamic unrest igniting in Egypt and of Sudanese invasion.[130] The Mahdi who had been Gordon's nemesis had been immediately succeeded by another inspirational religious leader, the Khalifa Abdullahi, who had made two attempts to invade Egypt from Sudan in 1885 and 1889.[131] The region was also vulnerable to the advances of the Britain's European rivals, Cromer coming to fear: 'Whatever Powers hold the Upper Nile Valley must, by the mere force of its geographical location, dominate Egypt'.[132] The ensuing provocative diplomatic incident at Fashoda in 1898, when Kitchener's victorious troops encountered a small French invasion force in the perceived attempt 'to appropriate' what was then considered 'the Egyptian province of the Bahr-El-Gazel' in the Upper Nile region, brought Britain and France to the brink of war and caused lasting French resentment.[133] And unsurprisingly, aspects of the minefield of Anglo-Sudanese relations pushed themselves into the tales of gothic Egypt also.

---

[129] Steevens, *Egypt in 1898*, pp. 163, 164, 198–99.
[130] Keown-Boyd, *The Lion and the Sphinx*, pp. 19-20, 41-2.
[131] Mansfield, *The British in Egypt*, pp. 75-6.
[132] Cited ibid., p. 76.
[133] Edward Dicey, 'The Future of Egypt', *Nineteenth Century: a monthly review*, 44:262 (Dec 1898), p. 881. See Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, for more on the Fashoda incident (204-5) and the accompanying 'paranoid fantasy' that the French might attempt, despite the absence of any necessary stone, to damn the Upper Nile and thus destroy Egypt (202).

One of the first things Forrester mentions before even disembarking at Port Said, is the sight of 'Soudanese soldiers at the barriers' (159); these would have been British-led colonial troops, but it evokes the Sudanese context and Kitchener's campaign nonetheless. And it is into Sudan that Bellingham, the Egyptianised villain of 'Lot No. 249', disappears in 1884 after his schemes have been thwarted, the date and location ever evocative of Mahdism and the fate of Gordon. *The Beetle* is suffused by low-key but leading references to the political situation in Sudan, a connection between the creature and the country implied early on when Atherton likens it to an 'Arab of the Soudan' (103). The conclusion of the text reveals a web of associations between the Beetle's cult and significant Sudanese locations: an adherent of the cult is described as 'a member of a tribe which had its habitat on the banks of the White Nile' (297); a captive of the cult is found 'in a state of indescribable mutilation' 'in some remote spot in the Wady Halfa desert' (296); and lastly British troops discover what appear to be the remains of a recently-destroyed underground temple of the cult of Isis '[d]uring the recent expeditionary advance towards Dongola' (320-1). The reference to the tribes of the White Nile evokes both the Sudanese tribal followers of Mahdism and Cromer's feared threat to the Egyptian Nile from hostile forces in that region. Wadi Halfa and Dongola, while obscure locations today, both held British garrisons in the northern Sudanese province that bordered directly upon Egypt in the late nineteenth century and would have leapt off the page in connection with British military activity there then. Wadi Halfa, unaffectionately known as 'Bloody Halfway', was on the very border between Egypt and Sudan, a buffer against invading Mahdist forces, and the starting point of the British expeditions against both the Mahdi and the Khalifa.[134] Not only was Dongola the region of the Mahdi's birthplace, the expedition to Dongola referred to in *The Beetle* was the first operation in Kitchener's campaign to retake Sudan from the Khalifa in 1895.[135]

Steevens's travelogue draws attention to Egyptian support for the Sudanese cause: 'a vast deal of opinion in Egypt which would be only too delighted to hear of a dervish victory' against the British, and fears that 'Egypt will never quite sit down beneath our

[134] See Mansfield, *The British in Egypt*, pp. 76, 137 and Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, pp. 172, 202.
[135] Mansfield, *The British in Egypt*, pp. 66, 77.

rule as long as we have an enemy unbeaten in the south'.[136] Though utterly confident about the benefits of the British occupation of Egypt, he also conveys a limited sense of Egyptian discontent with this state of affairs. He glancingly mentions the Egyptian nationalist movement (a 'native' 'party against us'): though he is dismissive of it, his conclusion that 'it is troublesome as long as we let it trouble us' concurs with this chapter's explication of the effect of paranoia concerning the canal on imperialist thinking.[137] The mid-1890s had seen a notable resurgence of Egyptian nationalism, and the opposition party that Steevens most likely encountered was a reincarnation of *al-hizb al-watani*, the Nationalist Party or Patriotic League, headed by the youthful, charismatic Mustafa Kamil.[138]

Educated in Europe and familiar 'with modern methods of political propaganda and organisation',[139] Kamil utilised popular periodicals in Egypt and Europe to convey his message, his inflammatory articles sporadically warranting citation in British organs such as *The Times* and the *African Review*. Mondal, in his study of the discourse of Egyptian nationalism, maintains that the *watani* successfully managed to harness contradictory impulses towards pan-Islamicism and loyalty to the territorially defined state of Egypt in opposition to the British administration.[140] This produced an alarming Islamicist-inflected nationalist rhetoric which fuelled paranoia despite the emergent and as yet ineffective nature of Egyptian nationalism. *The Times* Cairo correspondent, for example, denounced Kamil as 'a fanatical young man ... who now poses as the representative of the Pan-Islamic revival here'.[141] Though Cromer is typically considered reticent on the threat, his observation on 'the faith of Islam,... belief in which takes to a great extent the place of patriotism in Eastern countries', coupled with the dedication of a large proportion of his retrospective *Modern Egypt* (1908) to the Sudanese problem, demonstrates his awareness of the minefield of Islamicist nationalism.[142] Mondal further maintains that this fledgling

[136] Steevens, *Egypt in 1898*, p. 279.
[137] Ibid., p. 192.
[138] Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., 'The Egyptian Nationalist Party: 1892-1919', in P. M. Holt (ed.), *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 308–33.
[139] Zayid, *Egypt's Struggle for Independence*, pp. 31, 58.
[140] Mondal, *Nationalism and Post-Colonial Identity*, p. 153.
[141] 'Egypt (From Our Correspondent)', *The Times*, 17 Apr 1900, p. 3.
[142] Earl of Cromer [Evelyn Baring], *Modern Egypt*, 2 (London: Macmillan, 1908), pp. 132–33; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/modernegypt02earl.htm, 23 March 2010. Fifteen chapters are devoted to Sudanese affairs, with chapter 31, 'The Defence of Egypt', being highly indicative

movement emerged into a political field 'located at the very fulcrum of the balance of forces not just in the Middle East but of Europe and of much of the rest of the world'.[143] Hence the nationalist threat to British control of Egypt was greatly amplified by the complex geopolitical backdrop against which it acted. In this context, it is possible to read Pharos as an embodiment of the threat of nascent Egyptian nationalism, his quest for vengeance against the nations which despoiled ancient Egypt's relics as a rebellion against the European nations which contended for influence in this strategic territory, and to read the other monstrous Egyptian invaders as stemming from a similar impulse.

In support of this interpretation is a warning from Kamil in 1895 which contains a large-scale colonial revenge threat. It speaks of the 'great danger' to global security if England remained in Egypt and, 'once [she] gets the Suez Canal into her power', attempted any kind of incursion upon Mecca; in response '[t]hree hundred million Moslems would rise, and the world would witness a terrible conflict, more sanguinary even than that of the Crusades.'[144] What is notable here is that Kamil directly references Britain's desire for the canal, and that the archaic, Arabic formality of his translated language is echoed in Pharos's threats. Even more significant, however, is the scale of the threat Kamil envisages—nothing short of a global cataclysm should it come to pass. Similarly the most startling aspect of Boothby's novel is the success of Pharos's extermination plot, which brought about 'the most calamitous period in [European] history ... that terrible pestilence which swept Europe from end to end, depopulated its greatest cities, filled every burial place to overflowing, and caused such misery and desolation in all ranks of life as has never before been known among us' (22). In most invasion narratives the threat is typically averted before it does any major damage, at least to England, but Pharos succeeds in emptying London of all but soldiers, madmen and corpses (362-5).

Given the scale of the disaster unleashed in *Pharos*, it is certainly the most extreme example of the curse paradigm unearthed to date, and the one proffering the most dire view of the consequences of British involvement in Egypt. Perhaps Egypt as the

of Cromer's paranoia.

[143] Mondal, *Nationalism and Post-Colonial Identity*, p. 141.

[144] 'The Egyptian "Patriotic League"', *The African Review*, 6 (3 Aug 1895), p. 180. As Boothby's novel *The Beautiful White Devil* was serialised in *The African Review* from Sept–Dec 1895, he was clearly familiar with the periodical.

quintessential oriental country, 'the Orient-in-Egypt' as Said puts it, was ripe for imaginative transformation into the quintessential oriental threat.[145] Though as Said shows, Egypt's place in the discourse of imperialism was ostensibly that of Britain's greatest colonial success, viewed through the lens of imperial paranoia it transposed readily into Britain's gravest colonial danger. More specifically, the criticality of the Suez Canal to the British imperial project may be deployed to account for the startling success of Pharos's plot. Steevens's work insistently presents the Suez route as 'the main highway of the British Empire'; his earlier cited remark upon the potential of the canal to upset the balance of the world, make and unmake nations, is loaded with a sense of the significance of possessing it.[146] Any threat to Britain's controversial control of Egypt, such as the spectre of Egyptian nationalism, could potentially damage the imperial spinal cord and paralyse the British Empire. In Boothby's Egyptian apocalypse, the biological revolution unleashed by Pharos upsets the balance of the world irrevocably, undoing the great cities of the European nations, and perhaps tipping the scales in favour of the oriental colonies in the uncharted future following his annihilative rampage. Thus *Pharos the Egyptian*, and the host of comparable curse narratives avidly consumed at the fin de siècle, can be read as part of the response of cultural anxiety to the imperial dilemma posed by the British occupation of Egypt, and one strand in the wider invasion scare genre.

[145] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 167.

[146] Steevens, *Egypt in 1898*, p. 11. He dubs the canal route the 'imperial highway' on seven further occasions (pp. 2, 4, 6, 8, 14, 16, 18), and uses that term as the title of the first chapter.

The mummy romance

Having examined the unequivocally malevolent figures of Pharos and his cohorts of vengeful male Egyptian invaders, it is time to progress to the mummy romance to explore within this narrative strand of Egyptian gothic fiction the comparable underlying structure provided by the curse paradigm, with its hubris/nemesis or decline and fall format. As observed, it is somewhat over-simplistic to view tales featuring female mummies purely as romances as they typically traverse a spectrum of concerns ranging from the promise to the peril of involvement with Egypt. And regardless of their position on this spectrum, from the 1860s onwards female mummy narratives almost universally contained hostile elements. In some, the mummies themselves, or their personal attributes, are wholly malevolent; others contain supporting hostile Egyptian characters both ancient and modern; in yet others, the female mummies, though unquestionably desirable, are simultaneously agents of a threatening power commensurate with that of the male invaders; and many tales present combinations of these three types of threat. Luckhurst additionally suggests an overall reading of female mummies as inherently dangerous from the perspective of assumptions concerning pollution through close contact with the foreign other, both in terms of the metaphorical loss of self and literal transmission of sexual and other oriental diseases.[147]

In the body of tales involving female mummies, the operation of the curse paradigm is most obvious in a text like that of the little-known periodical writer Eva M. Henry's 'The Curse of Vasartas', where it is adverted to directly in the title and the narrative follows the hubris/nemesis format closely. The highly formulaic plot opens with the unearthing of a royal tomb by an English Egyptologist, who unthinkingly views the buried wealth of Egypt as his for the taking, followed by the despatch of the perfectly preserved mummy of Queen Vasartas to the British Museum. Though notably beautiful, the disinterred Vasartas is a purely malevolent entity, never so much as fleetingly presented as 'the ideal partner in an eternal union'.[148] Her hostile agency takes the form of a terrifying curse 'upon the man that shall disturb [my] tomb... To him shall come

[147] Comment made at the *'Century's End': Re-Evaluating Literature and the Arts at the Fin de Siècle* conference, Queen's University, Belfast, 12-13 Sep 2008.
[148] Deane, 'Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt', p. 391.

death with violence... Also his children shall be cut off from life ... until I ... be laid to rest'.[149] The curse swiftly claims the Egyptologist on location and penetrates the sanctity of an English boarding school to threaten his daughter's life, which is only preserved by the hasty re-interment of Vasartas. The political metaphor is easy to decipher here – underhand British appropriation of Egyptian sovereignty threatens the very fabric of domestic English society; the curse as a form of retributive invasion is plainly evident. The narrative's atmosphere of unease is intensified by recurrent references to the hostile inhabitants of modern Egypt, commencing in the opening paragraphs in which the narrator worries that the Egyptologist might fall victim to 'a marauding band of Arabs'.[150] Modern Egyptians are cast as dangerous potential rivals for the resources of Egypt, the Egyptologist concealing his work 'lest the Arabs should come on his treasure,' for which 'they would murder us', until a suitable band of Englishmen can be gathered to stealthily unearth it, and parallels with the underhand British seizure of the Suez Canal can be drawn here.[151] The text explicitly connects the ancient threat with the modern via the narrator's initial presumption that the danger to the Egyptologist's daughter must derive from 'some Arab' who 'had vowed vengeance if the mummy was not returned to its rightful possessors'.[152] Running through all of these references is a preoccupation with rightful ownership and an ingrained presumption of hostility on the part of modern Egyptian Arabs towards the English presence in Egypt.

Everett's *Iras: A Mystery* is very differently motivated to 'The Curse of Vasartas', focusing primarily upon the romance between the English Egyptologist narrator, Ralph Lavenham, and his revivified beloved, the ancient Egyptian princess Iras. Yet it signals insistently from the outset that the relationship is ultimately doomed. Before Lavenham has even received the illegal delivery of Iras's smuggled mummy-case to his London digs, he has been subjected to sustained haunting by the spectral projection of her ex-lover, the ancient Egyptian priest Savak, and made aware of Savak's effective curse upon anyone who disturbs her.[153] Vengeance-crazed and 'blazing' with 'scathing hatred', this

[149] Eva M. Henry, 'The Curse of Vasartas', *Belgravia*, 69:276 (Oct 1889), p. 11.
[150] Henry, 'The Curse of Vasartas', p. 1.
[151] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[152] Ibid., p. 9.
[153] As Day notes, after 1835 the unauthorized export of antiquities from Egypt was banned and mummies were often smuggled out of Egypt for souvenir purposes, *The Mummy's Curse*, p. 22.

malevolent entity is referred to throughout the narrative as 'the Egyptian' and may well have served as a prototype for the Pharos character.[154] Lavenham first becomes aware of Savak's presence at a 'psychological evening' with a clairvoyant in an episode similar to Forrester's initial encounters with Pharos in London society. Warned that the Egyptian is his 'enemy, and a powerful one, who will strike you through your heart's dearest, and strike home', Lavenham is left to speculate in classic fashion, 'What spell had bewitched me in that ordinary middle-class house, with its good-natured hostess and crowd of common-place guests'.[155]

After this first encounter, the narrative structure of the novel closely follows the clearly delineated phases through which Savak's curse is said to pass, the Egyptian relentlessly pursuing the ill-fated lovers across England and ultimately reducing Iras to a desiccated cadaver. As well as in the curse structure, the political context is evoked in a highly significant detail of the tale's setting: though it was published in 1896, it is explicitly set 'in the early spring of 1882'.[156] In other words the English protagonist illegally takes possession of the mummy in the same year that the unofficial occupation of Egypt occurred. As in the case of the setting of 'Lot No. 249' in 1884, there is no ostensible rationale given in *Iras*'s plot for its events unfolding in this year. Again in *Iras*, as in 'The Curse of Vasartas', concern about legitimate possession is evinced throughout the narrative, in fears of being 'caught red-handed in the possession of an unlawful mummy' and of losing the mummy to others, most significantly that representative of invasive Egyptian alterity, Savak.[157] The instant Iras reawakens, Lavenham's immediate thought is to legitimise her irregular civil status via marriage and he goes to great lengths to accomplish this: 'My anxiety is that all should be on a completely regular and legal basis'.[158] Despite Lavenham's nominal success, their union is entirely unsustainable and Savak's pursuit reduces this representative of empire, throughout comparable to Forrester in his ineptitude, to a wreck of a man who longs for death, a state which further recalls the fate of Lessingham.

---

[154] H. D. Everett [pseud. as Theo. Douglas], *Iras: A Mystery* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1896), pp. 14-5.
[155] Everett, *Iras*, pp. 21, 22.
[156] Ibid., p. 3.
[157] Ibid., p. 47.
[158] Ibid., p. 104.

In his reading of this strand of Egyptian gothic fiction, Dean observes, and the plot logic of *Iras* bears him out, that the marriage plot of domestic fiction has been transposed onto the mummy romance. Underpinning this narrative manoeuvre he identifies the related desires for both the exotic veiled oriental woman of European fantasy and what he characterises as the permanence of ancient Egyptian civilisation, conferred by union with the female mummy upon her English lover:

> On the one hand, then, we find modern British men harbouring potentially transgressive desires for veiled women whose magical power and ancient authority threaten to undermine all of the Manichean exclusions with which Britain's imperial identity is precariously shored up; at the same time, we find them yearning to channel their desire into a legitimate marriage that would unite disparate powers to produce a harmoniously strengthened empire.[159]

Deane's account of this latter legitimising imperial fantasy accords with this chapter's reading of the desirable aspects of the female mummy as representative of the economic and political promise of uncontested control of modern Egypt. However, despite the underlying fears highlighted by both aspects of his reading of the mummy marriage plot – those concerning porous imperial identity and vulnerable empire – Deane consistently refutes the approach which interprets the mummy romance as indicative of anxiety. He never questions why such fantasies should be so insistently repeated in tale after tale. This impulse is more easily understood if the fantasy of secure union is viewed as motivated by the same underlying anxiety that was driving the vengeful mummy narrative – fears for the security of the empire and especially of the vital territory surrounding Suez.

What Deane designates as fantasies of permanence, the yearning for unassailable empire, were yet another product of the prevalent fear of imperial decline, exacerbated by the unavoidable knowledge of the ultimate fate of Egypt's former civilisation. And it is surely significant from this perspective that, as Deane observes and *Iras* demonstrates, the relationships are never fulfilled – suggesting that the fears of the negative consequences of the unions outweighed the promise. Iras, for example, and Savak are inextricably linked, possession of one entails the inexorable vengeance of the other. The

[159] Deane, 'Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt', p. 391.

same underlying logic is very much in evidence in Haggard's similarly-themed story, 'Smith and the Pharaohs' (1912-13). Though it is often cited as a classic example of the mummy romance for its portrayal of the brief reunion of the reincarnated Smith with the ancient queen Ma-Mee, it is also structured by the pervasive curse premise as Smith, facing an angry tribunal of temporarily revivified Egyptian royalty, is only saved from death for tomb violation by his love for Ma-Mee. Finally, the mummy romances Deane's analysis concentrates on contain two of the most ambivalent and menacing examples of the female mummy in this narrative strand – Ayesha of Haggard's more famous *She* and Queen Tera of Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* – and it is to these we now turn, not least because both of their better-known authors had strong colonial connections which bear upon their tales.[160]

Ayesha the Egypto-Arabian: Haggard's encounter with Egypt

One of the first examples Arata astutely observes of the reverse colonisation threat is that embodied in the powerful Ayesha character of Haggard's immensely popular imperial romance *She*, but he leaves the implications of Haggard's own colonial experience of Africa upon the narrative unconsidered.[161] Superficially, *She* appears a straightforward colonial adventure tale, albeit with strong gothic overtones, of an expedition into Africa complete with a ruined city, a lost African tribe and a beautiful, fair-skinned female autocrat. On closer examination, far from being a tale of colonial dominance, it conversely contains not only the well-known, explicit reverse colonisation threat observed by Arata but also the close association of this threat with Egypt, as explored subsequently. Briefly, the reverse colonisation threat lies in the immortal Ayesha's desire, on learning of the establishment of Britain's empire, to end her self-imposed exile and decamp to London in order to overthrow the existing Queen-Empress and rule in her stead. That Ayesha, 'who is reported to have power over all things living and dead',

[160] The *Punch* cartoons included by Deane in support of his argument can also be read in this way: Egypt is represented by Cleopatra, who, while endlessly attractive, caused one of the greatest cataclysms in the history of the Roman empire.

[161] Arata, *Fictions of Loss*, p. 107-8. In his extended treatment of *Dracula* as a reverse colonisation text, Arata does consider the impact of Stoker's Anglo-Irish background upon the threat embodied by the vampiric Count, as discussed subsequently.

could achieve this if she so chose is unquestionable.[162] And Haggard, via his narrator and imperial representative, Horace Holly, even suggests that she might make a better job of it:

> In the end she would, I had little doubt, assume absolute rule over the British dominions, and probably over the whole earth, and ... speedily make ours the most glorious and prosperous empire that the world has ever seen... [She] was now about to be used by Providence as a means to change the order of the world, and possibly, by the building up of a power that could no more be rebelled against or questioned than the decrees of Fate, to change it materially for the better.[163]

Arata theorises that the anxieties underlying passages like this one demonstrate that even well-known apologists for empire like Haggard were affected by decadent or degenerative paradigms. However, even more than any generalised social malaise, the formative and negative effect of Haggard's traumatic personal experiences of Britain's South African colonies was likely to have shaped the doubts about the British imperial project that suffuse the narrative of *She*.

Though a home-grown Englishman, Haggard had spent a significant period of his youth working as a colonial administrator and farmer in Britain's disputed South African colonies. In a recent study of his African fiction, Gerald Monsman emphasises the significance of Haggard's African experience to the extent that he represents him as 'an Anglo-African writer straddling the moral divide of mixed allegiances, with one foot in Africa and the other in England'.[164] In other words, Monsman attributes a kind of doubled hybridity to Haggard that is comparable to that of the emigrant colonial-born authors; an outlook that involves a wide imperial perspective coupled with a first-hand experience of the dangers of life at the imperial margins. Haggard, for example, was deeply troubled following Britain's humiliating defeat at the notorious Battle of Majuba Hill in the First Anglo-Boer War (1880-1). An imperial setback that evoked the Indian Mutiny, it persisted in the popular imagination as an outrage to be avenged, and was

[162] H. Rider Haggard, *She* (1886; London: Penguin, 2004), p. 38.
[163] Haggard, *She*, p. 255-6.
[164] Gerald Monsman, *H. Rider Haggard on the Imperial Frontier: The Political and Literary Contexts of His African Romances* (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 2006), p. 3.

influential in hardening subsequent British colonial policy in Africa.[165] More immediately it resulted in the retrocession of the Transvaal territory over which Haggard had personally raised the British flag but four years before. During the war, proximity to the British line had placed Haggard's family farm under grave threat; worse still, the subsequent settlement negotiations at which the Transvaal was surrendered took place in his very farmhouse. Consequently in 1881, ashamed of his country for this 'great betrayal', and fearful for the safety of his young family, a much disillusioned Haggard set sail for Britain, never to live in Africa, the 'land of murder' again.[166] Thus in Holly's defence of Ayesha as empress, we can read the compelling personal appeal to Haggard of the security provided by an imperial power that cannot be challenged.

This feeling of imperial precariousness resonated through Haggard's adventure fiction, expressing itself poignantly and pervasively, for example, in *Allan Quatermain*, also written in 1887 and sequel to the celebrated *King Solomon's Mines* (1885). Here are the Gibbonian musings of the novel's eponymous narrator on the cyclical nature of civilisation and empire:

> Civilisation is only savagery silver-gilt. ... Out of the soil of barbarism it has grown like a tree, and, ... into the soil like a tree it will once more, sooner or later, fall again, as the Egyptian civilisation fell, as the Hellenic civilisation fell, and as the Roman civilisation and many others ... fell also.[167]

In this introductory address the world-weary veteran colonial Quatermain is admonishing his implied metropolitan readership, impressing upon them the transience of their society from the superior vantage point of his peripheral position. After Quatermain's death at the close of the novel, his companion in voluntary exile, Sir Henry Curtis, speaking of the lost country he and Quatermain discovered, expresses some telling concluding thoughts on European and presumably British imperialism:

> I intend to devote myself to ... the total exclusion of all foreigners from Zu-Vendis. ... I have no fancy for handing over this beautiful country to be torn and fought for

[165] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, pp. 185-6.
[166] This account of Haggard's African experience is based on Wendy R. Katz, *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 9-10.
[167] H. Rider Haggard, *Allan Quatermain* (1887; Oxford: World's Classics, 1995), pp. 10-11.

> by speculators, tourists, politicians and teachers... nor will I endow it with the greed, drunkenness, new diseases, gunpowder, and general demoralisation which chiefly mark the progress of civilisation amongst unsophisticated peoples.[168]

Far from revealing the unthinking jingoism he has often been assumed to espouse, and based on his personal colonial experience, these sentiments rather imply Haggard's deep disillusionment with empire in practice, if not in theory. Given the far-reaching influence of Haggard upon fin-de-siècle popular fiction, this motif of imperial vulnerability is significant. As Laura Chrisman puts it: 'Haggard is a formative, if not *the* formative agent in the development of the genre of the imperial romance, a genre which is itself of paramount importance to the ideological articulation of imperialism as a whole'.[169] This comment signals the productive nature of Haggard's fiction which on one level articulated a popular-cultural counter-current of anxiety running against the discourse of imperialism.

The concern with imperial inadequacy recurs again coupled with an even more exaggerated invasion threat in the sequel to *She*, *Ayesha: The Return of She* (1905), in which Ayesha resumes her quest for universal dominion in order to right the ills she has learned of the current imperial system from Holly. Using her absolute power, she aims to end the 'futile struggling for wealth and small supremacies' that characterise modern imperialism, and to cause its products, 'wars, sickness, and poverty to cease'.[170] Significantly, in the context of the emergent body of oriental invasion narratives which are examined in chapter three, she chooses the Chinese as the race through which to effect her will because 'their numbers are uncountable, ... they are brave, subtle, and patient, and though now powerless because ill-ruled and untaught, able with their multitudes to flood the little western nations' under her guidance. If the West resists, Ayesha responds vehemently to Holly's companion and her intended consort, Leo Vincey,

---

[168] Haggard, *Allan Quatermain*, p. 281-2.
[169] Laura Chrisman, *Empire and Opposition: Literature of South Africa 1830-1920*, cited in intro. to Lindy Stiebel (ed.), *H. Rider Haggard*, vol. 2 in Ralph Pite (ed.), *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures VII* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), p. ix.
[170] H. Rider Haggard, *Ayesha: The Return of She* (1905; London: Ward, Lock & Co, c. 1931), p. 253.

> 'then the East, that has slept so long, shall awake ... upon battlefield after battlefield such as history cannot tell of, thou shalt see my flaming standards sweep on to victory. One by one thou shalt watch the nations fall and perish, until at length I build thy throne upon the hecatombs of their countless dead and crown thee emperor of a world regenerate in blood and fire.'[171]

Inflated as its rhetoric is, in this extended passage Haggard explicitly links the imperial misdeeds of the Western nations with mass retributive colonial invasion. Once again Holly, though he now considers Ayesha's ambitions to be 'such as no imperial-minded madman could conceive', has no doubt that she can 'carry them to some marvellous and awful conclusion'.[172] Even while reading Ayesha in *She* as 'the perfect imperial bride,' rather than 'a spectre of reverse colonisation', Deane allows that 'her character is equivocal, encompassing both menace and promise';[173] but, as the sequel *Ayesha* demonstrates, ultimately Haggard seems to have leaned more towards the latter, horrific representation.

Though, in addition to his fiction writing, Haggard continued to devote himself to the public service of his country and its empire, his disillusionment with British imperial practice persisted. It is evident still in the 1914 account of his eventual return to South Africa for the Dominions Royal Commission, when, observing the grave inequalities facing black South Africans, he warned that 'the white man has a very heavy bill to pay to the native and certainly he will be called upon it in this coin or in that. Those who persistently sow the wind must expect to reap the whirlwind.'[174] It is possible, then, to read the retributive gothicized invasion threat he embodies in Ayesha as a fantastic fictional version of this whirlwind. Like Nikola, the avenging Ayesha, occupant of the African and Eastern colonial margins, is an object of exorbitant paranoia, another prime example of a hybrid author inverting his own troubled colonial experience to turn colonial subjects into invasive menaces to terrorise the metropolitan population. As an 'imperial madman', 'regenerate in blood and fire', Ayesha is also a highly unflattering reflection of the practices of imperial British society back upon itself. However, while

[171] Haggard, *Ayesha*, pp. 254-5.
[172] Ibid., p. 255.
[173] Deane, 'Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt', p. 396.
[174] H. Rider Haggard, *Diary of an African Journey (1914)*, ed. by Stephen Coan (London: Hurst & Co, 2000) p. 239.

undoubtedly a multivalent representative of colonial Africa and Asia, Ayesha is additionally associated with their physical meeting point, Egypt, a country which also had deep significance for Haggard.

As Richard Pearson documents, Haggard had an interest in Egyptology which, in addition to his colonial experience and journeys to South Africa via the famous canal, may have had a bearing on the text of *She*.[175] Overall Haggard's multifaceted engagement with Egypt could be said to be characteristic of the pervasiveness of the late-Victorian encounter with that country: he was himself briefly the recipient of a reputedly restless mummy appropriated from Egypt, two of his brothers fought in Britain's colonial wars there, and Haggard visited Egypt as a tourist several times obtaining many souvenirs, not least a pharaonic ring which he wore constantly. This accumulated experience manifested itself in a predilection for Egyptian artefacts which Haggard obsessively collected and displayed in his home, and from which, as Luckhurst elaborates, he produced a plethora of works dealing with Egypt ancient and modern, supernatural and historical.[176] Indeed, he wrote *She* just prior to his first and much-anticipated tour of ancient Egypt's most celebrated recent discoveries in 1888.[177] But equally at this time Egypt was topical for the ongoing border wars between the occupying British forces and the Mahdist rebels and it is possible that Haggard observed British troops on his visit, as Boothby and Steevens later did. Haggard subsequently wrote his first explicitly Egyptian tale *Cleopatra* in 1889, a historical romance set in ancient Egypt, the serialisation of which ran concurrently with reports of these wars. Indeed, Pearson, whose concern is with the relationship between archaeology and the gothic, observes in passing that Cleopatra can be considered 'a narrative dealing with the rise of Egyptian nationalism, since ... the central figure, intends to rid Egypt of the Greek yoke, represented by Cleopatra'.[178] And, indeed, in his introductory note, Haggard refers to the protagonist, Harmachis, as 'an Egyptian patriot

[175] Richard Pearson, 'Archaeology and Gothic Desire: Vitality Beyond the Grave in H. Rider Haggard's Ancient Egypt', in Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (ed.s), *Victorian Gothic* (Hampshire, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 220-2.
[176] Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse: The True History*, p. 190-9.
[177] Morton Cohen, *Rider Haggard: His Life and Works* (London: Hutchinson, 1960), p. 120.
[178] Pearson, 'Archaeology and Gothic Desire', p. 221.

of royal blood'.[179] Interestingly, this purportedly realist historical novel also has a vengeful mummy subplot in that Cleopatra, leader of the then occupying presence, is cursed for defiling the mummy of the pharaoh Menkau-ra by repeatedly plunging her hands into it to steal jewels that are only to be removed for the purposes of saving Egypt. At her death 'the vengeance of Egypt's outraged Gods' is predictably fulfilled, 'the curse of Menkau-ra' falls via Harmachis's agency, and Cleopatra is condemned to tortures beyond the grave.[180]

Returning to *She*, careful attention to the text certainly attests to the presence of Egypt on Haggard's mind while he was characterising Ayesha. Deane, for example, makes the case for reading Ayesha as a type of romantic mummy object based on her depiction as a bandage-swathed immortal who rules in the seat of the ancient civilisation claimed as ancestral to pharaonic Egypt.[181] Further scrutiny of the text reveals that Ayesha is described as an Arabian by birth and of the purest descent, but one with a personal knowledge of ancient Egypt, a similar conflation of a modern Egyptian ethnic group with the ancient civilisation to that in the more obviously Egyptian supernatural tales.[182] Significantly during Ayesha's protracted demise, Haggard details that 'the perfect whiteness' of her skin 'turned dirty brown and yellow' and her hand grew 'like that of a badly-preserved Egyptian mummy'.[183] Thus at the moment she is revealed as unequivocally abhorrent, Ayesha approximates more closely both an ancient Egyptian mummy and stereotypical descriptions of modern colonial subjects. *She*'s sequel *Ayesha*, which places more emphasis on Ayesha's plans to overrun the West, documents her origins in more detail, revealing how she became a devotee of the Egyptian goddess Isis. This has a strong resonance with children of Isis cult in *The Beetle*, strengthened in that Ayesha was tasked with a similar vengeance mission upon a faithless adherent to that of the Beetle creature.[184] And this accentuation of Ayesha's Egyptian origins in the latter novel allows the character to take a more obvious place amongst the ranks of the

[179] H. Rider Haggard, *Cleopatra: Being an Account of the Fall and Vengeance of Harmachis, the Royal Egyptian, as Set Forth by his Own Hand* (1889; London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1894), p. vii; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/cleopatrabeingac00hagg, 16 May 2013.
[180] Haggard, *Cleopatra*, p. 320.
[181] Deane, 'Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt', p. 393.
[182] Haggard, *She*, p. 150.
[183] Ibid., p. 292.
[184] Haggard, *Ayesha*, p. 199.

vengeful invaders of supernatural Egyptian fiction. However, though the impact of Haggard's Egyptian and African experience on Ayesha's invasive and Egyptianised menace is evident, Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* provides a much clearer example of the deployment of the female mummy in the Egyptian gothic, and it is to it that we finally turn.

The Egyptian Question meets the Irish: Stoker's The Jewel of Seven Stars

Though typically considered the exemplary romantic mummy tale, Stoker's contribution to the Egyptian gothic subgenre, *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, adheres closely to the curse paradigm and contains what can at best be described as an oblique and troubled portrayal of romance. While intersecting with many key fin-de-siècle discourses – moral, scientific and political – as David Glover elaborates, when examined through a postcolonial lens, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* is strongly demonstrative of the connection between the supernatural Egyptian invasion narrative and Anglo-Egyptian imperial politics.[185] Glover generally observes that 'Stoker's ... melodrama ... always carries a political charge, drawing up blueprints for change or intimating imminent disaster and decline'.[186] Following this line of argument, and approaching the text from its Egyptian context, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* can be read, on one level, as an extended metaphor for the Urabi revolt, the British occupation of Egypt, and the subsequent difficulties of Anglo-Egyptian relations.

Adhering to many of the usual curse plot points, the novel turns upon the fatal attempts of the obsessive English Egyptologist Abel Trelawny to perform an occult experiment to revivify the mummy of the ancient Egyptian queen Tera which he has appropriated back to England. Throughout the first phase of Stoker's text, Tera's hostile agency is strongly implied as Trelawny lies prostrate in a perilous occult trance; his daughter Margaret seems sporadically possessed by the queen's spirit; and the team of professional English gentlemen she has enlisted, comprising of a doctor, a barrister and an Egyptologist, seem powerless against the infiltration. Clive Leatherdale, introducing a

[185] Glover investigates the intersection between the Victorian sciences of human subjectivity, including physiognomy, degeneration theory, psychology and spiritualism, and *The Jewel of Seven Stars* in *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996).
[186] Ibid., p. 25.

1996 edition of the text, interprets it as derivative of *Dracula* in many respects, and points out the anxious formula that similarly structures both: 'an alien supernatural presence ... hav[ing] designs on modern England, but ... rel[iant] on duped mortals to prepare the way'.[187] The tale's atmospheric opening is classically suffused with invasion anxiety as the presence of the mummy and its artefacts in Trelawny's London home unleashes uncontainable supernatural forces. It compares to the anxiety engendered by the malevolent Chinese presence in Boothby's *Dr Nikola's Experiment* (1899), which similarly turns upon a dangerous revivification experiment and may have been influential upon Stoker (see chapter one). The barrister narrator's retrospective paranoid musings give some sense of what it is like to exist in such an anxious milieu: 'We ... lived in such a state of terrorism during ... Mr Trelawny['s] ... trance that the feeling had bitten deeply into us. No one knows till he has experienced it, what it is to be in constant dread of some unknown danger which may come at any time and in any form'.[188]

The middle phase of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* begins when Tera's chief dupe Trelawny awakens to reveal that he has been working for decades towards her revivification in accordance with instructions he deciphered in her tomb. Compelled by the promise of stupendous power despite a chain of convincing evidence as to the danger, Trelawny's associates are persuaded to participate in the revivification experiment that forms the infamous climax of the original 1903 text. In this exceptionally nihilistic conclusion all those involved, including Margaret, are killed – the narrator alone surviving to bear witness.[189] Thus the hubris of the team of professional English gentlemen in attempting to harness the exotic Egyptian potential of Tera brings about not only their own downfall, but also the demise of the young Englishwoman, the proper object of their protection. As in *Iras*, from the outset, even before Tera's sorceress identity is revealed, her effects are fatally imbued, the narrator coming early to the realisation 'that Mr Trelawny associated with this particular curio a doubt of his own

[187] Clive Leatherdale, intro. to Bram Stoker, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (Westcliff-on-Sea: Desert Island Books, 1996), pp. 9, 11.

[188] Bram Stoker, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903; London: Penguin, 2008), p. 227; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

[189] As is well-documented, this nihilistic ending resulted in a backlash of criticism against the novel's publishers and when it was reissued in 1912 the ending was re-written and toned down, whether by Stoker or an editor remaining a matter of speculation. See Kate Hebblethwaite, intro. to the 2008 Penguin edition of *The Jewel of Seven Stars*.

living' (93). As narrative disclosure concerning this invasive Egyptian presence unfolds the sense of Tera's vengeful agency builds: 'a great Sorcerer in ancient days', her unnamed tomb was shunned by the native Egyptians, its original discovery in the seventeenth century culminating in the deaths of the Arab despoilers (111).

With the intervening advances in philology, the nineteenth-century English expedition led by Trelawny was able to discover Tera's origins as a mighty sovereign – unusually, for a woman, holding sway over all Egypt. Details of this expedition are related as a tale-within-a-tale which once again conforms closely to the structure of the shorter periodical tales of gothic Egypt, in the same way as the narration of Forrester's Egyptian experience. Further, like Pharos, Tera's arrogance had provoked the wrath of her own gods, whose curse duly devolved upon anyone foolish enough to disturb her resting place (124). Unsurprisingly, and reminiscent of the Murray mummy rumour, the Trelawny expedition's homeward journey with Tera's remains was appropriately beset by misadventure and terror, which continued to plague the residence that housed Tera, and to haunt the team in their attempts to revivify her:

> 'Was it strange, then, that we had a superstitious feeling with regard to the dead Queen Tera and all belonging to her? Is it any wonder that it rests with us now, with a bewildering sense of some power outside ourselves or our comprehension? Will it be any wonder if it go down to the grave with us … [i]f, indeed, there be any graves for us who have robbed the grave!' (135)

Glover, reading *The Jewel of Seven Stars* through the burgeoning group of Victorian sciences and pseudo-sciences investigating human subjectivity, locates in the text, and particularly in its original ending, a hesitant 'sense that "muscular liberalism", despite its many imperial achievements, will finally be found wanting'.[190] This sense of vacillating uncertainty, of English inefficacy in the face of alien agency, is evident in the passage above, and most at odds with the outward confidence of imperial discourse. But it is, as Glover claims, exactly what theories of degeneration would lead us to expect, and links *The Jewel of Seven Stars* thematically to the more obvious imperial decline concerns of *Pharos the Egyptian* and *The Beetle*.

[190] Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals*, p. 85-6.

As the above analysis should additionally suggest, it is the trope of the curse that drives the novel's plot, structuring each significant episode: it retrospectively accounts for the misfortunes that occur throughout the opening trance sequence, and during the expeditions to Egypt, and it provides a rationale for the horrific conclusion to the experiment itself. The limited romantic elements, however, centre merely upon the narrator's regard for Margaret, who has a strong but ambiguously delineated connection with Tera. The romantic relationship between the mummy and the Englishman is thus indirect, and additionally problematic in that Tera's influence on Margaret is never cast as anything but insidious and transgressive. Indeed the very mechanics of Tera's influence themselves reveal the underlying invasion threat she embodies, as the narrator muses '[w]ith that astral body, space ceased to exist. The vast distance between London and Aswân became as naught' (206). A chilling thought in the context of the anti-British Islamic-nationalist sentiment known to be building in the region. Day's analysis of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* similarly stresses its deviation from romantic tropes, arguing that in it Stoker rewrote the seduction of the female mummy as rape. She, like many critics, focuses on the memorable scene preceding the experiment where Tera's perfectly preserved body is unwrapped beneath the intrusive gaze of Trelawny's team, and reads the rape metaphor of mummy unwrapping and tomb defilement as analogous to colonial exploitation.[191]

Coupled with its curse structure, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* contains three direct references to the Urabi revolt and its aftermath that signal the possible reading of Tera as a personification of modern Egyptian revenge for British colonial exploitation, although she is not conflated with modern Egyptians in the way that Pharos or the Beetle creature are. Commenting upon the general significance of the political contextualization of the narrative, the editor of the most recent authoritative edition of the novel, Kate Hebblethwaite, observes: 'Historical fact is intrinsic to the plot and expands the scope of the imaginary events and their suggested moral implications, making them more believable'.[192] As with so many supernatural Egyptian tales, the very date of the narrative is politically charged: according to the timeframe of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* Trelawny's

[191] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, p. 170-1.
[192] Hebblethwaite, intro., p. xxi.

initial expedition to Egypt takes place in the meaningful year of 1884, though this specific year is, in fact, only deducible in the light of later information. Instead, Stoker chooses to convey the timing of the expedition yet more significantly as 'soon after Arabi Pasha' (123). From this we can surmise that the Urabi revolt still retained such currency that two decades later in 1903 no fuller reference than 'Arabi Pasha' was necessary to evoke it. Stoker follows this reference with an allusion to the volatile situation pertaining in modern Egypt at this time: 'Egypt was no safe place for travellers, especially if they were English' (123). Hence the explorers were forced to employ an untrustworthy 'band of Arabs', as Stoker designates the hostile inhabitants of modern Egypt, to protect themselves from other 'chance marauding bands' (123). They also had to secure via bribery 'the consent and passive co-operation of the officials still friendly to Britain' (123).[193] In this way Stoker situates the pivotal episode of the novel – the violation of Tera's tomb – firmly within the context of the defining event of the modern Egyptian nationalist movement at that time.

This device of framing major narrative episodes with reference to the inimical state of modern Egypt clearly demonstrates Said's explication of the limiting effect of material British involvement in Egypt upon the imaginative play of British writers, and recurs throughout the text. When an Egyptologist colleague of Trelawny's later returns to Egypt seeking an over-looked treasure in Tera's tomb (in 1900 according to the narrative timeframe), the first thing he alludes to on arrival is the altered situation of Egypt: 'The country was now in a condition very different to that in which it had been sixteen years before; there was no need for troops or armed men' (141). The latter clause is presumably intended to imply that he did not require armed escort on this expedition. However, given its position in the text, it may alternatively be read as referring to the condition of Egypt, and thus, despite its assertion to the contrary, indirectly functioning as a reminder that Egypt was still very much under occupation by British armed forces. The third political reference occurs in response to Trelawny's protracted apologia for his experiment, which initiates the long climactic sequence of the novel. Margaret, in her bid to be included in

[193] Stoker may be a little confused as to the historical sequence of events here. His suggestion that sections of officialdom were overtly anti-British would imply that the expedition took place in the brief period of Urabi's regime 1881-2, rather than in 1884 when Baring was in unofficial but firm control of Egypt's cities. As noted earlier provincial unrest continued for a decade after the occupation, so the danger from marauding bands is likely.

the proceedings, harks back to 'that [first] journey of unknown danger to Egypt; [when] that country was then upset from end to end with war and the dangers that follow war' (163). As Trelawny has just stressed in the preceding paragraph, the 'great danger' (163) of undertaking the experiment, the danger of awakening the ancient Egyptian sorceress is closely associated with the threat of modern Egyptian nationalism. This conjunction is achieved by the overworded use of 'danger' – employed four times in quick succession in the paragraph concerning the experiment and three times in the ensuing account of Egyptian unrest.

Further narrative particulars that substantiate the Anglo-Egyptian political reading of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* concern Tera's connection with armed forces – close analysis reveals that her sovereignty depended not upon occult proficiency but upon military might, her father having 'taken the precaution of securing to his daughter the allegiance of the army' (128); subsequently this power is confirmed in the description of 'her, the raising of whose hand could hurl armies' (177). In the context of the military-led Urabi revolt, this repeated association between Tera and temporal, martial power, which is irrelevant to the plot, gains significance. Adding further grist to the mill is a possible connection between Tera and the all-important Suez Canal. Source work on Stoker's Egyptological references suggests that Tera may be partially based on Queen Hatasu, or Hatshepsut, a rare, historical female pharaoh, whose tomb had been discovered amidst great publicity by Howard Carter in 1902.[194] Popularised in the lectures of the prominent Egyptological fund-raiser, Amelia Edwards, Hatasu, like Tera, was said to have an interest in science, Edwards crediting her as the original creator of the Suez Canal: 'the scientific ancestress of M. de Lesseps'.[195] This connection evokes the pivotal issue of the rightful ownership of the canal and suggests an explanation for Tera's troubling potency.

Ultimately, as reiterated in each of the text's key episodes – the trance, the expeditions, and the experiment itself, the consequences for those who trespass into and despoil what is rightfully Tera's are deadly, and the land of Egypt is habitually depicted as a locus of danger which spills over into the lives and homes of respectable Londoners. This coupled with suggestions that Tera intended to stage her reincarnation in

[194] Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse: The True History*, p. 42.
[195] Cited in Glover, *Vampires Mummies and Liberals*, p. 90.

contemporary fin-de-siècle Britain signals a deep-seated underlying anxiety about the invasive consequences of the continuing British occupation:

> If, then, the Queen, intent on her resurrection under her own conditions, had, so to speak, waded to it through blood, what might she not do were her purpose thwarted? What terrible step might she not take to effect her wishes? … what were her wishes? … *In her record there was no expression of a love to be sought or found.* All we knew for certain was that she had set before her the object of resurrection, and that in it the North … was to have a special part.' (209) [My italics.]

As the emphasised sentence implies, Stoker was writing against the romantic mummy story, stressing the antagonistic nature of his supernatural Egyptian invader as well as associating her with unruly contemporary Egyptian forces. More broadly, reading Tera as representative of Egypt itself – and here she is akin to Ayesha – while she appears to hold out the promise of great, unassailable power, peril ultimately outweighs the promise as the terrible consequences that ensue for all who become involved with her demonstrate. Indeed, in the original ending of the novel, even Deane reads Tera as 'an incarnate Egypt [who] repays those who have revived and protected her with destruction', a horrific harbinger of 'empire's end'.[196]

Stoker researched and wrote much of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* sporadically over 1902-3 in a transitional period in his life during the wind down of London's well-known Lyceum Theatre, which he had managed for more than two decades. Despite his interest in Egypt and the familiarity with it the text evinces, he never visited the country and several of his biographers attribute his inspiration for the novel to youthful conversations with Sir William Wilde about the latter's Egyptological exploits.[197] However, as these took place nearly thirty years prior to the text's publication, it is worthwhile considering

[196] Deane, 'Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt', p. 406.

[197] These include Harry Ludlum, *A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Bram Stoker* (London: Fireside, 1962), p. 123; Daniel Farson, *The Man Who Wrote Dracula: A Biography of Bram Stoker* (London: Michael Joseph, 1975), p. 39; and Barbara Belford, *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula* (London: Weiden & Nicolson, 1996) who observes 'From the time Stoker heard Sir William Wilde expound on his Egyptian adventures, he had in mind a book about mummies and curses; he borrowed the plot from Wilde who had found a mummy outside a tomb and brought it back to Merrion Square' (297). Overall, as their titles imply, these works focus largely on Stoker's best-known work, and pay little attention to *Jewel*. Stoker himself possessed a library of popular Egyptological works, and *Jewel* was particularly influenced by those of E. A. Wallis Budge, as William Hughes elaborates in *Beyond Dracula: Bram Stoker's Fiction and its Cultural Context* (London: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 37-8.

other factors which may have been at play. William Hughes, examining the cultural context of Stoker's oeuvre, argues for him as ideally placed, in the milieu of the Lyceum, 'to observe the current preoccupations of late nineteenth century English society'.[198] Glover, reading Stoker's fiction against the crisis in liberalism within domestic British politics, argues for his 'consistent concern with questions of nationhood' and recommends that 'his writings also need to be placed' in the 'wider imperial context'.[199] And indeed, at the time Stoker was writing, as discussed earlier in this chapter, it was well-known that within Egypt the nationalist movement was undergoing a period of resurgence under the charismatic Kamil. Contemporaneously, on the level of great power relationships, the long-standing French claims on Egypt had precipitated fraught, clandestine negotiations between France and Britain to regularise their possessions in Africa. These finally resulted in the Entente Cordiale in 1904 after which France's renunciation of any claim to Egypt gave the British considerable relief, but during the preceding period in 1902-3 relations were strained.[200] That Stoker had a handle on the Egyptian political situation is evinced by his easy reference to 'Arabi Pasha' and familiarity with the ensuing turmoil, which also suggests he would have kept abreast of related current affairs while writing *The Jewel of Seven Stars*.

From the point of view of this study, Stoker's own Irish coloniality may be put forward as a key factor underpinning the depiction of an invasion threat in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and informing the text's engagement with modern Egyptian nationalism. A middle-class Anglo-Irish Protestant brought up in Dublin, Stoker was another hybrid product of the colonial project. And, like Boothby, he was one who initially followed a family tradition of colonial service, having worked as a clerk in the British colonial administration of Ireland before he moved to the imperial metropolis in his thirties. Like his fellow migrant colonial authors, Stoker's relocation to London added a further layer of complexity to his already hybrid consciousness, Glover claiming that 'his writings reveal the competing attractions of different national identities, suggesting a tension between his sense of his own local Protestant Irish origins and his desire for a more

[198] Hughes, *Beyond Dracula*, p. 8.
[199] Glover, *Vampires Mummies and Liberals*, pp. 8, 26.
[200] T. G. Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind: The Making of British Foreign Policy, 1865-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 287.

formal imperial-metropolitan ideal of citizenship'.[201] This resonates with the conflict discerned in Boothby between the Australian colonial and English gentleman aspects of his identity, as elaborated in chapter one.

In recent critical studies more attention has been paid to the impact of this hybridity upon Stoker's work. Jarlath Killeen, building on the works of other leading theorists of Irish cultural history, places Stoker within the Irish Gothic tradition, which though diverse and disjointed, was largely the preserve of Anglo-Irish authors in the nineteenth century. As Killeen articulates, 'the burden of colonial history ... is one of the main issues Irish Gothic revolves around' and in it 'descending Ascendancy' anxieties concerning what was perceived as their precarious position within an increasingly nationalist Catholic Ireland were given free rein.[202] Regarding the 'Irish Question' (the euphemistic epithet mirroring that applied to the Egyptian situation), Stoker's complex, multifaceted subjectivity prompted a somewhat ambivalent response. On the one hand, as Doyle came to be, Stoker was a firm but cautious adherent of Irish Home Rule, which would devolve a measure of power largely into the hands of the Anglo-Irish political elite; a position which put him at odds with establishment London opinion.[203] On the other hand, he was no supporter of the militant Fenian movement which had operated a bombing campaign in England during his first decade there, and which sought a complete upheaval of the Irish political system in direct conflict with the interests of his class.[204]

As touched upon in the introduction to this study, Daly's analysis of Stoker's first novel, *The Snake's Pass* (1890), foregrounds the impact of Stoker's coloniality and the submerged context of the ongoing Irish Land Wars on producing what he deems that text's irresolute, uncontained ending. Daly treats the novel 'as a vehicle for Anglo-Irish political fantasies ... relating to the Land War of the 1880s', which was then considered a

---

[201] Glover, *Vampires Mummies and Liberals*, pp. 23.

[202] Jarlath Killeen, 'Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction', *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, 1 (2006), online at irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/jarlath.html, 13 Nov 2008.

[203] Joseph Valente, *Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood* (University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 22-3, 40-1. Interestingly, Valente considers Stoker to be Anglo-Celtic, rather than Anglo-Irish, based on his mother's partially 'Celtic' Irish origins (16).

[204] As Bruce Stewart argues, Stoker disliked both the parasitic, elite landlord class and the militant Fenian movement, viewing both as atavistic, anti-modern and detrimental to Ireland's progress, see 'Bram Stoker's *Dracula*: Possessed by the Spirit of the Nation', in Bruce Stewart (ed.), *That Other World: The Supernatural and the Fantastic in Irish Literature and its Contexts*, 2 (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1998), pp. 65-83.

formidable threat to British rule in Ireland.[205] But the vast majority of critical attention has been paid to tracing the impact of Stoker's Irish background on *Dracula*.[206] Arata's insightful explication of *Dracula* as a reverse colonisation text, as well as placing the novel in the immediate historical context of the resonant 'Eastern Question', also briefly considers the intersection of Stoker's status as a 'transplanted Irishman' and the threat embodied by the Transylvanian vampire. He suggests the Count could 'conceivably have aroused seldom dormant fears of an Irish uprising', and that he can be read not only as suggestive of confrontational Irish nationalism, but also as a reflection of Britain's imperial exploitation of Ireland.[207] Though Glover reads its anxieties as indicative of the underside of liberalism, the general fear of an ungovernable populace, his analysis of *Dracula* similarly suggests a reading of the Count and his outlaw gypsy followers as the barbarian elements of Irish society that Stoker and his class feared.[208] Joseph Valente provides a complex psycho-postcolonial reading that posits a conflicted, overdetermined Irishness for Dracula as an embodiment both of Stoker's critique of the parasitic Irish landlord class and fears of militant Fenianism with its cult of blood sacrifice and resurrection.[209]

These interpretations are strengthened by the gothic imagination demonstrably at play in the endless caricatures of Irish nationalism then circulating in *Punch*. As elaborated by L. Perry Curtis, contemporaneously with the rise of militant Fenianism, the magazine had from the 1860s started to radically simianize and bestialise its imagery of Irish nationalism, making its representatives into 'monstrous brutes without a touch of

---

[205] Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle*, pp. 56, 68-9.

[206] Catherine Wynne provides a useful survey of this line of criticism, noting readings of Dracula 'as a fictional embodiment of Charles Stewart Parnell, the messianic leader of the Irish Home Rule movement', whose brand of nationalism was not supported by Stoker according to Glover (12). See *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002), pp. 10-11 and notes. Other relevant readings include Kellie Donovan Wixson '*Dracula*: An Anglo-Irish Gothic Novel', *Dracula: The Shade and the Shadow* (Westcliff-on-Sea: Desert Island Books, 1998) and Declan Kiberd, *Irish Classics* (London: Granta Books, 2000).

[207] Arata, *Fictions of Loss*, pp. 119-20.

[208] Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals*, pp. 40-1, 46, 66.

[209] Valente, *Dracula's Crypt*, pp. 55-9. It is interesting to note in this context a connection between these readings of *Dracula* and the work of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, the mid-century Anglo-Irish writer of Irish Gothic widely acknowledged to be influential upon Stoker. In his forerunning vampire tale, 'Carmilla' (1872), the seductive, intrusive vampire will disclose little about her origins save that '[h]er family was very ancient and noble [and] ... [h]er home lay in the direction of the west'. This ties in with embattled Anglo-Irish notions of hostile marginal Irish alterity residing west of the civilised pale. Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, 'Carmilla', *In a Glass Darkly* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1999), p. 263.

humanity'.[210] What is also appreciable in this trend is a gothicization – as well as becoming ape-like, the Fenian stereotype gained pointed fangs, and was alternatively represented in explicit supernatural form. After the Phoenix Park murders in 1882, *Punch* produced a notorious caricature, 'The Irish Frankenstein', depicting a pure monster clutching blood-stained daggers; and in 1885 it followed this with 'The Irish "Vampire"' representing the National League as a vampire feeding upon the prostrate figure of Hibernia.[211] Overall the body of analysis concerning the impact of Stoker's background upon his work, with its elaboration of a vulnerability in the Anglo-Irish psyche concerning its position vis-à-vis radical Irish nationalism, elucidates why the otherwise remote phenomenon of Egyptian nationalism may have been particularly evocative for him, leading to his conflation of a supernatural ancient menace with modern rebels.

Given the huge body of criticism devoted to reading *Dracula* in an Irish context, surprisingly little attention has been paid to questions of Irishness in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, but it too may be usefully examined from this perspective. Lisa Hopkins observes the general significance of place in Stoker's fiction, claiming that 'specific locations in Stoker often function effectively as tropes, offering, as it were, dis-locations of the familiar and expected and revealing strange new levels of meaning'.[212] Though she is writing in relation to Stoker's treatment of women, the observation may equally be applied to his views on Irish politics and the significance of Egypt. Writing on *The Mystery of the Sea* (1902) and *Dracula*, Hopkins holds that 'setting does not simply function as a backdrop … [it] becomes a miniature melting pot in which a variety of tensions between different races and nationalities can ultimately be resolved by displacing nationalised conflicts onto gendered ones'.[213] Certainly something of this process can also be seen at work in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, especially in the gendering of the climactic mummy unwrapping scene, though, mirroring the impasse in Egyptian affairs, no resolution is ultimately possible here. Considering the figure of the mummy in Stoker's work, Hopkins observes in passing, 'mummies could be seen as bringing together two of Stoker's most deep-rooted concerns, female power and the position of

[210] L. Perry Curtis Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature,* rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), p. 45.
[211] 'The Irish Frankenstein', *Punch* (20 May 1882) and 'The Irish "Vampire"', *Punch* (24 Oct 1885).
[212] Lisa Hopkins, *Bram Stoker: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 91, 94.
[213] Ibid., p. 95.

Ireland';[214] thus she is hinting at a potential connection between Tera's unruly Egyptian agency and Irish unrest. If, as Glover similarly argues, the locations in *Dracula* and its putative sequel, *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909), function as displaced or sublimated versions of Ireland,[215] it is tempting to see a parallel process at work in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and to read gothicized Egyptian rebelliousness as further emblematic of the militant strain of Irish nationalism that Stoker found objectionable.

Certainly in contemporary imperial discourse, it was habitual to view the militant nationalist movements in Ireland, Egypt and also India as comparable evils, and that the Egyptian nationalists had adapted the rallying cry 'Egypt for the Egyptians' from their Irish counterparts was well known. *Punch*, for example, connects Ireland and Egypt repeatedly in its ongoing lampooning of colonial problems, and strikingly so in the cartoons shown in fig.s 13 and 14, both published within a month of each other.



Fig. 13. 'The Egyptian Question.'
Punch, 110 (28 Mar 1896), p. 161.

Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

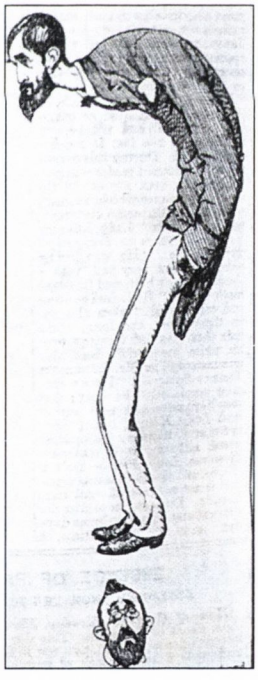


Fig. 14. 'The Irish Question'
Punch, 110 (4 Apr 1896), p. 168.

Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

[214] Ibid., p. 24.
[215] Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals*, pp. 13, 33-5.

Though the symbolic representative of the Egyptian Question is a revivified mummy just emerging from its wrappings in fig. 13, while the Irish Question is represented by the flesh-and-blood Irish parliamentary nationalist John Dillon in fig. 14, the same visual register is adopted in both. It is arguable that Stoker's hybridised Anglo-Irish subjectivity made him particularly receptive to this kind of discursive proximity.

Although Arata does not pursue in any depth the implications of authorial coloniality upon his reverse colonisation theme, it is highly significant that the text he considers to contain its definitive articulation is *Dracula*, a gothic novel written by a colonial author. This connection is not coincidental, but paradigmatic of the reverse colonisation and gothicized invasion narrative in general. As well as in the work of Boothby, Haggard and Stoker, it is very evident in the work of Doyle as Catherine Wynne's consideration of the impact of Doyle's colonial heritage upon his writing elucidates (as discussed previously in chapter one). According to Wynne 'the intrusion of the Gothic in Doylean texts is established as the voice of the colonial and the marginalised that haunts the narratives that tease out the tensions between an imperial and cultural centre and the dissident and dissenting margins.'[216] The gothicized invasion threat recurs across Doyle's lesser-known works – as well as in 'Lot No. 249', it is notably evident in such Indian-themed tales as *Our Lady of Death* (1887) in which an Anglo-Indian governess and secret member of the Thuggee cult ritually murders an English child under her care in Yorkshire; *The Mystery of Cloomber* (1889) in which British army officers who murder a Buddhist priest in India are led in a mesmeric trance to their death in a bog in the Scottish highlands; and 'The Brown Hand' (1899) in which a British surgeon is haunted on retirement to England by a Muslim man whose hand he had amputated in India. Though Wynne considers Doyle's coloniality to manifest itself in a generalised use of gothic conventions, as this chapter has attempted to elucidate, it was in the specific figure of the gothic invader that the inversion-inflected concerns of colonial authors frequently found expression, thus contributing to one of the late-Victorian gothic mode's most defining tropes.[217]

[216] Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle*, p. 9.
[217] For more on the gothic in general in Doyle's work, see Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle.*

Killeen's understanding of the Irish gothic is further instructive for the analysis of the gothic version of the invasion narrative undertaken in this chapter in two ways. Firstly it confirms the links between a fractured, hyphenated colonial subjectivity – in this case that of the Anglo-Irish – and a predilection for the gothic mode; and secondly it foregrounds the role of paranoia in producing gothic texts. He stresses that while '[t]he very broadly defined Protestant population was still in social and political control' what was crucial was that 'this was … a control that was under constant threat, and which always seemed on the verge of slipping away,' concluding 'Gothic, in truth, may not belong to the dispossessed but to the paranoid possessors'.[218] Though it goes without saying that the Irish colonial system had its own history and peculiarities, broadly speaking the analysis in this study demonstrates how at the colonial margins, in the zones of contact, the fear of being swamped by the colonial other was a powerful component of the dominant psychology. Following Killeen's logic that 'the fear of marginalisation – rather than marginalisation itself' was central to the Irish gothic tradition, it can be argued that paranoia concerning invasion, rather than the material likelihood of invasion was the driver in the body of popular fiction by colonial authors that depicted it, gothic and otherwise. And as Doyle affirms, concerning the legendary fate of Sir Charles in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), the effects of sustained fear can be just as deadly as an actual threat: existence in a state of 'constant anxiety ... however chimerical the cause ... might be', will have a 'serious effect' on the health of an organism, be it individual or empire.[219]

Returning to the body of supernatural Egyptian tales that have formed the focus of the analysis in this chapter, it is no wonder, given the conceptions of the Suez Canal as the imperial spinal cord and Egypt as the empire's Achilles' heel, that the paranoia concerning this vulnerable location infected the fiction of many popular authors with colonial perspectives like Stoker, Doyle, Haggard, Boothby and Marsh, causing them to unleash upon the metropolis a host of monstrous Egyptian invaders. And while the plethora of supernatural Egyptian narratives avidly consumed at the fin de siècle are clearly part of a response of cultural anxiety to the imperial dilemma posed by Britain's

[218] Killeen, 'Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction'.
[219] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902; London: Penguin, 1981), p. 23.

need to control the Suez Canal, it is also possible that the subgenre had a productive cultural effect of its own, albeit one which is hard to quantify. In her general examination of the fin-de-siècle gothic revival, Kelly Hurley observes the distinctly productive, as well as reactive, nature of this 'out-of-control' discourse, with its tendency 'not only to manage anxieties ... but also to aggravate them'.[220] More specifically, Deane, considering the potential influence of the romantic mummy trope, suggests: 'In the same way Orientalist assumptions about the Middle East cemented Britain's sense of superiority (and hence its imperial mandate), the prolonged eroticism of mummy fiction helped to sustain popular interest in the particular mysteries of the veiled protectorate'.[221]

In moving towards a conclusion on the cultural work performed by the fiction of gothic Egypt, it is important to note that the representation in the 1896 *Punch* cartoon of the Egyptian Question as a recently revivified mummy (fig. 13) demonstrates that non-fictional discourse on Egyptian affairs could be influenced by gothic literary tropes. This begs the question as to whether the insistent popular association of Egypt with the supernatural affected contemporary attitudes to and even foreign policy concerning Egypt. As noted earlier, commentators with Egyptian experience like Milner and Wolseley's staff-officer seem driven to the use of supernatural imagery to express the gravity of the Egyptian problem; a practice which recurs throughout *Punch's* treatment of it. During the 1896 Dongola campaign, the magazine ran a cartoon depicting the ghost of Gordon hovering in the desert cautioning John Bull to 'Remember!'.[222] And an earlier article written at the height of the Urabi revolt in 1882, and echoing a mid-century Poe satire, has an ancient Egyptian mummy offering an ironic justification for Egyptian rebellion based on the inept Anglo-French financial interference in Egypt that had preceded it.[223]

Given this cross-over between fictional and non-fictional discourse, it is arguable that following the opening of the Suez Canal with the attendant opportunities and dangers for

[220] Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, pp. 6-7.
[221] Deane, 'Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt', p. 407.
[222] 'In the Desert!: Shade of General Gordon (to John Bull) "Remember!"', *Punch*, 110 (28 Mar 1896), p. 150. A subsequent verse on Egypt in a long poem satirising ongoing colonial crises has a sphinx stand in as representative of the country: 'To make things more chaotic – (Oh, destiny despotic!) – / The Egyptian Sphinx, Drew into kinks, Our policy Nilotic', 'Curzon and Crises', *Punch*, 110 (11 Apr 1896), p. 169.
[223] 'Some More Words with a Mummy (Communicated by the Spirit of E. A. Poe)', *Punch*, 83 (15 July 1882), p. 22-3.

Britain, the iconic figure of the vengeful mummy came to act as a signifier for Egypt in the popular imagination. This figure may have fuelled the paranoia concerning Britain's hold on the vital territory, lurking at the margins of debate on the Egyptian Question and disseminating its concerns to a far wider audience than just those with a close interest in Egyptian affairs. On the one hand, this threatening image of Egypt justified the aggressive stance of the pro-imperialists who argued for security reasons for a long-term presence in Egypt. On the other hand, by insistently envisioning terrible consequences attendant upon continuing occupation, it suggested the advisability of withdrawal. From this perspective, one reason for the successful transition of the vengeful mummy of fin-de-siècle fiction to enduring cinematic icon of the twentieth century may lie in the fact that the Egyptian Question continued to haunt Britain into the twentieth century, especially following the 1919 Egyptian Revolution and the granting of limited autonomy in 1922. And perhaps a deep identification between this figure of a fallen civilisation and both the fears and realities of British imperial decline that began in the late nineteenth century continued to resonate in the mid-twentieth century with the 1956 Suez Crisis. Certainly a spate of British mummy films ran in the late 1950s into the 1960s, and since then, with empire well and truly fallen, the mummy has been largely relegated to children's popular culture.[224] Back in 1875, when Britain had originally gained a controlling interest in the canal, it was 'prophesied that the national obsession with this vulnerable waterway would prove disastrous to British interests. John Bull was bent on "*Suez-cide!*"' as an admonitory satire proclaimed.[225] And it is interesting to note in this context that the loss of the canal and the botched attempt to retake it during the notorious Suez Crisis is often considered the symbolic moment of the death of the British Empire.

Gothic narratives of retributive supernatural Egyptian invasion, then, can be viewed as part of a generalised metropolitan discourse of imperial unease, which was, amongst

[224] Day, *The Mummy's Curse*, chap. 3. The series of British mummy films is the well-known Hammer Horror series, the first of which was *The Mummy* (dir. Terence Fisher, 1959). Also, contemporaneously with the Egyptian Revolution, a cinematic version of *The Beetle* (dir. Alexander Butler) was released in Britain in 1919. For a general account of early cinematic representation of the mummy see Richard Freeman, '*The Mummy* in context', *European journal of American studies*, 1 (2009), online at http://ejas.revues.org/7566, 30 June 2010.

[225] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 143. The phrase in the inner quotations is the title of an 1876 satire by J. R. Jeffries subtitled *Or, How Miss Britannia Bought a Dirty Puddle and Lost Her Sugar-Plums*.

other things, a response to the emergence of Egyptian nationalism and other similar counter-colonial movements worldwide. Ever pertinent, Richard Marsh's work contains yet another histrionic instance of this unease which additionally provides a transition between the genre of supernatural Egyptian invasion under consideration here and that of Far Eastern oriental invasion that we are moving on to investigate in chapter three. After the Boxer Rebellion against foreign interference in China in 1901, Marsh attempted to recapture the success of *The Beetle* with a very similarly-plotted multi-narrator tale of invasive Chinese revenge, the somewhat obscurely-titled *The Joss: A Reversion*. Pursuing the seemingly incredible strategy of trying to outdo the sensationalism of *The Beetle*, in *The Joss* Marsh works in a multiplicity of degenerate, orientalised monstrosities, not least of which is the hybrid abomination of the eponymous Joss, an English colonial misfit who has been transformed via a process of mutilation into the living deity of a Chinese sect.

In a twist on *The Moonstone* theme of stolen colonial treasure, this living idol absconds from his dubious life on the Chinese coast back to London bringing enraged sectaries in hot pursuit after him, in a manner additionally reminiscent of *Dr Nikola's Experiment*. Once again Marsh is relying heavily on a plethora of simplistic assumptions concerning oriental infamy, from those concerning Indian *sati* to Pacific Island savagery to Chinese idolatry, to sustain the intense atmosphere of threat in the tale. However, what is particularly pertinent here is that he also combines the curse plot of the Egyptian gothic with a Chinese invasion threat. The chief vengeful Chinese acolyte, encountered on a London street, is described in the by-now very familiar terms of deformity and great age, 'a walking skeleton … the cheekbones … starting through his skin which was shrivelled and yellow…'.[226] And further, the threat embodied in this Chinese invader is multiply Egyptianised: in the description of his dress: 'a piece of double width yellow canvas cloth … wrapped around him, as … it is around mummies'; in the vehement curses he reiterates against those who aided the Joss's escape; and in the ensuing formulaic series of misfortunes which dogs the Joss's homeward voyage.[227] Most tellingly, on running out of coal and the necessary money to pay their passage home via Suez, the ship's captain

[226] Richard Marsh, *The Joss: A Reversion* (1901; Chicago: Valancourt Books, 2007), p. 11.
[227] Ibid., pp. 11, 224, 238.

makes the politically-charged lament, 'There was no Canal for us'; the curse of a Chinese invader thus putting the Suez Canal effectively beyond the reach of a British colonial endeavour.[228]

The next chapter will explore the emergence of a host of similar, if more explicit, so-called 'yellow peril' narratives in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion. But it will focus primarily on uncovering their pre-Rebellion antecedents, particularly in the output of metropolitan-migrant colonial authors.

[228] Ibid., p. 248.

CHAPTER 3

THE 'YELLOW PERIL': EAST-WEST COLONIAL RELATIONS AND M. P. SHIEL'S ORIENTAL INVASIONS

O Europe, that so long hath spent thy spleen
In tough trans-barrier battlings …
Beware this menace, dire and unforeseen,
That big with rally of onslaught, ere it cease,
Calamitous through thy lands, at fate's caprice,
Mongolian millions wildly would convene!

Half yours the blame, Britannia, and half yours,
Omnivorous Russia, since your greeds dared wake
These torpid swarms to furious flame of ill!
Yet shun Japan's conciliatory lures,
Lest she, the old kith of China, turn and make
This loathsome Yellow Danger yellower still!

Edgar Fawcett, 'The Yellow Danger' (1903).[1]

At the same time that concern over the impact of British colonial policy in Egypt distilled into the seamy gothic offshoot of supernatural Egyptian invasion tales, an intricate interplay of eastern and western colonial factors combined to inspire a comparable Asian version of the invasion threat. Out of a complex of fears surrounding both the tensions caused by European colonial expansion in the Far East and the perceived threat of global Chinese emigration developed the myth of the 'yellow peril'. In unemotive terms, the yellow peril referred to the possibility that the moribund Chinese empire might experience a political or economic revival and via the numerical strength of its population gain predominance over the white, imperial Western nations. 'Are we or the Chinese to be masters?', pondered the editor of a topical periodical in measured tones, 'This is the question which the Western nations are addressing to the Yellow Sphinx'; and the use of

[1] Edgar Fawcett, 'The Yellow Danger', *Collier's Weekly* ([U.S.A.] 18 Aug 1900); reprinted in *Voices and Visions: Later Verses by Edgar Fawcett* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1903).

Egyptian imagery here is also striking.[2] But at its core, yellow perilism was a visceral doctrine of race hatred, predicated on the belief that the 'white' and 'yellow' races could not co-exist, that one group must ultimately annihilate the other, and that if the West did not take heed it would be 'overrun'.

This is the hysterical vision of racial Armageddon articulated lugubriously in the objectionable Edgar Fawcett poem quoted as epigraph to this chapter, a vision which also implicates Japan in its dire scenario of furious yellow swarms. Providing an apt illustration of the anxious tendency in imperial discourse towards inversion, the yellow peril myth took shape at the very time that British and European incursion into China was entering the accelerated phase which culminated in the Boxer Rebellion in 1900-01. This violent Chinese uprising against foreign interference gave further impetus to the emerging popular conception of an awakening, vengeful Chinese dragon whose 'Mongolian millions' were poised on the brink of 'calamitous' 'onslaught' in Europe. Simultaneously British colonial labour requirements were in reality driving the mass migration of Chinese indentured labourers across the empire and particularly into the settler colonies of South Africa and Australia where they threatened the lower end of the white labour market. Though very few Chinese migrants had arrived in Britain in the 1890s, fuelled by strained Sino-British relations and mounting hysteria in the colonies, the fear of oriental invasion was starting to take hold in the metropolis by the end of the decade.

Ideally placed to articulate this fear was popular author M. P. Shiel, a colonial migrant to London from the West Indies who made a minor but distinctive contribution to many of the popular literary genres emerging at the fin de siècle, though he never attained the level of success he craved. In particular, Shiel was an influential pioneer of early British science fiction, his landmark text the dystopian, post-apocalyptic *The Purple Cloud* (1901) which sees a lethal volcanic gas cloud apparently reduce humanity to a single remaining survivor. But to Shiel also goes the dubious honour of being the first fiction writer to popularise the yellow peril theme in Britain with a racialised take on the future-war version of the invasion tale that dominated early science fiction. Shiel

[2] 'Some Notable Books of the Month: The Yellow Puzzle and the Russian Peril', rev. of A. R. Colquhoun, *China in Transformation* (1898), *The Review of Reviews*, 17 (Aug 1898), p. 202.

depicted an oriental invasion threat in three lurid novels, *The Yellow Danger* (1898), *The Yellow Wave* (1905) and *The Dragon* (1913; reissued as *The Yellow Peril* (1929)), and it is the contention of this chapter that an interplay of factors in his colonial background may particularly have disposed him towards adopting the yellow peril theme. Following the conceptual framework set out in the Introduction, the embattled sense of 'being a White Man' in a non-white society can to some extent be applied to Shiel as an ostensibly white West Indian author, with all the attendant racial paranoia it entailed. He also shared the broad sense of the importance of global imperial affairs that the trajectory of peripheral to metropolitan emigration often seems to have engendered in white colonial authors. The first section of this chapter, 'A "half-green West Indian"', thus explores Shiel's West Indian upbringing and subsequent move to London, placing particular emphasis on teasing out some of the complexities inherent in the Caribbean situation.

Once Shiel reached London, this colonial background, combined with a topical series of Far Eastern colonial crises and the pressures of writing for the fictional serial trade, seems to have provided him with the impetus to begin writing his first oriental invasion tale in 1898. Setting a pattern for many of the tales which were to follow, *The Yellow Danger* is set against the backdrop of the unfolding European scramble for concessionary territory in China and exhibits an intensity of racial calumniation that is staggering. The second section of this chapter, 'Anglo-Chinese relations and the "yellow peril"', investigates the origins of the yellow peril myth in Britain and the role played by Shiel's science fictional tales of future conflict in articulating it. It pays particular attention to elucidating the relationship between the series of crises and 'little' wars arising out of Europe's troubled colonial relationship with China and the plotting of Shiel's oriental invasion extravaganzas.

In addition to this combination of colonial-metropolitan factors, there may have been something more specific in Shiel's Caribbean background that influenced his choice of the Chinese as vengeful invaders; and this is explored in the final section of this chapter, 'The Caribbean component of an orientalist myth'. Like Australia and South Africa, several of Britain's Caribbean colonies had experienced a small but significant influx of Chinese indentured labourers into their plantations, as had some neighbouring Spanish Caribbean colonies where a number of bloody uprisings had taken place. As discussed in

chapter one, in Australia the press and popular novelists had whipped public opinion into an anti-Chinese frenzy as early as the late-1880s, and certainly a marked tendency to demonise the Chinese characterises the Anglo-Australian Guy Boothby's series of Dr Nikola novels (1895-1901). Following an investigation into the largely overlooked history of the Chinese presence in the Caribbean region, the final section of this chapter will contend that Shiel's youth in a colonial society that had also experienced Chinese immigration may have triggered a similar impulse in him. The ploy of depicting the Chinese as racial antagonists adopted by both of these colonial authors when writing for the domestic English market may have been designed to shake the insular English population out of their complacency by exposing the peril that they felt already menaced the empire's peripheries. Their role in helping to circulate the yellow peril myth at a time when China was politically weak and Chinese immigration of no significance in the metropolis demonstrates the capacity of invasion fiction to be productive, rather than merely reflective, of social anxiety. Indeed, so influential were Shiel's doomsday scenarios that, according to David Glover, a passage from *The Yellow Danger* may have been quoted by Lord Roberts in a parliamentary debate on the nation's defence budget.[3]

By 1912, as Shiel's career declined and the fear of oriental invasion had become more established, the yellow peril mantle passed to Sax Rohmer, another product of the colonial margins as the child of working-class Irish immigrant parents to Britain. His enduring Fu-Manchu character, 'the yellow peril incarnate', took the deplorable theme to new heights of popularity and kept the notion of white-versus-yellow race war alive well into the twentieth century. The genesis of the yellow peril theme in the late-nineteenth century, however, forms the focus of this chapter, which will open with an account of the origins of the writer who was the first to give it popular fictional expression in Britain – the West Indian immigrant Shiel.

[3] David Glover, '*Die gelbe gefahr, le péril jaune*, the yellow peril: the geopolitics of a fear' in Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy (ed.s), *Fear: Essays on the meaning and experience of fear* (Dublin: Four Courts Press: 2007), p. 50.

A 'half-green West Indian': Shiel's Caribbean origins

Born in 1865 to a father of Anglo-Irish descent and mother of probable slave origins in the British Crown Colony of Montserrat, Matthew Phipps Shiel could be considered a quintessential product of British colonialism in the nineteenth century. Part of the Leeward Islands in Britain's West Indian colonies, Montserrat, like much of the rest of the Caribbean, had a distinctive, multi-faceted society derived from centuries of European colonialism, augmented by turbulent climate and topography.[4] The impact of his island origins, this cultural-geographical maelstrom, on Shiel's own idiosyncratic and multiple colonial subjectivity cannot be over-estimated and warrants a measure of critical scrutiny. Indeed in one of the few nominally autobiographical pieces penned by Shiel, he dramatises the moment of his island birth thusly: 'I was born at the moment of an earthquake and a storm, or, rather, these were born at the moment of me. ... And, with lullaby rough enough, this mixture of Heaven and Earth and Hell which I call "I", and sometimes "We", came out, and began to cry'.[5]

From a social perspective, the Caribbean was a highly distinctive region because its indigenous populations had been wiped out following the initial fifteenth century contact with Europeans, and replaced over the following centuries with the iniquitous, tri-partite structure of European planters, African slaves, and a growing, intermediary mixed race segment, resulting in what Shalini Puri terms 'the hybrid reality of the Americas'.[6] The middle, 'mulatto' tier was largely derived from the illegitimate children of plantation owners and female slaves, born out of the long-standing practice of concubinage – those with darker skins tending to remain bound to the plantations, the lighter-coloured managing to develop into an independent, trading middle-class. It is to this middle group

[4] In 1866 Montserrat gave up its limited representative system to become a crown colony governed directly from Britain. From 1871 to 1956 Montserrat was also part of the British Federal Colony of the Leeward Islands, and therefore partially administered from Antigua and St Kitts. For a history of the Leeward Islands in the post-emancipation era see Douglas Hall, *Five of the Leewards 1834-1870* (St Laurence, Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1971).

[5] M. P. Shiel, 'About Myself', *The Candid Friend* (17 Aug 1901), p. 630; reprinted in A. Reynolds Morse (ed.), *The Works of M. P. Shiel,* 3 vols, (Cleveland, OH: Reynolds Morse Foundation, 1979-80), III, pp. 667-668.

[6] Shalini Puri, *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism and Cultural Hybridity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 53. For an overview of the history of colonialism in the Caribbean see Douglas Hall, *The Caribbean Experience: An Historical Survey 1450-1960* (Kingston: Heinemann Educational, 1982) and Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969* (London: Deutsch, 1970).

that the term creole is frequently applied, but the process of creolization was social and cultural as well as biological, affecting all racial groups, as Barbadian author Edward Kamau Braithwaite articulates:

> Started as a result of slavery and therefore in the first instance involving black and white, European and African, in a fixed superiority/inferiority relationship, it tended first to the culturation of white and black to the new Caribbean environment; and ... because of the terms and conditions of slavery, to the acculturation of black to white norms. ... [and] at the same time [a] significant interculturation ... between these two elements.[7]

As Braithwaite's account indicates the effects of creolization were manifold and resulted in all groups identifying with their Caribbean birthplace, in the privileging of white European culture to ensure white dominance, and consequently in black and coloured groups internalising negative colonial views of themselves. But as Braithwaite and others emphasise, despite the fundamental inequalities of the relationship this was not simply a one-way process. Puri explains, 'Caribbean hybridity is the result of accommodation and transformation between unequal social elements',[8] thus the white minority were fundamentally impacted by their experience of colonial contact as well. Speaking of Barbados, where Shiel attended secondary school, Karl Watson posits that given the small size and large population of the island, '[i]ntimate contact with slaves on a daily basis over several generations had hastened the process of creolisation for the island's whites' to the point where 'mentality, language, dietary habits, body language and musical tastes differentiated the native-born white from the expatriate'.[9] And the same forces had also shaped the society of the neighbouring, but far smaller society of Montserrat.

While the sugar-producing West Indian colonies had been a key source of wealth for Britain in the eighteenth century – the jewel in its colonial crown – by the nineteenth

[7] Edward Kamau Braithwaite, *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Savacou, 1974), p. 11.
[8] Puri, *The Caribbean Postcolonial*, p. 65.
[9] Karl Watson, 'White Politics and Creole Consciousness in Barbadian Slave Society, 1800-34', in Howard Johnson & Karl Watson (ed.s), *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1998), p. 21.

century this had ceased to be the case. The development of other colonial sources of sugar had undermined the Caribbean monopoly and, following the Emancipation Act of 1834, the abolition of slavery in all British colonies eliminated the free labour on which the plantation system was based.[10] Though emancipation fell far short of its initial promise, its impact was profound and by Shiel's time the islands were in a state of severe economic decline and significant social transition.[11] From a metropolitan perspective, the once prized West Indian colonies had become a shocking site of degeneration and disorder, as Piers Brendon observes: 'once sugar had been dethroned, they [the West Indies] became, in Joseph Chamberlain's phrase, "the Empire's darkest slum,"' Chamberlain advocating urgent intervention lest they 'fall into anarchy and ruin'.[12] Journalist Lafcadio Hearn's account of an 1888 Caribbean tour relates the 'tropical ruin' encountered on Grenada in luxurious prose, deeming it exemplary of Caribbean 'depression' in the 'decay of the sugar industry': '[I]n this silence of mouldering streets, this melancholy of abandoned dwellings ... there is the suggestion of what any West Indian port might become when the resources of the island had been exhausted and all ... left to rot down into the green water'.[13] In this lengthy period of depression the certainties of the old social system disintegrated as many of the white planter class emigrated to Europe, the growing coloured middle-class struggled to assume greater economic and social standing, and the large ex-slave population continued to suffer as low-wage labourers or unviable small-holders. This produced a demographic shift, reducing the already small white population to tiny numbers vis-à-vis the black and coloured majority. As an observer of 1903 Jamaican society put it, the degenerate descendants of the

[10] Piers Brendon observes that the price of sugar, the largest single imported commodity into Britain until 1820, fell by 75 percent between 1805 and 1850, see *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), pp. 14, 601.

[11] See Bridget Brereton and Kevin A. Yelvington (ed.s), *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Postemancipation Social and Cultural History* (Kingston: The Press University of the West Indies (UWI), 1999) for an account of the effect of emancipation on Caribbean society.

[12] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 601; Chamberlain cited ibid., p. 603.

[13] Lafcadio Hearn, 'A Midsummer Trip to the West Indies', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 77:460 (Sep 1888), p. 627; online at *Cornell University Library Making of America Collection*, http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=harp;idno=harp0077-4, 4 Nov 2010.

plantocracy 'today form a mere handful of white and coloured families who have inherited the prejudices but not the wealth of their ancestors'.[14]

One of the smallest of the Leeward Islands in size and population, Montserrat had a particular reputation for being backward, both in terms of social attitudes and agricultural production.[15] Another of its distinctive features was the Irish origins of some of its population, many descending from seventeenth-century Irish indentured labourers and victims of religious persecution. The original planter class, including Shiel's paternal ancestors, had mostly been Anglo-Irish Protestants, and therefore at odds with the Catholic majority. This tension contributed to the turbulent history of Montserrat, with planter psychology structured by 'fear of French invasion' from without, and 'fear of Irish-Catholic rebellion' and, as their numbers increased, African slave revolt from within.[16] In Shiel's time only fifty families designated 'white' on the census remained in Montserrat out of a total population of c. 7500.[17] But there were by this stage hundreds of free men and women of mixed race who carried the same surnames as the Irish planter families, owing to the practice of concubinage. Shiel's most recent biographer, Harold Billings, observes how swiftly the 'Irish generation that reaped unholy benefits from the bondage and concubinage constructed around the sugar industry' had become a society of mixed-race 'illegitimate cast-offs … struggling to survive the poverty left by the death of [the] industry and the social structure built upon it'.[18]

Shiel's own family was a product of this social upheaval: his mother's birth certificate indicates that she was the descendant of freed slaves and his father was an

[14] *The Daily Gleaner* (Kingston, Jamaica), cited in Patrick Bryan, 'The White Minority in Jamaica at the end of the Nineteenth Century', in *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, p. 117.

[15] Howard A. Fergus, a notable historian of the island, observes that in 1848 the Governor of the Leeward Islands found Montserrat to be the most backward of them all, reluctant even to adopt the use of the plough to improve depressed agricultural output, *Montserrat: History of a Caribbean Colony* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 123.

[16] Ibid., p. 35.

[17] Vere Langford Oliver (ed.), *Caribbeana: Being Miscellaneous Papers Relating to the History, Genealogy, Topography, and Antiquities of the British West Indies* (London: Mitchell, Hughes & Clarke, 1910-19). In 1649 there were more than 1000 white families, most of whom were Irish. However, by 1729, owing to the emigration of freed Irish labourers, absenteeism among the planters, and the increasing importation of African slaves to bolster the labour force, the demographics had shifted to black people outnumbering white people by a factor of 6:1, with only c.1000 white individuals remaining on the island. By 1851 an estimate is given of only 150 white individuals on the island. For details see Fergus, *Montserrat*, pp. 19, 52, 96, 103.

[18] Harold Billings, *M. P. Shiel: A Biography of His Early Years*, vol. 1 (Austin, TX: Roger Beacham, 2005), p. 10. Billings is the only biographer to produce a sustained, book-length study of Shiel.

illegitimate son of what had been the largest slave and plantation owning family on Montserrat.[19] On Montserrat, the ramifications of this hybrid, creolized society were twofold and somewhat contradictory. On the one hand there was a pragmatic social acceptance of miscegenation, the condition of almost the entire population: Shiel's sister Harriet, for example, is happy to acknowledge that, like herself, her mother was 'dark' and her granny 'an octoroon'; also that her father was 'of course illegitimate'.[20] On the other hand there was a cultural obsession with the degree to which individuals were mixed, as terms such as octoroon denote,[21] and a resultant social hierarchy favouring those more European in appearance: Harriet, for example, further commenting that it was a wonder her father, 'a most prejudiced man,' should have chosen her dark mother as his wife. And certainly, as on Trinidad, anyone marrying or personally falling under the suspicion of being 'touched with Negro blood' would have been excluded from the top level of white society.[22] As Robert Moore puts it, 'the deeply divided colonial society [was] characterised by a pathological emphasis on race and colour ... neurotically clung to by the Anglo-Saxon whites who saw it as the psychological underpinning of their pre-eminence ... in the society'.[23] Though obviously of partial African descent – the dark Harriet later being described by a London acquaintance of Shiel's as 'a smiling negress'[24] – the Shiell family's generally light skin colour would have given them good social standing (despite an increasingly precarious financial situation).[25] Shiel, then, while aware of his mixed background, would have identified with the white creole tier of society, though this group was by no mean homogenous and his family's position within it marginal.

In general, scholarship on the Caribbean has tended to focus on the experience of the subjugated with little work done on that of the white creoles (this parallels postcolonial

[19] See Billings, vol. 1, for details of Shiel's parents and their possible origins in as far as these are known. Billings also speculates, based on the genealogical work of Richard Shiell and Dorothy Anderson, that Shiel's father may also have been of mixed-race and a product of concubinage.
[20] Harriet Garry Shiell to Olive Horsford, 2 Feb 1932, cited ibid., pp. 12-3. For unknown reasons Shiel dropped the second 'l' from his surname after he emigrated to London.
[21] For a list of nineteenth-century racial 'colour' categories, see Puri, *The Caribbean Postcolonial*, p. 190.
[22] For an account of the policing of colour among elite families on Trinidad, see Bridget Brereton, 'The White Elite of Trinidad, 1838-1950', in *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, pp. 53-5, 63-4.
[23] Robert J. Moore, 'Colonial Images of Blacks and Indians in Nineteenth Century Guyana', in *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition*, p. 156.
[24] Arthur Ransome, *The Biography of Arthur Ransome* (London: Cape, 1976), p. 71.
[25] See note 20 above.

literary studies where the work of white colonial authors is often under-explored). However, in *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, a collection of essays exploring the experiences of this economically-dominant but discursively-marginal group, some central themes emerge that elucidate Shiel's experience. The majority of the contributors, in varying ways, identify a double-consciousness in the Caribbean-born whites arising out of the process of creolization.[26] While they identified strongly with their native islands, they simultaneously privileged the culture of the imperial metropolis that underpinned their elite positions; this then is another version of the hybrid colonial subject position explored in the Introduction. More specifically, their regard for the islands was as the location of their birth, family and property or wealth; they did not in any way identify with the majority of the islands' inhabitants.[27] In fact, many of the contributors also identify what may be called a 'siege mentality' inhering in the white creole outlook arising from their position in the plantation societies as the dominant but numerically-tiny elite:[28] the 'paranoid possessors', to borrow Jarlath Killeen's description of the dominant Protestant minority in nineteenth-century Ireland (discussed in chapter two).[29]

According to Bridget Brereton and Kevin Yelvington, who problematise the term 'creolisation', the process involved not just a 'blending' of cultures, but a 'confrontation' as well.[30] Inherent in the repression of the slave and later indentured populations was the fear of retribution. Speaking of Barbados, for example, Watson observes: 'As a minority, faced with all the attendant psychological stresses of minorities everywhere, Barbadian whites felt constrained to close ranks and present a united front to the black majority'.[31] This was an anxiety that deepened greatly after emancipation and economic decline in the mid-nineteenth century, exacerbated by the continuing decline in white population numbers. It is strongly conveyed in the seminal *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) written by the

[26] See, for example, the contributions of Watson, Brereton and Bryan to *The White Minority in the Caribbean* (cited above) all of whom write on various islands of the British West Indies: Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica.
[27] Bryan, 'The White Minority in Jamaica', p. 130.
[28] By 1921 there were only 2,281 whites in the Leeward Islands out of a total population of 85,183, see Isaac Dookhan, *A Post Emancipation History of the West Indies* (Trinidad: Longman Caribbean, 1975), p. 62.
[29] Jarlath Killeen, 'Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction', *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, 1 (2006), online at irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/jarlath.html, 13 Nov 2008.
[30] Brereton and Yelvington, intro. to *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition*, p. 8.
[31] Watson, 'White Politics and Creole Consciousness in Barbadian Slave Society', p. 18

white creole Jean Rhys (b.1890) and set in the post-emancipation period. In Rhys's text the experience of the now-marginalised white creole women is defined by feelings of alienation and insecurity: ostracised not only by the newly-emancipated black creole population, but also by the new post-emancipation elite of recently-arrived British speculators, they belong nowhere and fear constantly for their safety. As Tia, a young black creole girl, puts it: 'Plenty white people in Jamaica [now]. Real white people, they got gold money. ... Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger.'[32]

Hearn's ultimate impression from his 1888 Caribbean trip, 'that the white race is disappearing from these islands,' is worth quoting at length as it gives a broader perspective on both the reality of and the anxieties surrounding white population decline:

> Already the white West Indian populations are diminishing at a rate that almost staggers credibility. In ... Martinique in 1848 there were 25,000 whites; now, against 160,000 blacks and half-breeds, there are less than 8000 [white] creoles left to maintain the ethnic struggle, and the[ir] number ... annually growing less. Many of the British islands have been almost deserted by their former cultivators: St Vincent is becoming desolate; Tobago is a ruin; St Martin lies half abandoned; St Christopher is crumbling; ... St Thomas ... in full decadence. ... [T]he slave races of the past seem destined to become ... the masters of the future ... after Nature – who never forgives – shall have exacted the utmost possible retribution for all the errors and follies of three hundred years.[33]

It is significant that Hearn explicitly couches the statistics in terms of 'ethnic struggle', positioning whites 'against' blacks and suggesting that ultimately the non-white majority will have their retribution for past iniquity, undesirable as this may seem to him. Montserrat was perhaps too insignificant to warrant a mention, but many of the islands cited are its neighbouring Leewards, and Montserrat experienced the same population trends.

Writing specifically of the island, Howard A. Fergus characterises Montserrat's planter society as 'riddled with fear', 'existing in a continuous state of emergency', its

[32] Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966; London: Penguin, 2000), p. 21.
[33] Hearn, 'A Midsummer Trip to the West Indies', pp. 630-1.

administration preoccupied by 'slave resistance in one form or another,' and geared towards 'the protection of white persons and property ... above all else'.[34] Nor was the planters' paranoia misplaced: the colonial history of the Caribbean, far from being that of uncontested hegemony, was rather punctuated by the revolt of most sectors of the non-elite groups against the white elites on various islands at various stages – from the successful revolution in Haiti in 1804 to the Morant Bay Rebellion on Jamaica in 1865. Despite the relatively small scale of Morant Bay and the ferocity with which it was suppressed, the spectacle of ex-slave rebels taking over a Jamaican town and killing a number of planters had a lasting effect on white Caribbean thinking, especially when viewed through the distorting lens of Indian Mutiny paranoia.[35] So perturbed was Jamaica that its representative assembly voluntarily abolished itself in order to gain the protection entailed in being a direct Crown Colony after the rebellion; and Montserrat followed suit in 1866 both to avoid extending representation to its growing coloured population and to guard against similar anti-planter outbreaks. As Bryan puts it, 'Morant Bay and Haiti were always at the forefront of the white mind ... [w]hites did not ever rule out a re-enactment ... with blacks slaughtering whites indiscriminately'.[36] Slave uprisings were not limited to these two major instances, but also broke out in Barbados (1816), British Guiana (1823) and Jamaica (1831); the 1870s and 1880s also witnessed unrest and rioting amongst the new populations of East Indian and Chinese indentured labourers in Trinidad and British Guiana where they arrived in greatest numbers, as we will see.

Shiel's transition to London

As the Shiell family's fortunes declined and a further sugar depression hit the West Indies in the 1880s, Shiel was left with little option but to emigrate in 1885. Though he considered himself Irish by ethnicity and West Indian by birth, his white-colonial double-consciousness made him a citizen of the British Empire and London the obvious destination as the empire's metropolitan heart. This duality is potentially amplified by the possibility that, like Boothby, he had travelled to England as a boy to attend school, though his secondary education was completed in a Barbadian college owing to lack of

[34] Fergus, *Montserrat*, pp. 54, 69, 73.
[35] Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, p. 148-9.
[36] Bryan, 'The White Minority in Jamaica', p. 121.

funds. The level of culture-shock he must have experienced on reaching London may be glimpsed through metropolitan travellers' accounts of tiny, retrograde contemporary Montserrat 'where a steamer touches once a month ... [and] the people are half clad and a trifle more than semi-civilised'; Plymouth, Shiel's home town, full of 'cobblestones, dark stone houses and darker people, ... I do not think we saw three white people in the town'.[37] Despite his identification with British culture, and a possible three years at a Devonshire middle school, Shiel must have been acutely aware of his West Indian otherness on arrival in London. Frank Birbalsingh observes a sense of cultural dislocation as a recurrent theme in the works of twentieth-century immigrant authors of Indo-Caribbean origins to London. Though Shiel was white-skinned, he would have experienced similar dismay at the 'alien conventions of London life', the contrast between Caribbean laxity and English formality, and the constant sense of 'outsider status' that these later authors relate.[38] Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea* describes London as 'a cold, dark dream' from which the West Indian migrant wants to 'wake up'.[39]

Nor did the metropolitan prejudice concerning Caribbean heritage limit itself to immigrants of darker skin. Keith Sandiford describes the metropolitan 'attitudes of contempt and calumny' towards white creole society and the negative effect this had on the identity formation of white creoles.[40] The supposed degenerate condition of white creole people is ably expressed by disillusioned Trinidadian Frederick de Verteuil in 1909: 'I do not think that Europeans can live more than three generations in a hot climate and not degenerate, especially living in a small island, inter-marrying inevitably and having interests so circumscribed that only the strongest mind can fail to addle' (and this of course is the antithesis of the Boothbian ideal of the coming man of the colonies).[41] Arriving in London in 1885 from the West Indies the hybrid Shiel would have felt the implicit denial of a full British identity to someone of his background. One of Shiel's early letters home, a most revealing piece of correspondence, conveys this dislocation humorously but abundantly. From the outset, Shiel contrasts the hugely divergent

[37] William Drysdale, *New York Times* journalist writing in 1885, cited in Billings, vol. 1, pp. 65-72.
[38] Frank Birbalsingh, 'The Indo-Caribbean Short Story', *The Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12:2 (Nov 2004), p. 125.
[39] Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, p. 67.
[40] Keith Sandiford, *The Cultural Politics of Sugar: Caribbean Slavery and Narratives of Colonialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 6.
[41] Cited in Brereton, 'The White Elite of Trinidad', p. 66.

experience of one who 'walks the streets of busy London-town' with that of those who inhabit 'tiniest West Indies, emphatically *not* philosophy engendering'. He continues to expand on the unfamiliarity of London life relating his inexperience via an account of a misunderstanding over what constituted a bath between himself and an English servant girl. This account is prefaced by the remark 'I had not become quite an Englishman yet,' signalling awareness of his outsider status, and expressed as a humorous dialogue in which he tellingly refers to himself as a 'Half-green W. Indian'.[42]

Concerning race, Shiel would have been faced with the realisation that a far different set of norms than the intricate set of codes that structured the complex hybrid society of Montserrat were operating in English society and that miscegenation was regarded with great suspicion there. Puri's account of Caribbean hybridity is useful in understanding the personal ramifications for the *arrivant* Shiel. In *The Caribbean Postcolonial* (2004) she critiques the valorised, generic, ahistorical account of cultural hybridity circulating in current postcolonial theory, and the treatment of the Caribbean merely as an exemplar of hybridity, pointing instead to the many different modes of hybridity, racial and cultural, operating in the Caribbean from emancipation onwards and interpreting hybridity as potentially hegemonic, as well as subversive. For example, she observes historian J. A. Froude's usage of hybridity as 'a discursive means by which to delegitimize the West Indian colonies as potentially sovereign nation-states' in his 1888 claim that in the West Indies 'there are no people there in the true sense of the word, with a character and purpose of their own'.[43] While allowing for the subversive effect of the phenomenon of hybridity upon the discourse of imperialism, Puri stresses that for the hybrid individual the condition generally entailed social and/or political inequality. And while this focus on Shiel's racial background may seem excessive it must be stressed that his partially African heritage would have been deemed most unacceptable in metropolitan society. Contemporary pseudo-scientific racial theory divided the human race into a hierarchy of 'three great and clearly marked types, the black, the yellow, and the white' to use the infamous formulation of Arthur de Gobineau's influential *The Inequality of Human Races* (1853-5). And it was accepted orthodoxy concerning the position of the African

[42] Letter to his sister Augusta Horsford in St Kitts, c. June 1885, cited in full in Billings, vol. 1, pp. 90-7.
[43] Puri, *The Caribbean Postcolonial*, p. 43; J. A. Froude, *The English in the West Indies* (1888), cited ibid., p. 43.

races that: 'The negroid variety is the lowest, and stands at the foot of the ladder'.[44] Put more vividly in the travel writing of Winwood Reade: 'the typical negro is something between a child, a dotard and a beast', who in his physical characteristics and 'early cessation of brain-growth ... approaches the ape', while in character he is little short of monstrous:

> unrestrained by moral laws, [he] spends his days in sloth, his nights in debauchery ... he smokes haschish ... he drinks palm wine ... he abuses children; stabs the poor brute of a woman whose hands keep him from starving, and makes a trade of his own offspring.'[45]

In the face of this kind of invective the young Shiel must have realised that to possess any degree of African blood was unacceptable in London in the circles he aspired to move in, and perhaps begun a process of concealment and mystification about his origins to distract attention from suggestions of mixed race. This practice he may have inherited from his father who appears to have invented a family legend about being descended from the high-kings of Ireland in order to obfuscate his own illegitimate origins. Billings notes that, however much or little attention Shiel himself paid to such matters, 'By the time he spent a few years in England ... questions developed regarding his "race"', questions which he certainly never answered fully.[46] In a rare comment by Shiel on the subject of his ethnicity, in a 1930s letter, he obliquely denied any black ancestry, claiming instead to be 'an Irish Paddy – very mixed blood – Andalusian, Moorish – but perhaps no "Negro"'.[47] A 1901 exchange between Shiel and the reviewer for *The Candid Friend* magazine gives excellent insight into the kinds of questions circulating about Shiel's race and his evasive response. The speculation by the reviewer is worth quoting at

---

[44] Arthur de Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races*, trans. Adrian Collins (1853-5; London: Heineman, 1915), p. 205; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/inequalityofhuma00gobi, 10 Dec 2012.

[45] W. Winwood Reade, *Savage Africa: Being the Narrative of a Tour in Equatorial, Southwestern, and Northwestern Africa* (New York: Harper, 1864), pp. 399, 430; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/savageafricabein00read, 15 Dec 2012. Reade does qualify this denunciation by stating that the degraded condition of the 'true negro' is in part due to environmental conditions and that most of the inhabitants of Africa do not fall into this lowest category (399).

[46] Billings, vol. 1, pp. 31, 41-2.

[47] Shiel's response to bookseller Walter Goldwater who had shelved him with 'Negro' authors, cited ibid.

length because it also reveals the tangle of legend and personality cult that was beginning to develop around Shiel:

> The most mysterious of British authors, M. P. Shiel, is fast becoming the central figure of a cycle of legends. It is said that his birthplace has never been revealed to mortal man ... and his race is as great a mystery as his birthplace. His friends are agreed that he is a blend of two or three of the great races, but they differ utterly as to which... He is a man of disappearances. He will have left his chambers for months, and is believed to be in Ecuador or Teheran, when, at five o'clock on a summer's morning, his neighbors are roused by a furious knocking, and a pale and flurried man is crying at their doors, 'I've brought Mr. Shiel's horse!'... Or he has been lost for a year, and a friend, meeting a dusky brood of gipsies on the Great North Road, is driven by a sudden and inexplicable impulse to say to them, 'Can you tell me M. P. Shiel's address?' And the swarthy crew cry, in one sing-song, 'The Paradise, Brondesbury'...[48]

This highly romanticised account reads more like the description of a protagonist of a piece of imperial adventure fiction, and indeed is very close to the comparable accounts of the international provenance of Boothby's Dr Nikola in *A Bid for Fortune* (1895) and the Sandy Arbuthnot character in John Buchan's *Greenmantle* (1916), considered in chapter one.

Shiel's response, the quasi-biographical piece 'About Myself', also published in *The Candid Friend*, reveals how he seized upon such opportunities to glamorise himself and his colonial origins, exoticising his Montserratian upbringing in order to distract from the realities of his racial origins (see fig. 1 for the accompanying photo).

[48] 'Literary Notes', *The Candid Friend*, (13 Jul 1901), reprinted in John D. Squires (ed.) *Critical Perspectives: Periodical Reviews of M. P. Shiel's Writings*, vol. I (Kettering, Ohio: JDS Books, 1996), p. 42.



Fig. 1. 'Mr. M. P. Shiel', *The Candid Friend* (17 Aug 1901), p. 630.
Image from the collection of John D. Squires.

Not less importantly, like Boothby, Shiel cultivated this exotic image as a means of differentiating himself in the competitive literary marketplace and thereby creating a distinctive selling point for his fiction. 'My birthplace … is … wrapped in mystery,' he proclaimed in answer to the reviewer's speculation, 'Let it suffice that it is … a small island, set in far, high regions of sunlight and the palm, remote enough from Europe.' Not content with this grandiloquence Shiel, finally naming Montserrat, goes on to pronounce the tiny island, 'a very great and holy place, full of passionate woes, the very apex and hub … of the world,' fancying that 'it is foredoomed … at the moment of my death [to] sink', and concluding 'No one born in such a place can be quite sane'.[49]

This marketing tactic is evident again in a later publicity piece, also entitled 'About Myself', which accompanied the 1929 re-issue of some of Shiel's more popular texts, in which he seems to have extended his father's claim to royal ancestry to create the Redonda legend. Here for the first time he declared that his father had claimed the tiny, uninhabited islet of Redonda, neighbour of Montserrat, for Shiel when he was fifteen,

[49] Shiel, 'About Myself' (1901), p. 667.

crowning him king of it in front of an assembled company of local dignitaries.[50] While Shiel's biographers do not give much credence to this claim, it is highly indicative of the considered effort he put into projecting a glamorous, colonial persona in order to increase his sales. Again Brereton's analysis of Trinidad is elucidating, as she observes, 'The members of Trinidad's white elite ... saw themselves as constituting a genuine native aristocracy through their descent from the pioneers of settlement'. They thus harboured an obsessive pride in family lineage and traditions, and a tendency to exaggerate the prestige of their ancestors, which Shiel and his father certainly shared.[51] Shiel also attempted to use this kind of obfuscation to excuse himself for the scandal that blighted his later life. Writing in self-defence against his conviction for the sexual assault of a twelve-year-old girl to his friend and publisher Grant Richards, he attempted to paint his crime as the merely product of cultural misunderstanding, claiming 'I myself am wildly non-English'.[52]

Enthusiastic though Shiel was about his transition to London, it was not an easy one, and his lack of funds left him with the pressing need to find some means of making a living. Like Boothby's family, but even more so given their dominant position on Montserrat, the legitimate branch of Shiel's paternal family were deeply involved in the administration of the colony, holding an array of major offices: members and presidents of its Legislative Council and Assembly, Comptrollers of Customs, one even as Acting President of the island.[53] As Brereton remarks of Trinidad, 'It was not unusual for white Creoles to embark on careers in the government service, though the top posts were generally reserved for Britons'.[54] While high-level positions were not open to Shiel or his illegitimate father, the highest aspiration for the upwardly mobile middle classes who had

[50] M. P. Shiel, 'About Myself', *The Novels of M. P. Shiel*, (London: Victor Gollancz, [1929]); pamphlet reprinted in *The Works of M. P. Shiel*, III, pp. 669-674.
[51] Brereton, 'The White Elite of Trinidad', pp. 52-3.
[52] Letter to Grant Richards, c.1916, cited in Kirsten MacLeod, 'M. P. Shiel and the Love of Pubescent Girls: The Other "Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name"', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 51:4 (2008), p. 358.
[53] Given the incestuous nature of Montserrat society, it is not surprising that corruption was rife. In fact, Shiel's great-uncle, William Shiell, who held both the positions of Administrator of the Government and President of the Legislative Council, was so unscrupulous as to be described by the President of Montserrat in a letter to the Governor of the Leeward Islands as 'the evil genius of the colony'. Richard Shiell and Dorothy Anderson, 'Shiell Genealogy: William Shiell (1785-1853)', online at Alan Gullette's M. P. Shiel pages, *M. P. Shiel – The Lord of Language*, http://www.alangullette.com/lit/shiel/family/Shiell-William.htm, 14 Dec 2012.
[54] Brereton, 'The White Elite of Trinidad', p. 44.

internalised British standards of success was the attainment of white-collar employment – typically in the colonial service or in teaching. This was to be attained through secondary level education in English-style grammar schools, like that which Shiel attended on Barbados, which perpetuated white standards and values. Thus Shiel's main lines of enquiry when seeking employment in London were to seek a position in the Colonial Office or as a school-master. The closest he came to the former was to undergo some training for a civil service position as a student interpreter for China and the Far East, a post which never materialised, but may have helped stimulate his interest in oriental affairs.[55]

For various reasons, he also failed to maintain a number of teaching posts and becoming increasingly financially straitened, eventually turned to writing as a means of making a living. Over the course of the early 1890s he had gleaned some earnings doing odd-jobs for several literary periodicals and succeeded in having a few short stories published. By 1892 he had secured a literary agent and in 1895 managed to achieve some recognition with the publication of *Prince Zaleski*, a collection of detective stories written in the fashionable style of the Decadent movement and issued by its leading publisher John Lane. The mere fact of being published in John Lane's Keynotes series brought a certain amount of notoriety which prompted autobiographical questions from literary journalists. A letter describing Shiel's responses shows early evidence of deliberate glamorisation of his West Indian origins – including the claim to have been born in the same room as was the French Empress Josephine – and his awareness of the English newspapers' willingness to lap up such puffery.[56] Shiel's promising initial forays into Decadence, however, soon fell victim to the movement's collapse. And he turned instead to the more commercial 'fictional serial trade', as he put it, to begin producing popular works in tune with the sentiment of late-1890s high imperialism. The most successful of these was the 1898 bestseller *The Yellow Danger* to which we now turn.

[55] Billings, vol. 1, p. 121.
[56] Letter to Augusta Horsford, 14 Jan 1895, cited ibid., p. 144.

Anglo-Chinese relations and the 'yellow peril': Shiel's oriental invasions

The first of Shiel's novels of oriental invasion, *The Yellow Danger* is the first-known major fictional yellow-peril text to be published in the empire's capital, and one which amply reveals the colonial concerns that underpinned this highly-racialised subgenre of the invasion tale. In brief, the novel sees Sino-Japanese mastermind Dr Yen How, 'embodiment' of the 'antagonistic races' of the East, grant a series of advantageous Chinese territorial concessions to Britain's European colonial rivals in order to provoke a massive inter-European war.[57] The resulting devastation allows the combined forces of China and Japan to completely overrun war-torn continental Europe, until their attempt to invade Britain is defeated at the eleventh hour by the British 'sailor-hero', John Hardy (49). In touting the book version of *The Yellow Danger* to prospective publisher Grant Richards, Shiel summarises the narrative as follows:

> the political plot is this: that China deliberately sets the nations of Europe at war with each other by giving to the great Continental Powers vast tracts of Chinese land – and so on, of course, these three are fought over by England. The object of China is to produce a decimated and exhausted Europe, so that she may overrun Europe and destroy the white race. (The Yellow Danger!!!) This she does. She sweeps in locust swarms over Europe, and then only England is left. England saves the world. Then, of course, she is "Empress of the Earth".[58]

The plot was developed in response to a colonial crisis unfolding in China at the time, which saw the European nations scrambling for territory there and contributed to the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion. The first several chapters of *The Yellow Danger*, which was issued serially in the C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd group magazine *Short Stories* under the title *The Empress of the Earth: The Tale of the Yellow War* (5 Feb – 18 June 1898), incorporated aspects of this developing crisis and the Far Eastern political situation in general. However, from March onward Shiel detached his plot from any semblance of political actuality to extrapolate his cataclysmic scenario of global war and invasion. The

[57] M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Danger* (1898; London: Grant Richards, 1900), p. 4; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.
[58] Letter to Grant Richards, c. Feb 1898, cited in Harold Billings, *M. P. Shiel: The Middle Years 1897-1923*, vol. 2 (Austin, TX: Roger Beacham, 2010), p. 63.

political subject matter of the novel marked a radical thematic departure from the bulk of Shiel's previous work and the rest of this chapter will examine the colonial factors, oriental and occidental, Far Eastern and Caribbean, that may have influenced his adoption of this theme.

The most direct influence on the oriental subject matter of *The Yellow Danger* was the sequence of events unfolding in the Far East as the uneasy relationship between Britain, China and the other European colonial nations deteriorated. Though China was a sovereign state existing entirely outside the formal, territorial British empire, yet it had been subjected to a long-term, unequal trading relationship with Britain which placed it firmly within the informal sphere of British economic imperialism. '[I]t was not "not-empire,"' to use historian Robert Bickers's phrase, 'but intimately tied to and fed off a growing chain of foreign empires,' with 'Chinese possessions .. marked as such on maps of empire in French, English, Russian, Japanese and other scripts.'[59] The nineteenth century was a turbulent time for China as its ruling Qing (Manchu) dynasty was weakened by a series of threats on many fronts. Internally China experienced natural disaster, famine, and a series of rebellions including the long-running, massively destructive Taiping Rebellion (1850-64) against the Qing and the explosive, multifaceted Boxer Rebellion (1900-01) against foreign interference in China. Externally it lost two wars against Britain in the mid-century – the so-called Opium wars of 1839-42 and 1857-60, swathes of Manchurian territory to Russia in 1860, the Sino-French war over territory in Indo-China in 1884-5 and the Sino-Japanese war over Korea in 1894-5. Trade wars rather than wars of territorial conquest, the two Anglo-Chinese wars succeeded in forcing China to open itself to unrestricted trade with Britain and thereby safeguarded Britain's vital opium industry. While the decades that followed the second Opium war saw a period of relative calm in Anglo-Chinese relations, nonetheless Britain and rival colonial powers consistently exploited the advantageous terms imposed on the weakened Qing to steadily extend their spheres of influence in China.

The pace of incursion speeded up in the 1890s as China, like so much of the rest of the world in the late-Victorian period, found itself subjected to the rampant European

[59] Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1832-1914* (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 12.

territorial aggrandisement produced out of growing inter-European rivalry and the strident rhetoric of the 'New Imperialism'. Japan's territorial gains from and ease of victory over China in 1895 had demonstrated plainly the dire weakness of the Qing military. And 1897 saw the beginning of what became known as the 'Scramble for Concessions', the premise for Shiel's novel, when the expansionist German state saw fit to join the ranks of the foreign powers then arrogating tracts of Chinese territory. Following the murder of two German missionaries in north-east China in November of that year, Germany responded by seizing Jiaozhou (Kiao-Chau) Bay, a strategic location on the Yellow Sea coast relatively close to Beijing (Pekin). There it established a new, permanent German colony, and the response of the other powers was swift. As Bickers puts it: 'Over the next 200 days the maps of China were redrawn, and the fate of the Qing seemed to hang in the balance'.[60] The sequence of retaliatory appropriations is well-known and runs briefly as follows: first Russia seized the nearby strategic ports of Dalian and Port Arthur; next Britain was granted the adjacent port of Weihaiwei and in the south extended its mainland territories near Hong Kong; west of that, near its Indo-Chinese territory, France leased the territory of Guangzhouwan, just north of the strategic island of Hainan.[61] It is to this series of land-grabs that the Fawcett poem refers when it blames British and Russian greed for awakening Chinese fury. In addition, wide 'spheres of influence' were claimed by the various powers – the nebulous Yangzi valley area by Britain, Shandong province by Germany, Manchuria by Russia and an area of the south-west coast by France; 'the partition of the Chinese empire' seemed imminent.[62]

Just as envisaged in *The Yellow Danger*, the seizure of Chinese trading ports and territory by its European colonial rivals threatened Britain's dominant trading relationship with China and dangerously exacerbated ongoing inter-European rivalry. And it was against this fraught geo-political backdrop that Shiel's novel opened in February 1898. In the first instalment of the serial, Shiel listed the actual sequence of great power moves in what he dubbed the 'Eastern craze' (234), using them to situate the events that would unfold in his fictional narrative:

---

[60] Ibid., p. 327.

[61] For details of the political machinations behind this sequence of events see T. G. Otte, *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation 1894-1905* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), chap 2: '"Cartographic Consolation": The Powers and the China Question, 1895-8'.

[62] M. P. Shiel, *The Rajah's Sapphire* (London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1896), p. 91.

> The principal cause of fear had been what looked uncommonly like a conspiracy of the three great Continental Powers to oust England from predominance in the East. First there was the [German] seizing of Kiao-Chau ...; then immediately, the aggressive attitude of Russia at Port Arthur; then immediately, the rumour that France had seized Hainan, was sending an expedition to Yun-nan, and had ships in Hoi-How harbour. (2)

Though France did not actually seize Hainan, settling instead for the lease of the much smaller near-by Guangzhouwan territory,[63] the relative accuracy with which Shiel detailed the real-world events was presumably intended to grant a semblance of realism to the novel's preposterous plot outlined above. Richard Marsh, in his post-Boxer Rebellion, yellow-peril inflected, gothic farrago of invasive Chinese revenge, *The Joss: A Reversion* (1901), returned to these contested territories as a suitable setting for its outrageous Chinese events. It is after 'sneak[ing] through the Hainan Strait' into the remote 'Gulf of Tongkin' that the ship's crew encounter the Joss and make off with him and his treasure, thus bringing the curse of the Chinese sectaries down upon them.[64] While the Joss's exact location is deliberately withheld, this region is very much within the French sphere of influence – near the contentious Chinese border with French Indochina; though aggrieved party in the incident is ultimately acknowledged to be 'the Chinese government', implying that the vengeance mission in this small-scale invasion scenario may also be state-sponsored as per Shiel's text.[65]

Predictably, on the level of non-fictional discourse, the unfolding situation in China in 1898 was the ongoing subject of a considerable amount of concerned parliamentary debate and less restrained press coverage in Britain. It became known in the political parlance of the time as the 'Far Eastern Question', the euphemistic epithet deriving from the long running 'Eastern Question' quandary over the fate of the Ottoman Empire, and suggestive of that other ongoing source of inspiration for popular authors discussed in chapter two, the 'Egyptian Question'. From the outset of the crisis in November 1897 it was a running concern in *The Spectator*, an influential current affairs and literary

[63] France settled for the lease of the tiny territory of Guangzhouwan in April 1898, but it was widely feared from late 1897 in British political circles that France might seize the much-larger Hainan in response to the actions of the other powers, see Otte, *The China Question*, pp. 96, 105, 110-1.
[64] Richard Marsh, *The Joss: A Reversion* (1901; Chicago: Valancourt Books, 2007), p. 199.
[65] Ibid., p. 249.

periodical, which disseminated a cautionary view of events in successive articles such as 'The Seizure of Kiao-Chow' and the infamous 'The "Yellow Peril"' discussed later in this chapter.[66] The seriousness with which it was viewed is evident in the following public speech by the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain:

> It is impossible to overrate the gravity of the issue. It is not a question of a single port in China – that is a very small matter. It is not a question of a single province; it is a question of the whole fate of the Chinese Empire, and our interests in China are so great, our proportion of the trade so enormous … that I feel that no more vital question has ever been presented for the decision … of a nation.[67]

The timing of Chamberlain's speech, given in May 1898 as the crisis continued and the *Empress* serial neared its conclusion, amply demonstrates the relevance of *The Yellow Danger*'s theme and its likely resonance with the anxieties of the reading public. And as was usual these were wryly taken up in the works of contemporary cartoonists.

[66] 'Topics of the Day: The Seizure of Kiao-Chow', *The Spectator*, 79:3622 (27 Nov 1897), p. 760.
[67] Joseph Chamberlain in a speech to the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association, cited in 'Mr Chamberlain in Birmingham', *The Times*, 14 May 1898, p. 12.



Fig. 2. 'Hold On, John!'
Punch, 114 (2 Apr 1898), p. 151.

Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

The *Punch* cartoon in fig. 2 shows John Bull wrestling with France, Germany and Russia over a caricature representing the Qing empire. Though the supine figure of China in this cartoon clearly poses no threat to the vigorous European rivals, the concern that Britain may lose its predominant hold on China is quite evident here. And it mirrors the concern evinced over the potential loss of Egypt nearly two decades earlier in the 1882 *Punch* cartoon shown in fig. 1 in chapter two, which similarly admonished John Bull to 'Hold On!', illustrating the pervasiveness and endurance of this kind of imperial paranoia.

In the next instalments of the *Empress* serial the ploy of adverting to real-world affairs continued, as Shiel's fictional oriental villain Yen How began to move between the seats of power in China and Japan to orchestrate his conspiracy to form 'a League of the yellow races' (14) in conjunction with two real-world leading oriental statesmen of the day. These were Ito Hirobumi (Marquis Ito), then prime minister of Japan, and Li

Hongzhang (Li Hung Chang), a key figure in the Qing administration, both of whom were well-known to contemporary Victorians.[68] In persuading Ito and Li, Yen discourses on current political realities such as the emergence of Japan as a naval and trading power, its current cordial relationship with Britain, and the state of Sino-Japanese relations after the recent war, twisting them to suit his own purposes. He argues that Britain's seeming tutelage of Japan is a passing convenience – the real threat to the oriental races is not from each other but from Europe. To enable the oriental races to overcome the technologically-superior Europeans, Yen suggests that by the provocative granting of concessions, 'China has it in her power to turn Europe into an exhausted waste within ... three months ... without firing a single shot' (14).

That Shiel was picking up on circulating fears in his articulation of this possibility is evident in the close resemblance of his account of the Chinese reaction to the scramble to that of contemporary historian Edward Parker Harper's account of the origins of the Boxer Rebellion:

> Amidst the noisy talk of *kwa-fên,* or 'slicing [China] up like a melon', which succeeded Germany's stunning blow [seizure of Jiaozhou] ... China bridled up as haughtily as possible in silence, and set to work arming with a will; now trying on the old foolish game of inciting the jealousy of one Power against the other; now making a spasmodic resistance ... and now giving way in sheer desperation to a tremendous and ruinous demand such as that recently advanced by France.[69]

From this alarmist type of perspective, Shiel's narrative then began to depart from the real political situation, which later that year saw the rival nations consolidating some strategic territorial gains and settling back into their habitual uneasy peace. Instead under Yen's guidance, his fictional China made an unprecedented series of territorial grants: first, unnamed 'large additional territories' (17) to Germany; next, 'the Protectorate, without conditions, of Hainan and Yun-nan' (17) to France; finally, and worst of all, the

[68] For an extensive examination of contemporary events and figures incorporated into Shiel's oriental novels, see John D. Squires, 'Some Contemporary Themes in Shiel's Early Novels: The Dragon's Tale: M. P. Shiel on the Emergence of Modern China', in A. Reynolds Morse (ed.), *M. P. Shiel in Diverse Hands: A Collection of Essays on M. P. Shiel*, (Cleveland: Reynolds Morse Foundation, 1983), pp. 249-327.

[69] Edward Parker Harper, *China Past and Present* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1903), p. 44; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/chinapastandpre01parkgoog, 13 Jan 2013.

inflammatory grant of the assumed 'sphere of English power' (18), the Yangzi Valley, to Russia, Britain's greatest rival in China. Appalled, somewhat disingenuously, by the rapacity of its rivals, Britain quickly found itself left with no choice but to defend against their concerted attack in an all out European war.

Shiel's sequence of an escalating European colonial dispute and ensuing war conforms closely to the plot structure of many of the future-war themed invasion tales of early science fiction, in which diverse topical colonial rivalries were frequently envisaged as the catalyst for inter-European war and the potential invasion of Britain. The story line of William Le Queux's successful forerunner, *The Great War in England in 1897* (1894), for example, is broadly similar to *The Yellow Danger* and may have been adapted by Shiel to underpin his tale of oriental invasion. Le Queux's tale of future conflict plays on Eastern Question concerns, seeing Russia and France use a dispute with Britain over Bosnian borders as the pretext for declaring war; and their invasion attempt is likewise repulsed at the eleventh hour leaving 'Britannia' 'Empress of the World'.[70] In reiterating this plot structure, Shiel and his fellow authors were responding to the political concerns of what was in reality a very fraught time in international relations. As well as the virtual proxy war ongoing between the great powers in China, in 1898 Britain was simultaneously engaged in territorial disputes with Germany and France in Africa and with Russia on the northern Indian border. It was also fighting the Mahdists in the Sudanese campaign which later that year provoked the explosive 'Fashoda Incident' with the French, and on the brink of the initially disastrous Boer War in South Africa. British statesmen feared that systems of alliances were being formed against them by their European neighbours and some, such as Chamberlain, began to argue for closer relations with one of the European powers.[71] The excerpt on the gravity of the Far Eastern question cited above is from his rousing speech against the long-standing policy of 'strict isolation', in which, warning particularly against Russian aggression in China, he predicts that if Britain remains diplomatically isolated, much of China may be occupied to the

[70] William Le Queux, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower, 1894), pp. 16-7, 330.
[71] J. M. Goudswaard, 'Some aspects of the end of Britain's "splendid isolation", 1898-1904', unpublished doctoral thesis, 8 May 1952, pp. 12, 23.

exclusion of British trade. To safeguard free trade some form of alliance is necessary lest the 'jingoes ... drive us into quarrel, with all the world at the same time'.[72]

In this context, Shiel's scenario of an isolated Britain forced into war with its European neighbours in response to the China crisis seems not unrealistic.[73] As his narrative unfolded, 'the Island-Kingdom', remaining 'solitary in her majesty' (2), found itself facing a combined muster of French, German and Russian ships, and '"Invasion" was the word which more frequently than any other rose to the lips of Englishmen' (40). As was customary in future-war fiction following lieutenant-colonel George T. Chesney's landmark text, *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), Shiel denounced Britain's lack of preparedness for such an event, lamenting the insufficient tonnage of the British fleet. He also echoed Chesney's warning (noted in the Introduction) against the dispersal of Britain's armed forces in support of colonial commitments – Shiel describing the fleet as positioned across 'the China seas... the Mediterranean ... at the Cape, at Australia, at North America, at the West Indies, in the Pacific; ... not in the English Channel' (40). And this position is dramatically worsened when the French manage to enact the nightmare scenario elaborated in chapter two – blowing up the Suez Canal and leaving England starving and disconnected from its most important colonies (144). However, despite all these adversities and diverging from Chesney's wholly pessimistic outcome, in Shiel's text Britain is still able through the brilliant tactics of the hero Hardy to defeat its European foes and thus rebuff the first invasion threat imagined by Shiel.

Shiel's innovation to the future-war version of the invasion tale was, of course, to cast an oriental mastermind as the orchestrator of the colonial crisis and ensuing war which laid Europe bare for invasion. And in this menacing figure can be observed a thematic link with the gothic and crime versions of the invasion tale and their comparable supernatural and criminal intruders. Thus, in *The Yellow Danger*, no sooner than the European challenge was overcome, Britain found itself facing a second and far more terrifying invasion threat as Yen marshalled the combined forces of a militarised China

[72] 'Mr Chamberlain in Birmingham', p. 12.

[73] Lord Charles Beresford, discussed subsequently, also believed, 'The breaking-up of the Chinese Empire into Spheres of Influence would also be certain to lead to war between the European nations', *The Break-Up of China: With an Account of Its Present Commerce, Currency, Waterways, Armies, Railways, Politics, and Future Prospects* (London: Harper, 1899), p. 435; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/breakupchinawit00unkngoog, 17 Dec 2012.

and Japan, seemingly to a man, woman and child, and hurled them towards Europe. A key element of the racist myth of the yellow peril that Shiel was both responding to and helping to articulate in Britain, was the numerical superiority of the Chinese population to the European, and Shiel took pains to emphasise the size of the 'Yellow Wave' (255), as he designated Yen's invading army. It was monstrously large, 'four hundred millions' (237) in strength, an 'inconceivable worm of humanity' snaking its way across continents with its van already in Europe while its rear still departed Beijing (265-6).

In designating the Chinese army a 'yellow wave', Shiel may have been referring to the recently published work of Australian writer Kenneth Mackay, *The Yellow Wave: A Romance of the Asiatic Invasion of Australia* (London: Richard Bentley, 1895). Mackay, like Boothby, was writing from the same white settler fears of a growing Chinese labour force in Australia in the 1880s that are discussed in chapter one. An advocate of the 'White Australia' policy, his admonitory novel saw Australia invaded by a Russian-led army of Chinese troops while Britain's attention was diverted by the topical device of a colonial dispute with Russia in India. Like Shiel's text, Mackay's future-war invasion tale is more an extrapolation of the consequences of failed foreign or social policy than of technological advance. But given that he was living and writing in Australia, his scene of attack is not the metropolis but the supposedly vulnerable, sparsely populated colony of Queensland in northern Australia with its growing Asian and Polynesian population. Thus the resonance of his tale for a metropolitan audience was comparatively limited.

A second and yet more insidious component of the yellow peril myth was the habitual attribution of an evil nature to Chinese people and Shiel indulged in this slurring repeatedly and with an abandon that makes for deeply unpleasant reading. Lest subtler defamations of the Chinese be missed, Shiel spelled out that: 'The principal points of this [the Chinese] character are an immeasurable Greed, an absolute Contempt for the world outside China, and a fiendish Love of Cruelty' (109). Thus once Yen's 'Yellow Terror'[74] reached Europe, the Chinese were depicted at length revelling in every conceivable atrocity, not excepting human sacrifice and cannibalism, till the entire population of continental Europe was all but annihilated. Attempting, indirectly, to justify his

[74] The title of an entire chapter in which the narratorial voice rather appears to revel in lengthy depictions of the slaughter.

calumniation of the Chinese Shiel cited atrocities committed during the recent Sino-Japanese war: 'The reign of hell which had followed some Japanese victories during the Chino-Japanese war was well known in Europe. If China had fared so at the hand of Japan, how would Europe fare at the hand of China led by Japan...?' (273). This referred to the three-day massacre of the Chinese population of Port Arthur, military and civilian, by Japanese troops after they took the city, an incident widely reported in the British press.[75] Similarly, Shiel's account of Yen's treatment of the European population then resident in China may allude to the well-documented sporadic outbreaks of anti-foreigner, and particularly anti-missionary, violence which had regularly accompanied the foreign advance into China. The aftermath of the Sino-Japanese war saw Chinese attacks on European residents, for example, as some long-suffering Chinese extracted indiscriminate vengeance on any foreigner;[76] the catalyst for the Scramble had, of course, been the murder of German missionaries in 1897.

Extrapolating, perhaps, from this type of isolated attack on foreigners, *The Yellow Danger* portrayed Yen organising the 'wholesale massacre of Europeans in the East' (109) to enflame his army before its march on Europe, a task carried out with particular zeal '[i]n the cities round the coast, where the white man had long been known and abominated' (261). Not content with mere slaughter, in a curious inversion of the unwelcome Christian mission in China, Yen attempted to 'invest his Massacre with something of the solemnity of a Rite' and thereby create a 'religious mania' in the Chinese out of race hatred for the whites (260-1). Shiel's depiction of anti-foreigner violence in China echoes that proffered by Boothby in *Doctor Nikola* (1896), the latter text's portrayal of an anti-foreigner riot and the murder of a missionary in Shanghai being a more realistic, smaller-scale fictionalisation of the same contemporary Chinese events. Shiel's prediction of a mass attack on the foreign population in China was also foreshadowed by an English invasion tale published in China in 1893. A likely response to the violent anti-foreign activities of a criminal secret society operating in the Yangzi

[75] See, for example, 'Atrocities After the Fall of Port Arthur', *The Times* (8 Jan 1895), p. 6. These atrocities were also editorialised upon by W. T. Stead in 'The Progress of the World: Japanese Atrocities', *The Review of Reviews*, 11 (Feb 1895), p. 117, a periodical which Squires has shown was a source for Shiel when writing *The Yellow Danger*, 'Some Contemporary Themes in Shiel's Early Novels', pp. 257-269.

[76] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, p. 325.

valley in 1891, 'The Shanghai Exodus' envisaged the outbreak of a European war as the pretext for the Chinese to drive all foreigners out of the Shanghai settlements.[77] Written, like Mackay's tale, from the perspective of those dwelling in the colonies, it too posited the colonial periphery, rather than the metropolis, as the likely target of attack.

Ultimately, Shiel's lurid account of Chinese atrocity served to justify the narrative fate assigned to Yen's army. Under Hardy's direction, the battered British forces sunk the entire Japanese navy en route to Britain, hijacked the accompanying flotilla of twenty-million Chinese invaders and, in a flight of Poe-ian fancy, drowned them in a gigantic maelstrom off the Norwegian coast. Next, in a tactic reminiscent of that used by Boothby's supernatural Egyptian invader in *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899), Hardy unleashed a biological attack against the remaining Chinese in Europe, infecting them with a cholera-like plague that killed one hundred and fifty million and turned Europe into 'a rotting charnel-house' (344).[78] The survivors were driven from Europe by Britain, Hardy's plan for the complete extinction of their race overruled by a wiser 'Nature'. Britain consequently assumed de facto control of decimated continental Europe and by extension all former European colonial territories, becoming 'Empress of the Earth', though Shiel stressed it would have to change its ways to become worthy of this pre-eminence.

Just two years after the publication of *The Yellow Danger*, events in China seemed poised to prove aspects of Shiel's text prophetic as anger at both the territorial scramble and the continuing intrusion of foreign merchant and missionary activity found an outlet. In 1899, growing unrest in the drought-stricken Shandong province began to coalesce into a resistance movement under the auspices of a religious and martial arts society, the *Yihequan*, or 'Boxers' as the Europeans dubbed them, which blamed all China's problems on the presence of foreigners. By 1900, rebellion had spread into northern China as the Boxers took arms first against Qing forces and later in conjunction with them when a major faction of the aggrieved Qing administration itself declared war on the foreign forces in China in the summer of 1900. From a popular Western perspective,

[77] 'S. B. R.', 'The Shanghai Exodus and the capture of the Chinese Fleet', *North China Herald* (1893); summarised in Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, pp. 305-7.

[78] This biological attack also anticipates the method used to effect the genocide of the Chinese in Jack London's equally execrable 'The Unparalleled Invasion' (1910).

the most iconic events of the violent conflict were the widespread slaughter of missionaries and Chinese Christian converts, and the siege of the legations in Beijing, during which the city's foreign residents spent fifty-five days awaiting relief by an international expeditionary force. The cartoon in fig. 3 more than likely alludes to the anti-foreigner violence that occurred during the conflict, showing a slain white woman trampled beneath the feet of a heavily armed Chinese assailant.[79]



Fig. 3. 'The Yellow Terror In All His Glory', (1899).

Unknown origin, source Wikipedia.

The cartoon's imagery is highly reminiscent of illustrations of the Chinese rampage in Europe accompanying the *Empress* serial, and seems to have been part of a developing iconography of Chinese depravity, as discussed later in this chapter in the section on 'The Caribbean component of an orientalist myth'.

[79] As its source has not yet been tracked down, this cannot be said with certainty, but its imagery is so close to that of the illustrations to the *Empress* serial as to warrant its inclusion here.

Despite the speed and brutality of the foreign victory once the international expeditionary force arrived in Beijing, the intensity of the Boxer uprising, highly reminiscent of the infamous 1857 Indian Mutiny, gave a huge impetus to the developing myth of the yellow peril. The siege survivors' accounts and contemporary reportage even rivalled Shiel's sensational fictional text for vilification and hyperbole.[80] During the siege, when it was mistakenly believed in Britain that the legations had fallen, the typically more restrained *Times*, in strident rhetoric that seemed to echo Hardy's plan for the Chinese, carried the opinion that 'all Western civilisation must now arm for vengeance. The Chinese must be treated as cannibals and Peking razed to the ground'.[81] Writing just after the Chinese defeat, Sir Robert Hart, siege survivor and long-term holder of the hugely influential Inspector General of Chinese Imperial Customs post, gave credence to the imminent possibility of the 'Yellow Peril'. Hart, who warranted a brief mention in *The Yellow Danger* when Yen gave his coveted post to a Russian (30), warned that if China was not appropriately treated by the foreign powers:

> Twenty millions or more of Boxers, armed, drilled, disciplined, and animated by patriotic – if mistaken – motives, will make residence in China impossible for foreigners, will take back from foreigners everything foreigners have taken from China, will pay off old grudges with interest, and will carry the Chinese flag and Chinese arms into many a place that even fancy will not suggest today, thus preparing for the future, upheavals and disasters never even dreamt of.[82]

Though a Sinophile who opposed increased foreign intervention in China and was writing expressly to encourage a moderate response to the Boxer Rebellion, even Hart could be provoked to such Shielian predictions of China perilous by the extremity of the uprising. Unsurprisingly, this excerpt of Hart's essay was seized upon by opportunistic journalists and cited out of context of Hart's sympathy for China to stoke yellow peril anxiety.

---

[80] For an account of newspaper coverage of the Boxer Rebellion and 'factual' predictions of the consequent 'yellow peril', see David Scott, *China and the International System, 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), pp. 143-55; and Michael Diamond, *'Lesser Breeds': Racial Attitudes in Popular British Culture, 1890-1940* (London: Anthem, 2006), pp. 12-13.

[81] 'The Crisis in China: The Peking Massacre', *The Times*, 17 July 1900, p. 5.

[82] Sir Robert Hart, 'The Peking Legations: A National Uprising and International Episode', (Aug 1900); reprinted in *'These from the Land of Sinim': Essays on the Chinese Question* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1901), pp. 51-55; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924023496239, 23 Nov 2012.

In many ways, the lurid *Yellow Danger* seems like a text that should have emerged out of the frenzy of sensationalism produced by the Boxer Rebellion and the legations' siege.[83] And though written in response to the prior events of 1897-8, it anticipates, to a certain extent, the subsequent turn of events in China – the escalation of Chinese anger at foreign intrusion, the religious nature of the resistance movement and the eventual outbreak of violence against foreigners in China. Obviously, in its account of the apocalyptic scale of the conflict and bestiality of the Chinese in arms it diverged utterly from reality. And, when examined closely, its fictional version of monstrous China rather seems an articulation of something deeper and more visceral than just the factual political concerns of the scramble. As the historical facts elucidate, in the 1890s, China, though experiencing an upsurge in anti-foreign sentiment, was quite incapable of checking foreign encroachment into its territory let alone of threatening the home territories of Britain or any other major power. Michael Diamond, speaking of the period from 1890 on, observes '[i]t may seem strange that the Chinese should [then] inspire fear because a long historical period was not yet over when China, politically and economically, was at her weakest and Britain was immensely strong.'[84] And yet as European power tightened its grip on China, the myth of China as a locus of peril grew. In this incongruous response, the dissonance in imperial discourse between confidence and paranoia, expansion and collapse, jingoism and invasion is evident. Beneath the surface of confident assumptions of British supremacy and Chinese decline lay an inverse paranoid counter-discourse of China resurgent and revengeful that became encapsulated in the term 'yellow peril'. And it was this complex of fears that fuelled the excesses of *The Yellow Danger*, though Shiel was not the first to give it narrative expression, nor to employ the term 'yellow peril', or his variant 'yellow danger', as we will see.

Prior sources for the yellow peril

A number of prior sources are credited with engendering the yellow peril fear in the form it took in Britain in the 1890s. An early influential non-fiction proponent of the concept,

[83] For a detailed history of the rebellion, including the siege of the legations and the journalistic response, see Diana Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion: China's War on Foreigners, 1900* (London: Robinson, 2002); interestingly Preston cites Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* as representative of contemporary xenophobia towards the Chinese, p. xxvi.

[84] Diamond, *'Lesser Breeds'*, p. 12.

although his work seems to have predated the coining of the term, was British history professor and later Australian colonial politician, Charles H. Pearson. In his innocuously titled *National Life and Character: A Forecast* (1893), Pearson made a Gibbonian prediction concerning the decline of the west and the inevitable global 'preponderance of China' through population and industrial growth which gained a considerable amount of traction in Western political thinking.[85] Glover, writing on the origins of the yellow peril fear, stresses the importance of Pearson's colonial experience in shaping his outlook: 'what distinguishes *National Life and Character* is its indebtedness to Pearson's experience and concerns as a colonial politician and administrator. His view of the world is that of the Pacific margins, rather than the metropolitan centre; or, perhaps more precisely, the metropolitan centre seen from the standpoint of the Pacific margins'.[86] Indeed, in his treatise Pearson consciously placed himself in the vanguard of savvy colonials writing to warn the metropolis of the Chinese threat, stating that his 'fear of Chinese immigration ... which Englishmen at home find it hard to understand, is ... the instinct of self-preservation, quickened by experience'.[87]

Contemporary reviewers had no trouble linking *The Yellow Danger* to Pearson's thinking, one describing the novel as 'the history of the conquest of Europe by the Chinese hordes, whose coming was predicted by the late Professor Pearson'.[88] Overall, Shiel's oeuvre is characterised by an engagement with current social and scientific theories, and it is possible that *The Yellow Danger* was on some level a sensationalisation of Pearson's theory. Shiel himself, for example, explicitly described a later novel, *The Lord of the Sea* (1901), as a demonstration of the land nationalisation theories of Henry George.[89] George, a well-known American political economist whose work Shiel

[85] Charles H. Pearson, *National Life and Character: A Forecast* (1893; London: Macmillan, 1913), p. 137; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/nationallifeandc015071mbp, 25 Sep 2012.
[86] Glover, '*Die gelbe gefahr*', p. 54.
[87] Pearson, *National Life and Character*, p. 17.
[88] Cited in 'Mr Grant Richards's Catalogue of Works in Fiction, With Some Opinions of the Press', publisher's catalogue bound into the back of M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Danger* (London: Grant Richards, 1900), p. 8.
[89] John D. Squires, 'Rediscovering M. P. Shiel (1865-1947)', *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, 13:9 (May 2001), p. 13.

admired, was also an early advocate of restricting Chinese immigration into the United States to avoid the 'Mongolization of America'.[90]

A military dimension was added to the economic threat envisaged by Pearson in the aftermath of the fiercely-fought Sino-Japanese war in 1895, and, as Glover shows, the term 'yellow peril' began to crop up in European political parlance that year.[91] It was particularly popularised via an infamous allegorical sketch of that title commissioned after the war by Kaiser Wilhelm II and circulated throughout Europe. The 'famous *Kaiserbild* that caused such a sensation, throughout the world, on its production in 1895' showed anxious-looking personifications of the European nations ranged against a distant oriental 'Peril ... approaching, in the midst of fiery glory ... seated on a dragon' surrounded by a 'storm-cloud' 'rising from the flames of a burning city'.[92] It was an inflammatory graphic representation that seems to have made quite an impact on the political discourse of the time. In the sphere of the printed word, the periodical trade in Britain naturally provided a complementary outlet for the dissemination of this fear. The *Times* first usage of the term 'yellow peril' occurred in June 1895 and proffered a scenario that was curiously close to the plot of *The Yellow Danger*. First warning that European militarism was going to lead to 'a period of decay like that which overtook ancient Rome', it went on to point out that historically Europe had ever been invaded from the east, and that 'the "yellow peril" is more threatening [now] than ever'. Even more significantly it envisaged a scenario where 'a man of genius' might come forward to 'organise that immense [Chinese] empire' and 'effect an exodus towards the West', which given Europe's 'present state of folly' would 'open the gates of Europe to the barbarians of the East'.[93] And *Punch* dramatised the hostilities between the Far Eastern

[90] Henry George, 'Chinese Immigration' (1881); reprinted in Kenneth C. Wenzer (ed.), *Henry George: Collected Journalistic Writings, Volume I, The Early Years 1860-1879* (New York: M E Sharpe, 2003), p. 231.

[91] Glover, '*Die gelbe gefahr*', pp. 49-50.

[92] This satirical description of the cartoon is from Japanophile Arthur Diosy's scathing repudiation of the prevalent military version of the yellow peril presented in the cartoon in his 1898 treatise on the Far Eastern Question in *The New Far East* (1898; London: Cassell, 1904), pp. 327, 333; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/newfareast00diuoft, 10 Apr 2013. The cartoon itself is reproduced as the frontispiece to the text. Diosy, who singled out Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* for particular ridicule (337), does countenance an economic version of the fear – oriental industriousness surpassing Western thriftlessness with the aid of Western science (337-9).

[93] 'General Türr On European Armaments', *The Times*, 4 Jun 1895, p. 3. This article, reporting the speech of a Hungarian general on the Prussian threat, contained what was essentially an obscure and isolated usage

nations in similarly alarmist terms in 1895, as shown in fig. 4. Blaming 'European Civilisation' for arming the Asian belligerents, it lamented the unleashing of these 'armour-plated dragons'.[94]



Fig. 4. 'The Work of Civilisation'.
Punch, 107 (11 Aug 1894), p. 62.

Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

of the term 'yellow peril' in *The Times* in the 1890s. The phrase did not gain any kind of traction in *The Times* until the Boxer Rebellion was well underway in 1900, after which it was used with reference both to the South African labour issue and the worsening relations between Russia and Japan from 1903. It was used again extensively in 1904-5 in conjunction with coverage of the Russo-Japanese war, after which its usage dwindled.

[94] 'Eastward Ho!', *Punch*, 107 (11 Aug 1894), p. 63.

Writing in 1896 to better acquaint 'untravelled' readers of *The Windsor Magazine* with China, oriental authority, G. W. Ward, casually proffered this version of the yellow peril by way of preface:

> Frankly, I dislike the yellow race: deceitful, inhuman, obstinate... From Sydney to Peru, from Callao to Calcutta, you find them extending their influence silently, if not yet so crushingly as the author of 'The Yellow Invasion' predicted... He [the Mongol] is a power to be reckoned with, although the battle of Armageddon in which he will conquer will be one in which wealth will be the weapon...[95]

And in late 1897 after the scramble in China was well underway, *The Spectator*'s infamous article, 'The "Yellow Peril"', was published. It provided one of the most high-profile early usages of the term the 'yellow peril' in Britain, crediting the Kaiser with the first public usage of the term and suggesting Pearson as his inspiration. In its explication of the concept, the article countenanced the circulating view of Qing China as 'moribund', but argued that the escalating sequence of European land-grabs might eventually provoke it 'to protest against or to avenge such treatment'. The real though improbable danger it anticipated was desperation driving the Chinese to initiate a coalition of 'the whole Yellow Race' under Japan which could pose a formidable challenge to any unwary European power. This possibility is luridly summed up as: 'in their irritation the yellow giants may turn to the yellow dwarfs, and ... if they do the struggle may be at least more protracted than anyone in ... Europe now expects'.[96] *The Spectator*'s posited scenario is also very close to the outline of Shiel's plot in *The Yellow Danger* and may well have been a source for him. Thus it is clear that while Shiel's text was a high-profile and influential representation of the yellow peril fear in Britain that predates the Boxer Rebellion, it was responding to an orientalised version of invasion anxiety that had already gained some currency.

While many of the yellow peril sources discussed above undoubtedly influenced him, Shiel was quite deliberate in his usage of the phrase 'yellow danger' and his source for it

---

[95] G. W. Ward, 'Fragments of China', *The Windsor Magazine*, 5 (Dec 1896,) p. 362. 'The Yellow Invasion' referred to by Ward may be a misnomer for Mackay's *The Yellow Wave* or an as yet undiscovered yellow peril fiction that may also have been a source for Shiel.

[96] 'Topics of the Day: The "Yellow Peril"', *The Spectator*, 79:3624 (11 Dec 1897), pp. 874-8. It is interesting to observe that Pearson (deceased in 1894) had previously written for *The Spectator* and perhaps coloured its thinking on the matter.

warrants some investigation. Despite repeated suggestions from Grant Richards that the book be published under the title 'the Yellow Peril' or 'the Yellow Terror', it was issued as Shiel had always intended as *The Yellow Danger*.[97] From an analysis of the text itself, Shiel appears to attribute if not the actual phrase 'yellow danger', then certainly the theme to the well-known figure of Lord Charles Beresford, recently re-elected Conservative MP and Rear-Admiral in the Royal Navy. In *The Yellow Danger* Shiel, writing in early 1898, asserts that by this time 'that phrase, "The Yellow Danger," had become quite common in every one's ears', elaborating:

> For it must be remembered that the idea of 'The Yellow Danger' was no new one to European statesmen. Again and again had the more keen-eyed of politicians pointed Eastward, and said to Europe : 'The Yellow Danger! the Yellow Danger!' Only a year or so previously had Lord Charles Beresford, in a speech delivered, we think, at Hull, used words like these : 'The cloud at present may seem only the size of a man's hand – but it is there; and its seemingly small size is due to its remoteness, not to its intrinsic smallness. What appalling fate would be that of Europe, if the yellow races, in their hundreds of millions, organised a westward march, is beyond the imagination of man to conceive.' (108)[98]

Shiel used the phrase 'yellow danger' only once more in the text, again in quotation marks and again associated with Beresford (238), which might imply that he thought he was making a citation. However, in the speech Shiel seems to have in mind, although Beresford had indeed referred to the 'state of affairs in the Far East, in China … as very alarming', it was not for the reasons Shiel described. While Beresford feared, like Shiel, that the scramble might result in the formation of a triple alliance of the European powers against England, his solution was to 'take a naval base … near the gulf … where the other nations were' and to form 'an alliance with Japan', which latter proposal hardly conjures up the dread of the oriental races Shiel ascribes to him.[99]

---

[97] Correspondence between Shiel and Richards cited in Billings, vol. 2, pp. 63, 72, 73.

[98] This excerpt appears in chapter 12 of the *Empress* serial version of the text, issued in the 19 Mar 1898 edition of *Short Stories*.

[99] Election speech given at York by Lord Charles Beresford on 30 Dec 1898, reported in 'Election Intelligence: York', *The Times*, 31 Dec 2012, p. 4.

Curiously, the 'cloud' metaphor ascribed to Beresford by Shiel in fact seems to refer to a contemporary speech on an aspect of the Eastern Question by Lord Curzon, who, concerned over the resolution of the Greco-Turkish war of 1897, warned:

> A war cloud is there visible which, at first no bigger than a man's hand, is daily growing ... upon the horizon; and people ... throughout Europe, are looking upon that cloud with a horrid apprehension, but still with hope ... that [it] may yet be dispelled before it breaks in a cyclone of universal destruction.'[100]

This admonitory sentiment, quoted at length because it is so indicative of the paranoid imperial mindset that foresaw the possibility of apocalypse in every international dispute, in turn bears a strong resemblance to that in Lord Charles Canning's well-known prophetic utterance concerning India in the mid-century. On taking up office as Governor-General in India in 1856, the year before the Mutiny, he remarked: 'I wish for a peaceful time of office. But I cannot forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, no larger than a man's hand, but which, growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin.'[101] Canning's prediction was widely quoted in nineteenth century histories of the Mutiny and therefore may have suggested itself both to Curzon and Shiel. And, of course, the cloud metaphor also evokes the visual representation of the 'Peril' approaching amidst a fiery storm-cloud in the notorious *Kaiserbild*.

That Beresford had to some extent become associated with the yellow peril fear in the minds of more than just Shiel is evident in the way that news of his speech was picked up and reported in colonies with significant Chinese populations. The Singapore *Straits Times* in January 1898 reported: 'Lord Charles Beresford, addressing a meeting at York, said he regarded the situation in the Far East as alarming. His Lordship advocated an alliance between Great Britain and Japan.'[102] And an anxious Australian commentator, writing to warn against the dangers of pan-Asianism after the signing of the Anglo-

[100] 'Mr Curzon on the Cretan Question', *The Times*, 5 Apr 1897, p. 9.
[101] Cited in John Clarke Marshman, *History of India* (1876); abridged edn, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 490.
[102] 'Lord Charles Beresford on the Far East', *The Straits Times* [Singapore], 3 Jan 1898, p. 2; online at *National Library Singapore*, http://newspapers.nl.sg/Digitised/Article/straitstimes18980103-1.2.4.aspx, 23 Nov 2012.

Japanese Treaty in 1902, similarly associates both Beresford and Hart with a belligerent China:

> With Sir Robert Hart's prophecy fresh in our minds the 'Yellow Peril' of Lord Charles Beresford and Professor Pearson is not such an overdrawn picture as some people would have us believe.[103]

It is interesting to observe as an aside that this curious, perverse fear of Japanese treachery, despite the increasing cordiality of Britain's actual relationship with Japan in the early twentieth century, seems similarly to have plagued the poet Fawcett. An American who spent the last years of his life in London, Fawcett was suitably inspired by the circulating yellow peril anxiety – and, given his poem's title, perhaps directly by Shiel's novel – to pen his admonitory 'The Yellow Danger' in 1900 in response to the Boxer Rebellion. Like Shiel, Fawcett blamed European incursion for arousing China, and like the *Spectator* article and the Australian commentator cited above, warned against trusting Japan lest it make the 'loathsome Yellow Danger yellower still'.[104]

In the aftermath of the scramble in the autumn of 1898 Beresford was sent to China to investigate trading conditions there, his subsequent influential report, *The Break-up of China* (1899), arguing for a continuation of the British free trade policy and against the seemingly inevitable partition of China between the European powers. The tone of this work is moderate, sympathetic to the beleaguered Chinese position, and critical of Britain for allowing the scramble to occur.[105] Lamenting the then disorganised state of the Chinese armed forces, Beresford did, however, comment as follows on the efficiency of the Chinese as a fighting force if properly trained:

> From all that I have heard and seen I believe they [the Chinese] would make splendid soldiers if properly trained, and if fed, paid, and clothed according to their contract with the authorities. They have all the characteristics necessary to make a good

[103] T. H. Bath, 'The Anglo-Japanese Treaty', *Kalgoorlie Western Argus* [Western Australia], 4 Mar 1902, p. 2; online at *Trove*, http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/32608809, 2 Dec 2012.
[104] Fawcett's 'The Yellow Danger' appeared first in an August 1900 edition of the American magazine *Collier's Weekly*, the contents of which were dedicated largely to coverage of the conflict in China, before being published in England in 1903.
[105] Beresford, *The Break-Up of China*, p. 450.

> soldier. They are sober, obedient, easily managed, and very quick at learning. There were many instances of heroic bravery during the Chino-Japanese War.[106]

And while Beresford's actual, realistic cause for concern is the weakness rather than the strength of the Chinese empire, he does comment that danger arises from 'the jealousies of the neighbors who are waiting to divide [its] property among them'.[107] It is possible that similar statements to these, previously expressed by Beresford, had been sensationalised or reported out of context, in the same way that Hart's warning had been, and formed the basis of Shiel's attribution of the 'yellow danger' theme to Beresford.

The publishing process and the yellow peril

Returning to the more immediate source of inspiration for *The Yellow Danger*, it is clear from memoirs and correspondence that both Shiel and his publishers were well aware of the growing current of yellow peril anxiety in Britain and that *The Yellow Danger* was deliberately produced to capitalise on public interest in the 1897-8 Chinese crisis. Diamond holds that 'the Chinese fired the imagination of the British public during the half-century up to about 1940' owing to the dramatic nature of the events occurring in China and the presence of Chinese in British cities.[108] As discussed in chapter one, though a considerable notoriety already attached to the Limehouse area of London, its immigrant Chinese population in the 1890s was tiny and Chinese immigration into Britain did not give much impetus to the yellow peril myth until early in the twentieth century, as Diamond and Glover have shown. It was therefore, the movements of the Chinese on the international stage, as narrated by those with experience of the Far East or colonies with significant immigrant Chinese populations, that sparked public interest in the 1890s.

As Shiel later explained, when the 'trouble broke out in China' in November 1897, Pearson group editor, Peter Keary, specifically commissioned him to write a 'war-serial' to exploit it.[109] Keary was keen to follow up with something similarly topical Louis Tracy's *The Final War* (1896), which was serialised in the high-volume *Pearson's*

[106] Ibid., p. 283.
[107] Ibid., p. 453.
[108] Diamond, *'Lesser Breeds'*, 12.
[109] Shiel, 'About Myself' [1929], p. 673.

Weekly magazine and became one of the most successful future-war themed invasion tales of the 1890s. Like Le Queux's *The Great War in England in 1897* and *The Yellow Danger*, Tracy's novel envisaged the colonial project as a source of risk to Britain, extrapolating from ongoing European colonial rivalry an allied European attempt to steal Britain's colonies. Squires, who has teased out the complex publication history of *The Yellow Danger*, documents that the public response to the first instalments of the *Empress* serial was also enthusiastic, prompting Pearson to request Shiel to extend the serial twice while it was still running and more than doubling its original word count.[110] Shiel's awareness of the marketability of this brand of topical fiction is apparent in his pitch to Richards, while the magazine serialisation was still ongoing, to hurry the book version to print: 'I believe that if it is published in book form soon, while the China bother is still on the tapis, it might be widely successful'.[111] That Richards shared his view is evidenced by the speedy issue of the luridly-covered book version in July 1898 (see fig. 5) and the blurb in Richards's Spring 1898 catalogue which sells *The Yellow Danger* on its currency: 'The plot of this story is laid in the present year, the first chapters dealing with those incidents in the Far East that have so fluttered the chancelleries of the West.'[112] The marketing material continues to exploit this selling point by linking Shiel's plot to the well-known 'Yellow Peril' *Spectator* article, summarising it as 'the "Yellow Danger" of the Spectator'.[113]

[110] The original contract length of 70,000 words was increased first to 100,000 words and finally to 150,000. See John D. Squires, '*The Yellow Danger* Revisited', afterword to M. P. Shiel, *China in Arms: A Fantasy*, reprint of Shiel's unpublished final revision of *The Yellow Danger* c. 1929 (Kettering, OH: Vainglory Press, 1998), p. 353.

[111] Letter to Richards, c. Feb 1898, cited in Billings, vol. 2, p. 63.

[112] 'Publications and Announcements of Mr Grant Richards' (Spring 1898), publisher's catalogue bound into the back of M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Danger* (London: Grant Richards, 1898), p. 7.

[113] Ibid. Textual evidence shows that this link was deliberate: while the blurb reuses much of Shiel's plot description from the Feb 1898 letter to Richards verbatim, where Shiel had written 'The Yellow Danger!!!', the publisher has amended it to 'the "Yellow Danger" of the Spectator'.

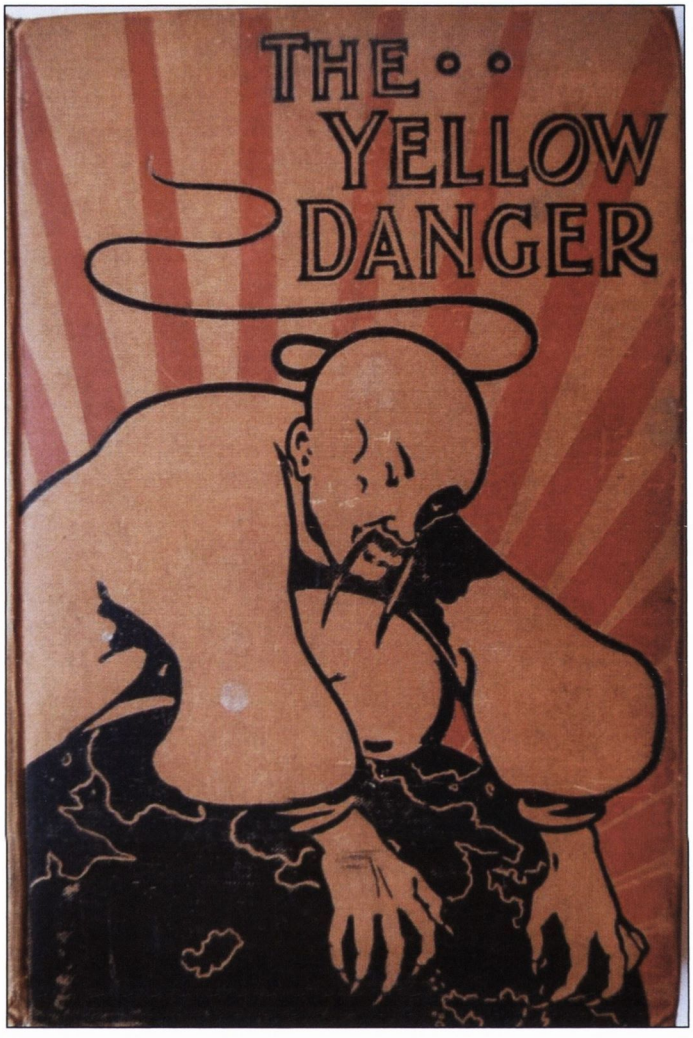


Fig. 5. Cover of the second edition of *The Yellow Danger* (London: Grant Richards, 1900), identical to the first edition of 1898.

Image from the author's collection.

Reviewers of *The Yellow Danger* were not unaware of the novel's interaction with Chinese events, nor were they reluctant to comment on the realism of the political scenario it depicted. The well-known, crusading journalist W. T. Stead chose to review it at length in his successful monthly *The Review of Reviews*, a publication with a global outlook that combined reviews with opinion on international affairs, and his summation is quite indicative of the general response. Commenting on the plot orchestrated by Yen, Stead opines:

> Yen How's scheme for the conquest of Europe has its germ in a thought which undoubtedly animates the mandarins at the court of Pekin. Not that they contemplate

> the conquest of the world ... being limited for the most part by a desire to protect themselves against being conquered by Europe, but their idea and Yen How's is the same ... to sow dissension among the European nations. Let them quarrel among themselves. When rogues fall out, the honest Chinaman will come to his own.[114]

Stead is more extravagant in his conclusion to the review, which demonstrates how easily a realistic appreciation of the balance of power in Anglo-Chinese relations could give way to its paranoid inverse, finally admonishing:

> One thing Mr. Sheil's [sic] book may help in doing in the political sphere, and that is to remind those who are so busy in disposing of the carcase of the Chinese dragon that the dragon himself is by no means defunct, and may yet emerge as a fire-breathing monster to terrify the world.[115]

Here, in the suggestion that a populist text like Shiel's may be influential in the high realm of international policy making, Stead's assessment signals the productive capacity of invasion fiction – its potential to shape opinion and even political outcomes rather than merely reflect anxiety.

The precedent for Shiel's awareness of the saleability of politically-charged, topical fiction may have been set through an earlier, oriental-themed collaboration with Stead. In order to reach a wider audience than that of *The Review of Reviews*, Stead had attempted to create a mass-market daily paper in 1893 which would include a permanent serial, *The Romance of the World*, 'designed to incorporate the leading events of the world's history into fictional form ... to reach those readers who would not read politics unless served "with the sauce" of a story.'[116] It is unclear as to whether Stead approached Shiel in 1893 to produce something for the daily (a complete failure), but certainly Shiel produced a

---

[114] [W. T. Stead], 'Books for the Holidays', rev. of M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Danger* (1898), *The Review of Reviews*, 17 (Aug 1898), p. 195.

[115] Despite this warning, Stead took major exception to Shiel's depiction of the Chinese: 'what is not excusable is the deliberate effort which he has made throughout to represent the Chinamen as fiends incarnate. As a matter of fact, the Chinese is not a fiend incarnate. He is, in the opinion of many of those who have lived with him and known him well, a product of the Almighty Maker, of which He has as little reason to be ashamed as of many of His white-skinned children. It is this element which vitiates the value of the book. Race hatreds are the devil, and any one who develops them consciously or unconsciously, as Mr. Sheil [sic] seems to have done, is holding a candle to the devil with a vengeance.' Ibid., p. 196.

[116] John D. Squires, 'The Curious Tale of Shiel, Stead and the Sapphire,' afterword to M. P. Shiel, *The Rajah's Sapphire* (1896; Kansas City: Highflyer, 1981), p. vii.

novella early in 1895 on commission from Stead, *The Rajah's Sapphire* (1896).[117] In its opening chapter a sense of dramatic tension was created by reference to the then-ongoing Sino-Japanese war and the topic recurs sporadically throughout the text. The passages which treat of 'the minutiae of the Chino-Japanese affair'[118] demonstrate Shiel's working knowledge of events, though they are ultimately overtaken by the prevalent cursed colonial treasure theme that recurs in Boothby's oeuvre (and of course in the works of Wilkie Collins and Arthur Conan Doyle). Stead had written repeatedly in *The Review of Reviews* against Japanese militarism and atrocity during the Sino-Japanese campaign.[119] He had further devoted its Christmas 1894 number to his novella *The Splendid Paupers*, summarised in his words as '"The Yellow Man with the White Money", which indulged in a more or less fantastic vision of the economic triumph of the Chinese over the Western World', and which clearly owed something to Pearson's *National Life and Character*.[120] As Shiel stated that *The Rajah's Sapphire* was written 'From a Plot given him vivâ voce by W. T. Stead',[121] it is possible Stead may have suggested utilising the 1894-5 Far Eastern crisis in the novel and set Shiel's mind turning generally upon the theme of East-West relations.

Returning to 1898, while the *Empress* serial was still running in *Short Stories*, Shiel was again commissioned by Keary to produce a war-serial in response to the latest crisis in international imperial affairs, the Spanish-American War of April-August 1898. *Contraband of War* (1899) ran serially in *Pearson's Weekly* from May to July of 1898, and, following the pattern of *Empress*, utilised developments in the new war in its weekly instalments. The Pearson group marketed the new serial on its topicality with ads printed alongside the May instalments of *Empress* highlighting *Contraband of War*'s connection to the current hostilities, and proclaiming 'For the first time in the history of British journalism a serial story of a war is running concurrently with the actual fighting'.[122]

---

[117] For what is known of the extent of this arrangement, see Billings, vol. 2, pp. 38-43.
[118] Shiel, *The Rajah's Sapphire*, p. 14.
[119] See for example, 'The Progress of the World: The Asiatic Triumphant', where Stead writes of Japanese victory, 'It makes us shudder to imagine the possibility of such … horror rising in the Further East', *The Review of Reviews*, 9 (Dec 1894), p. 533.
[120] [Stead], 'Books for the Holidays', p. 194.
[121] Shiel, *The Rajah's Sapphire*, title page.
[122] Advertisement for *Contraband of War* accompanying the 21 May 1898 instalment of M. P. Shiel, *The Empress of the Earth: The Tale of the Yellow War*, *Short Stories*, 4 (5 Feb-18 Jun 1898), p. 660; reprinted in A. Reynolds Morse (ed.) *The Works of M. P. Shiel*, 3 vols (Cleveland, OH: Reynolds Morse

Owing perhaps to Shiel's inability to predict the scale of the Spanish defeat or to its lack of a compelling threat comparable to that of oriental invasion, *Contraband of War* did not repeat the success of *The Yellow Danger*, but nonetheless confirms the Pearson group's policy of exploiting developments in current affairs. This practice of rushing to market sensational fiction extrapolated from nascent political crises demonstrates the influential role of the popular periodical editors, such as Keary and Stead, in guiding public opinion and fuelling anxiety about invasion and war, rather than passively responding to it. Something of the productive effect that it had with regard to Shiel's text is evident in the melodramatic conclusion of the *Literary World* reviewer after reading *The Yellow Danger* that 'we shall follow the affairs in the East for the future with an underlying sense of distrust and uneasiness which we had never thought to come to'.[123]

The sensationalist direction given by the periodical publishers is further borne out in the commissioning of some of Tracy's and Le Queux's invasion tales. In an interview with Tracy regarding the writing of *The Final War* he revealed that: 'At Mr Pearson's orders I had to whip the world between December and July, and ... make the English army invade... the three capitals of France, Germany, and Russia'; he also disclosed his own explicit 'patriotic' motive for writing the tale.[124] Le Queux's hugely successful follow-up invasion tale *The Invasion of 1910* (1906) likewise bears the hallmarks of editorial direction: as Cecil Eby describes, 'the author obligingly diverted his invading [German] hordes ... through larger towns in order to boost circulation figures' for the *Daily Mail* which had commissioned the serial.[125] It should be pointed out that, though to a lesser extent than Shiel, Le Queux and certainly Tracy may also be considered to be colonially-aware, double-voiced authors. As well as writing popular fiction, the seemingly Anglo-French Le Queux was a travel writer and newspaper foreign correspondent who travelled extensively in France, Italy and North Africa in his youth

Foundation, 1979-80), I, pp. 114-20. See also similar advertisements accompanying the May 7th and 28th installments of *Empress*.

[123] Cited in 'Mr Grant Richard's Catalogue of Works in Fiction', p. 8.

[124] 'The Man Who Wrote *The Final War*', an interview with Louis Tracy in *Pearson's Weekly*, 20:348 (Mar 1897); cited in John D. Squires, 'A Whiff of Collaboration: The Tracy-Shiel Connection', afterword to Louis Tracy, *The Great Strike* (1901; Kettering, OH: Vainglory Press, 2005), pp. 104-5; online at *M. P. Shiel – The Lord of Language*, http://www.alangullette.com/lit/shiel/shiel/essays/shiel_tracy.htm, 18 Jul 2012.

[125] Cecil D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1987), pp. 32-3.

and later in the Balkans and the Near East.[126] And Tracy, like so many of the authors on whom this study focuses, had Irish connections – born to well-off Irish immigrant parents reputedly while in transit aboard ship from Dublin to Liverpool. He also spent a formative period in Allahabad, India, where he edited a British paper and joined the Light Horse Volunteers, which experience he utilised in his invasion fiction.[127] Hence while Tracy's tales typically result in a straightforward restoration or extension of the prior imperial order, their invasion scenarios, like Shiel's, are predicated upon imperial concerns fore-grounded for Tracy by his colonial background and experience.

The subsequent publication history of *The Yellow Danger* and other Shiel texts further demonstrates the explicit relationship between colonial crises and the publication of invasion fiction. In 1900 after the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion, Grant Richards issued a new and cheaper edition of *The Yellow Danger* to capitalise on renewed public interest.[128] Likewise, in June that year as the notorious siege of the Beijing legations was ongoing, the Pearson group, which owned the serial rights, re-ran the *Empress* serial under the more germane title *The Yellow Peril*. It appeared in *The Illustrated Weekly News*, a new Pearson weekly which had been launched in 1899 – its particular focus indicated by its original title *The Illustrated War News*.[129] In August 1900 the influential literary trade periodical, *The Bookman*, observed the surge of interest in relevant publications generated by the Boxer Rebellion, stating: 'The crisis in China revived the sale of some recent works published on the Far Eastern problems'; it listed Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* among the top four, which also included Beresford's *The Break-up of China* and two other non-fiction works.[130] Interestingly, *The Bookman* does not appear to

[126] Most of the details of Le Queux's life are hard to pin down, but in as far as possible, these facts are corroborated in the latest and only reliable biography of Le Queux by Chris Patrick and Stephen Baister, *William Le Queux: Master of Mystery* (Purley: Chris Patrick and Stephen Baister, 2007), chap.s 2, 3 & 9.

[127] Squires, 'A Whiff of Collaboration', pp. 105, 123.

[128] Owing to demand, the text had already been reprinted in August 1898, and issued in American and colonial editions. For further details of its publication history see Squires, 'Rediscovering M. P. Shiel', p. 13, and Squires, '*The Yellow Danger* Revisited', pp. 353, 357.

[129] Before the serial concluded the ill-fated weekly had changed title again to *The Curiosity Shop*, before being discontinued in October 1900. *The Yellow Peril* ran from 30 June to 1 Sept 1900 in *The Illustrated Weekly News* and from 8 Sept to 13 Oct 1900 in *The Curiosity Shop*, see Billings, vol. 2, p. 324, for further details.

[130] 'Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade', *The Bookman*, 18 (Aug 1900), p. 136. A new edition of Diosy's *The New Far East* was also issued in 1900, its preface noting the war cry 'China for the Chinese!' (comparable to the other counter-colonial resistance cries of 'Egypt for the Egyptians!' and

differentiate between Shiel's fictional text and the so-called factual accounts, seeming to regard it as a comparably authoritative treatment of Chinese affairs. Bickers, who provides an analysis of the factual responses to the rebellion, observes 'China crises, like other crises, had seen experts rush to print, and publishers rush to resurrect old books... Never had there been such a clamour for work on China, and never such supply, and while some of it pleaded China's case, much of it served to damn the country ... yet further in foreign eyes...'[131]

Ironically for Shiel, earlier in 1900, the public obsession with the concurrent Second Boer War (1899-1902) had led Keary to drop one of his new novels, *The Lord of the Sea* (1901), from the serialization queue at *Pearson's Weekly*. Instead he commissioned from Tracy *The Invaders* (1901), a Boer War-themed invasion serial in which the colonial rivalry device was repeated, with France and Germany seizing Britain's difficulty during the conflict as an opportunity for invasion.[132] *The Invaders* ran from March to August 1900 in *Pearson's Weekly*, while, as historian T. G. Otte puts it, the 'dual Boer-Boxer crisis ... paralysed British foreign policy and ... revealed the potential risks entailed in the global dispersion of Britain's imperial interests and resources'.[133]

Shiel's subsequent development of the yellow peril

Shiel went on to produce two further future-war style tales of oriental invasion, *The Yellow Wave* in 1905 and *The Dragon* in 1913, though neither achieved anything approaching the profile of *The Yellow Danger*. Before we come to these, however, it is interesting to note that his major contribution to early science fiction and the text he tends to be remembered for – the 1901 catastrophe novel, *The Purple Cloud* – itself provides a curious take on the theme of oriental invasion. In this narrative, the lethal volcanic gas cloud that exterminates humanity is purported to have its source in a new series of volcanoes that have emerged in the South Seas. The gas cloud they emit travels slowly but relentlessly in a westerly direction, forcing the population of the east and south to flee westwards and swamp the cities of Europe, the literal lethal cloud here perhaps echoing

'Ireland for the Irish!', etc.) and urging Japanese custodianship of China. (This preface is included in the text of the 1904 fourth edition cited above, see pp. x-xii.)

[131] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, pp. 355-6.

[132] Squires, 'A Whiff of Collaboration', p. 108.

[133] Otte, *The China Question*, p. 291.

the *Kaiserbild*'s metaphorical peril seated on his storm-cloud, or the ominous 'cloud ... the size of a man's hand' foreseen in *The Yellow Danger*. In a departure from the more usual yellow peril scenario, however, by the time the sole survivor and protagonist of the text encounters the oriental refugees, they are all dead, as are the remaining displaced western population. The text abounds with, and (like *The Yellow Danger*) seems to revel in, bizarre and macabre descriptions of mortality, of piles of corpses attired in every manner of exotic 'southern, and Oriental' garb.[134] The protagonist, initially bemused and unable to believe he is in England so 'variegated a mixture of races, black, brunette, brown, yellow, white, in all the shades' does he encounter, eventually concludes to himself:[135]

> 'There has been an impassioned stampede, northward and westward, of all the tribes of Man. And this that I ... here see is but the far-tossed spray of that monstrous, infuriate flood.'[136]

There is no plot dependent reason beyond shock factor for the inclusion of this westward population flood, suggesting that the theme of oriental invasion was still playing out on a submerged level in Shiel's writing following *The Yellow Danger*.

Certainly the theme resurfaced in a far more explicit form in *The Yellow Wave* in 1905. Like *The Rajah's Sapphire* and *The Yellow Danger*, this text is set against the backdrop of yet another Far Eastern crisis, the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5; this time, however, a doomed love affair is fore-grounded. Presumably hoping to create another lucrative, up-to-the-minute war-serial, the financially-straitened Shiel began writing *The Yellow Wave* before the conflict began as diplomatic relations between Russia and Japan worsened early in 1904. He had mentioned a potential 'successor to "The Yellow Danger"' to Richards in January 1904 and by February 7th, the day after Japan broke off diplomatic relations with Russia, was writing to Keary to inform him 'in view of the "Declaration" [by Japan] that the story is pretty well on, and you can have what's done as soon as you require it'.[137] In his pitch to Keary, Shiel made the surprising claim that he

[134] M. P. Shiel, *The Purple Cloud* (1901; Leyburn, North Yorkshire: Tartarus Press, 2004), p. 77.
[135] Ibid., p. 85.
[136] Ibid., p. 77.
[137] Letter to Richards, pre-dating 14 Jan 1904; and letter to Keary, 7 Feb 1904, cited in Billings, vol. 2, pp. 172, 173.

had received 'an offer to go out to the seat of war to do graphic descriptive articles à la Stevens', and proposed that the Pearson group send him instead in order to 'boom' the new story.[138] While there is no evidence that Shiel ever went to the Far East, nor did Keary ultimately serialise *The Yellow Wave*, Shiel's proposal to Keary highlights his sustained interest in Eastern affairs and awareness of literary marketing tactics. After tortuous negotiations *The Yellow Wave* eventually saw publication in book form in June 1905, shortly after the main action of the war had concluded. For this reason and because it was in competition with several other fictional accounts of the war, including George Griffith's *The Stolen Submarine: A Tale of the Russo-Japanese War* (1904), its sales were poor.

At the outset the invasion threat in *The Yellow Wave* seems but a slightly updated version of that in *The Yellow Danger* and in Fawcett's poem. Leading Chinese and Japanese statesmen again conspire to start 'a European war' to achieve supremacy for 'the yellow race', this time using the pretext of the current war between Russia and Japan because each side had standing alliances with different groups of European powers.[139] Anticipating the reinforced yellow peril fears of Europe when Japan unexpectedly defeated Russia in actuality in 1905, Shiel likened the Japanese to '"the barbarians" ... that overthrew the Roman Empire' (69) and warned:

> Much of the waking up is done ... from end to end of Asia the rumour has run that the yellow man has beaten the white in war. When the Chinese coolie thinks of this he looks up into the air and screams out laughing; the Hindoo is glad; the worshippers of the sun far off are ready to help. (61-2)

This atavistic moment of racial panic, however, is uncharacteristic of the text as *The Yellow Wave* seems on the whole to be working to quite a different set of conclusions to its predecessor. The yellow peril theme quickly recedes in favour of the development of the tragic relationship of a Russian girl and a Japanese youth, offspring of the opposing military leaders, who both become embroiled in the conflict. And the overblown racial

[138] Though he died during the Boer War in 1900, *The Daily Mail*'s trail-blazing war correspondent, G. W. Steevens, is probably the journalist to whom Shiel refers here as 'Stevens'. Steevens's prior war reporting from Egypt is covered in chapter two.

[139] M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Wave* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1905), pp. 61-3; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

conflict of *The Yellow Danger* is mercifully superseded by a far more gritty and sympathetic treatment of the effects of war on the individual.

In *The Yellow Wave* it is Britain's then-allies the Japanese who are cast in a favourable light versus the Russians, who stand 'for all the darkness of the past', and 'an Asia Asiatic and Socialistic from the Frozen Sea to Ceylon' is anticipated as a positive development for humanity (36). The text goes even further to posit that the white races are but a 'freak' of nature, 'there to modify Man' like a leaven and then 'disappear'; when this evolutionary work is done humanity may 'look forward three hundred years to one universal race, highly evolved, of a flushed brown as clear as the ruby' (250). This runs startlingly counter to the entrenched contemporary 'belief in the biological superiority of Europeans and the inevitable decline of the other races' that developed from the application of Darwinian evolutionary principles to the accepted hierarchies of racial theory in the work of respected thinkers like Herbert Spencer and Alfred Russel Wallace.[140]

In the conclusion of *The Yellow Wave*, the tragic deaths of the youthful protagonists effect the peaceful resolution of hostilities and herald a twentieth-century era of full '*Egalité* ... of woman with man, of peasant with Tsar, of yellow with white' and an end to 'aristocrats, whether they be men or nations!' (316-7), an outcome that differs markedly from England's position as 'Empress' at the end of *The Yellow Danger*. This amicable conclusion was also quite at odds with a good deal of alarmist contemporary commentary which foresaw in Japanese victory intimations of an ominous 'pan-Mongol movement' and perhaps even a 'second Boxer rising', or worse.[141] The text's racial tolerance also diverged from a growing domestic clamour to restrict the immigration of 'undesirable' foreigners into Britain which resulted in the Aliens Act of 1905. This act, though principally an anti-Semitic device directed at controlling Jewish immigration, was also in part a response to yellow-peril informed fears of Chinese immigration.[142] The

[140] Sven Lindqvist, *'Exterminate all the Brutes'*, trans. Joan Tate (London: Granta, 2002), p. 133.
[141] [W. T. Stead], 'Leading Articles in the Reviews: "The White Peril"', *The Review of Reviews*, 29 (Feb 1904), p. 138. Stead, pursuing his interest in Far Eastern affairs, abstracted a great deal of material concerning the Russo-Japanese war in *The Review of Reviews*, much of it highly alarmist, as Squires documents, 'Some Contemporary Themes in Shiel's Early Novels', pp. 271-5.
[142] Jenny Clegg, *Fu Manchu and the 'Yellow Peril': The Making of a Racist Myth* (London: Trentham Books, 1994), p. 26. For a recent account of the social and cultural response to Jewish immigration into Britain, see David Glover, *Literature, Immigration and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England: A Cultural*

British settler colonies' fear of the oriental threat to the white labour force had finally begun to permeate the metropolis and played a major role in the election campaigns of 1906 which saw the hoardings plastered with repugnant caricatures of cheap 'Mongolian' labour.[143] *The Times*, earlier in 1903, had combined these two themes, warning against the threats of both pan-Mongolism and cheap labour: 'The Japanese... are seeking methodically to realise under their own hegemony and for their own benefit, the idea of Pan-Mongolism ... The yellow peril is advancing upon us...'; the precise peril in its view being not 'the armed Chinese warrior', but the 'peaceful seeker after employment'.[144] Interestingly, the so-called Chinese and Jewish menaces were on occasion linked in contemporary racist and anti-immigration discourse, for instance, in wild speculation that the mass migration of Chinese workers worldwide was orchestrated by a Jewish conspiracy or in a reference to the Chinese as 'the Jews of the Orient'.[145] This mirrors the conflation of the perceived threats of Chinese and Italian immigration into Australia, discussed in chapter one, in which the Italians were similarly, and somewhat circularly, demonised as 'the Chinese of Europe'.[146]

Written a couple of years later and partly in response to the crystallisation of these fears – of pan-Mongolism and Chinese immigration – was another future war extravaganza with a yellow peril aspect: *The War in the Air* (1908), the brainchild of the far more successful scientific romancer, H. G. Wells. Though *The War in the Air* deals with a far broader range of concerns and is suffused with a curious, tragicomic strain of anti-imperialism, in its inclusion of a significant yellow peril threat it is arguable that the impression of Shiel's two previous trail-blazing oriental invasion texts is discernible upon the much better-selling Wells work. As the pretext for the outbreak of hostilities *The War in the Air* follows the future-war convention of utilising a colonial dispute, though in this

History of the 1905 Aliens Act (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Similar to Erika Lee's argument concerning the legitimisation of xenophobia in response to Chinese immigration into the USA (referenced in chapter one), Glover argues that the attitude to immigration in Britain generally hardened owing to the xenophobia that became acceptable as a response to Jewish immigration. See Erika Lee, 'The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gate-Keeping, 1882-1924', *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Spring 2002), p. 37; online at *University of Victoria*, http://web.uvic.ca/~ayh/Lee.pdf, 29 Mar 2013.

[143] J. P. May, 'The Chinese in Britain 1860-1914', in Colin Holmes (ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1978), p. 117.

[144] 'The Manchurian Question. (From Our Russian Correspondents.)', *The Times*, 3 Aug 1903, p. 3.

[145] Glover, '*Die gelbe gefahr*', pp. 58-9; May, 'The Chinese in Britain', p. 113.

[146] Lee, 'The Chinese Exclusion Example', p. 48.

case the putative combatants are initially Germany and the United States, rather than Britain, and the contested territory South American.[147] On the eve of the conflict, the narrative voice in Chesney-fashion, deplores the position of the British Empire 'perilously scattered across the globe' and adverts to a series of opportunistic counter-colonial 'insurrectionary movements in Ireland and among all its Subject Races' (75); also notably in India, conjuring the ever-lurking fear of a second Mutiny (175).

Where the direct influence of Shiel upon Wells's text may be perceived is in the surprise emergence of a 'great alliance of Eastern Asia, a close-knit coalescence of China and Japan', as the dominant power in the conflict and one which similarly takes advantage of Europe's distraction to wreak havoc upon it, and also the United States, this time from the air (75). Immigration concerns are also at play here, as the pan-Asian attack on the United States was motivated by strained relations between Japan and America arising out of the latter's attempts to restrict Japanese immigration (77). As per Shiel's *The Yellow Danger*, the scale of the conflict is global and devastating, and the potential horror of the inversion of existing imperial relations plain: 'It's the end of the world,' laments a chastened German combatant, '... now Asia is at us all, and on the top of us all.... It's mania. China on the top...' (169). Wells too, through the voice of his everyman protagonist, Bert Smallways, blames Western imperialism for provoking Asia: 'we went and poked 'em up until they ...'*ad* to give us this lickin', Bert finally comes to see (215-6). However, in Wells's unrelentingly gloomy scenario of total war Britain does not remain unscathed, no nation emerges as the individual victor, and the entire world lapses into a state of primitive agricultural subsistence. Ultimately, in the oblique intimation that a typically Wellsian utopian 'world state' that is 'orderly, scientific, and secured' eventually emerges from the conflagration, there is, on the other hand, some resonance with Shiel's egalitarian ending to *The Yellow Wave* (246).[148]

Though Shiel lapsed from the theme of East-West conflict for another period of years, he was drawn back to it at the end of 1912 with *The Dragon*. Essentially a rewrite of *The Yellow Danger* in even more convoluted language, it was originally serialised from 1

[147] H. G. Wells, *The War in the Air* (1908; London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 75-8; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

[148] Wells pursued this disturbing suggestion in a remarkable later future war tale, *The World Set Free* (1914), in which a new peaceful, rational world state emerges out of the destruction following a global nuclear war.

January to 15 March 1913 as *To Arms!* in *The Red Magazine*. This 'popular print' was owned by Harmsworth, a booming publishing group with a finger on the pulse of the literary marketplace, or as Shiel put it 'like mercury thermometers to the popular temperament'.[149] Be this as it may, when the book version of the text was issued by Richards as *The Dragon* that May it was a complete failure, for which Shiel ironically blamed 'the staleness of the subject'.[150] Shiel retrospectively gave the following derogatory and arguably disingenuous explanation for his re-adoption of the theme: 'The fact that God has a predilection for pigtails [i.e. Chinese people] and microbes (to judge from their number) had always struck me, and there seemed to me such a "picture" in their overflowing into the west... that I was led back into writing my second book on one subject...'[151]

It seems likely that a combination of Shiel's increasingly dire financial circumstances, historic events in China, and the successful appearance on the literary scene of a more enduring oriental villain were more immediate sources of inspiration for *The Dragon*. Over the course of 1911-12 the failing Qing empire had eventually fallen in response to internal insurgency, and Sun Yat-sen, revolutionary leader and putative influence on the characterisation of Yen,[152] had briefly assumed power. While these events may have prompted Shiel to believe there would be renewed public interest in Far Eastern affairs, he did not attempt to situate his final yellow peril tale within them, predicating the plot instead on the general assumption of race-war well-established by its theme. The text lacks the references to unfolding contemporary events that characterise its precursors, instead falling back on the 'old trick' of provocative protectorate grants as the *casus belli* for European conflict in a rehash of the by-now clichéd colonial rivalry device.[153] Like Yen and Smallways, the villain of *The Dragon*, Li Ku Yu, cited colonial grievances as the reason why the Chinese 'Dragon and grand Anti-Christ ... stands awake', including

[149] Letter to Richards, 1 March 1914, cited in Billings, vol. 2, pp. 278-9.
[150] Ibid. Despite the commercial failure of *The Dragon*, Shiel did not give up on the yellow peril theme: *The Dragon* was re-issued as *The Yellow Peril* in 1929 by Victor Gollancz, and Shiel also revised *The Yellow Danger* for re-issue as *China in Arms: A Fantasy* c.1936, though it never saw publication.
[151] 1924 inscription to a collector's copy of *The Dragon* reprinted in A. Reynolds Morse (ed.), *The Works of M. P. Shiel*, 3 vols (Cleveland, OH: Reynolds Morse Foundation, 1979-80), II, p. 185.
[152] Squires, 'Some Contemporary Themes in Shiel's Early Novels', pp. 267-8.
[153] M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Peril* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1929) p. 34; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text. The text of the 1929 *The Yellow Peril* edition is only very slightly revised from the 1913 text of *The Dragon*.

the two Sino-British Opium wars and the Sino-French war (47-8). In revenge Li yet again threatened the horrifying inversion of the existing order: the imperial robbers of Britain will 'be robbed from', Japan will 'have Australia – Canada!', and worst of all, will be the spectacle of 'the saffron Dragon-flag of the Manchus … atop [the British] Parliament-house' (19). This last threat predictably never manifests itself: though China reduced war-torn Europe to a state of 'howling anarchy' as per *The Yellow Danger* (234), it was predictably repulsed from British shores by the text's hero Prince Teddy, a more progressive version of Hardy.

At first glance *The Dragon*, like *The Yellow Wave*, seems to extend the possibility of a more sympathetic treatment of the Chinese side: Li's is notably 'not a cruel mind' (331) and the practice of torture abandoned in his China. However, in narrating the Chinese invasion of Europe, Shiel cannot resist a chapter-length revel in gruesome excess which replicates that of *The Yellow Danger* almost exactly, now with the updated context of the Boxer Rebellion as justification.[154] In addition to the earlier Sino-European conflicts listed above, 'the bombard[ing] of Peking in 1900' (48) is cited as a major source of grievance for China, and the anti-foreigner violence of the Rebellion underpins the account of oriental atrocity throughout the text. Before the invaders arrive in Europe it is revealed that in China 'the cables have been cut, the Legations sacked, the whites massacred at the concessions and treaty-ports' (199), an implicit reference to the Beijing legations' siege and ensuing media hysteria in 1900. However, as discussed previously in this chapter, the threat of violence against white residents in China also pervades *The Yellow Danger* which predated the Boxer Rebellion.

While the documented attacks upon missionaries in China are one source for this, the accounts of atrocity in Shiel's texts resonate strongly with what, in the Introduction, was termed the master narrative of native violence that arose out of the Indian Mutiny. Jenny Sharpe observes 'the historical production of a colonial discourse on the native assault of English women in India', in which tropes of rape and mutilation developed out of the largely unsubstantiated reports on the treatment of English women by 'Mutineers' that

[154] The relevant chapter in *The Dragon* is 'The Flood' which reworks *The Yellow Danger*'s 'Yellow Terror' chapter.

were used to justify the brutality of British counterinsurgency measures.[155] Ross Forman observes in the fin-de-siècle period, as part of an attempt 'to trace a genealogy of empire, often for the purposes of jingoism', a concurrent surge in the publication of narratives about important earlier colonial events, especially the Mutiny and the Opium Wars.[156] Many of the passages detailing Chinese behaviour towards their opponents in both *The Yellow Danger* and *The Dragon* can be interpreted as recycling the tropes of the Mutiny master narrative – an early account of Li's troops slaughtering infants and mutilating women in Turkestani villages (42), for instance, could just as easily be describing a supposed Mutiny outrage. From this it can be argued that Shiel's account of Chinese brutality can be situated not only within the yellow peril mythos but also a wider popular imaginary of native violence conceived out of the shock of the Mutiny to the British colonial psyche and refined subsequently in order to justify the actualities of harsh colonial policy.

In addition to referencing the Boxer Rebellion Shiel made other attempts to give *The Dragon* a more contemporary feel. He adverts to the threat of 'Pan-Asianism' (a variant of the term pan-Mongolism) arising from the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese war (48), and, following the trend that emerged in Edwardian future war fiction, he casts a militant Germany as Britain's chief European foe. He also attempts to give the text a more explicit science-fictional feel, devoting considerable plot space to the workings of a futuristic aircraft and a super-weapon dubbed 'the red-like ray'. In his inclusion of these science-fictional elements, Shiel was most likely borrowing in turn from Wells whose *The War in the Air* had included a highly manoeuvrable aircraft with marked similarities to the one Shiel described in *The Dragon*, for instance. Despite these efforts, however, the text remains a dated rehash of his 1898 success, and one which was probably further hampered by competition with a far more compelling fictional embodiment of the yellow peril threat than Li Ku Yu.

In late 1912 when Shiel was preparing the first instalments of *The Dragon*, Sax Rohmer's notorious oriental villain, Dr Fu-Manchu, was making his successful

[155] Jenny Sharpe, 'The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter-Insurgency', reprinted in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (ed.s), *Colonial Discourse and Post -Colonial Theory: A Reader* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), p. 222.
[156] Ross G. Forman, 'Empire', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, Gail Marshall (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 99-100.

appearance on the literary scene.[157] Disputing Shiel's account of the 'staleness' of the theme, Rohmer recounted rather that 'Conditions for launching a Chinese villain on the market were ideal... The Boxer Rebellion had started off rumours of a Yellow Peril which had not yet died down'.[158] While Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* had certainly helped to shape the British version of the yellow peril fear to which Rohmer referred, it was Rohmer's 'fiendish Chinese doctor' who became its most enduring representative.[159] He captured the public imagination from his first serial appearances which contained the following much-quoted and memorable introduction:

> Imagine a person, tall, lean and feline, high-shouldered, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of the true cat-green. Invest him with all the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race, accumulated in one giant intellect, with all the resources of science past and present, with all the resources ... of a wealthy government ... and you have a mental picture of Dr Fu-Manchu, the yellow peril incarnate in one man. (15)

A charismatic, captivating villain, the characterisation of Fu-Manchu seems to owe more to Boothby's arresting portrayal of the Dr Nikola character (see chapter 1) than to either of Shiel's more forgettable oriental villains, Yen and Li. Despite the scale and horror of Shiel's narratives, the stilted, unconvincing account of Li as 'a yellow rock that sublimely smiles ... hairless but for ... his pigtail, coarsely yellow, ... a 'cute blade, made for business with men' (29) did not gain purchase on the popular imagination. The fore-running Yen, 'small ... with a wrinkled grin ... nearly bald ... [a] specially dirty shade in the yellow tan of his skin' (2), is comparably lacklustre and seems an unlikely

---

[157] The Fu-Manchu character first appeared in October 1912 in 'The Zayat Kiss', the first instalment of the first serial *Fu-Manchu*. It was published in a Cassell group monthly magazine, *The Story-Teller*, and is likely to predate Shiel's work on *The Dragon*. The serial was issued in book form by Methuen in 1913 as *The Mystery of Dr Fu-Manchu*. These bibliographical details are from Lawrence Knapp, *The Page of Fu Manchu: The Sax Rohmer Site*, http://www.njedge.net/~knapp/FuFrames.htm, on 17 Dec 2012. For an account of the impact of the Fu-Manchu novels see John Kuo Wei Tchen, 'The Yellow Claw: The Optical Unconscious in Anglo-American Political Culture', in Christine Bold (ed.), *The Oxford History of Print Culture*, vol. 6: *US Popular Print Culture 1860-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 484-6.

[158] Cited in Thomas J. Cogan, 'Western Images of Asia: Fu Manchu and the Yellow Peril', *Waseda Studies in Social Sciences*, 3:2 (Nov 2002), pp. 38-9.

[159] Sax Rohmer, *The Mystery of Dr Fu-Manchu* (1913) reprinted in *The Fu-Manchu Omnibus*, vol. 1 (London: Allison & Busby, 1995), p. 219; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

source of inspiration for Fu-Manchu, bar the title of doctor and expertise in Western science (which Nikola also shared). Certain of the original illustrations make the unequal contrast between Shiel's and Rohmer's characters abundantly clear, as fig.s 6 and 7 show.



Fig. 6. Illustration of Dr Yen How, 'He was duly at the Pattison Gate.' *The Empress of the Earth*, *Short Stories* (5 Feb 1898), p. 163.

Image from the collection of John D. Squires.



Fig. 7. Illustration of Fu-Manchu, 'One last glimpse I had of the fixed, green eyes…' 'The Clue of the Pigtail', *Collier's Weekly* (1 Mar 1913).

Image from the collection of Lawrence Knapp.

Fig. 6 shows a relatively realist illustration of Yen in what is probably intended to be the costume of Qing officialdom, slightly reminiscent even of the elderly Li Hongzhang, and quite unthreatening with spectacles and cane. In the first American image of Fu-Manchu from *Collier's Weekly*, shown in fig. 7,a far more mythic and menacing figure is beginning to emerge from the atmospheric, indistinctly-sketched portrait, tentacle-like hands ominously outstretched to signal the extent of his reach.

A marked difference in tactics further separates Rohmer's villain from those of Shiel and signals a subtle shift in emphasis in the yellow peril fear. Though motivated by a comparable desire to redress colonial wrongs and invert the existing imperial order, Fu-Manchu operates by means of surreptitious, small-scale terror-attacks which are evocative of retribution being enacted at an individual as well as a racial level. One of the earliest plots in the Fu-Manchu tales involved a convoluted revenge attack perpetrated in the quiet English countryside upon a retired clergyman. The target of the attack, in fact, turns out to be the '"Fighting Missionary"' whose single-handed interference in China had purportedly 'culminated in the Boxer Risings' (49). Unlike Shiel's global tales of mass death and unprecedented population displacement, the early Fu-Manchu tales hark back to Boothby's and Doyle's earlier successes with their small casts of clear-cut characters acting out their dramas 'in the very heart of the metropolis' (137). Though Rohmer's tales are saturated with the threat of race war erupting on a Shielian scale, Fu-Manchu is not the head of a huge invading army but rather of a 'great secret society' (121) and his sphere of operations is not the Far East but London's 'squalid …East End' (161). Like Nikola, he is master of the Chinatowns of the world – those pre-existing vanguards of oriental invasion – the early Fu-Manchu novels strongly associating him with Limehouse, which under Rohmer's hand plumbed further depths of notoriety.[160] In the insistence on an enemy already at work within the domestic sphere Rohmer seems more attune to the early-twentieth-century shift in British popular opinion from concern with events in the Far East to an exaggerated dread of the small number of Chinese immigrants already within Britain. This closer reflection of the zeitgeist coupled with the more appealing characterisation of Fu-Manchu – the villain the public loved to hate – were among the factors that combined to make the Fu-Manchu character the principle representative of yellow peril paranoia into the mid-twentieth century.

Despite the fear of immigration and racial alterity underpinning the plots of the Fu-Manchu tales, Rohmer himself, like so many authors of invasion fiction, was a colonial

[160] For analyses of the role of Limehouse in the Fu-Manchu tales see Ruth Mayer, '"The Greatest Novelty of the Age": Fu Manchu, Chinatown, and the Global City', in Vanessa Künnermann and Ruth Mayer (ed.s), *Chinatowns in a Transnational World* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 116–34; and Lynn Pan, *Sons of The Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese* (London: Mandarin, 1991), pp. 85-9.

outsider. Born Arthur Henry Ward, he was the son of lower-class Irish-Catholic immigrant parents both of whom reputedly suffered from alcoholism. Although Rohmer's pen name literally meant in Anglo-Saxon, 'Wandering Blade' or 'Free Lance', Clive Bloom observes that 'Sax' too connotes 'Saxon' or 'true Englishman'. He interprets Rohmer's choice of pen name, then, as an attempt to obscure his Irish origins which evinces a 'desire for a type of conformity' with an ideal Englishness that in the context of this study may be termed Boothbian.[161] It also chimes with Shiel's attempt to exoticise his background in order to obscure his mixed-race descent.[162] It is arguable that by demonising the oriental races, and the Chinese in particular, hybrid authors like Rohmer and Shiel, and to a lesser extent Boothby, were on some level attempting to shift the focus from the varyingly 'inferior' aspects of their own backgrounds. The argument set forth in chapter one concerning Doyle's ambivalence toward his Irish background and the inconclusiveness of the Holmes canon also applies equally to Rohmer, whose Fu-Manchu character, like Nikola, succeeds in thwarting the representatives of imperial order at every turn, remaining uncontained into the mid-twentieth century. Although, as Urmila Seshagiri points out, the irresolution of the Fu-Manchu stories is necessarily a product of the serialisation process, it also 'betrays unending racial and cultural failure' and 'mirrors the white protagonists' inability to rid the modern West of Fu-Manchu'.[163] Likewise, the same double-voiced dissonance haunts Shiel's oriental invasion tales: although Britain eventually triumphs, it is always at a terrible cost and attended by some suggestion that the existing imperial order will not and should not be restored, but replaced with something more enlightened.

In *The Dragon* particularly, Shiel seems to be struggling against the fabric of *The Yellow Danger* to express a more egalitarian outlook: the text is overtly hostile to the landed aristocracy, obliquely anti-imperialist, and initially tries to mitigate against the excesses of yellow peril racism. Its account of the European contribution to 'war world-

[161] Clive Bloom, *Cult Fiction: Popular Reading and Pulp Theory* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), p. 181.
[162] Before adopting the name Sax Rohmer, Ward had begun to use Sarsfield as a middle name, apparently based on his mother's claim to be descended from the seventeenth-century Irish general, Patrick Sarsfield, a piece of self-aggrandisement which is reminiscent of Shiel's Redonda fantasy. See Tchen, 'The Yellow Claw', p. 485.
[163] Urmila Seshagiri, 'Modernity's (Yellow) Perils: Dr Fu-Manchu and English Race Paranoia', *Cultural Critique*, 62 (Winter 2006), p. 179.

wide' (56) is also more restrained and realistic than that of *The Yellow Danger*, especially as conveyed through the experience of a war-nurse. While in this last respect *The Dragon* might seem eerily prescient given the events that would unfold in the year following its publication, on the other hand *The Dragon* also adheres closely to many of the outlandish conventions of the future-war themed invasion tale which had become so clichéd as to merit parodic treatment by P. G. Wodehouse in 1909. Wodehouse's satirical novella *The Swoop!* saw Britain saved from the simultaneous invasion of nine foreign armies, including the Chinese under Prince Ping Pong Pang, by a boy scout named Clarence. And Shiel implicitly acknowledges his text's place within this tradition via many references to the Franco-Prussian war, the event that inspired Chesney's founding text, *The Battle of Dorking*, which saw Britain overrun by a technologically superior Germany.[164] Nonetheless, given that *The Dragon* dramatises four successive invasion attempts upon Britain (by the German navy, an allied European navy, a Sino-Japanese navy and a Chinese airforce), it is a key instance of a white colonial author's call 'to arms' on the verge of World War I:

> To Arms! To Arms! – no talk, no nonsense. '*To Arms!*' re-echoed every paper the next day; and white lips in Whitehall whispered 'War!' (57)

[164] Li is depicted reading 'Chesney's "Military Prussia"' (29) – a reference to Lieutenant-Colonel C. C. Chesney's *The Military Resources of Prussia and France and Recent Changes in the Art of War* (1870), a factual work which, like G. T. Chesney's fiction, was penned as an admonitory response to the Franco-Prussian war.

The Caribbean component of an orientalist myth: The Chinese in the West Indies

The series of crises and 'little' wars arising out of Europe's troubled colonial relationship with China and its contribution to the wider, alarmist discourse of inversion and decline was, as we have seen, a major factor influencing Shiel's adoption of the yellow peril theme. Commenting upon the media response to the ignominious 'scramble', a contemporary historian remarked, 'A good deal of nonsense, inspired by a large and generous ignorance of Chinese conditions and affairs, was talked and written in 1898',[165] and certainly Shiel's yellow peril output can be situated within this scaremongering. Squires observes that 'East Asia appears to have been a subject close to Shiel's heart,' but offers no explanation for this beyond the newsworthiness of the crises.[166] However, in addition to this topicality and the concern with global affairs shared by many colonial migrant authors, it is arguable that there was something more specific in Shiel's Caribbean background that predisposed him to give his invasion fiction an oriental twist, unlikely as that may initially sound. Once again the underlying factor was the requirements of the British imperial project, but this time it was imperial requirements in the West Indies rather than in the Far East.

As touched upon in chapter one, in addition to trade conditions, the British terms imposed on China after the Opium wars included the rescinding of the Qing proscription against Chinese emigration and the resulting movement of hundreds of thousands of Chinese workers into British colonies and beyond. Ignacio López-Calvo outlines the push and pull factors that precipitated what became referred to as the 'coolie trade', in other words, the set of reprehensible practices that developed around the transportation of the Chinese emigrants from the 1830s. These factors were chiefly overpopulation, natural disaster, economic degradation and political instability within China coupled with the increasing incursion of the European powers into China and

[165] Editorial note preceding chap 42, 'Coveted China', in Lord Charles Beresford, *The Memoirs of Lord Charles Beresford*, vol. 2 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1914), p. 420; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/memoirsofadmiral01bereuoft, 8 Jan 2013.
[166] Squires, 'Some Contemporary Themes in Shiel's Early Novels', p. 252.

their ongoing need for cheap labour.[167] The conjunction of this global Chinese diaspora with the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean saw the arrival of Chinese 'coolies,' as the unfortunate indentured labourers were dubbed, into many Caribbean and Latin American countries from the 1840s. In order to provide themselves with an ongoing source of cheap and controllable labour, plantation owners, in conjunction with colonial administrations, began importing hundreds of thousands of Asian workers on strict fixed-term contracts into those Caribbean islands where the workforce was most depleted by emancipation. As Walton Look Lai, author of one of the few major studies into this wide-ranging colonial experiment, puts it, after emancipation 'the phenomenon of labour coercion, far from dying out, assumed new and diverse forms'.[168] Scarcely better off than slaves, the vast majority of these migrants came from East India, but a significant percentage of the new populations were Chinese.[169]

The main phase of Chinese immigration into the British West Indies was between 1859 and 1866 with c.15,000 Chinese indentured labourers landing mostly in British Guiana, Trinidad and Jamaica.[170] While the numbers arriving were relatively small, it is important to re-iterate that the white inhabitants of the British West Indies also formed a tiny percentage of the population and, further, were accustomed to view non-European races through a lens of hostility and suspicion. In addition, far greater numbers were being transported to the nearby Spanish American colonies: between 1847 and 1884 c.142,000 Chinese indentured labourers were brought to Cuba and c.100,000 to Peru.[171]

---

[167] Ignacio López-Calvo, *Imaging the Chinese in Cuban Literature and Culture* (Miami: University of Florida Press, 2008), p. 4.

[168] Walton Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1919* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. xi.

[169] The British colonies that received the majority of these immigrants – mostly East Indian, but also including significant numbers of Chinese and Madeiran Portuguese – were British Guiana, Trinidad and Jamaica as the wider availability of land in these territories afforded more opportunities for the ex-slave populations to leave the plantations after emancipation. See Look Lai, ibid.

[170] In total 17,430 Chinese came to the British West Indies between 1853 and 1884 – 13,533 to British Guiana, 2654 to Trinidad, 1152 to Jamaica and 100 to Antigua; see Dookhan, *A Post-Emancipation History of the West Indies*, p. 49.

[171] See Walton Look Lai, *The Chinese in the West Indies 1806-1995* (Kingston: The Press UWI, 1998), pp. 4-7. As Look Lai enumerates, in the 1860s small numbers of Chinese also ended up in the Dutch West Indies – c. 2,500 in Suriname, and in the French West Indies – c. 800 in Martinique in the Windward Islands and c. 100 in Guadeloupe in the Leeward Islands – neighbouring island to Montserrat. And after the period of Chinese indenture ended c.13,000 Chinese workers migrated to Mexico between 1876 and 1911. Overall an estimated 270,000 Chinese migrated to Latin America and the Caribbean in the mid to late-nineteenth century.

By the 1880s when Shiel emigrated, more than 250,000 Chinese had reached the Caribbean area, in addition to over half a million East Indians. The consequences of the arrival of this new, racially-other workforce into the established Caribbean Creole societies were profound and naturally the subject of endless speculation – positive and negative – and though the system of indenture was not established on the Leeward islands, the young Shiel growing up on Montserrat could not have been unaware of the phenomenon. Certainly fellow Caribbean-born, metropolitan-migrant author, George Lamming, writing a century later gives a sense of the significance of the indenture project in his essay 'The Occasion for Speaking' (1960): 'for me, [there were] just three important events in British Caribbean history': the advent of Columbus, 'the abolition of slavery and the arrival of the East – India and China – in the Caribbean Sea', and finally 'the discovery of the novel by West Indians as a way of investigating and projecting the inner experiences of the West Indian community'.[172] Needless to say, the presence of these new, exploited ethnic groups led to further social tensions, not least because the ruling classes used the indentured labour supply to suppress wages for the free black and coloured workforce.

Puri's account of the multiplicity of Caribbean hybridities sheds a useful light on the extraordinarily marginal position of the Chinese immigrants to the West Indies. In her critique of the 'discursive complex' of creolization she highlights how it elides those groups in the Caribbean who are not of African and/or European origins.[173] She holds that the basis for this continuing marginality stems from their original position as indentured labourers, since inherent in the condition of indenture was the assumption that after a period of typically five years, the immigrants would return home.[174] While the harsh realities of the plantation system ensured only a small minority did so, the assumption of transience kept them outside the unequal but normative creole majority.

---

[172] George Lamming, 'The Occasion for Speaking', in *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960); cited in Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 2nd edn. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2005), p. 68.

[173] For example, the term 'creole' in the English-speaking Caribbean still does not encompass its inhabitants of East Indian or Chinese origins, even though they form c. 20% of its population; Puri, *The Caribbean Postcolonial*, p. 65.

[174] Though Puri's analysis pertains mainly to the position of East Indian immigrants and their descendants, it can be extrapolated to apply to the Chinese also, perhaps even more so as they formed a second wave of indentured labourers and, arriving in smaller numbers, lived in even greater segregation.

Arriving into 'a colonial society that was already racially stratified and polarized,' it was 'hardly surprising' 'that the racialization of difference was extended to them'.[175] And given the inter-connectedness of creole society, it was equally unsurprising that the new group should become to 'white' creoles even more other than the African other. As Froude observed, 'the African and the Asiatic will not mix', stating as a 'natural' fact a policy of segregation which the colonial administrations pursued in order to deter the two subjugated groups from joining forces against them.[176] Rhys, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, writes that a planter planning to 'import labourers – coolies … – from the East Indies' is warned immediately that the estate's ex-slave workforce will not like it.[177] These observations, coupled with Look Lai's that 'an artificial affectation of cultural superiority, [was] a favourite posture of Westernized colonial middle-class elements towards alien races and cultures in their midst', may suggest some of the Caribbean factors involved in Shiel's choice of the migrant Chinese as demonised racial other.[178]

Moore's account of the operation of colonial stereotypes in British Guiana (now Guyana), where there was a large Indian and Chinese coolie population, is potentially illuminating. Observing how stereotypes typically 'reflect the state of political or economic relations between one group and another,' he examines the deployment of negative stereotypes by the white minority after emancipation to keep the ex-slave population subjugated, to justify the importation of indentured Asian labourers, and to prevent any kind of solidarity from developing between these two groups. From an analysis of his account it can be observed that side-by-side with the dominant stereotype of the 'docile coolie' whose labour had saved the colony, existed a contradictory account of the 'revengeful', 'murderous' coolie prone to civil unrest as the series of Indian riots between 1869 and 1872 evidenced, some even invoking the Mutiny in order to highlight the potential threat of the coolie workforce.[179] Birbalsingh observes this

[175] Puri, *The Caribbean Postcolonial*, p. 172.
[176] Froude, *The English in the West Indies,* p. 74, cited ibid.
[177] Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, p. 30.
[178] Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar*, p. 168.
[179] While Moore's analysis is largely devoted to stereotypes of the East Indian, some of it may be applied to the smaller Chinese group, with the caveat that some sources privileged the Chinese above the East Indians owing to the perception that the 'parsimonious' East Indians did not contribute to the economic life of the colony. See Moore, 'Colonial Images of Blacks and Indians in Nineteenth Century Guyana', pp. 143-6, 153-4.

alienizing, stereotyped response to Indian immigrants persisting into the twentieth century and alternating between accounts of impoverished, exploited labourers and small farmers given to 'coarse manners, violent passions, greed, treachery and brutality'.[180] These ambivalent representations of the Caribbean immigrant workforces conform closely to Bhabha's account of contradictory signification in colonial stereotyping[181] and replicate the general disjunction in imperial discourse between confidence and paranoia. Beneath the surface of a confident discourse on the role of the indenture project in saving the sugar colonies, ran a current of concern that planter society had created another numerous, hostile underclass capable of murderous rebellion.

Given the usage of the indentured workforce as leverage to suppress the free workforce, there was always opposition to the project, some of which unsurprisingly targeted the character of the new populations. This opposition was mainly articulated by the coloured middle-classes, but included planter and disparate voices. In British Guiana in 1846, for example, a missionary lamented the importation of 'hordes of ignorant, idolatrous and sensual immigrants' into the society. And this discursive trope of Eastern 'hordes' was one that was replicated in yellow peril fiction. As Indian numbers grew in Trinidad in the 1870s, even establishment newspapers began to call for a reduction and eventually for a complete cessation of the importation of 'the dregs of India, rotten with the most ...unnatural vices, thieves and liars' who were filling the colony's jails.[182] And in this emergent anti-indenture discourse standard orientalist tropes of Eastern idolatry, sensuality, violence and criminality began to blend with fears of proximity and incursion. With the economic crisis caused by a further sugar slump in 1884 the calls to abandon the indenture project gained momentum and in the 1890s began to be expressed by West Indian lobbyists in London. And it is possible that Shiel, with his keen interest in international colonial affairs, kept up with news of these developments in his home colonies.

[180] Birbalsingh, 'The Indo-Caribbean Short Story', 119.
[181] Homi Bhabha, 'The other question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge Classics, 1994), p. 100.
[182] Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar*, pp. 168-71.

While most accounts tend to focus on the reception of the Indians as the main immigrant group, general aspects of the negative, orientalist stereotyping of coolies naturally extended to the Chinese. López-Calvo's account of the treatment of the immigrant Chinese in the Cuban national imaginary elaborates the plethora of often contradictory concerns about them, observing:

> At both official and popular levels, xenophobic anti-Chinese sentiments have been common in most countries with a significant Chinese minority. Cuban cultural production often reflects this irrational fear and hatred, which may originate from very different sources. In the tradition of the "Yellow Peril" complex, the hostility may be caused by ... competition in the job market, jealousy of ... economic success, or ... fears that the local culture would be tainted or, worse yet, that Western civilisation itself would be undermined.[183]

Analysis of the specific reactions to the Chinese migrants in Britain's Caribbean colonies reveals that the double-sided account of the Indian coolie is replicated. While there was much praise from some planter sources for prized qualities such as docility, dexterity and diligence, there were also many anxious responses and it is on these that we will focus as they are a potential source for the yellow peril fear that Shiel helped to articulate in 1890s Britain. Before examining the negative responses it is important to stress again that the overall numbers of Chinese arriving in the British West Indies were small and to point out that by the 1880s, after Shiel had left, they had, through great personal endeavour, largely escaped plantation labour to form a successful small trading class. There was, therefore, very little likelihood of anything remotely approaching the type of violent oriental invasion or upheaval that Shiel later fictionalised ever taking place there.

On the other hand, to reiterate – it is the guiding rationale of this thesis that imperial transgressions, such as the coercive indenture project, generated extreme paranoia concerning retribution that burgeoned regardless of the small probability of it ever actually occurring. In keeping with this argument, it is possible that the fears circulating in his childhood concerning the influx of Chinese and East Indian workers into the Caribbean region may have sown the seeds in Shiel for what, catalysed by the other

[183] López-Calvo, *Imaging the Chinese in Cuban Literature and Culture*, p. 46.

better-known Far Eastern factors elaborated previously, would become Britain's first major fictional expression of yellow-peril paranoia. Further, in the 1860s and 1870s when Shiel was growing up, the Chinese had not established their trading niche and were a far more volatile element in the British territories. And in the neighbouring Spanish territories the harsher conditions of indenture there had produced some notorious violent counter-colonial outbursts.

The negative side of the response to Chinese migration developed before the immigrants had even set foot on Caribbean soil. In 1853 the Hong Kong published *Friend of China* warned in terms anticipating the Shielian that:

> The candidates for emigration will be the scum of the empire ... kidnapped men who retaliate on the ship that takes them; ... rebels who know the use of arms and have witnessed every atrocity and act of barbarous torture; Triads from the Straits that carry the kris...; wretches with manacle marks on their legs ... to whom European blood will be nectar. A precious witches cauldron! Bubble! Bubble! Bubble! We say beware![184]

Given the atrocious conditions of passage, several mutinies did take place on ships transporting Chinese workers and a corresponding degree of notoriety attached itself to the so-called coolies.[185] As Jessie G. Lutz puts it, 'Misunderstandings must have festered frequently on ships lacking a Chinese interpreter, and there were reports of many instances of mutiny and of attacks on the ship's crew during the long journey of several months.'[186] Andrew Meagher estimates that mutinies occurred on at least 68 emigrant ships from Chinese ports between 1847 and 1874, with one in eight British coolie ships experiencing mutiny. Thirteen of these were successful, and often in the case of failure the mutineers resorted to the desperate tactic of setting the ship on fire.[187] The following from the journal of an apprehensive ship's surgeon en route to British Guiana in 1852 provides a flavour of the resulting unease:

---

[184] *Friend of China* [Hong Kong], 23 Nov 1853; cited in Andrew J. Meagher, *The Coolie Trade: The Traffic in Chinese Labourers to Latin America 1847–1874* (Xlibris, 2008), p. 141.
[185] Estimations put the death toll for Chinese migrants to Cuba at a shocking 50,000 owing to the brutal conditions of passage and indenture there, see López-Calvo, *Imaging the Chinese in Cuban Literature and Culture*, p. 34
[186] Jessie G. Lutz, 'Chinese Emigrants, Indentured Workers, and Christianity in the West Indies, British Guiana and Hawaii', *Caribbean Studies*, 37:2 (Jul-Dec 2009), p. 141.
[187] Meagher, *The Coolie Trade*, pp. 174, 185, 190.

> The greater part we have on board are quite savage … having as little idea of right and wrong as the wandering savages of the wildernesses of America. They are fierce, cunning, ill-natured, revengeful and hypocritical; and we have far more to do to keep order among them than if they were so many monkeys.[188]

A violent mutiny in 1864 gained particular notoriety, producing the striking, iconic image of the 'Enraged Coolie' (shown in fig. 8) which appeared as an illustration to a *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* article on the 'coolie trade'.



Fig. 8. 'Enraged Coolie.' 'A Chapter on the Coolie Trade', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 29 (Jun 1864), p. 2.

Image courtesy of Cornell University Library, Making of America Digital Collection.

[188] Cited in Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar*, p. 90.

Given that *Harper's* was an American publication it is unlikely that Shiel saw it, but it is indicative of the popular conception of the mutinous, murderous coolie developing in areas experiencing Chinese immigration. It also shares the visual tendency to demonise the Chinese observed in chapter one in relation to the illustrations to Boothby's novels *Doctor Nikola* and *The Beautiful White Devil*. Rather than looking ethnically Chinese, the mutineer in fig. 8 appears more an orientalist nightmare conglomeration of all the non-white races, and one that further recalls the *Punch* magazine illustrations of gothicized Fenians described in chapter two. That such attitudes towards the plight of migrating Chinese workers continued to have currency into the late-century is borne out by Joseph Conrad's treatment of returning migrants in his 1902 novella touching on the coolie trade, *Typhoon*; his dehumanisation of the immiserated 'cargo of Chinamen' is, in its understated way, yet comparable to the worst of Shiel's yellow peril excesses.[189] Despite the text's acknowledgement of the terrible conditions of indenture the migrants have endured in order to amass their savings, when the storm hits and their possessions are scattered, the ensuing struggle for survival below decks is described in the most unsympathetic, crude and yellow-peril inflected terms. The Chinese are, in keeping with the mutinous coolie imagery, at times bestial, at times demonic, 'swarming' on the hatchway ladder 'in a crawling, stirring cluster, beating madly with their fists the underside of the battened hatch', a grave danger to themselves, the crew and the very ship itself.[190] 'Passengers, indeed!', the phlegmatic Captain scoffs tellingly when questions concerning their safety are initially broached, 'Never heard a lot of coolies spoken of as passengers before', and the narratorial voice, at least, does not seem to disagree with him.[191]

Of those Chinese migrants who survived the arduous passage and landed in the Caribbean, many recruited from non-agricultural backgrounds unsurprisingly proved ill-adapted to plantation life: the language barrier was virtually impenetrable, some were already chronic opium smokers, and many deserted the estates, taking to vagrancy and lawlessness. As Look Lai observes, 'a significant minority' chose to organise

[189] Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon* (1902), reprinted in *Typhoon and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2002), p. 72. *Typhoon* was written not long after the publication of *The Yellow Danger* between September 1900 and January 1901, see the intro. to this edition, p. xiv.
[190] Ibid., p. 45.
[191] Ibid., p. 23.

themselves into 'armed bands, as a means of sustaining themselves outside the wage labour system, and perhaps as a form of rebellion against it. These elements were considered a perpetual ..... menace by the planters'.[192] The memoirs of a magistrate in British Guiana, published in London in the same year as *The Yellow Danger*, attest to this phenomenon describing 'powerful ruffians [who] always carried a large, sharp, two-edged knife ... a terror to all law-abiding citizens'.[193] This behaviour stimulated fears of unrest or rebellion, especially following a widespread outbreak of Chinese violence in Trinidad in 1866; and these fears were greatly amplified by the far larger coolie uprisings that took place in Cuba and Peru in response to the atrocious conditions of indenture there. The Cuba Commission Report into the abuse of Chinese workers in 1877 documented that many Chinese responded to abuse in ways that could ill be described as docile – they refused to work, burned plantations, killed overseers and joined the anti-Spanish rebels, with some 20 percent of them in desertion by 1873.[194] In the rare counter-hegemonic account of a runaway slave, the Chinese are described as defiant: 'They killed their overseers with sticks and knives. The Chinese didn't trust anybody. They were rebels from birth.'[195] Given his claim to have occasionally accompanied his father to Cuba, as well as Barbados and Martinique, as a boy, Shiel could well have witnessed first-hand the mistrustful attitudes towards the Chinese coolie population that were developing there.[196]

Though the transportation of Chinese indentured labourers into the British West Indies largely ceased after 1866, occasional shipments occurred throughout Shiel's childhood in the restless 1870s, including one to Montserrat's larger neighbour and point of reference Antigua in 1882. Misled as to their destination, the Chinese bound for Antigua had already mutinied aboard ship before landing, and the controversy that was generated by the arrival of even this tiny shipment of 100 is highly indicative of responses to the general indenture phenomenon. Described initially by the *Antigua Times* as 'the most miserable batch of humans that could ever be seen', their presence was documented by the paper with grave misgivings: 'we have the veritable Heathen

[192] Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar*, p. 99.
[193] Henry Kirke, *Twenty-five Years in British Guiana, 1872 – 1897* (London, 1898); cited ibid.
[194] López-Calvo, *Imaging the Chinese in Cuban Literature and Culture*, p. 37.
[195] Cited ibid., p. 42.
[196] Billings, vol. 1, p. 63.

Chinee among us, may we never have to regret it'. This aspiration proved ill-founded as the furious Chinese vowed 'vengeance' against all who colluded against them deciding 'that some nine planters against whom they hold some ill feeling, should be subject to death, regardless ... of the consequences to themselves, having made up their minds to hang ... themselves after committing such outrages, and burning properties'. Nor were these idle threats as one estate manager was murdered and two Chinese labourers executed in 1883.[197] As the Federation of the Leeward Islands was governed from Antigua, events transpiring there would have been of particular significance for members of the island group like Montserrat.

From these contemporary accounts it is possible to see how imperial paranoia twisted the early efforts of Chinese migrants to escape indentured servitude into a cultural imaginary capable of germinating yellow peril myths and how Shiel growing up in its atmosphere could become a proponent of them. Analysing contemporary Indo-Caribbean writing, Birbalsingh observes its rootedness in the history of the region: 'Inevitably Caribbean writing reflects themes that emanate directly out of this experience of brutal political control and dispossession – poverty, injustice and resistance, or exile, homelessness, loss and the need for freedom and fresh identity'.[198] On the other side of the divide, as a nominally white author, Shiel's oriental invasion fiction pulsates with the white minority's dread of being racially overwhelmed. Textual analysis discloses that the fictional accounts of Chinese violence and cruelty in Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* resonate strongly with the hysteria of the so-called factual accounts of the Chinese Caribbean experience cited above, although it is unlikely he directly encountered any of them. To give but a few brief examples: the second chapter of *The Yellow Danger*, significant because it sets out Yen's plan to destroy the white race, is entitled 'The Heathen Chinee' – replicating the epithet used in the *Antigua Times*' admonition. While Shiel's stereotypical account of 'the Chinese instinct of Vengeance' and proficiency in 'the matter of Torture' (127) chime with the generalised fears of 'barbarous torture' and 'revengefulness' expressed above, his more extreme insistence on the Chinese desire to 'wash... their hands in ... blood' (271) and sleep on 'pillow[s]

[197] All quotes from the *Antigua Times* are from Look Lai, *The Chinese in the West Indies*, pp. 9, 203-5.
[198] Birbalsingh, 'The Indo-Caribbean Short Story', p. 118.

of flesh' (288) comes eerily close to the *Straits Times*' dire predictions concerning the 'scum of empire... to whom European blood will be nectar'.

On a visual level, the illustrations from the *Empress* serial depicting Chinese atrocity in Europe bear notable similarities to those accompanying the *Harper's* article on the coolie trade, as fig.s 9 and 10 show.



Fig. 9. 'One lifted a club to smite a head.' *The Empress of the Earth*, *Short Stories*, 4 (28 May 1898), p. 683.

Image from the collection of John D. Squires.

Like the striking image of the 'Enraged Coolie' wielding a flaming torch and a machete shown in fig. 8 above, the illustration from *Empress* shown in fig. 9 depicts a murderous invader brandishing a club. This visual theme recurs in fig. 10, in which the

raised knife also echoes the British Guianan magistrate's account of 'powerful ruffians' carrying 'large, sharp, two-edged knife[s]'.



Fig. 10. 'The scream of the victim and the scream of his slayer.'
The Empress of the Earth, *Short Stories*, 4 (21 May 1898), p. 657.
Image from the collection of John D. Squires.

The *Harper's* article also contains illustrations of groups of rioting coolies that closely resemble *Empress* illustrations of groups of invaders engaged in battle or slaughter. And yet again it must be observed that the subjects depicted in the *Empress* illustrations in fig.s 9 and 10, look, aside from their traditional Qing queues, generically monstrous rather than ethnically Chinese. Further, there is an undeniable continuity between the imagery in these illustrations and that in the unsourced, putative Boxer Rebellion cartoon depicting 'The Yellow Terror' wielding torch, knife and gun, shown in fig. 3.

In attempting to account for the persistence of this image of the Chinese migrant as a 'pigtailed yellow man-creature' across national and temporal boundaries from a non-fiction 1860s American text to a fictional 1890s British text, John Kuo Wei Tchen's work is instructive.[199] He elaborates how the visceral image of 'the yellow claw' became encoded as a powerful visual symbol of the yellow peril in 'the optical unconscious' of 'Anglo-American political culture' in the 1900s, replicated across publications and national boundaries in the Anglophone world in support of exclusionist policies in the struggle between white and oriental labour.[200] Predating the sharpening of this image of oriental menace into the synecdoche of the yellow claw, the image of the gothicized murderous coolie seems to have circulated in the same way in the late nineteenth century, provoking the same visceral response.

Further references to the coolie trade and the Caribbean context across Shiel's three oriental texts are scant but marginally present. Shiel mentions the West Indies once in *The Yellow Danger* in the significant passage cited earlier that warns against the danger of dispersing the British fleet across its colonial possessions, thus implicitly linking Britain's Caribbean colonies with the threat of invasion (40). Though the yellow peril theme is more muted in *The Yellow Wave*, it is apparent in the passage cited previously recounting widespread oriental glee at Japan's victory over a 'white' nation in the Russo-Japanese war. This key passage of pan-Asian menace contains the one instance across the three yellow peril texts in which Shiel used the plantation term 'coolie' to refer to Chinese people: 'the Chinese coolie ... looks up into the air and screams out laughing' (61). As well as reproducing *The Yellow Danger*'s assumptions of Chinese savagery, *The Dragon* makes a direct reference to the coolie trade in listing the following ethnic groups amidst the western procession of Chinese invaders: 'Hunanese, tribesmen of Fukien, Kuantung, industrious blades ... who had furnished washermen to Sydney and 'Frisco, and diggers to the Zootpansberg' (236). This shows Shiel's awareness of the pattern of Chinese emigration from the poor and populous southern provinces of Hunan, Fujian (Fukien) and Guangdong (Kuantung) to Australia, California and South Africa, evoking without directly acknowledging the comparable

[199] Tchen, 'The Yellow Claw', p. 488.
[200] Ibid., p. 477.

migration to the Caribbean. Shiel further adverts to the settler colonies' hostile response, citing as a reason for Japan's part in the invasion of Europe its citizens' exclusion from imagined new Australian goldfields:[201]

> Japan was padlocked out: her nationals had to write fifty words of English dictation, nicely spelled, before landing; captains were fined a hundred pounds for allowing a yellow man to escape to land (50).

This is a reference to Australia's Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 which did not explicitly restrict immigration on racial grounds, but included a prejudiced dictation test in a European language that effectively excluded the vast majority of prospective oriental immigrants.[202] It also echoes Wells's assumption of Japanese hostility arising out of later anti-Japanese immigration measures being adopted in the United States in *The War in the Air*.

It is fitting that the discussion of Shiel's three yellow peril texts should conclude with evidence of his knowledge of the hostile response to oriental immigration in Australia. Racial fears caused by Chinese migration to the other destinations mentioned by Shiel, South Africa and the United States, had produced similar anti-immigration legislation to that of Australia in those jurisdictions. As observed previously, there was no comparable immigration of Chinese people into Britain at this time, so it is clear that the racial concerns of its Australian and South African settler colonies filtered into the passing of its 1905 Aliens Act. Popular fiction provided a major channel for the distribution of yellow peril concerns, with white popular authors in Australia and America producing rabid local yellow peril tales.[203] In Britain in the vanguard of those giving fictional expression to the yellow peril myth for the metropolitan audience was Shiel, a colonial-migrant author from an area that had also experienced the Chinese

---

[201] Between 1854 and 1856 seventeen thousand Chinese males entered the gold fields, and thousands continued to come every year until the 1880s by which time the alluvial deposits had become exhausted, C. Y Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1975), pp. 3-35; cited in Lutz, 'Chinese Migrants, Indentured Workers, and Christianity in the West Indies', p. 136.

[202] 'Documenting a Democracy: Immigration Restriction Act 1901', *National Archives of Australia*, http://foundingdocs.gov.au/item-did-16.htm, 23 Nov 2012.

[203] Representative Australian tales include Kenneth Mackay, *The Yellow Wave: A Romance of the Asiatic Invasion of Australia* (1896) discussed above, William Lane, *White or Yellow? A Story of the Race-war of A.D. 1908* (1888) and C. H. Kirmess, *The Australian Crisis* (1909); American tales include Lorelle, 'The Battle of the Wabash' (1880), William Ward Crane, 'The Year 1899' (1893), Dr C. W. Doyle, *The Shadow of Quong Lung* (1900), and Marsden Mason, *The Yellow Peril in Action* (1907).

diaspora. Shiel's significant role in disseminating a concern which contributed to the enacting of anti-immigration legislation also highlights the productive rather than merely reflective nature of invasion fiction. For instance, in 1903 a New Zealand newspaper concerned with perceived militarism in China was still viewing the phenomenon through the lens of Shiel's fiction, worrying: 'What if Mr Shield's [sic] "Yellow Danger" proves prophetic?'[204]

Alarmist though they are, Shiel's yellow peril texts are far from being univocal on the subject of race, however, and in conclusion this chapter will briefly examine a particular and quite explicit strain of dissidence that seems to recur in them. While on the surface they seem to effortlessly reproduce the discriminatory racial theory underpinning imperial discourse, a careful examination in fact evinces some significant deviations from these hierarchical assumptions. It is in this divergence that we can glimpse traces of what Michel Foucault terms 'a "reverse" discourse', a subtext in which counter-hegemonic, anti-imperial sentiments may find expression.[205]

Taken at face value, *The Yellow Danger* reads as racist, jingoistic diatribe and Glover observes the many ways in which it conforms to the noxious 'tripartite colour line' formulations of Gobineau's racial theory.[206] But a contrapuntal reading reveals a slightly more equivocal text, in which Hardy, the great white hero and saviour of Britain, is killed at the end in a meaningless duel, his belligerence redundant in the promising post-war future. It has even been suggested that *The Yellow Danger* may have been written to covertly parody more simplistic contemporary pro-war tales, particularly Tracy's *The Final War*.[207] On the other hand, Forman, who identifies *The Yellow Danger* as a 'reverse colonisation' text responding to fin-de-siècle imperial concerns, argues that it is a conservative text with a final positive view of empire which stems from Shiel's position as metropolitan insider, writing *against* the voices of

[204] 'Table Talk', *The Auckland Star* [New Zealand], 25 May 1903, p. 1; online at *Papers Past*, http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast, 22 Feb 2013.
[205] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (1976; London: Penguin, 1990), p. 101.
[206] Glover, '*Die gelbe gefahr*', pp. 53, 54.
[207] Squires, 'Some Contemporary Themes in Shiel's Early Novels', p. 299.

'writers hailing from the colonies (be they Britons overseas or native subjects)'.[208] Hence he fails to recognise Shiel's own colonial origins and the undoubted impact of his doubled hybridity on what I would consider the more ambiguous, open endings of his texts. Even in *The Yellow Danger*, the most conventional of his yellow peril texts, though Britain ends up 'Empress of the Earth', Shiel is clear that the English 'must change' to become worthy of this role: 'We will not ... do as we are – we are in such very shockingly bad form! God will not have his otiose, green world made into a great, base Factory' (347). More significantly, Hardy's attempt to exterminate the Chinese is thwarted by the 'wiser' intervention of 'Nature' because, as the text grudgingly concludes, 'The yellow man is in *the Scheme* ... / And labours for some good' (344). A far cry, say, from Jack London's 'The Unparalleled Invasion' (1910) in which the genocide of the Chinese is considered a wholly beneficial measure.

What 'the Scheme' may be becomes clearer in *The Yellow Wave* and *The Dragon* where Shiel more overtly sets out his atypical understanding of racial progress. As we have seen, *The Yellow Wave* hypothesises that the white races exist only as some kind of evolutionary catalyst. Put more fully, 'Man lives in Asia and Africa, and the white races are there to modify Man; but they are not Man ... white men are a freak ... and will soon disappear' making way for the prophesied 'one universal race, highly evolved, of a flushed brown as clear as the ruby', but 'before any such intermarriage could take place', '[t]he yellow race will have to be highly ascendant' (250). This runs quite counter to the conventional understanding of 'the immense superiority of the white races' as the evolutionary pinnacle far above the 'apathetic' oriental races, and further still from the 'animal' Africans whose implied fate was extinction.[209] Anti-imperialist as Wells's *The War in the Air* undoubtedly was, for example, and multinational as the projected world state he hints at may have been, there are unsurprisingly no

[208] Forman, 'Empire', p. 93.

[209] Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races*, pp. 205-7. Gobineau is less concerned with the fate of the non-white races than with protecting the white race from the evils of miscegenation, but the work of his contemporaries such as Robert Knox is filled with the conclusion, often eagerly anticipated, that the lower races will inevitably become extinct. Reade, for example, ends *Savage Africa* with the happy conclusion that after the black races have performed the physical labour necessary to 'redeem' Africa under white tutelage, 'they may possibly become exterminated. We must learn to look on this result with composure. It illustrates the beneficent law of Nature, that the weak must be devoured by the strong' (452). For a discussion of the reliance of imperial discourse on social Darwinist predictions of non-white racial decline and extinction see Lindqvist, *'Exterminate all the Brutes'*, pp. 122-42.

accompanying eager expectations of a miscegenated race to inhabit it. And in Wells's more detailed non-fictional account of a supposedly utopian future 'New Republic' in *Anticipations* (1901), it is, in fact, the portion of 'those swarms of black, and brown, and dirty-white, and yellow people, who do not come into the needs of the new efficiency ... to die out and disappear'.[210] Shiel's vision is thus extraordinary for a number of reasons, not only in deeming the white races a 'temporary accident', but in contending that normal humanity is constituted of the African and Asian races, advocating the ascendancy of the Asian races, and recommending miscegenation or 'intermarriage', that horror of imperial discourse, as the method by which to engineer the highly-evolved, brown-skinned universal race.

Although placed in the mouth of the unappealing Li, these views are reiterated and expanded upon in *The Dragon*, which likewise pronounces the white races a 'freak of nature' (20) and asserts a natural evolutionary tendency towards 'one universal world-race – mixed – ruby-coloured – prettier and better than any at present' (30). This would seem quite an unexpected theory for a metropolitan author of the period to propound, but is less so, perhaps, for someone with Shiel's diverse West Indian background and experience. Rather than reflecting the white minority's horror of racial admixture and annihilation that fuels the dominant theme of oriental peril in his texts, this explicitly dissident undercurrent may divulge something of the aspect of his background that Shiel otherwise tried to conceal – his own mixed race origins.

As in his best-known novel, *The Purple Cloud*, in each of the yellow peril texts Shiel seems to be working toward his own characteristic conclusion of redemption through ordeal, not just for the individual characters in the narrative but for the entire human race.[211] As *The Candid Friend* reviewer put it, his novels turn on 'great happenings that change the destiny of the human race, and shake the world'.[212] Though *The Yellow Wave* stops short of this conclusion, *The Yellow Danger* and *The Dragon*

[210] H. G. Wells, *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901; London: Chapman & Hall, 1902), p. 317; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/anticipationsofr00welluoft, 12 Dec 2012.
[211] *The Purple Cloud*, for example, predicates an evolutionary leap forward for humanity on its near extinction after the massive volcanic disaster. For more on this see Ailise Bulfin, '"One-planet-one-inhabitant:" Mass Extermination as Progress in M. P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud*', *Trinity College Dublin Journal of Postgraduate Research*, 7 (2008), pp. 101-18.
[212] 'Literary Notes', p. 42.

both imply that human progress is possible only after global conflict has cleared the way, and certainly there are echoes of this sentiment in Wells's *The War in the Air* (not to mention in the post-nuclear utopia postulated in his later *The World Set Free* (1914)). However, the Shiel texts give voice to the further disturbing proposition that yellow-versus-white race war is an evolutionary inevitability, and one with a potentially positive outcome. Even the English hero-prince of *The Dragon* reluctantly concedes Li's convoluted argument that it is 'not wrong ... to kill two hundred million ... men' for the 'benefit' of 'higher evolution' (325-6). Hence on one level Shiel seems to be justifying the horrific representations of genocidal slaughter in his texts with the hypothesis that a mass clearance of people is necessary before the superior universal race can emerge.

Despite what he considers Shiel's conservative outcome to *The Yellow Danger*, Forman concludes that the fact that a major challenge to the imperial hegemony is represented in the text has an unintended destabilising effect.[213] This accords with Alan Sinfield's assertion that in the very representation of social struggle, of mass oriental invasion in this case, though the ruling order may be ultimately restored at the end of the narrative, dissidence is enacted and the dominant discourse disrupted.[214] This view is applicable to both Shiel's invasion texts and their more conservative counterparts; however, it is arguable that there is more at play in the Shiel texts than just the inadvertent dissidence that any text can be forced to yield up through a contrapuntal reading. Shiel was not just a writer of neutral prose reflective of the jingoistic sentiment of his times; he was attempting to produce a philosophy-driven literature through which his own complex world-views could be articulated. His idiosyncratic and highly-contrived style alone differentiates him from writers like Tracy and Le Queux, and even from the far more nuanced Wells – phrases like 'a flushed brown as clear as the ruby', speaking abundantly for themselves. In Shiel's texts too, the ruling order is most emphatically not restored in the end, especially in *The Yellow Wave* and *The Dragon*. And, ultimately, in the suggestions that the white race is a transient freak of nature, that the future of the human race is that of ruby-skinned beauty, and that invasion, mass

[213] Forman, 'Empire', p. 93.
[214] Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), p. 48.

death and the destruction of the old imperial order are needed before humanity can progress to the next level of development – in these heterodoxies, Shiel's texts exceed the Sinfieldian understanding of dissidence and move towards the realm of reverse discourse.

For Foucault, the power of reverse discourse lies in its ability to appropriate the discursive elements of a dominant, repressive discourse and redeploy them for potentially emancipatory purposes. His famous example is that in which 'homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy ... be acknowledged' via the very vocabulary and categories of the emerging Victorian medical-legal discourses by which it was disqualified and controlled.[215] And something of a similar appropriation can be seen operating in the Shiel texts. While on the whole they participate in the dominant imperialist discourse and reproduce its prejudices, in a few distinct contradictory moments they also hijack the familiar discursive elements of repressive discourses like social Darwinism and Victorian racial theory and use them to draw some very different conclusions about the future of humanity. Thus even in such seemingly doctrinaire texts as Shiel's yellow peril offerings can we see borne out Foucault's contention concerning the polyvalence of discourse, that while 'discourse transmits and produces power ... [and] reinforces it', it may also be 'a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy'.[216]

[215] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 101.
[216] Ibid.

AFTERWORD

'TO ARMS!' IN EARNEST

> And the call, however urgent, however exacting, has rarely failed to bring out the right man, whether it were for missionary, or soldier, or merchant or traveller, ready to spend himself for his country and his country's work; simply, cheerily, unreservedly doing deeds the reading and hearing of which here in England make our pulses bound and our eyes moisten.[1]

The epigraph is from the preface to Augustus Raymond Margary's posthumously published personal record of his explorations into China in the 1870s. It was compiled from journals and letters written while on a mission to attempt to re-open the important overland trade route between India and China after the cessation of the long-running anti-Qing Panthay rebellion in Yunnan. It was published posthumously because Margary, 'a young officer of great promise' who had selflessly answered the pressing 'call' of his country to serve in its imperial endeavour, was attacked en route by 'wild' Yunnan hill tribes and killed in 1875.[2] What is significant about this episode and the excerpt above from the point of view of this study is not only that Margary's progress was halted by Chinese forces opposed to the further incursion of England into China, or that the news of what was considered his treacherous slaying gave vent to a wave of anti-Chinese sentiment,[3] but also that the author of the preface to his journals considers that the relation of such events to the domestic English audience will have a powerful emotional effect upon them.

It is one thing to argue that the colonial backgrounds of the authors on whom this study has focused on one level manifested itself in a predilection for narratives turning

---

[1] Preface to Augustus Raymond Margary and Rutherford Alcock, *The Journey of Augustus Raymond Margary, from Shanghae to Bhamo, and Back to Manwyne: From His Journals and Letters* (London: Macmillan, 1876), p. vii; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/journeyofaugustu00marg, 18 Sep 2013.

[2] Ibid., pp. ii, iv.

[3] See Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1932-1914* (London: Penguin, 2012), pp. 259-63. The incident also led to the signing of the Chefoo Convention in 1876 under which a series of concessions for British trade were extracted from the Qing administration by way of compensation.

upon invasive foreign threats. In other words, the case may be made that these authors – the Anglo-Australian Guy Boothby, the Caribbean M. P. Shiel, not to mention Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, Sax Rohmer and H. Rider Haggard, with their various Irish, Scottish and African connections – shared a type of doubled hybridity that gave them a heightened sense of the immediacy of colonial issues and threats that pervaded their wide and varied output. And it may be suggested that this was often expressed in catastrophic scenarios of metropolitan invasion based on contemporary events taking place in the colonies which had particular resonance for them. It may further be postulated that given the pervasive nature of their circulation in popular fiction, the invasion concerns of these colonial authors and others had a formative effect on the very development of genre fiction in the fin de siècle, helping to shape some of the dominant themes of the emergent genres of crime, gothic and science fiction. Textual evidence for propositions such as these may be amassed and it may be hoped that they have to some extent been borne out over the course of this study. It is another thing, however, to argue that the body of invasion fiction created by these and other comparable popular authors was productive upon the society in which it was consumed. This is a far trickier proposition to substantiate as it is difficult to quantify the extent to which invasion fiction affected those who read it, and further to judge, if the fiction did impinge upon its readers, the type of effect it might have had. As Cecil Eby points out concerning the effects of militaristic fiction on preparing the public for the outbreak of World War I, 'Unfortunately there is no way to measure precisely, then as now, the effect of militant literary outpourings upon actual historical events'. And yet he makes a good case over the course of his wide-ranging study that in the preceding period 'popular literature was so steeped in militant nationalism that the Great War, when it finally arrived, came like an ancient prophecy at last fulfilled'.[4]

One way to investigate the proposition concerning the potential productivity of invasion fiction is to try to assess the impact it made upon its contemporary readership and to see whether and how its fictional tropes entered non-fictional discourse, as aspects of the preceding chapters have attempted. To recap very briefly, in chapter one we saw

[4] Cecil D. Eby, *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 7.

that contemporary reviewers' accounts of Boothby's subversive Dr Nikola character attest to the powerful impression the character made on the reading public and that in linking the invasion threat implicit in Nikola with that imputed to the Chinese people, Boothby was not merely responding to metropolitan invasion anxiety, but also shaping it – bringing the peripheral concerns about Australia's number one perceived racial menace to a metropolitan centre not yet experiencing Chinese immigration for itself. In this he was paving the way for the type of embattled, racist view of Chinese immigration that had tended to develop in Western countries already experiencing it and which was further promulgated in the more overt yellow peril fictions discussed in chapter three. Chapter two in seeking to discern the potential productivity of Egyptian gothic fiction argues that the iconic image of the vengeful mummy circulated worries about Britain's contentious hold on Egypt to a far wider audience than those closely concerned with Egyptian politics and even transcended fictional discourse to inform non-fictional accounts of the Egyptian Question. Combined, the analysis in these two chapters suggests that the endless insistence on foreign villainy, whether criminal or supernatural, colonial or European, at very least reinforced the growing xenophobia which was a cornerstone of jingoism.

Chapter three, turning to matters Far Eastern, shows how fiction by colonial authors continued to be in the vanguard of channels through which yellow peril concerns were expressed, with Shiel's pre-Boxer Rebellion *The Yellow Danger* (1898) in particular disseminating this concern to a wide audience, causing reviewers to speculate as to the likelihood of such scenarios actually occurring and to suggest that policy makers should heed such warnings. It is also argued in chapter three that, as in the United States and Australia, such racially-charged fiction may have made a contribution to the immigration restriction legislation enacted in Britain in this period. In the rest of this short conclusion, I will try to point out a few further disparate instances in which the productivity of fictional narratives of colonial revenge and invasion may be glimpsed and to tentatively explore what effects may have been produced, whether eyes may have moistened and pulses bounded.

There are a certain number of cases where invasion fiction has been accepted to have had a demonstrable effect on public opinion, and even on political debate and policy; these typically involve future-war themed invasion tales, and the best-known example is

that of Lieutenant-Colonel Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871). As Patrick Kirkwood has shown, as well as spawning a spate of fictional followings, Chesney's dismal vision made an impact on public discourse concerning military preparedness at the time of its publication that transcended even press commentary to make itself felt at the level of public controversy between political and military elites. Immediately following its publication then British Prime Minister William Gladstone warned against its 'alarmism', references to it in military and parliamentary debates recurred throughout the 1870s, and it may even have influenced the undertaking of a defence project to fortify the North Downs outside London in the early 1890s.[5] Reissued after the outbreak of World War I in September 1914, the cover of this wartime edition claimed, 'No book has ever touched the public conscience more strongly than this', while its introduction argued for the ongoing relevance of the lessons taught by the admonitory fictional text even in the face of the outbreak of actual hostilities.[6]

In the realm of discourse about the threat of colonial dissent, rather than European great power hostility, the response to the Indian Mutiny is, as might be expected, always relevant. As we saw in the introduction, Kim Wagner argues that Indian affairs in the decades following 1857 were viewed through the warped lens of Mutiny paranoia. And as well as in factual commentary, the '"Mutiny"-motif', as Wagner calls it,[7] was, of course, kept alive in the long tradition of fictional Mutiny narratives. Its distorting effect meant that '[p]erceived threats were invariably taken more seriously than the actual circumstances warranted and thus affected colonial policies in profound ways', leading to the violent suppression of minor threats and hence fuelling the development of Indian nationalism rather than containing it as intended.[8] Likewise the comparable wider master narrative of native violence, also identified in the introduction, was expressed both in political and military debate and commentary and in fictional texts, for instance in the tropes of yellow peril fiction as we saw in chapter three. And its effect was to replicate

[5] Patrick M. Kirkwood, 'The Impact of Fiction on Public Debate in late Victorian Britain: *The Battle of Dorking* and the "Lost Career" of Sir George Tomkyns Chesney', *Graduate History Review*, 4:1 (Fall 2012), pp. 3-7, 16.
[6] G. H. Powell, intro. to [Sir George Tomkyns Chesney], *The Battle of Dorking* (London, Grant Richards, 1914), pp. v-vii.
[7] Kim Wagner, '"Treading Upon Fires": The "Mutiny"-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India', *Past and Present*, 218:1 (Feb 2013), p. 169.
[8] Ibid., pp. 192-6.

this type of paranoid overreaction in instances of colonial insurrection outside India, such as the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica in 1865.[9]

Another way to attempt to answer the question concerning literary productivity is to look at the motivation of those who produced invasion fiction. Were they simply reflecting a prevalent social concern in the hopes that resonant fiction would prove to be profitable, or were they rather attempting to influence popular opinion through their work. As we saw in chapter three, the tactics of the C. Arthur Pearson group and other comparable popular publishers of rushing to market sensational fiction extrapolated from nascent political crises indicate that they played an influential role in guiding public opinion and fuelling anxiety about invasion and war, rather than passively responding to it. Shiel, in fact, directly adverted to this role in his tale of future economic strife, *The Lord of the Sea* (1901), in which the protagonist is attracted by an imagined competition in *Pearson's Weekly*, a magazine which had serialised a lot of invasion fiction.[10] Its offer of 'a prize of £500 for "the most clear and intelligent" article ... explaining the precise cause, or causes, of "the present prevailing distress and commercial crisis"', signals Shiel's awareness of the publication's focus on alarmist themes. In a characteristically unorthodox and Shielian response, the protagonist concludes, 'Every Englishman should compete – and the prize of solution would be not the £500 only, but Paradise.'[11]

As well as responding to editorial and publisher direction, many future-war themed invasion tales were written explicitly for propaganda purposes and often by military men: Chesney certainly freely stated that he intended *The Battle of Dorking* as 'propaganda for improved defence'.[12] And, as noted briefly in chapter three, Louis Tracy confessed to a nationalistic motive for writing *The Final War* (1896): 'I determined that the patriotic sentiments that were very prevalent among the people at that time, although not among the Press, should be supplied with something to keep them alive'.[13] Likewise, in the book

[9] Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), pp. 148-9.
[10] Examples include Louis Tracy's *The Final War* (1896) and *The Invaders* (1901).
[11] M. P. Shiel, *The Lord of the Sea* (London: Grant Richards, 1901), p. 49.
[12] Cited in Kirkwood, 'The Impact of Fiction on Public Debate in late Victorian Britain', p. 3.
[13] 'The Man Who Wrote *The Final War*', an interview with Louis Tracy in *Pearson's Weekly*, 20:348 (Mar 1897); cited in John D. Squires, 'A Whiff of Collaboration: The Tracy-Shiel Connection', afterword to Louis Tracy, *The Great Strike* (1901; Kettering, OH: Vainglory Press, 2005), pp. 104-5; accessed online at *M. P. Shiel – The Lord of Language*, http://www.alangullette.com/lit/shiel/shiel/essays/shiel_tracy.htm, 18 Jul 2012.

edition of William Le Queux's sensationalist *The Invasion of 1910* (1906), which sold an estimated million copies, was included an introduction by the celebrated hero of the Second Boer War, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, recommending it to 'everyone who has the welfare of the British Empire at heart'.[14] In a similar vein, G. A. Henty's boys fiction – famous for its accounts of imperial campaigns and, according to Henty, written 'to inculcate patriotism' as 'one of my main objects' – was deemed by recruiting officers to be instrumental in attracting young men into the army, and particularly to the officer class.[15] And, as we saw in chapter three, the crusading journalist W. T. Stead made many attempts to employ the fictional mode as a means to reach and inform a wider audience. These ranged from his failed daily paper with its intended didactic *Romance of the World* serial to his use of the Christmas number of *The Review of Reviews* 'to embody in the narrative form ... the most conspicuous events and ideas of the passing year', as he put it in the preface to his tale of economic yellow peril, *The Splendid Paupers: A Tale of the Coming Plutocracy* (1894).[16]

Of course it must be acknowledged that just because the writers, editors and publishers of this brand of fiction produced it with explicitly patriotic, admonitory or jingoistic purposes, does not necessarily mean that their aims were fulfilled. The gap between an author's intentions and a reader's response may be wide. As Fredric Jameson, in his discussion of the development of genre, comments: 'No small part of the art of writing, indeed, is absorbed by th[e] (impossible) attempt to devise a foolproof mechanism for the automatic exclusion of undesirable response to a given literary utterance.'[17] That said, however, when the war finally broke out, many well-known fiction writers were included in the group of propagandists recruited to the covert service of the British War Propaganda Bureau, a fact which certainly demonstrates a belief in the power of fiction to manipulate opinion circulating amongst the most powerful echelons of British society at a time of real crisis. The work of the authors, amongst other things,

[14] Mike Ashley, 'Rise of the Invaders: The apocalyptic spin-offs inspired by H. G . Wells's *War of the Worlds*', *Rare Book Review*, 359 (2005), pp. 20-4.
[15] Eby, *The Road to Armageddon*, p. 6.
[16] W. T. Stead, preface to *The Splendid Paupers: A Tale of the Coming Plutocracy, Being the Christmas Number of the Review of Reviews* (1894), online at *The W. T. Stead Resource Site*, http://www.attackingthedevil.co.uk/pdfs/paupers.pdf, 23 Nov 2012.
[17] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981), pp. 106–7.

involved the crucial task of trying to sway public opinion in the United States in favour of entering the war on the Allied side.[18] And, as John D. Squires has discovered, an interesting and little-known contribution to this endeavour was made by Tracy, who had developed a reasonable following for his fiction in the United States.

In 1916 Tracy spent a period of time in America, during which, as well as directing a series of lectures and newspaper articles towards the war effort, he also made use of a most up-to-date fictional form. To be precise, he wrote the novelization of a propagandist silent movie serial, *The Yellow Menace*, which ran serially in numerous newspapers across America in 1916 to publicise the movie episodes which were being screened simultaneously (see the advertising poster in fig. 1).[19]

[18] M. L. Sanders, 'Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War', *The Historical Journal*, 18:1 (Mar 1975), p. 119.

[19] 'Louis Tracy to Write for Pathe', *The Moving Picture World*, 27 May 1916, p. 1489. *The Yellow Menace* was serialized in 15 instalments, 3 Sept - 17 Dec 1916 in the *Boston Sunday Herald*, amongst several other newspapers. Tracy also produced the more blatant propaganda novel, *The Day of Wrath : A Story of 1914* (New York: Clode, [May] 1916) which dramatized all 'the horror and agony undergone by heroic Belgium in the cruel days of August and September, 1914' according to its reviewer. Details from Squires, 'A Whiff of Collaboration, pp. 118, 129.



Fig. 1. Poster for *The Yellow Menace* (1916).
Image from the collection of John D. Squires.

Promoted with the advertising tag line: 'Produced to Arouse Sleeping America' (as shown in fig. 1), this movie-newspaper serial combination is an interesting example of potentially productive invasion fiction featuring a colonial menace because it deploys the yellow peril trope to evoke indirectly the presumed German threat awaiting the unprepared Americans. And once again Tracy was quite open about his didactic motivation:

> 'In writing *The Yellow Menace* … I must confess that I was mainly actuated by a desire to warn the United States of their deadly peril. America has up to the present time been a sleeping giant, but now she must arouse herself and be prepared against any invasion or foreign interference that might come. Certainly, danger from the yellow races is no

> less than that which threatens from European powers. The picture drives home powerfully the lessons that I have striven to convey in writing the story.'[20]

The plot of *The Yellow Menace* relies heavily on both Shiel's and Rohmer's prior articulations of the yellow peril myth, envisaging the invasion of the United States by hordes of bloodthirsty orientals under the leadership of an omnipotent evil genius whose initial approach is covert. However, in order to heighten this already overblown threat, Tracy goes one step further: 'this veritable peril to civilization as we understand it' 'embodies in himself the subtlest characteristics of *every eastern* race [my italics]'; his very name, 'Ali Singh', intended to connote both Muslim and Hindu origins.[21] A piece of shameless puffery in the contemporary press neatly sums up the ludicrous plot, about which not much more need be said:

> Ali Singh, the all-powerful and superhuman Mongolian demon has gathered about him the fanatical millions of ... all the oriental races, Chinese, Japanese, Hindus, Malays and Polynesians, into one mighty army to conquer the United States. ... The All-powerful fans the fires of treachery and ultimately sails for the Pacific coast of the United States with a terrible army of fanatics ... [to] strike the first blow at unprepared America.[22]

It is significant, however, that Tracy's version of the yellow peril is highly coloured by his personal experience of India (discussed in chapter three), Ali Singh's name relating him to India's two largest ethnic-religious groups, rather than to the more expected Chinese or Japanese roots. And though the opening episode of the serial novel depicts a violent uprising set in a Chinese treaty port and evocative of the Boxer Rebellion, it is described in terms more appropriate to the seminal Indian uprising: 'Another mutiny' is suspected as news comes in that 'The whole bazaar has risen!'.[23] 'Bazaar' was not a colonial Chinese term and closing the bazaars was the standard response to perceived

[20] 'Great Race Serial, *The Yellow Menace*, To Be Shown September 4', *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 Aug 1916, p. 14; cited in John D. Squires, 'Newspaper Serials, War Propaganda and Tracy's Novelization of *The Yellow Menace*', afterword to Louis Tracy, *The Yellow Menace* (1916; Ontario: Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, Forthcoming 2014), p. 214.
[21] Tracy, *The Yellow Menace*, pp. 1-2.
[22] Daisy Dean, 'News Notes from Movie Land', *The Atlanta Constitution*, 31 Jul 1916, p. B6.
[23] Tracy, *The Yellow Menace*, pp. 3-4.

unrest in India, indicating that Tracy was relying heavily here in his depiction of pan-Asian uprising upon the Mutiny master narrative.

Trail-blazer for the yellow peril theme, Shiel, coincidentally, had already observed the propagandist potential of early cinema in this context. Li Ku Yu, evil genius of Shiel's *The Dragon* (1913), uses '125,000 cinematographs' to film a series of '"plots" which had only one subject in infinite variety – a combat between white men and yellow,' which 'soon proved popular apostles of atrocity ... to hundreds of millions'.[24] Shiel himself later in 1920 even wrote and attempted to find a producer for a screenplay based on his *The Yellow Wave*.[25] Like Li's fictional film series, *The Yellow Menace* was very much intended to manipulate public opinion, as Tracy's explanation of his motivation disclosed. As well as in the text of the novelization, a laboured emphasis is placed on America's 'unpreparedness' throughout the film's promotional material and as far as possible through the simplistic racially-charged visuals of the silent movie: 'A subject of national interest', 'The theme is timely, it is the big idea in America today', declared advertising poster after poster.[26] Like Tracy, the movie's producer and director William Steiner considered that it dealt with the most important issue facing the present generation: 'the case for preparedness'. 'Ali Singh,' he continued in a newspaper interview, '...indicates to the thinking mind a real danger lurking in the future. If this lesson can be driven home, this series of films will render a national service ... and pains have been taken to insure that [its] political significance will ... make itself felt'.[27] While there is yet again no way to tell exactly what the impact of *The Yellow Menace* was, there is no doubt that the intentions of its author and producer were clear, that fictional narratives were considered an effective medium for disseminating a widespread social message by the culture industry, and that the serial novel and movie were enthusiastically received by a wide audience, syndicated, as they were, across numerous newspapers and hundreds of movie theatres. Ultimately, it should be observed that the United States did finally enter the war in 1917, and while this is not to imply the remotest connection

[24] M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Peril* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1929), pp. 43, 47.
[25] Harold Billings, *M. P. Shiel: The Middle Years 1897-1923*, vol. 2, (Austin, TX: Roger Beacham, 2010), pp. 299-304.
[26] Posters reprinted as back matter to Tracy, *The Yellow Menace*, pp. 171, 172.
[27] William Steiner in *Motion Picture News* (9 Sep 1916), p. 1519; cited in Squires, 'Newspaper Serials, War Propaganda and Tracy's Novelization of *The Yellow Menace*', p. 202.

between a sensational piece of cultural ephemera like *The Yellow Menace* and an event of this magnitude, it may still be suggested that this and other fictionally-transmitted preparedness messages might have contributed to generating acceptance for the decision.

If it may be argued, then, that the fiction of invasion had some productive effect, the next question is as to the nature of that effect – did it tend to manage or to intensify social anxieties? Speaking in general of popular generic fiction, Stephen Arata holds that, 'One attraction of formulaic genres is that they effectively manage unruly anxieties by rearticulating them within the conventions of the genre, thereby draining or at least redirecting much of their troubling energy'.[28] This view is based in part on his account of the functioning of the gothic mode, centring on Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) in which the threat is mastered at the conclusion of the narrative.[29] I believe this may be an over-simplification of the cultural work performed by genre fiction and one which is certainly belied by a substantial portion of the fiction of invasion. Overall, as a body of work, future-war themed invasion narratives grew increasingly hysterical as the geo-political climate worsened in the early-twentieth century, but, unlike Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking*, many of the later narratives have relatively closed, resolved endings depicting British triumph against great adversity.[30] This, in conjunction with their rallying cry to defend the empire, situates these texts well within the dominant discourse of imperialism and also implies that they may have worked to mitigate against anxiety in the way that Arata outlines. However in their increasingly alarmist representations of invasion and demonization of the invaders, it is equally possible that they had the converse effect of fuelling societal anxiety concerning metropolitan security and undermining imperial confidence. And this accords with the understanding of the double function of popular culture set out by Darryl Jones in which, extending the analysis of Theodor Adorno, he argues that while it often acts to reinforce hegemony it may simultaneously allow for the circulation of challenging, dissident views.[31]

---

[28] Stephen Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 132.
[29] Ibid., p. 126.
[30] I. F. Clarke, 'Before and After *The Battle of Dorking*', *Science Fiction Studies*, 24:71 (Mar 1997), online at www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/71/clarke71art.htm, on 10 May 2009.
[31] Darryl Jones, '"It's in the Trees! It's Coming!" *Night of the Demon* and the Decline and Fall of the British Empire', in Darryl Jones, Elizabeth McCarthy and Bernice Murphy (ed.s), *It Came from the 1950s! Popular Culture, Popular Anxieties* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 49-51.

Turning to more indirect representations of invasion – many of the key narratives examined in this study allow even less for the putative management of anxiety outlined above because they are, in fact, open-ended: their conclusions do not entail the complete containment of the threat. In some the invasive force emerges victorious or remains at large – for instance, Boothby's Nikola novels and *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899), certain of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales and gothic short stories, and Rohmer's Fu-Manchu series, not to mention, of course, Chesney's ur-text. And in others the consequences of the invasive act are so profound that those experiencing it, or even entire societies, are transformed beyond all recognition – for example, Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897), Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), Haggard's *Ayesha: The Return of She* (1905), Shiel's three yellow peril offerings and H. G. Wells's *The War in the Air* (1908). In more nuanced terms that accord with the analysis of Jones, Roger Luckhurst argues that 'Popular fictions bind floating emotional states into cohesive narratives, their templates and icons short-cuts for complex and contradictory feelings'.[32] And this brings us closer to the view of the paradoxical impact of invasion fiction proposed by this study – that the paranoia and pessimism much of it produced was inverted to become belligerence and jingoism, discordant social forces which fuelled the militarism that legitimated Britain's entry into war in 1914.

Certainly this view of the affecting power of popular fiction is countenanced in George Bernard Shaw's controversial 1914 tract, *Common Sense About the War*, in which he articulated the highly unpopular idea that British jingoism contributed as much as German belligerence to the outbreak of World War I.[33] In this piece Shaw aims to expatiate on the subjects of British 'Militarism' and 'Junkerism' in general and to give 'the history of the literary propaganda of war between England and Potsdam which has been going on openly for the last forty years on both sides' – all of which he identifies as causative.[34] In the vanguard of literary propaganda disseminating the ideas of Germany as 'White Peril' and the inevitability of war between the two nations, Shaw placed *The*

[32] Roger Luckhurst, *The Mummy's Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 206.

[33] The place of Shaw's tract in the response of the literary world to the war in 1914 is examined by Eby in *The Road to Armageddon*, pp. 240-2.

[34] George Bernard Shaw, *Common Sense About the War* (1914), reprinted in *The New York Times Current History of the European War*, 1:1: *What Men of Letters Say* (Dec 1914), p. 12; accessed online at *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/commonsenseabou00shawgoog, 24 Sep 2013.

Battle of Dorking: 'its moral was "To Arms; or the Germans will besiege London as they besieged Paris" ... From that time until the present, the British propaganda of war with Germany has never ceased'.[35] He also includes in this propagandist effort Rudyard Kipling's work in general and Wells's *The War in the Air* in particular, thus implicating fictional literature heavily in the militarism that he believes caused the war; further, he does not draw a distinction between fictional and non-fictional modes in his list of propaganda sources.[36] Ironically Shaw's denunciation of Wells's text as militaristic is more than a little unfair. Despite Wells pro-war stance after hostilities broke out in 1914, *The War in the Air* reads far more like an anti-war and anti-imperial novel. It is critical of the same jingoism that Shaw denounces, Wells articulating it as the perversion of 'patriotism' into 'a squittering succession of thinly violent ideas about German competition, about the Yellow Danger, about the Black Peril, about the White Man's Burthen...' all of which led to the militarism, arms race and other 'similar imbecilities' which preceded his imagined total war.[37] Wells too agrees with Shaw and so many of his contemporaries concerning the productive capacity of literature to further such negative social tendencies, speaking of the power of the 'evil-spirited press' and the significance of the 'reading masses', and of the role of a 'considerable literature of military forecasts' in 'partially prepar[ing] the ... imagination for some such enterprise', in this case – 'astounding war'.[38]

It is a widely accepted tenet within the field of popular culture studies that certain concerns are more to the fore in certain ages. In their recent essay collection examining the interplay between popular anxieties and popular culture in the 1950s, Jones et al., for example, contend that the spectre of '"The Bomb" attains the status of an overarching metaphor or master-narrative' for that era's popular cultural production.[39] In like fashion this study concludes with the tentative suggestion that invasion may have come to fulfil a

[35] Ibid., pp. 13-4.
[36] Other sources include a famous Stead article on naval preparedness, the suppression of the Channel Tunnel, *The National Review*, the Navy League, dreadnoughts and Lord Roberts, as well as the work of other less-known writers. Ibid., pp. 14-5.
[37] H. G. Wells, *The War in the Air* (London: Bell, 1908), p. 97; accessed online at Internet Archive, http://www.archive.org/details/warinairandparti00welluoft, 30 Sep 2013.
[38] Ibid., pp. 106-7, 347, 348.
[39] Darryl Jones, Elizabeth McCarthy and Bernice Murphy (ed.s), intro. to *It Came from the 1950s! Popular Culture, Popular Anxieties* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 9.

comparable role in the pre-war, fin-de-siècle years between 1890 and 1914. Invasion, as a total inversion of empire, the nightmare of the empire collapsing back in on itself, was perhaps the ultimate fear of an island nation that had long attempted to control an untenable amount of overseas territory – 'one fifth of the earth's surface and the care of one in five of all the inhabitants of the world,' as imperial apologists were yet pleased to boast even after the outbreak of World War I.[40]

[40] Lord Roberts in *The Hibbert Journal* (Oct 1914) cited in Shaw, *Common Sense About the War*, p. 14.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

'A Foreword', *The Windsor Magazine*, 1 (Jan 1895), pp. 1-3.

'A Foreword for 1897', *The Windsor Magazine*, 5 (Dec 1896), pp. 153-4.

[Alcott, Louisa May], 'Lost in a Pyramid', *Reynolds's Miscellany*, 42:1086 (3 Apr 1869), pp. 244-5.

'An Egyptian Ghost Story', *Leisure Hour*, 602 (July 1863), pp. 441–43.

'Atrocities After the Fall of Port Arthur', *The Times* (8 Jan 1895), p. 6.

Bath, T. H., 'The Anglo-Japanese Treaty', *Kalgoorlie Western Argus* [Western Australia], 4 Mar 1902, p. 2; online at *Trove*, http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/32608809, 2 Dec 2012.

Beresford, Lord Charles, *The Break-Up of China: With an Account of Its Present Commerce, Currency, Waterways, Armies, Railways, Politics, and Future Prospects* (London: Harper, 1899); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/breakupchinawit00unkngoog, 17 Dec 2012.

Beresford, Lord Charles, *The Memoirs of Lord Charles Beresford*, 2 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1914); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/memoirsofadmiral01bereuoft, 8 Jan 2013.

Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, *A Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (1907; New York: Alfred Knopf, 1922).

'Boothby, Bunkum, and Bathos', rev.s of Guy Boothby, *Love Made Manifest* (1899) and *Dr Nikola's Experiment* (1899), *The Outlook Magazine*, 16 Sep 1899, p. 218.

Boothby, Guy, *On the Wallaby, or Through the East and Across Australia*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1894).

———, *A Bid for Fortune, or Dr Nikola's Vendetta* (London: Ward, Lock & Bowden, 1895).

———, *The Marriage of Esther: A Torres Straits Sketch*, (London: Ward, Lock, 1895).

———, *The Beautiful White Devil* (London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1896).

———, *Doctor Nikola* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1896).

———, 'With Three Phantoms', *Bushigrams* (Ward, Lock & Co, n.d. [1897]).

———, *The Lust of Hate* (London, Ward, Lock & Co, 1898).

———, *Dr Nikola's Experiment* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899).

———, *Love Made Manifest* (New York: Herbert Stone, 1899).

———, *Pharos the Egyptian* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1899).

———, *'Farewell, Nikola'* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1901).

———, 'A Professor of Egyptology', *The Graphic*, 70 (1904).

———, 'Mr Aristocrat', *A Crime of the Under Seas, and Other Stories* (London: Ward, Lock, 1905).

Buchan, John, *Greenmantle* (1916; London: Penguin, 1992).

Caine, Hall, *The White Prophet* (London: Heinemann, 1909).

Chesney, General Sir George Tomkyns, *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (1871), reprinted in *The Battle of Dorking* and *When William Came* (Oxford: Oxford Popular Fiction: 1997).

Collins, Wilkie, *The Woman in White* (1860; London: Penguin, 2003).

———, *The Moonstone* (1868; London: Penguin, 1998).

Conrad, Joseph, *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896; London: Penguin, 1975).

———, *Heart of Darkness*, Norton Critical Edition, 4th edn (1899; New York: Norton, 2005).

———, *Typhoon* (1902), reprinted in *Typhoon and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2002).

Cromer, Earl of [Evelyn Baring], *Modern Egypt*, 2 (London: Macmillan, 1908); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/modernegypt02earl.htm, 23 Mar 2010.

'Curzon and Crises', *Punch*, 110 (11 Apr 1896), p. 169.

De Gobineau, Arthur, *The Inequality of Human Races*, trans. Adrian Collins (1853-5; London: Heineman, 1915), p. 205; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/inequalityofhuma00gobi, 10 Dec 2012.

Dicey, Edward, 'The Future of Egypt', *Nineteenth Century: a monthly review*, 44:262 (Dec 1898), p. 881-96.

Dickens, Charles, *Little Dorrit* (1857; London: Penguin, 2003).

Diosy, Arthur, *The New Far East* (1898; London: Cassell, 1904); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/newfareast00diuoft, 10 Apr 2013.

Doyle, Arthur Conan, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1999).

———, 'John Barrington Cowles' (1888), reprinted in *The Edinburgh Stories of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1981).

———, 'The Ring of Thoth' (1890), *The Conan Doyle Stories* (Leicester: Galley Press, 1988).

———, *The Sign of Four* (1890), reprinted in *Sherlock Holmes Selected Stories* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998).

———, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892), reprinted in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 2001).

———, 'Lot No. 249' (1892), reprinted in Roger Luckhurst (ed.), *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2005).

———, *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894), reprinted in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 2001).

———, *The Parasite* (1894), reprinted in *The Edinburgh Stories of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1981).

———, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902; London: Penguin, 1981).

———, 'The Adventure of the Empty House' (1903), collected in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1905; London: Reader's Digest, 1995).

———, 'The Pot of Caviare' (1908), reprinted in *The Conan Doyle Stories* (Leicester: Galley Press, 1988).

'Eastward Ho!', *Punch*, 107 (11 Aug 1894), p. 63.

'Egypt (From Our Correspondent)', *The Times*, 17 Apr 1900, p. 3.

'Egypt of Today', *The Windsor Magazine*, 5 (Dec 1896) p. 617-23.

'Election Intelligence: York', *The Times*, 31 Dec 2012, p. 4.

Ellis, Havelock, *The Criminal* (New York: Scribner & Welford, 1890); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/criminal00elli, 16 Apr 2013.

Everett, H. D., [pseud. as Theo. Douglas], *Iras: A Mystery* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1896).

Fawcett, Edgar, 'The Yellow Danger', *Collier's Weekly* ([U.S.A.] 18 Aug 1900); reprinted in *Voices and Visions: Later Verses by Edgar Fawcett* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1903).

'Fiction', rev. of Guy Boothby, *Pharos the Egyptian* (1899), *The Academy*, 1405 (Apr 1899), p. 407.

Forster, E. M., *A Passage to India* (1924; London: Penguin, 2005).

'General Türr On European Armaments', *The Times*, 4 Jun 1895, p. 3.

George, Henry, 'Chinese Immigration' (1881); reprinted in Kenneth C. Wenzer (ed.), *Henry George: Collected Journalistic Writings, Volume I, The Early Years 1860-1879* (New York: M E Sharpe, 2003).

Gibbon, Edward, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, David Womersley (ed.), 1 (London: Penguin, 1995).

Grierson, Francis D., 'The Mixture – Not As Before', *The Bookman*, 65 (Nov 1923), p. 118.

H., W., 'New Leaves', *Outlook Magazine*, 6 (Aug 1900), p. 54.

Haggard, H. Rider, *She* (1886; London: Penguin, 2004).

———, *Allan Quatermain* (1887; Oxford: World's Classics, 1995).

———, *Cleopatra: Being an Account of the Fall and Vengeance of Harmachis, the Royal Egyptian, as Set Forth by his Own Hand* (1889; London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1894); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/cleopatrabeingac00hagg, 16 May 2013.

———, *Ayesha: The Return of She* (1905; London: Ward, Lock & Co, c. 1931).

———, *Diary of an African Journey (1914)*, ed. Stephen Coan (London: Hurst & Co, 2000).

Harper, Edward Parker, *China Past and Present* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1903); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/chinapastandpre01parkgoog, 13 Jan 2013.

Hart, Sir Robert, 'The Peking Legations: A National Uprising and International Episode', (Aug 1900); reprinted in *'These from the Land of Sinim': Essays on the Chinese Question* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1901); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924023496239, 23 Nov 2012.

Hearn, Lafcadio, 'A Midsummer Trip to the West Indies', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 77:460 (Sep 1888), p. 627; online at *Cornell University Library Making of America Collection*, http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=harp;idno=harp0077-4, 4 Nov 2010.

Henry, Eva M., 'The Curse of Vasartas', *Belgravia*, 69:276 (Oct 1889), pp. 1-13.

'Historical Romances' *The Athenaeum*, 3726 (Mar 1899), p. 368.

Hobson, J. A., *Imperialism: A Study* (London: Nisbet, 1902); online at *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/imperialismastu00goog.htm, 3 July 2013.

Hyde, John, 'The Creator of "Dr Nikola": An afternoon with Guy Boothby,' *The Windsor Magazine*, 5 (Dec 1896), pp. 129-133.

'In the Sepulchre', *Reynolds's Miscellany*, 40:1044 (June 1868), pp. 411–12.

Kipling, Rudyard, 'The Mark of the Beast' (1890), reprinted in Roger Luckhurst (ed.), *Late-Victorian Gothic Tales*, (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2005).

———, 'Recessional' (1897), collected in Rudyard Kipling, *The Five Nations* (London: Methuen, 1903), pp. 214-5.

———, *Kim* (1901; London: Penguin, 2000).

Klickman, Wilfrid, 'Guy Boothby At Home,' *The Windsor Magazine*, 13 (Feb 1901) pp. 297-302.

Lane, Edward W., *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians: Written in Egypt during the years 1833-1835* (1836; London, New York & Melbourne: Ward, Lock & Co, 1890, reprinted from the 3rd edn., 1842); online at *Travellers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA)*, http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9176, 13 Oct 2009.

'Latest – From the Sphinx', *Punch*, 57 (27 Nov 1869), pp. 210-4.

Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan, *In a Glass Darkly* (1872; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1999).

Le Queux, William, *The Great War in England in 1897* (London: Tower, 1894).

———, *The Invasion of 1910* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1906).

'Literary Notes', *The Candid Friend*, (13 Jul 1901), reprinted in John D. Squires (ed.) *Critical Perspectives: Periodical Reviews of M. P. Shiel's Writings*, I (Kettering, Ohio: JDS Books, 1996), p. 42.

'Lord Charles Beresford on the Far East', *The Straits Times* [Singapore], 3 Jan 1898, p. 2; online at *National Library Singapore*, http://newspapers.nl.sg/Digitised/Article/straitstimes18980103-1.2.4.aspx, 23 Nov 2012.

Lowry, H. D. and T. S. C. Crowther, 'Unknown London: The Italian Colony in Saffron Hill', *The Windsor Magazine*, 1 (Jan 1895), pp. 305-12.

Machray, Robert, 'Our Reserve of Generals', *The Windsor Magazine*, 12 (June 1900), pp. 27-32.

Mackay, Kenneth, *The Yellow Wave: A Romance of the Asiatic Invasion of Australia* (1896; Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003).

Mansford, Charles J., 'At the Pyramid of the Sacred Bulls', *The Windsor Magazine*, 3 (Jan 1896), pp. 386-91.

Margary, Augustus Raymond and Rutherford Alcock, *The Journey of Augustus Raymond Margary, from Shanghae to Bhamo, and Back to Manwyne: From His Journals and Letters* (London: Macmillan, 1876); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/journeyofaugustu00marg, 18 Sep 2013.

Marsh, Richard, *The Beetle: A Mystery* (1897; Ontario: Broadview, 2004).

———, *The Joss: A Reversion* (1901; Chicago: Valancourt Books, 2007).

Marshman, John Clarke, *History of India* (1876); abridged edn, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Milner, Alfred, *England in Egypt*, 6th edn (1892; London: Edward Arnold, 1899).

'Monthly Report of the Wholesale Book Trade', *The Bookman*, 10:58 (July 1896), p. 104.

'Monthly Reports of the Wholesale Bookselling Trade', *The Bookman*, 18:107 (Aug 1900), p. 135-6.

'Mr Chamberlain in Birmingham', *The Times*, 14 May 1898, p. 12.

'Mr Curzon on the Cretan Question', *The Times*, 5 Apr 1897, p. 9.

'Mr Grant Richards's Catalogue of Works in Fiction, With Some Opinions of the Press', publisher's catalogue bound into the back of M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Danger* (London: Grant Richards, 1900).

'Mr Guy Boothby,' *The Advertiser* (Adelaide) 1 Mar 1905, p. 5; online at *National Library of Australia*, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5039806, 13 Mar 2013.

'News Notes', *The Bookman*, 7:40, (Jan 1895) pp. 103-6.

'News Notes', *The Bookman*, 8:44 (May 1895), p. 37-40.

'News Notes', *The Bookman*, 13:74 (Nov 1897), pp. 29-30.

'News Notes', *The Bookman*, 17:100 (Jan 1900), pp. 103-6.

'News Out of Egypt', *The African Review*, 6 (13 Jul 1895), p. 63.

Nordau, Max, *Degeneration* (1892; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

'Notes,' *The Academy and Literature*, 69:1713 (Mar 1905), pp. 187-9.

'Obituary: Mr Guy Boothby,' *The Times*, 28 Feb 1905, p. 10.

'Old Par's Wanderings', *The Academy*, 1492 (Dec 1900), pp. 579-80.

'Our Booking-Office', rev. of Guy Boothby, *The Lust of Hate* (1898), *Punch Magazine*, 114 (23 Apr 1898), p. 189.

'Our Mail Bag: News From Everywhere', *The Mataura Ensign* [NZ] (11 Mar 1899), p. 4; online at *Papers Past*, paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast, 3 July 2013.

Pearson, Charles H., *National Life and Character: A Forecast* (1893; London: Macmillan, 1913), p. 137; online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/nationallifeandc015071mbp, 25 Sep 2012.

Powell, G. H., intro. to [Sir George Tomkyns Chesney], *The Battle of Dorking* (London, Grant Richards, 1914).

Prichard, K. and H. [pseud. as E. and H. Heron], 'The Story of Baelbrow', *Pearson's Monthly Magazine*, 5 (April 1898), pp. 366-75.

'Publications and Announcements of Mr Grant Richards' (Spring 1898), publisher's catalogue bound into the back of M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Danger* (London: Grant Richards, 1898).

Radcliffe, Ann, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998).

———, *The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1796; London: Penguin, 2004).

Reade, W. Winwood, *Savage Africa: Being the Narrative of a Tour in Equatorial, Southwestern, and Northwestern Africa* (New York: Harper, 1864); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/savageafricabein00read, 15 Dec 2012.

'Recent Novels', rev. of Guy Boothby, *A Bid for Fortune* (1895), *The Times*, 27 Dec 1895, p. 10.

'Recent Novels', rev. of Guy Boothby, *Doctor Nikola* (1896), *The Times*, 29 Dec 1896, p. 13.

'Recent Novels', rev. of Guy Boothby, *The Lust of Hate* (1898), *The Times*, 10 Aug 1898, p.10.

Rohmer, Sax, *The Mystery of Dr Fu-Manchu* (1913), reprinted in *The Fu-Manchu Omnibus*, 1 (London: Allison & Busby, 1995).

Rhys, Jean, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966; London: Penguin, 2000).

Schlippenback, Baron, 'A Night with King Pharaoh', *Belgravia*, 9 (August 1869), pp. 196–213.

Seeley, John R., *The Expansion of England* (1883; London: Macmillan, 1914); online at *Internet Archive*, http:archive.org/details/expansionofengla00seeluoft, 15 Aug 2013.

Shaw, George Bernard, *Common Sense About the War* (1914), reprinted in *The New York Times Current History of the European War*, 1:1: *What Men of Letters Say* (Dec 1914), pp. 11-60; online at *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/commonsenseabou00shawgoog, 24 Sep 2013.

Shiel, M. P., *The Rajah's Sapphire* (London: Ward, Lock and Bowden, 1896).

———, *The Empress of the Earth: The Tale of the Yellow War*, *Short Stories*, 4 (5 Feb-18 Jun 1898); reprinted in A. Reynolds Morse (ed.) *The Works of M. P. Shiel*, 3 vols (Cleveland, OH: Reynolds Morse Foundation, 1979-80), I.

———, *The Yellow Danger* (1898; London: Grant Richards, 1900).

———, 'About Myself', *The Candid Friend* (17 Aug 1901), p. 630; reprinted in A. Reynolds Morse (ed.), *The Works of M. P. Shiel,* 3 vols, (Cleveland, OH: Reynolds Morse Foundation, 1979-80), III, pp. 667-668.

———, *The Lord of the Sea* (London: Grant Richards, 1901).

———, *The Purple Cloud* (1901; Leyburn, North Yorkshire: Tartarus Press, 2004).

———, *The Yellow Wave* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1905).

———, 'About Myself', *The Novels of M. P. Shiel*, (London: Victor Gollancz, [1929]); pamphlet reprinted in A. Reynolds Morse (ed.), *The Works of M. P. Shiel,* 3 vols, (Cleveland, OH: Reynolds Morse Foundation, 1979-80), III, pp. 669-674.

———, *The Yellow Peril* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1929).

'Sir Charles Dilke on Egypt', *The African Review*, 6 (19 Oct 1895), p. 659.

'Some More Words with a Mummy (Communicated by the Spirit of E. A. Poe)', *Punch*, 83 (15 July 1882), p. 22-3.

'Some Notable Books of the Month: The Yellow Puzzle and the Russian Peril', rev. of A. R. Colquhoun, *China in Transformation* (1898), *The Review of Reviews*, 17 (Aug 1898), p. 202.

[Stead, W. T.], 'The Progress of the World: The Asiatic Triumphant', *The Review of Reviews*, 9 (Dec 1894), p. 533.

[Stead, W. T.], 'The Progress of the World: Japanese Atrocities', *The Review of Reviews*, 11 (Feb 1895), p. 117.

[Stead, W. T.], 'Books for the Holidays', rev. of M. P. Shiel, *The Yellow Danger* (1898), *The Review of Reviews*, 17 (Aug 1898), p. 194-6.

[Stead, W. T.], 'Leading Articles in the Reviews: "The White Peril"', *The Review of Reviews*, 29 (Feb 1904), p. 138.

Stead, W. T., preface to *The Splendid Paupers: A Tale of the Coming Plutocracy, Being the Christmas Number of the Review of Reviews* (1894), online at *The W. T. Stead Resource Site*, http://www.attackingthedevil.co.uk/pdfs/paupers.pdf, 23 Nov 2012.

Steevens, G. W., *Egypt in 1898* (1898; New York: Dodd, Mead & Co, 1899); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/egyptin189800stee, 10 June 2010.

Stevenson, Robert Louis, 'Olalla' (1885), reprinted in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales of Terror* (London: Penguin, 2003).

Stoker, Bram, *Dracula* (1897; London: Penguin, 2003).

———, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903; London: Penguin, 2008).

'Table Talk', *The Auckland Star* [New Zealand], 25 May 1903, p. 1; online at *Papers Past*, http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast, 22 Feb 2013.

'Tales of Adventure,' rev. of Guy Boothby, *The Lust of Hate* (1898), *The Athenaeum*, 3677 (Apr 1898), p. 498.

'The Crisis in China: The Peking Massacre', *The Times*, 17 July 1900, p. 5.

'The Egyptian Amulet', *The London Reader*, 37:946 (June 1881), pp. 164-7.

'The Egyptian "Patriotic League"', *The African Review*, 6 (3 Aug 1895), p. 180.

'The Literary Week,' *The Academy*, 57:1420 (July 1899), p. 76.

'The Manchurian Question. (From Our Russian Correspondents.)', *The Times*, 3 Aug 1903, p. 3.

'The War and the Book Trade', *The Bookman*, 18:104 (May 1900), pp. 37-9.

'Topics of the Day: The Partition of China', *The Spectator* 79:3626 (25 Dec 1897), pp. 920-1.

'Topics of the Day: The Seizure of Kiao-Chow', *The Spectator*, 79:3622 (27 Nov 1897), p. 760.

'Topics of the Day: The "Yellow Peril"', *The Spectator*, 79:3624 (11 Dec 1897), pp. 874-8.

Tracy, Louis, *The Final War* (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1896); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/finalwar00tracgoog, 31 Nov 2012.

Wade, George A., 'Where "Tommy's" Weapons Are Made and Tested', *The Windsor Magazine*, 11 (Mar 1900), pp. 462-9.

Ward, G. W., 'Fragments of China', *The Windsor Magazine*, 5 (Dec 1896,) pp. 362-8.

Wells, H. G., *The War of the Worlds* (1898; London: Penguin, 2005).

———, *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901; London: Chapman & Hall, 1902); online at *Internet Archive*, http://www.archive.org/details/anticipationsofr00welluoft, 12 Dec 2012.

———, *The War in the Air* (1908; London: Penguin, 2005).

Voynich, E. L., *The Gadfly* (1897; London: Mandarin, 1991).

Secondary Sources

Alkon, Paul K., *Science Fiction before 1900: Imagination Discovers Technology* (Oxford: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994).

Andreoni, Helen, 'Olive or White? The Colour of Italians in Australia', in Richard Nile (ed.), *Sojourners and Strangers*, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 77 (2003), pp. 81-92; online at *The Australian Public Intellectual Network*, http://api-network.com/main/pdf/scholars/jas77_andreoni.pdf, 1 Mar 2013.

Arata, Stephen, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Ashley, Mike, 'Rise of the Invaders: The apocalyptic spin-offs inspired by H. G . Wells's *War of the Worlds*', *Rare Book Review*, 359 (2005), pp. 20-4.

Bassett, Troy and Christina Walker, 'Books and Bestsellers: British Book Sales as Documented by *The Bookman*, 1891-1906', *Book History*, 4 (2001), pp. 205–236.

Belford, Barbara, *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula* (London: Weiden & Nicolson, 1996).

Bell, Ian A., 'Eighteenth-century crime writing', in Martin Priestman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Bhabha, Homi K., *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Bickers, Robert, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1932-1914* (London: Penguin, 2012).

Billings, Harold, *M. P. Shiel: A Biography of His Early Years*, 1 (Austin, TX: Roger Beacham, 2005).

'iel: The Middle Years 1897-1923*, 2 (Austin, TX: Roger Beacham, 2010).

', 'The Indo-Caribbean Short Story', *The Journal of West Indian* ' (Nov 2004), pp. 118-134.

'ction: Popular Reading and Pulp Theory* (New York: St Martin's

l (1867 - 1905)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 7 .bourne University Press, 1979), pp. 347-348, online at .online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070352b.htm, 23 May 2008.

dward Kamau, *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration* 'ibbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Savacou, 1974).

...nger, Patrick, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988).

Brendon, Piers, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007).

Brereton, Bridget, 'The White Elite of Trinidad, 1838-1950', in Howard Johnson & Karl Watson (ed.s), *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1998).

Brereton, Bridget and Kevin A. Yelvington (ed.s), *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Postemancipation Social and Cultural History* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1999).

Bryan, Patrick, 'The White Minority in Jamaica at the end of the Nineteenth Century', in Howard Johnson & Karl Watson (ed.s), *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1998).

Bulfin, Ailise, '"One-planet-one-inhabitant:" Mass Extermination as Progress in M. P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud*', *Trinity College Dublin Journal of Postgraduate Research*, 7 (2008), pp. 101-18.

———, 'Sherlock Holmes and Dr Nikola: Too much at home in the underworld, or Holmes's improbable influence on the trope of the international master criminal,' in Sally Sugarman (ed.), *Sherlock Holmes: The Man and His Worlds* (Shaftsbury, VT: Mountainside Press, 2013).

———, 'Guy Boothby's "Bid for Fortune": Constructing an Anglo-Australian colonial identity for the fin-de-siècle London literary marketplace', in Mandy Treagus and Maggie Tonkin (ed.s), *Changing the Victorian Subject* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, Forthcoming 2014).

Castles, Alex C., 'Boothby, Benjamin (1803 - 1868)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 3 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1969), pp. 194-196, online at http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A030185b.htm, 23 May 2008.

Ching-Liang Low, Gail, *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

Churchill, Kenneth, *Italy and English Literature 1764–1930* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

Claeys, Gregory, *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire 1850-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Clarke, Clare, 'Horace Dorrington, Criminal-Detective: Investigating the Re-Emergence of the Rogue in Arthur Morrison's *The Dorrington Deed-Box* (1897)', *Clues*, 28:2, (Fall 2010), pp 7-18.

Clarke, I. F., *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763-3749*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

———, 'Before and After *The Battle of Dorking*', *Science Fiction Studies*, 24:71 (Mar 1997), online at www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/71/clarke71art.htm, on 10 May 2009.

Clarke, I. F. (ed.), *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914: Fictions of Future Warfare and of Battles Still-to-Come* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996).

——— (ed.), *British Future Fiction, 1700–1914*, 8 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001).

Clegg, Jenny, *Fu Manchu and the 'Yellow Peril': The Making of a Racist Myth* (London: Trentham Books, 1994).

Cogan, Thomas J., 'Western Images of Asia: Fu Manchu and the Yellow Peril', *Waseda Studies in Social Sciences*, 3:2 (Nov 2002), pp. 35-45.

Cohen, Morton, *Rider Haggard: His Life and Works* (London: Hutchinson, 1960).

Coote, Stephen, *The Penguin Short History of English Literature* (London: Penguin, 1993).

Crotty, Martin, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870-1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001).

Culler, Jonathan, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Curthoys, Ann, 'Indigenous Subjects', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Curtis, L. Perry Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature,* rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997).

Daly, Nicholas, 'The Colonial Roots of *Dracula*', in Bruce Stewart (ed.), *That Other World: The Supernatural and the Fantastic in Irish Literature and its Contexts*, vol. 2 (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1998).

———, *Modernism, Romance and the fin de siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Damousi, Joy, 'War and Commemoration', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Darian-Smith, Kate, et al. (ed.s, *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in Australia and South Africa* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Davis, Mike, *Late Victorian Holocausts* (London: Verso, 2001).

Day, Jasmine, *The Mummy's Curse: Mummymania in the English-speaking world* (London: Routledge, 2006).

Deane, Bradley, 'Mummy Fiction and the Occupation of Egypt: Imperial Striptease', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 51:4 (2008), pp. 381-410; online at http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/english_literature_in_transition/v051/51.4.deane.html, 17 Dec 2008.

Depasquale, Paul, *Guy Boothby: His Life and Work* (Seacombe Gardens, South Australia: Pioneer Books, 1982).

———, 'An Incomplete Essay on Guy Boothby and the London Theatre', *The Pioneer Books Magazine*, 1 (Spring 1994), pp. 53-4.

Diamond, Michael, *Victorian Sensation* (London: Anthem, 2003).

———, *'Lesser Breeds': Racial Attitudes in Popular British Culture, 1890-1940* (London: Anthem, 2006).

Dixon, Robert, *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, gender and nation in Anglo-Australian popular fiction, 1875-1914* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Dookhan, Isaac, *A Post Emancipation History of the West Indies* (Trinidad: Longman Caribbean, 1975).

Eby, Cecil D., *The Road to Armageddon: The Martial Spirit in English Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1987).

Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952; London: Pluto Press, 2008).

———, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961; London: Penguin, 2001).

Feldman, David, 'Jews in the East End, Jews in the Polity, "The Jew" in the Text', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 13 (Dec 2011), pp. 1-25; online at http://19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/article/view/630/734, 8 March 2013.

Fergus, Howard A., *Montserrat: History of a Caribbean Colony* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (1976; London: Penguin, 1990).

———, 'Is It Useless to Revolt?', *Le Monde*, 11-12 May 1979, p. 1; reprinted in Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 263-67.

Forman, Ross G., 'Empire', in Gail Marshall (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Freeman, Richard, '*The Mummy* in context', *European journal of American studies*, 1 (2009), online at http://ejas.revues.org/7566, 30 June 2010.

Glover, David, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996).

———, '*Die gelbe gefahr*, *le péril jaune*, the yellow peril: the geopolitics of a fear' in Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy (ed.s), *Fear: Essays on the meaning and experience of fear* (Dublin: Four Courts Press: 2007).

———, *Literature, Immigration and Diaspora in Fin-de-Siècle England: A Cultural History of the 1905 Aliens Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Goldschmidt, Arthur, Jr., 'The Egyptian Nationalist Party: 1892-1919', in P. M. Holt (ed.), *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

Greenblatt, Stephen, 'Invisible Bullets', in *Shakespearian Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).

Greenfield, John, 'Arthur Morrison's Sherlock Clone: Martin Hewitt, Victorian Values, and London Magazine Culture, 1894-1903', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 35:1 (Spring 2002), pp. 18-36, 19, online at http://www.jstor.org/stable/20083856, 29 Jun 2011.

Guran, Paula, 'The Mummy', in S. T. Joshi (ed.), *Icons of Horror and the Supernatural: An Encyclopaedia of Our Worst Nightmares*, 1 (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007).

Haddad, Emily A., 'Digging to India: Modernity, Imperialism and the Suez Canal', *Victorian Studies*, 47:3 (Spring 2005), p. 363-96.

Hall, Douglas, *Five of the Leewards 1834-1870* (St Laurence, Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1971).

Hayes, Paul, 'British Foreign Policy 1867-1900', in T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (ed.s), *Later Victorian Britain 1867-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

Hebblethwaite, Kate, intro. to Bram Stoker, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (London: Penguin, 2008).

Hebblethwaite, Kate and Elizabeth McCarthy (ed.s), *Fear: Essays on the meaning and experience of fear* (Dublin: Four Courts Press: 2007).

Higham, Charles, *The Adventures of Conan Doyle: the Life of the Creator of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Hamilton, 1976).

Hirst, John, 'Empire, State, Nation', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London: Abacus, 1994).

Hopkins, Lisa, *Bram Stoker: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Huggan, Graham, *Australian Literature: Postcolonialism, Racism, Transnationalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Hughes, William, *Beyond Dracula: Bram Stoker's Fiction and its Cultural Context* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

Hurley, Kelly, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Jameson, Fredric, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981).

Jones, Darryl, '"It's in the Trees! It's Coming!" *Night of the Demon* and the Decline and Fall of the British Empire', in Darryl Jones, Elizabeth McCarthy and Bernice Murphy (ed.s), *It Came from the 1950s! Popular Culture, Popular Anxieties* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Jones, Darryl, Elizabeth McCarthy and Bernice Murphy (ed.s), *It Came from the 1950s! Popular Culture, Popular Anxieties* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Kabbani, Rana, *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient* (London: Pandora, 1994).

Karabell, Zachary, *Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal* (London: John Murray, 2004).

Katz, Wendy R., *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Keating, Peter, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989).

Keown-Boyd, Henry, *The Lion and the Sphinx: The Rise and Fall of the British in Egypt, 1882-1956* (Durham, Spennymoor: The Memoir Club, 2002).

Killeen, Jarlath, 'Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction', *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, 1 (2006), online at irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/jarlath.html, 13 Nov 2008.

Kirkwood, Patrick M., 'The Impact of Fiction on Public Debate in late Victorian Britain: *The Battle of Dorking* and the "Lost Career" of Sir George Tomkyns Chesney', *Graduate History Review*, 4:1 (Fall 2012), pp. 1-16.

Knight, Stephen, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980).

———, 'Sterling settlement and colonial currency: Post Colonial Patterns in Australian Crime Fiction', *Working Papers in Australian Studies*, 82 (Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1992), pp. 1-13.

———, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

Leatherdale, Clive, intro. to Bram Stoker, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (Westcliff-on-Sea: Desert Island Books, 1996).

Ledger, Sally and Roger Luckhurst (ed.s), *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History c.1880-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Lee, Erika, 'The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gate-Keeping, 1882-1924', *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Spring 2002), pp. 36-62; online at University of Victoria, http://web.uvic.ca/~ayh/Lee.pdf, 29 Mar 2013.

Lee, Joseph, *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848-1918*, 3rd edn (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2008).

Lindqvist, Sven, *'Exterminate all the Brutes'*, trans. Joan Tate (London: Granta, 2002).

Look Lai, Walton, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1919* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1993).

———, *The Chinese in the West Indies 1806-1995* (Kingston: The Press UWI, 1998).

Loomba, Ania, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 2nd edn (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2005).

López-Calvo, Ignacio, *Imaging the Chinese in Cuban Literature and Culture* (Miami: University of Florida Press, 2008).

Luckhurst, Roger, 'Trance-Gothic, 1882-97', in Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (ed.s), *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century* (Hampshire, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

———, 'The Mummy's Curse: A Genealogy', in Jarmila Mildorf, Hans-Ulrich Seeber & Martin Windisch (ed.s), *Magic, Science, Technology and Literature* (Berlin: LITVERLAG, 2006).

———, *The Mummy's Curse: The True History of a Dark Fantasy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Luckhurst, Roger (ed.), intro. to *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2005).

Lutz, Jessie G., 'Chinese Emigrants, Indentured Workers, and Christianity in the West Indies, British Guiana and Hawaii', *Caribbean Studies*, 37:2 (Jul-Dec 2009), p. 133-54.

Lycett, Andrew, *Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007).

Macintyre, Stuart, *A Concise History of Australia*, 3rd edn (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

McLeod, John (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 2007).

MacLeod, Kirsten, 'M. P. Shiel and the Love of Pubescent Girls: The Other "Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name"', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 51:4 (2008), pp. 355-80.

Mansfield, Peter, *The British in Egypt* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1971).

May, J. P., 'The Chinese in Britain 1860-1914', in Colin Holmes (ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1978).

Mayer, Ruth, '"The Greatest Novelty of the Age": Fu Manchu, Chinatown, and the Global City', in Vanessa Künnermann and Ruth Mayer (ed.s), *Chinatowns in a Transnational World* (London: Routledge, 2011).

Meagher, Andrew J., *The Coolie Trade: The Traffic in Chinese Labourers to Latin America 1847–1874* (Xlibris, 2008).

Mitchell, Timothy, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley and LA: University of California Press, 1991).

Mondal, Anshuman A., *Nationalism and Post-Colonial Identity: Culture and Ideology in India and Egypt* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

Monsman, Gerald, *H. Rider Haggard on the Imperial Frontier: The Political and Literary Contexts of His African Romances* (Greensboro, NC: ELT Press, 2006).

Montrose, Louis, 'Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture', in H. Aram Veeser (ed.), *The New Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1989).

Moore, Robert J., 'Colonial Images of Blacks and Indians in Nineteenth Century Guyana', in Brereton, Bridget and Kevin A. Yelvington (ed.s), *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Postemancipation Social and Cultural History* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1999).

Mukherjee, Pablo, 'Touring the Dead Lands: Emily Eden, Victorian Famines, and Colonial Picturesque', *Critical Survey*, 21:1 (2009), pp. 24-38.

Murphy, James H., *Ireland: A Social, Cultural and Literary History, 1791-1891* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003).

Nayder, Lillian, *Wilkie Collins* (New York: Twayne, 1997).

O'Day, Alan, 'The Irish Question', in T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (ed.s), *Later Victorian Britain 1867-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

Otte, T. G., *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation 1894-1905* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

———, *The Foreign Office Mind: The Making of British Foreign Policy, 1865-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Pan, Lynn, *Sons of The Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese* (London: Mandarin, 1991).

Parrinder, Patrick, *Shadows of the Future: H. G. Wells, Science Fiction and Prophecy* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995).

Patrick, Chris and Stephen Baister, *William Le Queux: Master of Mystery* (Purley: Chris Patrick and Stephen Baister, 2007).

Pears, Iain, intro. to *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 2001).

Pearson, Richard, 'Archaeology and Gothic Desire: Vitality Beyond the Grave in H. Rider Haggard's Ancient Egypt', in Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (ed.s), *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century* (Hampshire, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

Peters, Catherine, *The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1991).

Piacentini, Patrizia, '"Wonderful things" on paper: the Egyptologist Victor Loret in the Valley of the Kings', *Apollo Magazine* (July 2003), online at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0PAL/is_497_158/ai_106732097/, 10 May 2010.

Pick, Daniel, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Porter, Bernard, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism, 1850-1983*, 2nd edn, (London: Longman, 1984).

Praz, Mario, *The Romantic Agony*, trans. Angus Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

Preston, Diana, *The Boxer Rebellion: China's War on Foreigners, 1900* (London: Robinson, 2002).

Puri, Shalini, *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism and Cultural Hybridity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

Quinault, Ronald, 'Joseph Chamberlain: A Reassessment', in T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (ed.s), *Later Victorian Britain 1867-1900* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

Ransome, Arthur, *The Biography of Arthur Ransome* (London: Cape, 1976).

Rennison, Nick, *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* (Herts, Harpenden: No Exit Press, 2008).

Richards, Eric, 'Migrations', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Rickard, John, *Australia: A Cultural History*, 2nd edn (New York: Longman, 1996).

Ross, Catriona, 'Prolonged Symptoms of Cultural Anxiety: The Persistence of Narratives of Asian Invasion within Multicultural Australia', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, 5 (2006), pp. 86-99.

Ruddick, Nicholas, 'The fantastic fiction of the fin de siècle', in Gail Marshall (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Rushdie, Salman, 2006 Preface to *Midnight's Children* (London: Vintage, 2008).

Said, Edward, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994).

———, *Orientalism*, 3rd edn (London: Penguin, 2003).

Sanders, M. L., 'Wellington House and British Propaganda during the First World War', *The Historical Journal*, 18:1 (Mar 1975), p. 119-46.

Sandiford, Keith, *The Cultural Politics of Sugar: Caribbean Slavery and Narratives of Colonialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Scott, David, *China and the International System, 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

Seaman, L. C. B., *Victorian England: Aspects of English and Imperial History, 1837-1901* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Seshagiri, Urmila, 'Modernity's (Yellow) Perils: Dr Fu-Manchu and English Race Paranoia', *Cultural Critique*, 62 (Winter 2006), p. 162-94.

Sharpe, Jenny, 'The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter-Insurgency', reprinted in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (ed.s), *Colonial Discourse and Post -Colonial Theory: A Reader* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994).

Sinfield, Alan, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).

Squires, John D., 'The Curious Tale of Shiel, Stead and the Sapphire,' afterword to M. P. Shiel, *The Rajah's Sapphire* (1896; Kansas City: Highflyer, 1981).

———, 'Some Contemporary Themes in Shiel's Early Novels: The Dragon's Tale: M. P. Shiel on the Emergence of Modern China', in A. Reynolds Morse (ed.), *M. P. Shiel in Diverse Hands: A Collection of Essays on M. P. Shiel*, (Cleveland: Reynolds Morse Foundation, 1983).

———, '*The Yellow Danger* Revisited', afterword to M. P. Shiel, *China in Arms: A Fantasy*, reprint of Shiel's unpublished final revision of *The Yellow Danger* c. 1929 (Kettering, OH: Vainglory Press, 1998).

———, 'Rediscovering M. P. Shiel (1865-1947)', *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, 13:9 (May 2001), pp. 12-15.

———, 'A Whiff of Collaboration: The Tracy-Shiel Connection', afterword to Louis Tracy, *The Great Strike* (1901; Kettering, OH: Vainglory Press, 2005); online at *M. P. Shiel – The Lord of Language*, http://www.alangullette.com/lit/shiel/shiel/essays/shiel_tracy.htm, 18 Jul 2012.

———, 'Newspaper Serials, War Propaganda and Tracy's Novelization of *The Yellow Menace*', afterword to Louis Tracy, *The Yellow Menace* (1916; Ontario: Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, Forthcoming 2014).

Stableford, Brian, *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890-1950* (London: 4th Estate, 1985).

Stewart, Bruce, 'Bram Stoker's *Dracula*: Possessed by the Spirit of the Nation', in Bruce Stewart (ed.), *That Other World: The Supernatural and the Fantastic in Irish Literature and its Contexts*, 2 (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1998).

Stiebel, Lindy (ed.), *H. Rider Haggard*, vol. 2 in Ralph Pite (ed.), *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures VII* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009).

Storey, John, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 4th edn, (Harlow: Pearson, 2006).

Sullivan, Alvin (ed.), *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837 – 1913*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1983).

Sutherland, John (ed.), preface to Guy Boothby, *A Bid For Fortune, or Dr Nikola's Vendetta* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Tchen, John Kuo Wei, 'The Yellow Claw: The Optical Unconscious in Anglo-American Political Culture', in Christine Bold (ed.), *The Oxford History of Print Culture*, vol. 6: *US Popular Print Culture 1860-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Trainor, Luke, 'Australian Writers, British Publishers, 1870-1902: Talking to the Nation', *Australian Historical Studies* 37:127 (2006), pp. 140-155.

Tuchman, Barbara, *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World before the War 1890-1914* (1966; London: Papermac, 1997).

Valente, Joseph, *Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood* (University of Illinois Press, 2002).

Vuohelainen, Minna, 'Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897): a late-Victorian popular novel', *Working With English: Medieval and Modern Language, Literature and Drama*, 2.1: Literary Fads and Fashions (2006), pp. 89-100.

———, intro. to Richard Marsh, *The Goddess: A Demon* (1900; Kansas City: Valancourt Books, 2010).

Wagner, Kim, '"Treading Upon Fires": The "Mutiny"-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India', *Past and Present*, 218:1 (Feb 2013), pp. 159-97.

Ward, Stuart, 'Security: Defending Australia's Empire', in Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward (ed.s), *Australia's Empire* in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Companion Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Watson, Karl, 'White Politics and Creole Consciousness in Barbadian Slave Society, 1800-34', in Howard Johnson & Karl Watson (ed.s), *The White Minority in the Caribbean*, (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1998).

Weaver, Rachel, 'Colonial Violence and Forgotten Fiction', *Australian Literary Studies*, 24:2 (2009), pp. 33-53.

Whelehan, Niall, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Williams, Chris (ed.), *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

Williams, Raymond, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961).

Wilson, A. N., *The Victorians* (London: Arrow, 2002).

Wolfreys, Julian, intro. to Richard Marsh, *The Beetle* (1897; Ontario: Broadview, 2004).

Wotherspoon, Garry, 'The Bulletin', *Dictionary of Sydney* (2010), online http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/the_bulletin, 21 Feb 2013.

Wynne, Catherine, *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002).

Young, Robert J. C., *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Yu, Ouyang, *Chinese in Australian Fiction, 1888-1988* (New York: Cambria Press, 2008).

Zayid, Mahmud, *Egypt's Struggle for Independence* (Beirut: Khayats, 1965).

Web Resources

British Periodicals Collection I, ProQuest, http://www.proquest.co.uk.
In general the following publications were accessed through this site: *The Academy*, *The Academy and Literature*, *The Athenaeum*, *Belgravia*, *The Bookman*, *Bow Bells*, *The English Illustrated Magazine*, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, *The Idler*, *Leisure Hour*, *The London Reader*, *The Outlook Magazine*, *Pall Mall Magazine*, *The Review of Reviews*, *Reynolds's Miscellany*, *The Windsor Magazine*.

Cornell University Library Making of America Collection, Cornell University Library, http://digital.library.cornell.edu/m/moa

Internet Archive, www.archive.org.

M. P. Shiel – The Lord of Language, Alan Gullette, http://www.alangullette.com/lit/shiel.

The Page of Fu Manchu: The Sax Rohmer Site, Lawrence Knapp, http://www.njedge.net/~knapp/FuFrames.htm.

Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand, paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast.

The Times Digital Archive, Gale, gale.cengage.co.uk/times.aspx.

Trove, National Library of Australia, trove.nla.gov.au.