Richard Marsh, *The Beetle: A Mystery*

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Introduction

By Minna Vuohelainen

"Richard Marsh," professional author

In a rare interview published in *Strand Magazine* shortly after his death, Richard Marsh recounts how he "Broke into Print:" "I doubt if there was a time when I did not write—beginning, I do believe, with my first pair of knickerbockers. I used to lie awake at night telling myself stories; the following day I would write them down." Marsh's humorous account defines his calling essentially as that of a storyteller, emphasizing the importance of imagination and entertainment above artistic achievement and indicating that storytelling was for him, first and foremost, a pleasurable activity. Apart from such natural ability, Marsh unashamedly reveals in the interview a second consideration driving him to writing. As "the merest child," he recalls, he "rewrote" the story of Robinson Crusoe and succeeded in getting it published "in several instalments" in a boys' paper. He claims he could not "remember the name of the publication," though he "did not like the look of it;" nor could he "recall ever having read the story itself," even though he remembers that "[t]he editor altered the title—and I dare say other things as well" until the story "had nothing to do with Robinson Crusoe." What he does, however, remember, is that he was "paid […] thirty shillings" for the story. He recalls the money as "quite a burden," because he did not know how to cash in a post-office order and dared not consult his relatives in fear of having "the money […] taken from [him] altogether, or else doled out in instalments of, say, twopence a time." Describing himself as "obsessed by the anxiety to get that thirty shillings," Marsh concludes by confessing unashamedly that that sum "in those days represented to [him] fabulous wealth" and he "set [his] heart on having it for [his] very own!" Finally, he recalls, he was "able to convert it into coin of the realm—and then that thirty shillings flew!"[1] As Marsh tacitly acknowledges, monetary considerations were a key factor in fuelling his creativity. While Marsh's love of storytelling was evident throughout his career as a

[1] Richard Marsh, "How I 'Broke into Print,'" *Strand Magazine* 50 (November 1915): 573-74.

professional writer, in command of an easy style and a happy faculty for inventing imaginative plotlines, his writing was also always driven by financial incentive.

Little certain is known about Richard Marsh (1857-1915). Marsh was born Richard Bernard Heldmann in St John's Wood in north-central London on 12 October 1857, the first child of lace merchant Joseph Heldmann (*c.* 1827-96), a German Jewish convert to Christianity, and Emma Marsh (*c*. 1830-1911), a lace-manufacturer's daughter from Nottingham. Bernard, or "Bertie," was born into a troubled household: Joseph Heldmann was in 1857 on the brink of large-scale bankruptcy proceedings after making false returns of his sales to his employers, his in-laws. His bankruptcy proceedings, reported at length in *The Times*, represented him as an unscrupulous, profiteering foreigner, indicative of the xenophobia of nineteenth-century Britain. Despite Heldmann's disgrace, he remained in Britain, and two further siblings were born into the family shortly after the trial: Harry, born in Emma Heldmann's native Mansfield in October 1858, and Alice, born in Kensington in London in October 1860; ten years later, the Heldmanns had a further son, John Whitworth, who, however, died in his infancy in August 1871. His career as lace merchant over, Joseph Heldmann took to private tutoring in languages and the Classics, eventually running Brunswick House School in Hammersmith in West London. Although Marsh later claimed to have been educated at Eton and Oxford, it is much likelier that he in fact stayed at his father's school where, interestingly, Edith Nesbit and her brother Alfred were boarders in 1871.

By 1880, young Bernard had deserted his family background in trade and education for journalism, then a semi-intellectual career on the borders of respectable society. He first began to publish fiction under his given name at the youthful age of twenty-two in the devotional publications *Quiver* and *Young England* and the boys' paper *Union Jack*. It was *Union Jack*, associated with two favorite boys' writers of the time, W.H.G. Kingston (1814-80) and G.A. Henty (1832-1902), that provided Heldmann with his initiation into the literary life. Under Henty's editorship, he quickly became a trusted contributor to this quality penny boys' weekly, providing short and serial school and adventure stories, possibly drawing on his personal experience of school-boy capers at his father's school. This early career reached its pinnacle in October 1882, when Henty promoted the precocious Heldmann to co-editorship of the weekly. However, in spring 1883 Heldmann's contribution to the paper began to flag for unknown reasons, the

serial he was publishing was interrupted in March, and his editorship was abruptly terminated by Henty in June. After 1883, Bernard Heldmann published no new fiction under his given name. There has been speculation that Heldmann may have become entangled in a financial or sexual disgrace of some kind, but no hard evidence exists to support this conjecture. However, a breach did occur between Heldmann and his family in the 1880s: Heldmann was disinherited by his mother's will, dated 1888, which left him £25, accompanied by a litany of religious admonitions, out of an estate amounting to nearly £3000; this will remained unaltered although Emma Heldmann survived until 1911. Furthermore, his subsequent reticence about his past and the alteration in his worldview from a sturdy Christianity to a marked cynicism suggest that his departure from *Union Jack* may indeed have been linked to a scandal of some kind. Heldmann's movements between 1883 and 1886 remain unclear, but by the autumn of 1886, he had settled with a woman called Ada Kate Abbey. Of more modest social origins than Heldmann, Ada may have been one reason for the breach between Heldmann and his family in the 1880s. The couple's first child, Alice Kate, was born in July 1887 when Ada was only twenty years old and Heldmann working as a journalist for an unidentified paper or magazine; however, Alice died of dentition and cerebral convulsions in March 1888. Five further children, Harry, Mabel, Madge, Conrad, and Bertram, followed in rapid succession between July 1888 and January 1895.

Whatever the reasons for Heldmann's demise in 1883, by 1888 he was again producing fiction, now under the pseudonym "Richard Marsh." The pseudonym was a combination of his own first name and his mother's maiden name, as well as the name of his maternal grandfather and, incidentally, of the trainer of the Prince of Wales's racehorses. Heldmann's burst of productivity as "Richard Marsh" coincided with the birth of his children and led to the growing prosperity of his household, and producing short fiction may initially have been a means of supplementing his income from journalism. The Heldmanns' frequent relocations within London and the South of England highlight the gradual improvement in the family's fortunes: from the poor Shaftesbury Road in Richmond, west of London, they moved to the more comfortable Kempson Road in Fulham, West London, and then into more spacious quarters outside the capital, first in Three Bridges and then in Haywards Heath in Sussex, south of London. It was here that Richard Marsh died at the age of fifty-seven on 9 August 1915, having written 76 volumes and at least 250 short stories since adopting the penname in

1888. The death certificate gives his cause of death as "Dilitation and degeneration of heart" and "Dropsy and heart failure," probably indicating a combination of excess weight and too much work. Indeed, so prolific had he been that new fiction by him continued to appear in volume form and in magazines until 1920. The indication is that Marsh had been working at full speed up to his death: his estate was valued at under £500, not a great deal after a successful twenty-five-year career.

The career of "Richard Marsh" cannot be understood without reference to the peculiar conditions which governed the print industry at the turn of the century, a potential golden age for the popular novelist. The period witnessed a number of significant developments in the publishing industry: beneficial changes in taxation, the introduction of cheaper and quicker printing methods, advances in distribution and communication, the emergence of magazines specializing in fiction, increasingly aggressive marketing, and, importantly, the introduction of state education and the near-universal literacy this led to by the end of the century among the younger part of the population. The newly-literate lower middle classes gathered in the cities, where the employment market was creating unprecedented opportunities for clerks and office workers with basic skills in literacy and numeracy; simultaneously, real income was increasing, allowing for greater consumption of leisure than before. From the 1880s, the publishing industry responded to the challenge of catering for newly-literate consumers by providing them with cheap and light reading matter, particularly fiction. The extortionately priced three-decker novel was replaced by 1894 by the six-shilling one-volume first edition, physically less cumbersome to read, often lighter in content than the three-decker, and, crucially, within the reach of middle-class buyers. The financial and leisure patterns of the newly literate classes were, however, particularly suited to the consumption of weekly penny papers such as *Tit-Bits*, *Answers*, and *Pearson's Weekly*, and sixpenny monthlies such as *Strand*, *Windsor*, and *Idler*, which were inexpensive, light to carry on public transport, and accommodating of restricted leisure opportunities due to the limited length of the features printed in them. While for the popular author these developments offered unprecedented opportunities, for conservative commentators they were a matter of deep concern, most famously articulated by George Gissing in his novel *New Grub Street* (1891), which bitterly regretted the demise of the man of letters in the semi-literary

universe of the "quarter-educated."[2] Appendix 2 charts contemporary responses to this commercialization of literature.

Marsh's success was conditioned by these developments. From the time that the first work attributed to "Richard Marsh" appeared in *Belgravia* in 1888, Marsh accurately gauged the mood and tastes of the fin-de-siècle public. His earliest work mostly falls into the gothic and crime genres, but by the end of the century, he had branched out into the sensation, thriller, and romance genres which were to remain his standard fare from then on. Apart from 76 volumes issued by 16 different publishers, Marsh published short and serial fiction in a number of magazines, including *Belgravia*, *Household Words*, *Cornhill Magazine*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, *Longman's Magazine*, *All the Year Round*, *Answers*, *Idler Magazine*, *Harmsworth Magazine* (later *London Magazine*), *Pearson's Weekly*, *Pearson's Magazine*, *Windsor Magazine*, *Cassell's Magazine*, and, most importantly, *Strand Magazine*, in which he built up an impressive reputation by the early years of the twentieth century. Marsh was clearly aware of current developments in publishing and tailored his literary production to suit a growing but increasingly diversified market; his popular success was intimately connected to his ability to cater for his rapidly expanding target audience of lower-middle-class and female readers. Among them, he found a market for his work, building up a solid reputation as a provider of entertaining and up-to-date popular fiction. While the sheer volume of Marsh's literary output is indicative of his status as a professional popular novelist relying on his fiction for his living, the wide range of formats in which his fiction was issued—cheap weeklies, illustrated monthlies, first editions of various prices, and a range of reprints—suggests that he was able to maintain a substantial reputation among a diverse popular readership over a transitional period in the history of book publishing.

The Beetle, a fin-de-siècle bestseller

Marsh's topicality and business sense are nowhere more apparent than in his bestseller *The Beetle: A Mystery* (1897), a fragmented split narrative mixing a number of fashionable genres, including occult horror, urban gothic, popular romance, New

[2] George Gissing, *New Grub Street: A Novel.* 3 vols. (London: Smith, Elder, 1891), III, 232.

Woman fiction, male quest romance, and detective fiction. According to a much repeated though unsubstantiated legend, *The Beetle* was the result of a wager between Marsh and Bram Stoker. Each author is supposed to have undertaken to produce a horror novel, and the better text would win; while Stoker wrote *Dracula*, published in June 1897, Marsh dashed off *The Beetle*, issued in volume form some months later. Such a contest, if indeed it took place, would have been very unfair on Marsh since Stoker had spent years planning his vampire classic; however, such a good comparison does *The Beetle* make with *Dracula* that critics have always assumed Marsh to have been influenced by the rival novel, even to have deliberately imitated it. Such claims are, however, inherently flawed because *The Beetle* in fact *preceded* Stoker's novel in a serial form, a fact ignored by most critics. The novel was initially serialized in *Answers*, Alfred Harmsworth's penny weekly miscellany which had since its inception in 1888 reached a readership of half a million. Running under the title "The Peril of Paul Lessingham: The Story of a Haunted Man," Marsh's novel appeared in *Answers* in fifteen substantial installments between 13 March and 19 June 1897. Asterisks mark the breaks between the original serial installments in this Valancourt edition to give modern-day readers an indication of how it might have felt to read the novel as a serial.

Answers was an effective vehicle for Marsh: in Alfred Harmsworth, he made an influential publishing contact with commercial power within the popular fiction market; "The Peril of Paul Lessingham" was heavily "boomed" in the weekly; and Marsh's name featured prominently among the mostly unsigned contributions to *Answers*. The paper catered for a lower-middle-class audience with a little leisure time and a modest smattering of education, seeking to provide its clientele with reading that suited their daily routines, notably the possibilities of time spent commuting to and from work on public transport. For their weekly penny, readers could expect sixteen pages of small print in three columns, crammed full of fiction and short articles on all imaginable subjects, including health, royalty, women's features, jokes, and facts of interest. Much of the fiction was mystery and horror, strangely at odds with the trivial gossip, humor, competitions, and short snippets of information of which the paper mainly consisted, but presumably palatable to its family audience. Plot summaries were provided for the benefit of new readers, emphasizing the serial's frightening, occult, and titillating aspects, presumably deemed its selling points. Lurid details of crime, sexual corruption, rape, human sacrifice, New Women, cross-dressing, foreign others, hidden pasts, and

dangerous outcast elements mingled freely with the mundane advice, banal jokes, and reader correspondence which filled the rest of the weekly.

By serializing his novel in *Answers*, Marsh was targeting a large, partially educated audience. When the novel was published in volume form in late September 1897 by the religious publishing house Skeffington, it was arguably aimed at an audience of a higher social standing: the price of 6*s*., though standard for first editions in this period, would have made the novel too expensive for the average reader of *Answers* who had acquired the entire serial for 1*s*.3*d*., less than a quarter of the price of the volume. The title, too, had moved up-market from the clumsy "The Peril of Paul Lessingham: The Story of a Haunted Man" to the much more effective *The Beetle: A Mystery*. Apart from attempting to secure a different audience and higher sales, the new title also emphasized the importance of the occult element within the story. This message was reinforced by the design of the first edition: on its cover, a striking black beetle scampered across a blood-red background, while inside the reader would find four illustrations by John Williamson, illuminating occult, criminal, social, and romantic developments in the novel and thus appealing to different reader interests. This Valancourt edition reproduces the original cover and illustrations.

The critical reception of *The Beetle* was mixed; a selection of early reviews can be found in Appendix 1. In general, reviewers acknowledged the novel to be a good read but criticized its sensationalism and violence. The newly launched *Daily Mail*, while recognizing that "Mr Marsh has a certain skill in weaving a plot and sustaining a mystery," called the novel "sordid" and "vulgar" and queried why it was "absolutely impossible for a writer of sensational fiction to make a story exciting without introducing murder and bloodshed." The *Saturday Review*, similarly acknowledging that Marsh "does occasionally succeed in making the flesh creep," yet thought that "[m]ore often he misses fire. The author has neither Poe's command of terror nor Mr H.G. Wells's of plausibility. One feels the thing to be egregious at every step. Nevertheless, it is good reading, so far as it goes." The *Figaro*, by contrast, recognized "the admirable skill of the author's workmanship," while the *Academy* congratulated Marsh on "a very ingenious book of horrors […] Mr Marsh has a lurid imagination, and has put together a narrative which should make the flesh of even the least susceptible reader creep." "Its horrors are the fantastic horrors of a nightmare," the *Speaker*

suggested, "but the skill with which they are presented to us is undeniable." Indeed, the "creepiness" of the novel was an important selling point. According to the *Daily Graphic*,

> *The Beetle* is a book to read—not maybe when alone or just before going to bed, because it is the kind of book which you put down only for the purpose of turning up the gas and making sure that no person or thing is standing behind your chair—and it is a book which no one will put down until finished except for the reason above described.

In an echo of the current critical debate on the novel, early critics also recognized the similarities between *The Beetle* and *Dracula*, with some preferring *The Beetle*: "Mr Bram Stoker['s …] was an effort of the imagination not easy to beat," opined the critic of the *Glasgow Herald*, "But Mr Richard Marsh has, so to speak, out-Heroded Herod. […]*The Beetle* is one of those 'creepy-crawly' stories […] which it is difficult, if not impossible, to lay down when once begun." The *Speaker* agreed that "Marsh ha[d] evidently resolved to 'go one better' than […] the ingenious author of *Dracula*, and to make the flesh of his readers creep as he recites a blood-curdling story of the most terrific kind."[3]

The Beetle, Marsh's eighth volume-form novel under this pseudonym, proved his most successful piece of writing in every respect, though, ironically, he may not have made much money on it: Marsh's grandson Robert Aickman, himself a fine writer of "strange stories," alleges that "Marsh sold *The Beetle* outright in order to keep his family for a week or two."[4] Upon its publication in volume form, *The Beetle* achieved immediate high sales, featuring on the *Bookman*'s bestseller lists from December 1897 to May

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[3] "The World of Books," *Daily Mail*, 17 October 1897, 3; "Fiction," *Saturday Review*, 6 November 1897, 501; Ranger Gull, "Books & Writers," *Figaro*, 20 November 1897, 9; "Reviews," *Academy Fiction Supplement*, 30 October 1897, 99; "Fiction," *Speaker*, 30 October 1897, 489; "New Books," *Daily Graphic*, 2 October 1897, 4; "Literature: Novels and Stories," *Glasgow Herald*, 9 October 1897, 9.

[4] Robert Aickman, *The Attempted Rescue* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1966), 12. However, as the 1959 World Distributors edition of *The Beetle*, based on the 1907 Fisher Unwin edition, attributes the copyright to "Richard Marsh," Marsh may instead have sold the copyright for a period of ten years, after which the novel passed from Skeffington to Unwin. This conjecture is supported by a relative lull in Marsh's otherwise remarkably regular publication pattern at the end of the Edwardian decade.

1898, peaking at No. 6 in December 1897. The first volume-form edition was an instant sell-out, with three more impressions following in October, November, and December 1897. Two further impressions came out in April and September 1898, while April 1900 saw the publication of the seventh edition, October 1901 the eighth and March 1903 the ninth; these were all 6*s*. editions, indicating continuing demand for the novel at this relatively high price. The novel peaked again in 1907-08 after T. Fisher Unwin brought out a 2*s*. reprint, with four editions between August 1907 and September 1908. Indeed, *The Beetle* achieved substantially higher sales than *Dracula* well into the twentieth century: in 1913, when the fifteenth impression of *The Beetle* was issued, *Dracula* was only in its tenth. The novel remained popular during the First World War, with half-a-dozen new editions issued in 1914-18, and continued to sell steadily after the war, with the twenty-fourth impression appearing in 1927, thirty years after it was first published. By the end of the 1920s, *The Beetle* had also been translated into several European languages, made into a silent film, and dramatized on the London stage.[5] By the 1960s, however, while *Dracula* was being reinterpreted for new audiences by Hammer Horror, *The Beetle* was becoming an anachronism, perhaps because the ugly beetle-creature was not as adaptable as the increasingly attractive vampire count.

For Roger Luckhurst, *The Beetle* has in recent years "moved from relative obscurity to become [an] exemplary tex[t] not so much of the gothic revival as the fin de siècle *itself*."[6] While the novel is perhaps not as well known as Luckhurst thinks, it is true that the sustained volume and popularity of Marsh's literary output indicate that he was able accurately to gauge the tastes of the turn-of-the-century mass market, also addressed by writers such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Bram Stoker, R.L. Stevenson, Arthur Machen, and Marie Corelli. *The Beetle*, perhaps more than any other of Marsh's writings, reflects its time in its articulation of many of the uneasy social and cultural negotiations of the 1890s. In Marsh's novel, the eponymous monster serves as a means of discussing contemporary anxieties, notably urban problems in London, the setting of the novel; issues related to gender roles, sexual deviance, and sexual violence at the fin de siècle;

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[5] Richard Dalby, "Richard Marsh: Novelist Extraordinaire," *Book and Magazine Collector* 163 (October 1997): 82, 87; Julian Wolfreys, "Introduction," in Richard Marsh, *The Beetle*, ed. Julian Wolfreys (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), 11. Unfortunately, the early British silent film of *The Beetle* (1919) has been lost.

[6] Roger Luckhurst, "Trance-Gothic, 1882-1897," in *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 159.

imperial skirmishes in Egypt, the origin of the monster; and questions over the permanence of identity, knowledge, and progress.

Urban anxieties

The Beetle owes much of its fascination to its atmospheric, contemporary London setting. As Victoria Margree observes, the novel "opens on a note of anxiety that […] belongs to the modern metropolis itself" and deals "with the changing nature of the social fabric of Britain."[7] The turn of the nineteenth century witnessed in Britain a national debate on social inequality, poverty, unemployment, and urban decay. This debate centered on London, an imperial metropolis and a world city which had grown at an uncomfortable pace in the nineteenth century, expanding from a million inhabitants in 1801 to four million in 1881, and reaching seven million by 1911. The poorest Londoners crowded into uncomfortable, insalubrious, and cramped conditions in the slums, the East End in particular becoming a symbol of urban decay, though it was gradually recognized that the problem was not confined to eastern parts of the capital only. As Appendix 3 seeks to demonstrate, the emotive accounts of a host of social workers and missionaries brought outcast London to public consciousness in the final decades of the nineteenth century.

According to Peter Keating, late-nineteenth-century fiction writers attempted to imitate these urban commentators' forays into London slums. For Keating, slum fiction was articulated in two contrasting traditions, the ultra-Realist Literary Naturalism of writers such as George Gissing and Arthur Morrison, and the idealistic Romance of Walter Besant.[8] However, a third literary tradition, the gothic mode, was also available to writers wishing to depict life in outcast London. Though dealing with the fantastic and the grotesque, gothic is also a genre that engages with social issues, functioning as a "repository for cultural anxieties."[9] Indeed, gothic experienced a remarkable vogue in

[7] Victoria Margree, "'Both in Men's Clothing:' Gender, Sovereignty and Insecurity in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*," *Critical Survey* 19.2 (2007): 64.
[8] Peter Keating, *The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 31-32.
[9] Teresa A. Goddu, "Vampire Gothic," *American Literary History* 11.1 (Spring 1999): 126.

the 1880s and 1890s, "crystalliz[ing]" into "a distinctively urban Gothic"[10] focused on the decaying city and derelict buildings as sites of corruption. An imagery of darkness, fog, and unknowability conveyed a sense of the city as a place of danger for the independent human subject. Like all gothic writing, urban gothic flirted with the fantastic, questioned the possibility of progress and rationality, and explored the primitive and the transgressive, but these explorations were now inextricably connected to the experience of city life and its terrors,[11] also explored by the scientific and sociological commentators of the time. Indeed, as Luckhurst argues, factual discourses were a key inspiration for writers of urban gothic:

> The kinds of statistics that shocked social reformers into philanthropic and democratic measures were also those that generated Gothic fictions within the topography of London. […] These discourses converged in the metaphorics of the primitive urban jungle, the penumbra of unknown Darkest London.[12]

For the fiction writer, urban gothic provided an opportunity to engage with social issues in a distorted form but also to deal with otherwise unacceptable subject matter.[13] *The Beetle* belongs prominently to this tradition in its gothic scavenging of contemporary social commentary, offering a "temporary but influential response to social, political, and sexual problems."[14]

Marsh's London is a city where the boundaries between the West and the East, civilization and savagery, progress and degeneration, and respectability and corruption are fluid. *The Beetle* offers a kaleidoscopic view of fin-de-siècle London, a largely nocturnal city where the wealth and luxury of the West End exist in uneasy proximity to narrow, deserted, and labyrinthine slum streets. The perpetually poor weather and

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[10] Roger Luckhurst, "The Contemporary London Gothic and the Limits of the 'Spectral Turn,'" *Textual Practice* 16.3 (2002): 530.
[11] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-13; Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 30-33.
[12] Luckhurst, "Contemporary London Gothic:" 539.
[13] Rhys Garnett, "*Dracula* and *The Beetle*: Imperial and Sexual Guilt and Fear in Late Victorian Fantasy," in *Science Fiction Roots and Branches: Contemporary Critical Approaches*, ed. Rhys Garnett and R.J. Ellis (Houndmills: MacMillan, 1990), 33.
[14] Judith Halberstam, "Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," *Victorian Studies* 36.3 (Spring 1993): 339.

darkness of this urban setting disorient both the characters and the reader, the rain, fog, and mist further ensuring that clarity of vision is compromised, both literally and symbolically. As the unemployed clerk Robert Holt, a concrete reminder of the economic and class problems of the time, remarks on the "miserable night" on which he falls prey to the beetle, "The rain was like a mist, and was not only drenching me to the skin, but it was rendering it difficult to see more than a little distance in any direction. The neighbourhood was badly lighted."[15] In accordance with the unstable class boundaries of the time, the London of *The Beetle* is a city in which turning a corner can lead one from wealth and luxury to squalor or even danger. Characters, whether wealthy or impoverished, constantly traverse across social and moral boundaries, represented in spatial terms, in the novel. Approaching the beetle's lair after being turned away at Hammersmith workhouse, Holt, thus, feels that he is entering "a land of desolation" and "leaving civilisation behind" him (7): Holt is metaphorically leaving civilized London for a more primitive mode of existence when he enters the desolate urban space of outcast London at the beginning of the novel. However, only a little later, Holt is sent on "remote-controlled"[16] errand to Lowndes Square, making record time between the relative squalor of the beetle's residence in shabby-suburban Walham Green and the up-to-date luxury of Paul Lessingham's mansion in fashionable Belgravia. The novel abounds with such spatial shifts, each of which marks a social, sexual, or moral negotiation or transgression.

The urban architecture of London plays its own role in *The Beetle* by actively cajoling strangers into danger. The novel starts with such a scene, with the shelter offered by the beetle's lair inviting the starving Holt to enter: "I saw the open window," Holt explains, "How it rained out there! [...] And, inside that open window, it was, it must be, so warm, so dry!" (10). Refused entry to the casual ward, the homeless Holt is glad of any shelter from the rain. However, where the foggy, rainy scene outside becomes a disorienting labyrinth, true horror in the novel resides behind the closed doors of private dwellings, whether squalid or sumptuous. In a nod to the social explorers' accounts of the dread of vermin common amongst slum dwellers, Marsh appropriates the image of the common cockroach and transforms it into an unclean representative of horror. The

[15] Richard Marsh, *The Beetle: A Mystery* (London: Skeffington, 1897), 6. All further references to the novel will be placed within the text.
[16] Luckhurst, "Trance-Gothic:" 164.

resulting malodorous parasite climbs her victims' bodies with sticky feet, as in Holt's first encounter with the monster:

> [W]ith a sense of shrinking, horror, nausea, rendering me momentarily more helpless, I realised that the creature was beginning to ascend my legs, to climb my body. […] [I]t mounted me, apparently, with as much ease as if I had been horizontal instead of perpendicular. It was as though it were some gigantic spider,—a spider of the nightmares; a monstrous conception of some dreadful vision. […] Higher and higher! It had gained my loins. It was moving towards the pit of my stomach. […] It reached my chin, it touched my lips,—and I stood still and bore it all, while it enveloped my face with its huge, slimy, evil-smelling body, and embraced me with its myriad legs (14-16).

In the urban gothic of *The Beetle*, unwelcome vermin have become objects of horror, nightmarish exaggerations of a natural physical shrinking away from contact with unclean parasites. That contact in the novel, however, has clear sexual overtones.

Gendered shifts, corrupt sexualities

In turn-of-the-century literature and social discourse, London emerges as the site of both erotic opportunity and of sexual danger. Elaine Showalter posits that the fin de siècle was a period "of 'sexual anarchy,' when all the laws that governed sexual identity and behaviour seemed to be breaking down."[17] Certainly discourses of gender and sexuality proliferated in this period, addressing the perceived threat to national integrity and national stock posed by shifting gender roles and changing sexual practices. The social explorers' descriptions of poverty emphasized the moral and sexual corruption of the slums, communicating the sordid side of London sex to the public through newspapers and exploratory accounts. In 1888, the unsolved Jack the Ripper murders brought public interest in the vice trade to a sensational pitch. Finally, the 1890s witnessed heated debates over non-reproductive urban sexualities, particularly the demands for sexual equality by outspoken New Women and scandals, most notoriously the trials in 1895 of Oscar Wilde, caused by the discovery of a homosexual subculture in the metropolis.

[17] Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*: *Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Virago, 2001), 3.

The Beetle comments on the contemporary perception of London as a site of sexual opportunity and danger, recalling contemporary anxieties over shifting gender roles and sexual corruption. Judith Halberstam suggests that the novel creates "a Gothic nation within which men are like women, women are determinedly masculine and sexual contacts between the foreigner and the native abound."[18] Certainly the reader is implicitly directed to interpret the threat posed by the eponymous monster as sexual in motivation and implementation by the novel's very unusual emphasis on beds and nakedness. The beetle is most of the time portrayed as "between the sheets" (27), "a bed in the manner of the Easterns" (238) appears to be the only piece of furniture that her den contains, and her assaults on the British characters take place mostly when they are naked and in bed. Disturbingly for a society concerned over changing gender roles, even the sex of the eponymous monster remains uncertain: "I could not at once decide if it was a man or a woman," Robert Holt admits, "Indeed at first I doubted if it was anything human. But, afterwards, I knew it to be a man,—for this reason, if for no other, that it was impossible such a creature could be feminine" (18). Just two years after the Wilde trials, Holt is forced to regard his experience with the beetle as male rape: "My only covering was unceremoniously thrown off me, so that I lay there in my nakedness. Fingers prodded me […], as if I had been some beast ready for the butcher's stall […], and—horror of horrors!—the blubber lips were pressed to mine" (23). Like Marjorie after him, Holt conveniently faints, thus avoiding the humiliation of having to recount his ordeal.

Perhaps aware of the risqué nature of such material, Marsh soon moves from a depiction of the monster as homosexual to a description of her as a hideous, cross-dressing New Woman, as Holt is forced to alter his views and consider whether he "could by any possibility have blundered, and mistaken a woman for a man" (28). Most of the existing criticism on *The Beetle* defines the sexual threat posed by the eponymous monster as female.[19] Certainly Holt's judgment of the beetle as "some ghoulish example of her sex,

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[18] Judith Halberstam, "Gothic Nation: *The Beetle* by Richard Marsh," in *Fictions of Unease: The Gothic from "Otranto" to "The X-Files,"* ed. Andrew Smith, Diane Mason and William Hughes (Bath: Sulis Press, 2002), 100.

[19] Garnett, "*Dracula* and *The Beetle*," 40-43; Halberstam, "Gothic Nation," 100, 105-09, 112-14; Hurley, "'The Inner Chambers of All Nameless Sin:' *The Beetle*, Gothic Female Sexuality, and Oriental Barbarism," *Virginal Sexuality and Textuality in*

who had so yielded to her depraved instincts as to have become nothing but a ghastly reminiscence of womanhood" (28) reads very much like a contemporary condemnation of the trouser-clad, short-haired New Woman, astride her bicycle and loudly demanding sexual equality and the right to free love. The representation of the female monster was also in keeping with contemporary criminal anthropology, which characterized the female criminal as "[m]asculine, unsexed, ugly [and] abnormal," and "strongly marked with the signs of degeneration;" in "an inversion of all the qualities which specially distinguish the normal woman," her crimes were often attributed to "an exaggeration of the sexual instincts."[20] In accordance with contemporary concerns over the true nature of women, Holt is indeed proven to "have blundered" when Marsh proceeds to strip the beetle of her clothing to titillate the reader with the revelation of "not a man, but a woman, and, judging from the brief glimpse which I had of her body, by no means old or ill-shaped either" (139). This confusion is later repeated when the monster brings out the rebelliousness inherent in the attractive but headstrong Marjorie, a potential New Woman character, by making her cross-dress "in the tattered masculine habiliments of a vagabond" (348), including "a rotten, dirty pair of boots; a filthy, tattered pair of trousers; a ragged, unwashed apology for a shirt; a greasy, ancient, shapeless coat; and a frowsy peaked cloth cap" (305). Halberstam and Margree argue that it is this female masculinity, the conflation of the emasculate tramp and the masculinized New Woman, that is the most troubling scenario in the novel.[21]

Kelly Hurley, by contrast, argues that encounters with the monster may be usefully interpreted as "some sort of nightmare of sexual encounter, sexuality at its most primitive and terrible." The beetle's physicality, in Hurley's view, is a gothicized representation of female genitalia, the monster's "embodi[ment] as her own hungry, emasculating womb—damp, adhesive, and overwhelmingly nauseating."[22] I would agree with Hurley that the "savage, frantic longing" (32) that the beetle feels towards Lessingham and Holt is a form of insatiable female desire that would have disturbed and titillated contemporary readers in its reduction of men, in particular, to passivity.

Victorian Literature, ed. Lloyd Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 194, 203.

[20] Havelock Ellis, *The Criminal* (London: Walter Scott, 1890), 217; Caesar Lombroso and William Ferrero, *The Female Offender* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1895), 295, 297.

[21] Halberstam, "Gothic Nation," 109, 112; Margree, "'Both in Men's Clothing:'" 63, 72-74

[22] Hurley, "'The Inner Chambers,'" 208-09.

Paul Lessingham's recollections of his "Eastern Romance" (132) confirm his emasculation when faced with the Woman of the Songs:

> I was lying, undressed, on a heap of rugs in a corner of a low-pitched room […] By my side knelt the Woman of the Songs. Leaning over, she wooed my mouth with kisses. I cannot describe to you the sense of horror and of loathing with which the contact of her lips oppressed me. There was about her something so unnatural, so inhuman, that I believe even then I could have destroyed her with as little sense of moral turpitude as if she had been some noxious insect. […] The most dreadful part of it was that I was wholly incapable of offering even the faintest resistance to her caresses. I lay there like a log. She did with me as she would, and in dumb agony I endured (250, 252).

Female sexuality is here linked to the ethnic otherness of the Woman of the Songs (of which more shortly), and literally described as unnatural, inhuman, monstrous, and animalistic. However, the monster's sexual challenge is also disturbing because of its very ambiguity and indeterminacy. Gender roles are reversed as supposedly stalwart English gentlemen are reduced to effeminate hysteria and sexual passivity, while women become so assertive that it is impossible to determine their sex. Such dangerous negotiations are in the novel represented as monstrous, but also point to Marsh's awareness of radical shifts in contemporary gender roles. Appendix 7 introduces relevant contemporary discourses on female self-assertiveness, sexuality, and metamorphic monstrosity, highlighting the contemporary contention that calls for greater equality were only the first steps down a slippery slope to female infertility, madness, hysteria, criminality, and the break-down of the family unit, the cornerstone of Victorian patriarchy and the British Empire.

In its emphasis on the sexual threat posed by the monster, *The Beetle* also recalls contemporary narratives of child prostitution and the white slave trade, the human traffic in white women that centered on Brussels and Egypt. As Appendix 5 documents, such concerns peaked at the fin de siècle. Thus, W.T. Stead revealed that the "infernal traffic" of child prostitution was rife in modern-day London, "the greatest market of human flesh in the whole world." Customers who frequented this market Stead characterized as "bestial, ferocious, and filthy beyond the imagination of decent men."

His voyeuristic narrative dwelt obsessively on the sexual corruption, fear, and suffering of young girls sold into prostitution and "snared, trapped, and outraged, either when under the influence of drugs or after a prolonged struggle in a locked room, in which the weaker succumbs to sheer downright force." In a curious echo of the beetle's violation of Holt and Marjorie, Stead was shown

> a room where you can be perfectly secure. The house stands in its own grounds. The walls are thick, there is a double carpet on the floor. The only window, which fronts upon the back garden, is doubly secured, first with shutters, then with heavy curtains. You lock the door and then you can do as you please. The girl may scream blue murder, but not a sound will be heard.[23]

Marsh's novel recalls these contemporary scare stories. In the beetle's den in Walham Green nobody does, indeed, hear the screams of Holt or Marjorie, both "stripped to the skin" (253) and violated by an omnivorous superior force. While Holt is later literally sucked dry for his sins of destitution and emasculation, Marjorie "stands in imminent peril not only of a ghastly death, but of what is infinitely worse than death" (266), recognized euphemisms for death from syphilis, common amongst prostitutes, and rape; the fate in store for her as a participant in one of the "orgies of nameless horrors" (253) that Lessingham has had to witness in Egypt recalls contemporary accounts of the white slave trade where Englishwomen were kidnapped or cajoled into foreign brothels, forced into prostitution, and, eventually, it was alleged, even killed by brutal customers. The text's emphasis on the beetle's obsession with her victims' "white skin" (21) would support such a reading. As Lessingham explains, "it seemed to me that they offered human sacrifices. […] [I]n each case the sacrificial object was a woman, stripped to the skin, as white as you or I,—and before they burned her they subjected her to every variety of outrage of which even the minds of demons could conceive" (253). Augustus Champnell explains that it is "the procuration of fresh victims for that long-drawn-out holocaust" (322) that motivates the beetle to kidnap Marjorie as much as her wish to take revenge on Lessingham, and his narrative dwells obsessively on what "unimaginable agony" or "speechless torture" Marjorie may "have been made to suffer" (316) during the time she has spent with the beetle behind the closed doors of suburban

[23] W.T. Stead, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon: The Report of the 'Pall Mall Gazette's' Secret Commission* (London: *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1885), 2-4, 14.

dwellings and sailors' homes, and inside public cabs and third-class train compartments. However, it is also noteworthy that it is Marjorie's assertiveness, that key characteristic of the objectionable New Woman, that lands her in her predicament, and it could thus be argued that the narrative punishes her for her disobedience, acting as "a warning that the city was a dangerous place where [women] transgressed the narrow boundary of home and hearth to enter public space" at their peril.[24]

The Oriental Other

In an era of imperial expansion, the metaphorical "darkness" of the slums, discussed above, also functioned as a rhetorical device directing the reader's thoughts towards the Empire with its "benighted" subject peoples. The urban explorers depicted their topic in strikingly racial and imperial tones, drawing analogies between the colonial subjects and the indigenous poor, representing the poor as an alien people. Samples of such rhetoric may be located in Appendix 3. As Deborah Epstein Nord argues, this anthropological "rhetorical flourish" aroused reader interest by sensationalizing poverty.[25] In this discourse, social explorers functioned as anthropologists or imperial explorers, "penetrating" an urban jungle, the uncharted territory of "Darkest London," as Stanley and Livingstone had braved the real jungles of Darkest Africa. George Sims described his account of outcast London as "a book of travel," "the result of a journey into a region which lies at our own doors—into a dark continent that is within easy walking distance of the General Post Office."[26] The people of outcast London were in this discourse described in terminology which emphasized their physical and moral degeneration. The urban decay of the slums was seen to have stripped the inhabitants of their British characteristics, turning them into an alien race with animalistic, violent, and criminal tendencies. Thus, Jack London wrote of encountering in the streets of outcast London a "new and different race of people, short of stature, and of wretched or beer-sodden appearance." "They are a new species," London concluded, "a breed of city

[24] Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (London: Virago, 2000), 3.
[25] Deborah Epstein Nord, "The Social Explorer as Anthropologist: Victorian Travellers among the Urban Poor," in *Visions of the Modern City: Essays in History, Art, and Literature*, ed. William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 122-23, 131.
[26] George R. Sims, *How the Poor Live and Horrible London* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 1.

savages. The streets and houses, alleys and courts, are their hunting grounds. […] The slum is their jungle, and they live and prey in the jungle."[27]

This alleged racial deviance was due to the different way of life of "native" East-Enders, but also to the number of foreign immigrants in the area. As the first port of call for immigrants, the East End, with its growing Jewish and Chinese communities, was peculiarly suited to accommodate such imaginary landscaping. Here, Sims found "a page of the old Orient bound up in the book of modern Western life." Almost forgetting that he was "in London," he felt he could have been "in Cairo or Mogador."[28] Olive Malvery confirmed that

> [T]here are in London certain streets and localities peopled almost entirely by foreigners, these strangers having "eaten out" the original inhabitants[…]; indeed, some places are so alien in their characteristics that one might fancy oneself in another country on entering them […]; the sights, sounds, and incidentally the smells, are so utterly different to those found in purely English slums. Whichever way one turns, one sees nothing but foreign figures and hears nothing but foreign tongues.

Contemporary accounts were particularly concerned over the impact of foreign sexual mores on the English poor, above all women. As Malvery observed, "Foreign ideas of propriety […] are quite unique. […] [I]n encouraging an indiscriminate number of undesirable aliens to enter this country, we are putting a premium on some of the most dastardly and insidious forms of vice." As Malvery concluded, "The dangers that menace young girls in the great cities of Britain are increased a thousandfold by the unrestricted influx of aliens of evil character."[29] As Appendix 4 seeks to demonstrate, the "alien question," the impact of this influx of immigrants on the moral and physical condition of the native population, was a heated topic of debate throughout the 1890s.

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[27] Jack London, *The People of the Abyss* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1903), 5, 247-48.
[28] George R. Sims, *Off the Track in London* (London: Jarrold, 1911), 18.
[29] O.C. Malvery, *The Soul Market* (London: Hutchinson, 1906), 207, 212, 217-18.

H.L. Malchow posits that nineteenth-century gothic and racial discourses were closely connected.[30] The description of the monster in Marsh's novel reflects contemporary fears over native degeneration and racial miscegenation. The beetle intriguingly avoids easy categorization beyond Holt's confident statement that "I had no doubt it was a foreigner." Holt initially describes the creature as an ancient Asiatic mummy: "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." Next, however, we are told that the monster's skull is "disagreeably suggestive of something animal," though the "extravagant […] dimensions, and […] peculiar […] shape" of her nose also direct the reader to consider racial stereotypes of Jews; in contemporary physiognomy, the strong nose would also have marked the creature as a potential murderer. "The mouth, with its blubber lips," classifies the creature not only as Negroid but also as degenerate and sexually deviant. Finally, Holt returns to his earlier classification of the monster as Asiatic, although the emphasis on her "long" and "narrow" eyes also recalls the Jewish evil eye, as well as the Egyptian eye of Horus which decorated the spine of the novel's first edition. The combination of degeneration theory, racial stereotyping, and animal characteristics in the passage provides an "Orientalist" misreading of the beetle's Otherness as monstrosity, beyond the understanding of the Westerner. "What I did see I had rather left unseen," Holt pronounces (17-18).

Anxieties caused by immigration often assume the shape of invasion narratives in late-Victorian gothic fiction. Patrick Brantlinger has coined the useful concept of "Imperial Gothic" to describe the blend of adventure and gothic fiction that dealt with atavism and the invasion of civilization by alien forces.[31] Marsh's novel brings to London a monster from a particularly topical corner of the Empire, Egypt. While Egypt was a popular travel destination and a frequent motif in popular culture at the turn of the century, it would also have produced feelings of unease in the minds of contemporary readers; Appendix 8 seeks to chart this mixed reaction. Not only was Egypt a troubling example of a fallen Empire, it had also furnished Britain with some of its most traumatic imperial experiences of the nineteenth century. Of particular importance to Britain because it guarded the access to the Suez Canal and thus to India, Egypt had experienced

[30] H.L. Malchow, *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 5.
[31] Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 227-30.

nationalist unrest from the late 1870s, leading to a controversial British occupation in 1882. As Rhys Garnett argues, *The Beetle* "reveals the guilty fear of an imperialist class that its greedy expropriation of alien territories may *deserve* punishment."[32] Furthermore, in the 1880s, the Sudan, an Egyptian colony, had succumbed to Mahdism, a radical religious sect associated in the minds of British newspaper readers with formidable military skills, as well as the particularly brutal treatment, including bodily mutilation and sexual violation, of British citizens and soldiers, most notoriously the butchery of the imperial hero General Gordon in Khartoum in 1885. These events made *The Beetle* a topical account of fictional captivity and torture in the claws of an Oriental monster.

By bringing the Oriental invader to London, Marsh plants a slice of the Empire in the heart of the metropolis. Atherton may remind the beetle that "this is London, not a dog-hole in the desert" (83); nonetheless, the monster's alien customs and oriental magic transform contemporary London, the heart and brain of the empire, into an imperial gothic setting.[33] The streets of London in Marsh's novel mirror the native quarters of Cairo and caves in the deserts of the Sudan. Lessingham's description of his "search of amusement" with "a spice of adventure" in the "dirty," "ill-lit," and "deserted" "native quarter" (246-47) of Cairo bears a remarkable similarity to Holt's wanderings in the London night. This conflation of Cairo, an actual imperial trouble-spot, and London, a city divided along social fault lines, links colonial trouble *abroad* with the possibility of class, sex, and race strife *at home*, implying a connection between the oppressed Others of Western patriarchy. As Edward Said argues,

> The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or—as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory—taken over.[34]

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[32] Garnett, "*Dracula* and *The Beetle*," 30.
[33] Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 9; Mighall, *Geography*, 29.
[34] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), 207.

It is, after all, only natural that Holt and Marjorie should rebel against systems that have oppressed them, just as the Oriental is reacting against Western desecration of Eastern culture. I am in agreement with Margree that "the threat to civilisation comes not solely from the archaic and the foreign but already exists in the centre of modernity itself."[35] *The Beetle*, thus, explores Victorian England's guilt over its imperial, patriarchal and social legacy by questioning the stability of ethnic, gender and class identities, conflating the characters of the Oriental, humiliated by the colonizer; the New Woman, a victim of patriarchy; and the destitute tramp, let down by the social system.

Questions of identity

Whether in London or in Egypt, the beetle's victims quickly lose their supposedly English characteristics of moral and sexual rectitude, becoming "enchained, helpless, spell-bound" (19) pawns under the monster's hypnotic gaze. As Julian Wolfreys observes, hypnotic control over the minds and bodies of others is in the novel equated with sexual penetration *and* with colonial domination.[36] Hypnotic control was a key debate of the time in medical circles, and Appendix 6 presents a selection of contemporary accounts concerned with the hypnotic subject's loss of identity. It is this constant, traumatic shifting of class, social, gendered, sexual, ethnic, and national identities that is perhaps the overall theme of the novel. Showalter argues that "[i]n periods of cultural insecurity, when there are fears of regression and degeneration, the longing for strict border controls around the definition of gender, as well as race, class, and nationality, becomes especially intense."[37] In Marsh's novel, characters repeatedly cross social, spatial, and psychic boundaries that, it is implied, were better left uncrossed: Holt crosses a moral boundary by burglariously clambering through the beetle's window; Lessingham tests the class structure by bidding for an improved social and political role; colonialists challenge ethnic and national identities by braving the unknowable native quarter of Cairo at night; the scientist Atherton has to admit that progressive Western knowledge may not always triumph over ancient Eastern superstition; Marjorie defies existing gender roles by repeatedly leaving the safety of the private sphere for the dangers of the masculine world outside; and almost all sexual

[35] Margree, "'Both in Men's Clothing:'" 65.
[36] Wolfreys, "Introduction," 13, 15.
[37] Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, 4.

mores are disputed by the Oriental monster's violations of white men and women. Marsh's deployment of hypnotism allows for the supposedly stable divisions between the body and the mind, the colonizer and the colonized, masculinity and femininity, morality and immorality, London and Cairo, to be blurred. Instead of the rigid taxonomies and conclusive resolutions we usually reassuringly encounter at the end of detective stories, this uncertainty is maintained until the end of the novel: Augustus Champnell's concluding narrative ends on a note of hesitation with the detective refusing "to pronounce a confident opinion" on the case (351).

Most readings of *The Beetle* focus on the novel's engagement with issues of gender and sexuality. It is, however, important to acknowledge the breadth of its cultural resonances at the "critical historical matrix" of the fin de siècle, "an epoch of endings and beginnings."[38] It is impossible to attribute the contemporary appeal of *The Beetle* to any one genre or theme addressed by the novel. It is rather the metamorphic indeterminacy and adaptability of the "the liminal man-woman-goddess-beetle-Thing,"[39] "an aggregate of race, class, and gender,"[40] that should be seen as central to its success. Despite some critics' condemnation of the novel's sadistic voyeurism, xenophobia, and misogyny, it is important to acknowledge that *The Beetle* is a text essentially of its time, typical of the fears and fantasies of the fin de siècle. This Valancourt edition provides an annotated copy of the first edition of the novel, together with a number of contextual appendices, to facilitate the return of this key gothic shocker into the hands of contemporary readers.

[38] Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, "Introduction: Reading the *Fin de Siècle*," in *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, c. 1880-1900*, ed. Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), xiii, xx.
[39] Luckhurst, "Trance-Gothic," 160.
[40] Halberstam, "Technologies of Monstrosity," 334.